

**THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING LEARNER DISCIPLINE: THE
CASE OF TWO SCHOOLS IN PINETOWN DISTRICT**

BY

FLORENCE ZANDILE NENE

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TWO SCHOOLS IN PINETOWN DISTRICT**

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FLORENCE ZANDILE NENE

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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2013

SUPERVISOR' S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval

Mr Sphiwe Eric Mthiyane (Supervisor)

March 2013

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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Researcher:

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May God richly bless you all!

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my twin daughters, Andiswa and Lungiswa.

Also, to my late sister, Phindisile (Ntie) Nene, who tragically passed away in February 2008.

We always love you.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges of managing learner discipline. A case study was conducted in two schools, the secondary and the primary schools in Pinetown District in KwaZulu Natal. The aim of this study was to investigate what challenges educators face in the management of learner discipline. This qualitative study was set in the interpretivist paradigm. The research tools comprise of semi-structured interviews and documents review. The theoretical frameworks that inform this study are behavioural modification model by Skinner, (1992), The Choice theory by Glasser, (1998) and assertive discipline model by Canter, (2007). International and local literature that foregrounds and supports the study were reviewed. Analysis of different contexts was made to inform the challenges of managing learner discipline problems in schools. The findings of this study revealed that teachers from very different schools, primary and secondary, felt that learners were becoming more unruly and less respectful than they used to be in the past. They further stated that the lack of discipline among learners makes it impossible to teach effectively.

Educators identified some of the challenges they face such as bullying and intimidation, sexual harassment, drugs and alcohol abuse and carrying of dangerous weapons to schools. Furthermore, the findings revealed that lack of parent involvement in school, home and family background, abuse of various types, balance between learner rights and responsibilities, peer pressure, the role of media and politics were the biggest cause of disciplinary problems. Educators suggested that alternatives measures to corporal punishment were not very effective in curbing learner indiscipline in schools. They found it difficult to choose and implement the correct alternatives to corporal punishment.

Some of the recommendations based on the findings are that, at the beginning of the school year, the principal and educators should orientate learners about the code of conduct and school rules. Rules and the consequences of breaking them should be clearly indicated to learners during assembly. Active parental involvement in the lives of their children is crucial for the management of discipline at school. Teachers should acquaint themselves and learn to know learner home backgrounds in order to understand learners they are dealing with. In-service workshops for all teachers across the country to be trained in alternatives to corporal punishment should be organised by the Department of Education. Professional support i.e. psychologists or educational counsellors should be increased to support schools.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- DoE - Department of Education
- DSSC - Discipline, Safety and Security Committee
- SASA - South African Schools Act
- SGB - School Governing Body
- HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
- HODs - Heads of Department
- PL1 - Post Level 1

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Good school discipline is one of the most important characteristics of an effective school and a vital aspect of school and classroom management (Oosthuizen, 2009). Furthermore, discipline is important for maintaining harmony in a school, and for securing a climate in which learners can learn free from disruption and chaos. Effective discipline creates a climate conducive to high academic and non-academic achievements. It is commonly accepted that learners perform better when they know what is expected of them (Oosthuizen, 2009). The ‘growing incidence’ of disruptive behaviour in schools is posing a challenge to everybody and needs to be tackled by every means at our disposal (Tungata, 2006, p.1). Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt (2004) report cases of learner indiscipline in high schools in KwaMashu in northern Durban, an impediment to the culture of teaching and learning in a number of schools. In a similar vein, Aziza (2001) reports a sharp rise of cases of learners suspended and expelled from the Western Cape schools. Reasons that lead to suspensions and expulsions include physical and verbal confrontations, theft, substance abuse and watching pornography (Aziza, 2001). Such cases of learner indiscipline impact negatively on teaching and learning in the schools (Zulu, *et al.*, 2004). Cases of learners injured and killed within the confines of the school are on the increase in South African schools. Press reports continue to alert the public on the rise of indiscipline cases in schools (Thompson, 2002). It is for this reason that a study on learner discipline problems is of great importance.

1.2 Rationale for the study

This study focuses on challenges experienced by educators in the management of learner discipline in two schools in the Inchanga Ward, Pinetown District.

As an educator in a school at Inchanga Ward, who has taught in two different secondary and two primary schools for the past eight years, I have observed that educators are faced with new and different disciplinary challenges in schools (both in primary and secondary schools).

In South Africa, for example, there are reports of a sharp increase in the number of cases of learner indiscipline in schools and there are cases where some learners are alleged to have murdered other learners on the school premises (Thompson, 2002; Harber, 2001). This is confirmed by various media reports, which have highlighted a number of incidents of physical violence, bullying and victimization in schools in the Eastern Cape (Smit, 2010). School administrators and teachers have wide discretionary authority in disciplining students. Reyes (2006) points out that teachers and other school staff assume the role of parents with teachers as the frontline for student discipline.

The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (Section 8) highlights that the management of discipline calls on teachers to make children feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe so that they (learners) can develop self-discipline and accountability in their actions (Naong, 2007). Every teacher has to create an environment in which each learner is guided towards an attitude of caring and respect for other learners. According to the *in loco parentis* principle, the teachers have a duty to protect learners against danger. This is also corroborated by Nieuwenhuis, Beckmann and Prinsloo (2007) who state that South African educators have an important duty with regard to the safety and the protection of learners, not only in accordance with the Constitution and other legislation, but also in terms of their *in loco parentis* status (i.e. the educator “acting as parent”). The *in loco parentis* status of educators furthermore compels schools to foresee the potential dangers to which learners may be exposed at schools and to act proactively by taking steps in the form of safety measures and/or policies protect learners from harm. Furthermore, there are two coextensive pillars to the *in loco parentis* role that educators play: the duty of care (which implies looking after the physical and mental wellbeing of learners) and the duty to maintain order at a school (which implies educators’ duty to discipline learners).

According to Jeloudar, Yunus and Roslan (2011), schools in Malaysia have some disciplinary problems such as petty crimes, immoral conduct, dressing, truancy, disrespect for others and maladjustments with the school environment. They also add that bullying, school violence and maladjustments are increasing among students. Disruptive behaviour continues to be the most consistently discussed problem in South Africans schools. Misbehaving learners and disciplinary problems are a disproportionate and intractable part of every teacher’s experience of teaching (Meier & Marais, 2010). Teachers in South Africa are becoming increasingly distressed about disciplinary problems in schools, as corporal punishment has been outlawed by legislation, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

(Republic of South Africa, 1996a) and the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996b). Some sectors of society have reacted positively, claiming that the said legislation affirms human dignity, but others have expressed concern, contending that there are no viable alternatives to corporal punishment (Meier & Marais, 2010). Naong (2007) maintains that abolition of corporal punishment in schools has left a gap which cannot be filled and that it has led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in schools. His research clearly indicates that teachers in South Africa are generally unhappy, demoralized and exhausted.

Lapperts (2012) asserts that most educators observe that, although corporal punishment is now a criminal offence, it, nevertheless, remains a prevalent and pervasive practice. Morrell (2001) states that even after the banning of the use of corporal punishment in schools, educators still used it as a strategy to discipline learners. Wittingly or unwittingly educators may be unaware that they are committing crimes under the guise of disciplining learners. Mtsweni (2008) observes that after the banning of corporal punishment in schools, most educators feel incapacitated and helpless in dealing with learner indiscipline in schools. Learners are believed to have now become ill disciplined to the extent that they even openly challenge the teacher's authority because they know that nothing would be done to them (Masitsa, 2008).

Furthermore, teachers from very different schools, primary and secondary, rich and poor, private and public, feel that learners are becoming more unruly and less respectful than they used to be in the past. They further state that the lack of discipline among learners makes it impossible to teach effectively. In addition, according to Maphosa and Mammen (2011), teachers in South Africa often find themselves in a dilemma of having to find effective ways of dealing with learner indiscipline in schools while at the same time protecting children's rights. Constitutional requirements call for the upholding, preservation and protection of children's rights and hence harsh and punitive disciplinary measures have been outlawed. On the other hand, indiscipline by learners in South African schools is on the increase (Aziza, 2006; de Wet, 2007; Masitsa, 2008).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the challenges faced by educators in managing discipline in schools. This study focuses on the management of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools, also focuses on the perceptions of educators regarding the management of discipline in primary and secondary schools.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Currently, one of the most prominent factors that have a bearing on education in South Africa is the misconduct of learners (Oosthuizen, 2009). According to my observation with other colleagues, many educators, parents and communities in especially the disadvantaged areas of Pinetown District are gravely concerned about the disorderliness in some of their schools. The most challenging task facing educators is the handling of disciplinary problems caused by ill-disciplined learners. Good discipline is reliant on effective management, both within the school as a whole, as well as within the classroom. Section 8(1) of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 places a legal obligation on school governing bodies to draft a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and educators. In terms of Section 8(2), the code of conduct must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. According to Section 8(4) of SASA, learners have an obligation to comply with the code of conduct of the school they attend.

In addition, according to Ooisthuizen (2009), the current state of discipline among learners in schools under study is not conducive to learning. Problems such as drug abuse, cheating, insubordination, truancy and intimidation results in continuous classroom disruptions. Educators find it difficult to enforce classroom rules and policies and to perform their duties effectively. This observation is also corroborated by the study conducted by Matseke (2008) who states that the school manager does not get full support from parents to resolve learner disciplinary problems. Therefore, the study seeks to explore the challenges faced by educators in managing discipline in schools.

1.4 Research aims and questions

The aims of the research are:

- To determine what problems educators face regarding learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools.
- To determine what the causes of learner indiscipline are in primary and secondary schools.
- To determine what role the educators play regarding the management of discipline in primary and secondary schools.

- To determine what alternative methods and strategies educators implement in maintaining discipline at school.

Therefore, the study seeks to address the following key questions:

- What are the challenges encountered by educators in managing learner discipline?
- What are the causes of learner discipline problems in the selected schools?
- What is the role that educators play in managing learner discipline schools?
- How do the teachers find the alternative methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the Department of Education working?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study will make contribution to national and international debates by providing insights into how educators deal with learner discipline problems in schools. The study will also contribute to an increased awareness of causes of disciplinary problems in learners and thus may help to control bad behaviour and to maintain discipline in schools. The study may also bring about changes in the approach and strategies in maintaining discipline, especially at a time when corporal punishment of children is no longer legal in schools (Tungata, 2006). Studies by Naong, 2007; Thompson, 2002; Harber, 2001; Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000; Mtsweni, 2008; Kgosana, 2006; De Wet, 2007; Meier & Marais, 2010; Zulu, *et al.* 2004, have been conducted on the nature, patterns and extent of discipline problems internationally and in South African schools. Therefore, the study examines the challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools at Inchanga Ward.

This is corroborated by Matsoga (2003) who itemises the most common forms of indiscipline in schools as follows: bullying, vandalism, alcohol and substance abuse, truancy, inability and unwillingness to do assigned class work or homework, refusal to take given orders, teasing of other learners, disrespecting educators, swearing at educators or other learners, carrying dangerous weapons to the school, threatening other learners with dangerous weapons, assaulting other learners, murdering other learners or educators, viewing pornographic materials at school and indecent dressing. Discussions I have had with teachers of schools in the area where I teach indicate that the culture of teaching and learning in schools is no longer there. Learners defy their educators and school rules. Educators find it difficult to control learners who do as they wish. Some parents are even concerned about the

education of their children. The study is motivated by the need to improve a safe schooling experience for educators and learners at the school. Furthermore, educators also seek to know what exactly the strategies that are currently used to maintain learner discipline and to what extent the strategies used could be so as to assist in finding ways to eliminate disciplinary problems faced by educators in schools.

1.6 Definition of key concepts

In order to facilitate a common understanding, the broad definitions of terms used in the study are provided.

1.6.1 Discipline

Discipline in positive sense refers to learning, regulated scholarship, guidance and orderliness (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000). Discipline in this sense may qualify as an integral part of an effective educational endeavour in which parents and educators give assistance to a help-seeking child. The child is supported and guided towards the degree of self-guidance, which is necessary for successful learning and to achieve adequate self-actualization and responsible and happy adulthood (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000).

1.6.2 School discipline

School discipline refers to regulation of children and the maintenance of order (rules) in schools. These rules may, for example, define the expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethics (Nakpodia, 2010).

1.6.3 Management

The term 'management' encompasses an array of different functions undertaken to accomplish a task successfully. In the simplest of terms, management is all about 'getting things done'. However, it is the way and the process of how one achieves ones target or

goals and it is in this respect that management is considered an art and a science as well (Indian Child, 2000-2010).

1.7 Review of literature

Local and international literature that surrounds and supports the study was reviewed. Analysis of different contexts was made to inform the challenges faced by educators in managing learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools. Bless and Higson-Smith (2006) point out that in order to conceive the research topic in a way that permits a clear formulation of the problem and hypothesis, some background information is necessary. This is obtained mainly by researching whatever has been published that appears relevant to the topic. Important sources of data are memoranda, circulars, minutes, White Papers on Education and Government Gazettes, newspapers, books, and journals dealing with discipline. “Once you have read, evaluated, organised and synthesized the literature relevant to your research problem, you will begin writing the section or chapter that describes your literature” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p.84).

The current state of discipline among learners in the school under study is not conducive to learning. Problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, bullying and intimidation, sexual harassment of girls and carrying of dangerous weapons to school result in continuous classroom disruptions. Educators find it difficult to enforce classroom rules and policies and to perform their duties effectively. The school manager does not get full support from parents to resolve learner disciplinary problems.

1.7.1 Research design and methodology

Mouton (2001) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting one’s research. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that the research design provides the overall structure for the procedure that the researcher follows, the data collected and the data analysis conducted by the researcher.

The paradigm in which this research is conducted is interpretive. Researchers working in this paradigm assume that people’s subjective experiences are real and should be taken seriously (ontology); that we understand other’s experiences by interacting with them and listening to

what they tell us (epistemology); and that qualitative research techniques are best suited to this task (methodology). Esterberg (2002) states that the interpretive tradition requires of the researcher to immerse herself or himself in the world inhabited by those they wish to study.

1.7.2 Methodological approach

A qualitative case study approach is used in this study. Qualitative research deals with data which are principally verbal. Qualitative research is more concerned with understanding social phenomena from the perspectives of the participants (White, 2005). Data can be kept in the form of notes, audio and video tapes, pictures and films. Stakeholders who are involved with learner discipline on a day-to-day basis share their experiences with regard to learner discipline in their schools (White, 2005).

1.7.3 Sampling

Sampling means to make a selection from the population (a concrete listing of the elements in the population) in order to identify the people or issues to be included in the research (Macmillan, 2000). Purposive sampling was used which is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher. Therefore, a purposive sample of eight educators (four were from a primary school and the other four from a secondary school) were selected. The target sample for this study consists of the principal, one HOD and two Post Level one educators in each of the selected schools.

1.7.4 Data generation tools

Data that is raw information shall be generated to reach certain conclusions (Chauke, 2009). The main sources of data generation in this study were in-depth interviews with eight educators. Semi structured interviews and documents review were the most suitable instruments to be used to obtain in-depth information about the management of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools. Open-ended questions were used. The interviews were conducted in English and be voice-recorded (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

1.7.5 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Recorded data was transcribed and analysed by the researcher to be able to identify relevant themes. Qualitative data collected was analysed using themes derived from the research questions that guided the study. Different themes were identified and code those encountered by means of a line-by-line analysis of each interview transcription (De Vos, Fouche & Schurink, 2011). The researcher played and replayed audio recordings in order to become familiar with data, furthermore, be attentive to words and phrases in the participant's own vocabularies that capture the meaning of what they do or say (De Vos, Fouche & Schurink, 2011). Furthermore, reporting of data took the form of thick description and verbatim quotations. Patton, (2002) points out that qualitative researchers have an obligation to monitor and report the analytic procedures they use in their work.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) point out that the term "ethics" refers to questions of right and wrong. When researchers think about ethics, they must think if it is right to conduct a particular study or carry out certain procedures. Is there some kind of studies that should not be conducted? According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues, confidentiality and anonymity, the right to equality, justice, and the participants' right to withdraw or terminate participation at any time. A statement of the purpose of the interview was explained to the participants before the interview process, and a promise of confidentiality and an assurance that there is no right or wrong answers. The participants also received a clear explanation that they need to be part of the study and they must have the freedom to withdraw at any time. Pseudo names were used to protect the identity of the participants. Participants were also assured that data collected will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study.

Therefore, I first applied to the Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal for approval to do the research. Secondly, I applied to the Research Office of the

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education for permission to do research at specific schools in the province. Thirdly, whilst waiting on responses from the UKZN and the KZN DoE, I made appointments with the principals of two different schools in the Pinetown District. During these meetings, I submitted letters seeking permission to use the educators of the schools as participants in my study. I also gave each principal a brief overview of what my study would entail. Fourthly, on receiving letters of approval from the UKZN as well as the District Director of the DoE, I contacted the principals concerned to get their response to my request for permission to use their schools in my study (Oosthuizen, 2009). Lastly, I also requested permission from the research participants and encourage them to take part in the study by informing them of the credentials and proposed aim of the research. Cohen and Manion (2002) define informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely to influence their decisions. The participants were then told that they will have to sign a consent form before they participate in the study.

1.9 Theoretical frameworks

The theoretical frameworks that inform the study are behavioural modification model (Skinnerian model) by Skinner, B.F. (1992), theories of educational transformation by Glasser, W. (1998) and assertive discipline model by Canter, (2007).

1.10 Limitations of the study

There are certain elements that could be regarded as limitations to the study. The research study is limited to a primary and secondary schools at Inchanga Ward, Pinetown District. The participants in the study include educators only. According to my understanding, some of the educators in the selected schools were reluctant to be interviewed especially when they realised that the researcher was using a tape recorder. In addition, it was very difficult to assess the level of honesty with which the participants answer the questions. Therefore, the participants were also assured that data collected will be kept confidential and that pseudo names were used to protect the identity of the participants.

1.11 Organisation of the study

This study covers five chapters to be demarcated as follows:

Chapter one entails the rationale and background of the study, research question and research objectives, a brief description of the research methodology, concept clarification.

Chapter two is a review of related literature and the theoretical frameworks utilised in the study.

Chapter three presents the research design and methodology of the empirical study. The research design, instrumentation, strategies for data collection as well as procedures for data analysis, forms the core of this chapter.

Chapter four consists of the findings of the study as well as a discussion of the results. The discussion focuses on the qualitative data collected by means of semi structured interviews as well as documents review.

Chapter five summarises the study and draws conclusions pertaining to the research question, based on data collected. It also makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1.12 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the background to the study was described, the research questions were formulated and the aims of the research stated. The research design and methodology were also explained. The relevant concepts used in the study were also clarified. Finally, the organisation of the study was given. The following chapter investigates what literature posits about the challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools and also presents the theoretical frameworks utilised in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the introduction and background to the study. In this chapter, international and local literature that foregrounds and supports the study was reviewed. Analysis of different contexts was made to inform the challenges faced by educators in managing learner discipline problems in both primary and secondary schools. The chapter also concentrated on the legal framework for discipline in schools; the problems that schools face; causes of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools; the role of educators in the management of discipline problems; the prevention of learner discipline problems; and theoretical frameworks that inform the study.

It is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to good academic performance (Oosthuizen, 2009). According to Masitsa (2007), numerous schools, however, experience increasing incidents of poor discipline that impact negatively on academic performance, while some of these incidents even has a life-threatening character. Oosthuizen (2009) further states that discipline is always rooted in a learning situation. Du Preez, Campher, Grobler, Loock and Shaba (2002) confirm that teaching becomes problematic in the absence of discipline. According to Van der Walt and Oosthuizen (2007), interviews with educators reveal that they are experiencing difficulty in coping with disobedience, aggression, rejection of authority and the lack of respect and responsibility manifested by some learners at their schools.

2.2 Literature review on learner discipline in schools

According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011), literature review serves several important functions. First, it informs the reader that you are knowledgeable about your research problem and that you have a good grasp of the major theoretical and empirical research related to your research problem. Second, it is a summary of a body of work that is related to your problem. Moreover, it is a critical evaluation of what you see as the relevant issues and

questions that need to be addressed in other research. It also shows the audience that you can integrate and synthesise a range of different but interrelated studies that deal with your research issues.

2.2.1 International literature

Maphosa and Mammen (2011) highlight that the issue of learner indiscipline has taken centre stage for a long time internationally and nationally. In the United Kingdom, for example, there are reports of many cases of classroom disorder. Learners are generally noisy, rowdy and disrespectful to educators (Bisetty, 2001). Such forms of indiscipline invariably lead to a drop in educational standards in United Kingdom schools (Wright & Keetly, 2003). There has also been forms of indiscipline that include the use of drugs, gangsters and shootings, and most schools worldwide have adopted 'zero tolerance' approaches to indiscipline (Thernstrom, 1999). The prevalence of violence, use of foul language and disrespect towards school teaching and non-teaching staff are also confirmed forms of indiscipline in schools in the United States of America (Tomczyk, 2000).

Thernstrom (1999) highlights some of the common cases of learner indiscipline in Massachusetts in the United States as including rapes, sexual battery, robberies, physical attacks and vandalism. This is confirmed by Wolhuter and Steyn (2003) who surveyed subject-related literature on school discipline in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Results confirmed that learner discipline in schools in these three countries constitutes a problem, although it seems to be only relatively minor forms of misbehaviour that dominate. Serious forms of misbehaviour, such as criminal offences, are rare. Australian schools by and large are safe schools. Nonetheless, discipline problems do exist – including bullying behaviour. As traditional behaviour-management practices, including corporal punishment, are largely prohibited in Australian schools, contemporary practices centre on management through supportive school programmes including appropriate curricula and school-support structures (Stewart, 2004).

In addition, the result of incidents like the 1999 massacre of pupils at Columbine High School in Columbia, United States of America, caused a national outcry and increased the emphasis, not only on school safety, but on the availability of weapons and bullying as a nationwide problem (Yeoman & Charter, 2009). In another incident in South West of Germany, a

teenager went on a rampage at his former high school, killing sixteen people by discharging his father's gun (Yeoman & Charter, 2009).

Henderson (2008) reports that aggression via electronic media such as blogs, instant messaging, chat rooms, e-mails and text messaging is affecting many children in the United States. International statistics on Internet and mobile phone use reported that sixteen percent of British children/adolescents claimed to have been cyber-bullied over the Internet (Shariff & Johnny, 2007). Furthermore, school authorities are becoming more aware of the negative psychological consequences of verbal harassment (Shariff, 2004).

Mugabe and Maposa (2007) also state that common acts of misconduct in Zimbabwean secondary schools include fighting, truancy, bullying, taking drugs and insubordination to teaching staff. The Zimbabwean education policy on school discipline forbids the use of corporal punishment by educators without the approval of the school head. Human rights organisations regard corporal punishment as a dehumanizing method of curbing misconduct. Until recently, the issue of culture and discipline in Nigerian schools had never been of much a concern and threat to the educational system. In the past few years, there has been rising incidents of serious misconduct by students (Oroka, 1994). There are alleged cases of teachers being threatened or attacked by students in the secondary schools. In some cases the attacks have been violent. Similarly, punishments have been imposed and some of which have been administered harshly with little or no consideration for the age, sex or cultural background of the students. In the midst of these problems, there is a growing debate over the declining standard of education as caused by students' unrests; and the routine blaming of teachers for being unproductive. Parents have also been accused of abdicating their responsibility of rearing responsible children (Nwideeduh, 2003). According to (Zindi, 1995) violence and misbehaviour exist in schools. This lack of discipline, which interferes with the teaching and learning process, manifests itself in various ways including bullying, criminality, vandalism, alcohol and drugs abuse, truancy, inability or unwillingness to do homework (Douglas & Strauss, 2007).

The native cultures emphasise respect for elders, total obedience to rules and adequate compliance to societal norms. These attributes of native culture are shared; that is, it is practised by a whole group of people from generation to generation (Fowers, 2008). Culture is maintained or modified through informal education and expected to be an integral aspect of the school curriculum development. This is because where educational institutions discharge

their duties well; they influence the total life of the society (Banda, 2004). Where the societal norms are contrary to the school sets of rules, there is possibility of cultural shocks to the students (Reyes, 2006; Day-Vines & Day-Harrison, 2005).

Okiemute (2011) asserts that Nigerian teachers insinuate that the reason for the exponential growth of cases of learners' misconduct is that school regulations are not founded in the cultural strategies for disciplining children. Furthermore, according to Okiemute (2011), learner discipline is an integral part of child socialisation hence, is not a lonesome work involving the entire society and not just the schools. However, teachers in Nigeria regularly lament that they are not adequately protected and authorised to be involved in the disciplinary process in that they are relatively helpless especially when they encounter discipline challenges in classrooms where the school head is not always nearby. Although only the school head is allowed to administer corporal punishment, most teachers ignore this regulation. However, teachers believe that the manner in which parents and the general public treat them is influenced by school discipline regulations. Teachers complain that they are rarely respected by parents and if it happens that they punish learners, their parents would come to reprimand them even in the presence of the learners (Okiemute, 2011).

In addition, teachers find the school discipline regulations practised in Nigerian schools problematic (Nwideduh, 2003) in that classroom control has become somehow cumbersome. This is because learners are prone to misconduct knowing that the teachers are not allowed to administer corporal punishment. Suspension and expulsion regulations cause some ambivalence in the school administration. When it comes to making decisions about a problem learner, the school head has to think carefully as not to cause him some embarrassment which often follow the revocation of school's decisions by the education authorities.

Ngare (2008) also reports concern by school principals in Kenyan high schools over the ever increasing number of cases of learner indiscipline in Kenyan schools. Such indiscipline resulted, in some cases, in the destruction of property in schools, violence and substance abuse, and school authorities indicated that indiscipline had reached unmanageable levels.

2.2.2 National literature

Learner indiscipline is also very prevalent in South African schools (Thompson, 2002; Harber, 2001; Mtsweni, 2008; Kgosana, 2006; Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000; Van Wyk, 2001; Netshitahame & Vollenhoven, 2002). Aziza (2001) highlights the rising number of learners being suspended and expelled from some Western Cape schools. The reasons that lead to suspensions and expulsions range from physical confrontation, verbal confrontation, theft, substance abuse and pornography (Aziza, 2001). Mnyaka (2006) acknowledges the prevalence of learner indiscipline, particularly violence in schools in the Libode District in the Eastern Cape Province. Learner indiscipline in Mthatha schools has resulted in learner deaths in some schools as well as serious injuries within school premises (Ngcukana 2009).

Furthermore, in one of the independent schools in the Mthatha district, an incident sparked debate in the press when learners got drunk while on a school excursion. They got suspended and the school authorities almost denied them access to sit for their final Matric examination (Ngcukana, 2008). In 2008, in another Mthatha independent school, a learner was asked to leave class because he refused to obey a teacher's request to remove his hat (which contravened the school's dress code). He went out, bought petrol and burnt down the teacher's car (Ngcukana & Booi, 2008). A study by Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe & Van der Walt (2004) investigated 16 High schools in the violence-prone area of Kwa-Mashu in Northern Durban and revealed that violence was prevalent in the schools: learners were largely unsafe in schools and were mistrusted by fellow learners. Violence and indiscipline had severely impeded the culture of teaching and learning in schools. It is indiscipline of this magnitude that is worrisome because schools should be safe and conducive environments for learning and if this is disturbed it becomes a real cause for concern.

Joubert and Serakwane (2009) point out that some educators are struggling to find alternatives that will enable them to feel in control of the learners they teach, as a result they are suffering from stress and some consider leaving teaching because of difficulties in dealing with learner misbehaviour. Additionally, most educators have not received formal training with regard to the discipline strategies and their application as recommended by the Department of Education. Joubert and Serakwane (2009) further state that some learners are not cooperative towards their educators and turn to violent and aggressive behaviour, smoke dagga and carry dangerous weapons in schools. This confirms what is expressed by Flannery (2005) where he mentions that learners constantly disrespect, disrupt and demean their

educators. Flannery (2005, p.22) states that “Learners verbally assault educators regularly. They steal, cheat, lie, and vandalize, use cell phones in class and keep iPod earphones dangling from their ears”. This also confirms Bateman’s (Pretoria News, 28 May 2007) report that learners carry knives and firearms, verbally abuse and threaten their educators. Furthermore, another challenge is that most parents of learners who are truant are not supportive. Schools are not getting the full support from parents with regard to learner misbehaviour management (Flannery, 2005). This confirms Holford’s (2009) argument that not all parents respond positively on receiving reports that their children have been corrected for misbehaviour.

2.3 The legal framework for discipline in schools

The South African Schools Act, 84 of (1996a) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 108 of (1996b), have created a new legal context and it is therefore important for SMT members to know the law relating to school discipline and punishment, and to be familiar with legal concepts, principles and procedures to continue building and maintaining effective schools. School discipline policies, rules and punishment must comply with certain legal requirements. In this way, the law ensures that discipline and punishment are reasonable and that principals and educators do not exceed their disciplinary powers.

Knott-Craig (2007) argues that schools with effective discipline systems have the following: strong leadership; an emphasis on the pastoral care of the learners and building of relationships; educators and leadership modelling respectful behaviour; healthy relationships and minimum conflict. In addition, Du Plessis and Looek (2007) claim that well-functioning schools foster learning, safety and socially appropriate behaviours. They have a strong academic focus, foster positive relationships in educators and learners and promote meaningful parental and community involvement. Joubert, De Waal and Rossouw (2004) state that schools operate under the supreme Constitution of the Republic South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Section 9, and a number of statutes of which the Schools Act has the biggest impact on school discipline. The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution), as well as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, has introduced a new human rights culture in schools. Both these documents reflect the culmination in the field of education, of the political transformation the country has undergone since 1994. It is clear that the supreme law of this

country contains specific protection against behaviour that could threaten a person's dignity, safety and fundamental rights.

Joubert, *et al.* (2004) further explain that one of the goals of discipline is to provide a safe environment for all learners and educators. Sections 12 and 24 of the Bill of Rights are very clear about everyone's right to be free of all forms of violence in a safe environment and Section 28(d) stipulates that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. The founding values of the Constitution, namely human dignity, equality and freedom, are even more important when exercising learner discipline in schools. Joubert, *et al.* (2004) emphasise that in their efforts to protect the rights of a learner who misbehaves, educators and educational officials often ignore the rights of the learner who does not misbehave. The individual's right to quality education places an obligation on schools to provide all learners the opportunity to learn in an environment characterized by order.

Oosthuizen, Wolhuter and Du Toit (2003) also argue that it is not only the delinquent learner who has a fundamental right to education, but also the learner who is well-disciplined. Once the ill-discipline or misconduct of one learner becomes a threat to the harmony of learning, the question arises: Should the collective right of the learners to an environment conducive to learning not be protected against the ill-discipline and misconduct of the individual? According to Oosthuizen, *et al.* (2003), the High Court of South Africa has repeatedly found in favour of the collective rights of learners to an orderly environment, which enhances teaching and learning. It is the duty of the educator to ensure that the collective interests of the group outweigh those of the individual misbehaving learner. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 states that discipline must be maintained in the school and classroom situations so that the education of learners flourishes without disruptive behaviour and offences (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Act places the responsibility of maintaining discipline on the educators. Under the Schools Act of 1996 Section 10, the use of corporal punishment in schools is banned. According to the Act, the perpetrator is liable to a sentence. Therefore, educators need to devise strategies that take cognizance of learners' rights and protection. However, the Act is not explicit on the disciplinary strategies educators should adopt to handle learner indiscipline in schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). The Act reiterates the provisions of the constitution and states categorically that learners should not be punished in a cruel or demeaning manner and should not be detained in solitary confinements or locked out of safe environments. This implies that the educators should protect, promote

and respect the rights of learners. As such, the implementation of disciplinary measures in schools results in a dilemma on how educators should discipline learners without infringing on the learners' rights (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

Joubert, *et al.* (2004) contend that the SASA No 84 of 1996 stipulates in Section 8(1) and (2) that the SGB is responsible for adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process. The code of conduct should be aimed at establishing a disciplined environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Thus the focus is on positive discipline, self-discipline and inculcating a standard of behaviour that is recognized and accepted by civil society. Joubert, *et al.* explain that in terms of Section 8(4) of the SASA, learners are obliged to comply with the code of conduct. Section 8(5) makes provision for due process, including a fair hearing, before a learner may be suspended by the SGB or expelled by the provincial Head of Department. Section 9 prescribes two kinds of suspension: either as a correctional measure for a period up to a week, or pending a decision from the DoE, as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school.

Prior to independence in 1994, the maintenance of discipline in South African schools heavily relied on the use of corporal punishment and discipline was taken as synonymous with punishment (Porteus, Vally & Ruth, 2001). In order to help educators come up with alternatives to corporal punishment, the Minister of Education designed a comprehensive document entitled 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment' (Department of Education, 2000). Disciplinary measures to be taken in South African schools are clearly documented in different levels. This booklet containing guidelines on alternatives to corporal punishment was disseminated in an effort to combat the escalating disciplinary problems in schools. In spite of this support from the National Department of Education, the following headline appeared in the media (Rademeyer, 2001, p.5): "Punishment guide not helping much with discipline — wonderful theories not always practical". Rademeyer's comments focused renewed attention on the jaundiced view of discipline that became evident after corporal punishment was abolished. Teachers who used to rely on reactive measures such as corporal punishment to address disruptive behaviour now have to develop alternative proactive measures to pre-empt disruptive behaviour.

2.4 Causes of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools

In Kenya, the generally documented causes of student indiscipline include drug abuse by students, poor parenting, and negative influence by the mass media, and politics (Ruto-Korir, 2003). Edwards and Watts (2004) indicate that disciplinary problems do not just emanate from nowhere: They always have a root cause, such as the society from which learners come from, the home, the school and the peer's learners associate with. These aspects contribute to the manner in which learners behave in schools. Educators who are often overwhelmed by disciplinary problems, with which they have to deal, are according to Edwards and Watts (2004) the cause of some of these problems. However, many of these problems are a manifestation of problems at home and in society or of conditions and administrative procedures in the school (Edwards & Watts, 2004). Below are some of the factors that cause learner discipline problems according to different authorities:

2.4.1 Individual factors

When learners have emotional problems, this may cause them to misbehave. They may behave badly in class because they need special attention, want to be leaders, want to be left alone, or want to hurt others as they have been hurt (Lewis, 1991). Rossouw (2003) mentions that some learners play with cell phones in class, and when the educator confronts them they start acting aggressively to impress their classmates. Learners with emotional problems are particularly disruptive when certain teaching methods are used. For example, Rossouw (2003) comments on active learning approaches which allow learners to speak out aloud. As the lesson progresses some learners take advantage of the situation and start making a lot of noise. Thus they are troublesome. Furthermore, Rossouw (2003) mentions that learners with emotional problems often have no respect for human dignity, hence younger learners are often victimised and bullied by older ones. He indicates that some learners have a negative influence on others, for example, a group of learners may admire and imitate individuals who are unruly and arrogant. This is typical behaviour of adolescents in secondary school.

According to Matseke (2008), a number of child-related factors may be responsible for learner misbehaviour in class. First, he may well have been raised to behave in ways that are not in line with the behaviour expected of him at school. It is also common for a child to

misbehave in order to conform to peer expectations and avoid rejection. Other causes of misbehaviour by a child are immaturity – he simply does not know any better – and developmental problems. Moreover, frustration at home or at school may result in misbehaviour, as may the approval and recognition a learner receives from his peers for challenging the educator’s authority. Misbehaviour such as cheating in tests may be motivated by the desire to avoid making mistakes and being punished (Matseke, 2008).

According to Knott-Graig (2007), young people today are aware of their rights. They know they have the rights to be educated and the educators cannot deny them this. Equally true is the fact that, with the right to be educated comes the responsibility to attend school regularly and not to prevent others from being taught. Schools need to teach learners and parents about the relationship between rights and responsibilities and duties. When a responsibility is neglected, a privilege may be suspended.

2.4.2 Family factors

The family is the most immediate and perhaps the most influential system affecting the individual (Walsh & Williams, 1997). Lack of parental guidance and dysfunctional families are continually emphasised as risk factors. Rayment (2006) points that certain parents display violent and aggressive behaviour towards school staff and that their children also show signs of violent, aggressive and antisocial behaviour. It is also found that 10% of respondents professed to often seeing their parents verbally or physically fighting. It stands to reason that if children are exposed to aggressive displays between the adult partners who are their role models at home, they will carry these experiences with them into the school. Wolhuter and Oosthuizen (2003) mention that from a learner’s perspective, lack of parent involvement is the biggest cause of disciplinary problems.

According to Edwards (2008), Edwards and Watts (2004), various home experiences have an influence on children’s behaviour. If parents spend little time at home, children may seek unsuitable social experiences elsewhere, which sometimes have devastating consequences. Even when parents are at home, parent-child interactions may be laced with conflicts. Factors such as divorce and poverty, as well as physical and mental abuse, can adversely affect children’s ability to function properly. Children from severely dysfunctional families

in particular face enormous adjustment problems at school. The four aspects of dysfunctional families are: damage to self-concept, attention deprivation, and love deprivation.

Edwards and Watts (2004) further point out that learners, who do not get enough attention at home, often compensate by seeking attention from their educators. Unfortunately, many children receive their parents' attention only when they misbehave. If they do not disturb parents unduly, they are ignored. These conditions encourage unacceptable behaviour and discourage acceptable behaviour. Children from such homes discover that their bad behaviour is a sure way to get the attention they crave for. When children learn these behaviour patterns at home, they tend to repeat them in school. Love deprivation is similar to attention deprivation. Learners usually consider attention to be an indication of how much they are loved (Edwards & Watts, 2004). Furthermore, the development of self-concept in learners begins long before they start attending school. The confidence with which learners enter school will have been either enhanced or diminished by various home experiences. Learners are able, at an early age, to perceive their own powerlessness when compared with larger and more capable adults. Learners' outlook on life depends generally on how successful parents and caregivers are in helping them shift from feeling powerless to feeling confident about themselves.

Alidzulwi (2000) regards parents as of the greatest importance in creating a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere. It seems that the lack of parental involvement is the major cause of disciplinary problems in secondary schools (Alidzulwi, 2000). Alidzulwi (2000) further points out that many parents in Venda are not involved in the education of their children, causing poor results, high drop-out rates, and the absence of discipline in schools. Bowman (2004) is of the opinion that parents' failure to teach their children discipline is identified as the greatest contributing factor to disciplinary problems in schools. A psychologist is quoted by Louw and Barnes (2003), claiming that he has never seen a problem child, only problem parents. In the researcher's opinion the statements made by several authors indicate the extent to which parents are being blamed for the disciplinary problems in schools. Hayward (2003) indicates that when parents show due civility and respect, their children reflect it in their interaction with their educators. On the other hand, if parents fail to exhibit reverence to others, the learners will imitate this behaviour and show little or no respect for their educators (Louw & Barnes, 2003). Masekoameng (2010) states that the important predictors of juvenile conduct problems uncovered by a vast amount of research include factors such as poor, harsh or erratic discipline, parental conflict, poor

supervision of the child, and parental attitudes and actions that condone the child's bad behaviour. In addition, Masekoameng (2010) indicates that a high percentage of young people are struggling to reconcile themselves with the many losses caused by divorce, blended families, highly transient lifestyles, poverty, disabilities discrimination, uncertain cultural values, and confusing relationships with adults. All these problems, coupled with the rapid changes in the economic, political and social arenas, seriously affect children, and the ability of adults to give them adequate care.

To complement the findings made above, Rossouw (2003) points out that teenager parents are afraid of their children and end up feeling helpless. He further indicates that parents expect the schools to teach their children proper conduct, without admitting their own responsibilities. This is considered one way of passing the buck.

2.4.3 School factors

Oosthuizen and Van Staden (2007) as well as De Wet (2003) list numerous school-related factors which may heighten learners' propensity to engage in disruptive behaviour such as: a negative school climate, inadequacy of teachers as role models; teachers' professional incompetence (lack of educational/didactic expertise), overcrowded schools; deficient organizational structure of the school, and rundown, ill-kept physical appearance of the school. Wolhuter, Lemmer and de Wet (2007) further highlight that learner conflicts takes place more easily in unkempt, graffiti-covered and unhygienic schools than in neat schools where a positive school climate prevails. De Wet (2003) points that poor infrastructure may lead to learner frustration and violence. He further argues that the same may be said about overcrowded and large urban schools in which learners have either limited space to move around in on the school grounds, or are part of the faceless masses.

Harber (2004) also points out that South Africa suffers from high levels of violence in schools in a situation where many schools do not function effectively. Furthermore, a document resulting from an initiative of the Secretariat for Safety and Security and the Department of Education conclude that schools indirectly contribute to such violence because they fail to operate at the most basic level. In this way they open space for violence and fail to provide the basic sense of routine, support and security required for young people to develop and grow. In addition, even those schools operating at a basic functional level

continue to contribute to the system of violence because they do not address the risk factors underlying the system of violence, nor provide children with the tools of resilience.

Harber (2004) further states that research on successful students in Alberta, Canada suggests among other things that schooling fails to protect them from name calling, racial hostility and slurs and that they are subject to lower teacher expectations than white students and that this supports a number of other studies in Canada. In addition, a study of the violence experienced by pupils at five junior high schools in America find that not only is bullying common but that 25 percent of the female pupils have experience sexual harassment at the hands of male students. The pupils say that teachers do not notice or ignore the violence experienced by pupils. MacDonald (1996) in Harber (2004) highlights that administrators at the schools perceive violence to be less of a problem than the pupils and feel that teachers are more aware of the problem than pupils think they are.

2.4.4 Societal factors

Moral degeneration of communities, racial conflict, poor housing and medical services, the availability and poor control of firearms, poor law enforcement and unemployment (De Wet, 2003) are some of the community-based risk factors that could heighten the possibility of learners' engaging in disruptive behaviour. Furthermore, McHenry (in Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007) takes the view that prevalent examples of violence propagated in the media and witnessed or experienced as victims in society have a predisposing influence that could heighten learners' propensity to engage in disruptive behaviour.

Edwards (2008) confirms that the society has a significant role in promoting school discipline problems. He mentions the four areas of social influences such as: gang activity and drugs, peer pressure, technology, racial and class conflict. Family influences and social influences on discipline problems are usually interrelated. Rejection at home may encourage children to search elsewhere for acceptance. Rejected children are often attracted to gangs. A gang may satisfy a child's need for attention and for an identity. Anderson and Stavrou (2001) concur with Edwards (2008) by saying that lack of parental supervision correlates with misbehaviour. Poor parental supervision and/or lack of familial contact will affect adolescents' behaviour, as youth chooses to associate with peers who may similarly display diverse problematic behaviour. Peer pressure, which is part of everyday life at school,

contributes significantly to shaping students' behaviour. If their peer group considers school a joke, learners may go along with the crowd and put little effort to their studies.

2.4.5 The influence of gender and race

Learner gender is another important aspect worth looking into in terms of how it influences the extent of disciplinary problems (Masekoameng, 2010). Day-Vines (2005) states that urban American male adolescents experience disproportionately higher rates of disciplinary referrals than females, as well as suspension and expulsion, which have been attributed to numerous ecological factors. These include cultural conflicts and misunderstandings related to the culture of origin and school. Monroe (2005) also brings the difference in gender to the fore when he indicates that African American males are disciplined with greater frequency and severity than their peers in other countries.

Morris (2005) points out that school officials tend to view the behaviour of boys as more threatening than that of girls, and in most cases boys are the ones receiving strict, punitive discipline. Furthermore, boys are more violent at school than girls, using both physical aggression and threats. Girls tend to portray more indirect modes of malicious gossip, as well as malicious ostracism. Morris (2005) further points out that the reason why boys are more violent than girls is because boys are biologically more prepared to learn dominance, competitiveness and aggression. Girls are socialised into being more inhibited.

2.5 The role of educators in the management of learner discipline in primary and secondary schools

The South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (Section 8) highlights that the management of discipline calls on teachers to make children feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe so that they (learners) can develop self-discipline and accountability in their actions. Every teacher has to create an environment in which each learner is guided towards an attitude of caring and respect for other learners. According to the *in loco parentis* principle, the teachers have a duty to protect learners against danger. Nieuwenhuis, Beckmann and Prinsloo (2007) state that South African educators have an important duty with regard to the safety and the protection of learners, not only in accordance with the Constitution and other legislation, but

also in terms of their *in loco parentis* status (i.e. the educator “acting as parent”). The *in loco parentis* status of educators furthermore compels schools to foresee the potential dangers to which learners may be exposed at schools and to act proactively by taking steps in the form of safety measures and/or policies protect learners from harm. Furthermore, there are two coextensive pillars to the *in loco parentis* role that educators play: the duty of care (which implies looking after the physical and mental wellbeing of learners) and the duty to maintain order at a school (which implies educators’ duty to discipline learners).

Furthermore, according to the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (Section 8), the responsibility of maintaining discipline in the school lies with all the educators. The educator who is first informed or sees the problem must take responsibility and report the situation or deal with it if possible. If necessary, the educator may refer discipline matters to a senior member and then to the principal. If the misconduct is very serious the principal may refer the matter to tribunal, a school discipline committee, the SGB, the provincial education department and ultimately the MEC of Education. Any disciplinary action should suit the level of misconduct. Schools should determine the levels of misconduct (South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, Section 8).

2.6 The prevention of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools

Nakpodia (2010) highlights that in an effort to prevent and resolve students’ discipline problems and ensure efficient functioning of the schools, there has to be reasonable disciplinary policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are made more specific at individual school levels as rules and regulations. To be legally enforceable, school rules and regulations are to be reasonable, have educational purpose and be administratively feasible. The reasonableness of rules and regulations cannot be decided in the abstract except in the context of the application or fact of the situation. To judge the reasonableness of any rule and regulation, the following criteria should be applied to every proposed rule before being enforced by the school administrator. He should put into consideration things such as: 1) is the proposed rule necessary for the orderly and effective operation of the school? 2) Do the rules involve some suppression of freedom?

Furthermore, according to Nakpodia (2010), in Nigerian law, the human right principles which also apply to students as citizen of the country are prescribed in sections 30-42 of the

1979 constitution. Rules and regulations for legal enforcement must be tailored along these sections of the constitution. For in the infringement of the rights of the individuals, unless such practices are proved reasonable and justifiable in the eyes of the law, the individual may disagree and challenge disciplinary measure. Due to the peculiar nature of the school, there are many areas a teacher has to conduct disciplinary matters. The rules and regulations are thus made to cover many grounds affecting the student, school attendance, use and uniform, personal appearance of the student, use and misuse of school property, student-student relationship, student-teacher relationship, class regulations and test or examination.

Lastly, Nakpodia (2010) states that a teacher involved in handling any of the above disciplinary matters must do it within the limit of the law. To do this three guidelines are given. These are that: 1) the teacher must adopt the appropriate code of conduct when dealing with the student. 2) The method adopted to ensure discipline, must be authorised by the Ministry of Education. 3) The action of the teacher must be protected by the vicarious liability, that is, he is working within the scope of his employment.

Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2001) and Pienaar (2003) point out that in 1996 the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 banned the use of corporal punishment in all South African Schools. The abolition of corporal punishment in schools has left a gap which cannot be filled and this led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in schools (Oosthuizen, 2002). These discipline problems refer to disruptive behaviour that affects the fundamental rights of the learner to feel safe and to be treated with respect in the learning environment (Rodgers, 1994). In 2000 a national project on discipline in South African schools was undertaken and many of the results were incorporated in the booklet titled *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: the learning experience*. This booklet was distributed to all South African schools in 2001 by the Department of Education. The booklet contains guidelines for dealing with alternatives to corporal punishment in an effort to combat the fast-escalating problems with discipline, as well as examples of disciplinary action for dealing with misconduct, ranging from verbal warnings and community service to suspension from all school activities. The following actions could be taken in the event that a learner transgresses the Code of Conduct (Department of Education, 2000):

Counselling

A more positive approach to the problem is required, and by referring the learner to a school counsellor it is hoped that the matter can be handled in a positive manner.

Verbal and written warnings

Some record has to be kept of learners who are consistently breaking the Code of Conduct, starting with verbal warnings, eventually followed by written warnings.

Community service

This has become an accepted form of disciplinary action both in the school and in the community as a whole.

Menial tasks

Tasks such as cleaning and tidying up classrooms could be included in this form of disciplinary action.

Additional work

Additional relevant work could also be used as a form of disciplinary action.

Constructive detention

Once again, if the time is spent constructively, then it could be a meaningful form of disciplinary action.

Suspension and expulsion.

These measures are the last resort and really should only be used when all other avenues have been explored.

Kubeka (2004) reports that teachers argue that, without corporal punishment, discipline could not be maintained (children would neither show them respect nor develop the discipline to work hard unless they were beaten or threatened with being beaten; their power as educators had been taken away; corporal punishment was quick and easy to administer, while other methods required time, patience and skill, which educators often lacked; unless they were beaten, they (the children) would think they (got away with) wrongdoing, and would repeat this misconduct; corporal punishment would restore a culture of learning in schools; it was the only way to deal with difficult or disruptive learners; educators had not experienced any harmful effects when it was administered to them as learners, so there was no reason why they should not administer it to their learners as well.

Maphosa and Shumba (2010) are of the same opinion with Kubeka (2004), that educators generally feel disempowered in their ability to maintain discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. This concurs with Makapela's (2006) findings that learners literally take advantage of educators because they know fully well that whatever punishment that is given, will not equal the pain of corporal punishment. The disempowering of educators has also led to feelings of abdication of the critical role of disciplining learners. The seeming abdication of this role could be attributed to the rise in cases of learner indiscipline in schools (Kgosana, 2006; Van Wyk, 2001).

In addition, Meier and Marais (2010) concur with Pienaar (2003) that parental involvement is also another discipline measure and is becoming one of the most essential measures of discipline both within the school and out of the school. It is seen as a preventative measure specifically in the early grades of school. Sheldon and Epstein (2002) argue that an active partnership between parents and schools has great benefits and parents can have a powerful effect on children's behaviour. In most cases parents whose children behave well ensure that they arrive on time at school, behave appropriately, and have proper uniforms, the necessary books and equipment: and do their homework on time. The transformation of education in South Africa has defined the role of parents as key partners in education (Morrell, 2001). Mestry and Khumalo (2012) also highlight that the election of parents to SGBs allows them to be involved in issues of misconduct in schools and to participate in disciplinary proceedings as set out in the learner code of conduct. However, parental involvement in learner discipline in many schools has been lacking. Van Wyk (2001) states that many parents are reluctant to become involved in disciplinary issues involving their children and believe that the school should deal with the problem.

2.7 Theoretical frameworks

The theoretical frameworks that inform this study are behavioural modification model (Skinnerian model) by Skinner, (1992), The Choice theory by Glasser, (1998) and assertive discipline model by Canter (2007).

2.7.1 The Skinnerian Model

The Skinnerian model as a behaviour modification paradigm derived from the work of behavioural psychologist, B.F Skinner. Skinner (1992) believes that consequences (in other words what happens to the individual after performing an act) shape an individual's behaviour. The Skinnerian model assumes that behaviour is learnt and that reinforcements contribute towards achieving good behaviour when reinforcement procedures are used to shape a learner's behaviour in a desired direction. Educators reward desired behaviour by withholding all rewards. It is vital that educators who utilise behaviour modification consider their own behaviour and how it may be used to reinforce good behaviour in the classroom environment. This is corroborated by Mohapi (2007) who states that the Skinnerian model assumes that behaviour is conditioned and that reinforcements contribute towards achieving good behaviour when reinforcement procedures are used systematically to direct learners' behaviour in a desired direction. Covalieskie (2008) concludes that in this approach learners are shaped through the coercion of disciplinary power, but that because they are unaware of being disciplined, they do not resist.

Positive reinforcement means rewarding positive behaviour with praise and enjoyable rewards, while negative reinforcement is based on the 'eradication' of the undesired behaviour rather than on punishment, i.e. to take away the reward or something that the learners like. Eventually, the repeated positive rewarding of desired behaviour combined with the non-rewarding of the undesired behaviour leads the desired behaviour to become associated in the mind of the learner with good experiences (Smit, 2010). Furthermore, Skinner (1992) sees all behaviour as being controlled all the time. By this Skinner implies that there are always external factors from the environment that constantly impinge on the individual; these consciously or unconsciously influence his/her behaviour. He also points out that organised control, e.g. by the educator, is often arranged in such a way that it reinforces the behaviour of the controller at the controller's expense.

Morrison, Furlong, D'Incau & Morrison (2007) would have disagreed with such behaviourist methods and states that:

“If you punish a child for being naughty, and reward him for being good, he will do right merely for the sake of the reward, and when he goes out into the world and finds that goodness is not always rewarded, nor wickedness always punished, he will grow

into a man who only thinks about how he may get on in the world, and does right or wrong according as he finds an advantage to himself.”

Still, many primary grade teachers use behaviour modification to teach learners desirable behaviour, rewarding students who behave acceptably and withholding rewards from those who misbehave. Mohapi (2007) observes that more overtly punished learners might get the negative attention they are seeking from their peers, and then persist with negative behaviour in the hope of gaining more attention. Behaviour modification seems to work well with younger children, especially with more difficult cases, but as learners mature they might feel embarrassed to be singled out for praise in front of their classmates, and punishments in the form of withheld rewards may lose their “sting” (Mohapi 2007, p. 22).

2.7.2 Choice Theory

Glasser (1998) developed a tool he calls Choice Theory for use in his attempt to transform and revitalize education in schools. Choice theory can be described as a biological theory about our functioning as living creatures. The theory states that all the behaviour is an attempt by individuals to satisfy needs that are built into the genetic structure of the brain. Choice Theory has an expanded list of human needs, which are more central to its basic application. Glasser (1998) suggests that children be taught about these needs as well as ways of more legitimately satisfying them. The list of needs associated with control theory includes love, control, freedom and fun. Children usually try to satisfy their need for love and acceptance through behaviour designed to get attention. Children are constantly trying to get the attention of parents and others as a sign of love and acceptance. They often want more attention than teachers and parents can provide. Children who are lonely and ignored often behave outrageously in their quest to belong and be accepted (Edwards, 2008).

Furthermore, Glasser’s Choice Theory is similar to Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow believes that the need gratification is the most important single principle underlying all human development and motivation. He developed a hierarchy of needs with the lowest needs being met before the higher needs can be met (Owens & Valesky, 2007). Abraham Maslow developed the theory of a Hierarchy of Needs, believed that our basic needs must be satisfied before we satisfy higher needs. Once we actually meet all the steps (physiological,

safety, belongingness and love, esteem and finally self-actualising) we would then become self-actualizing.

Edwards (2008) further states that, all of us need sufficient power to regulate our lives as we desire. Unfortunately, teachers usually deny children the opportunity to satisfy this need. Children are considered too immature to make responsible choices. Therefore, when children assert themselves, teachers ordinarily increase their own control. Children not only need to be in control of their own lives but also need to be free from control by others. Teachers usually interpret children's efforts to obtain freedom as affronts to their authority. In addition, children are driven by the need for fun, far more than parents and teachers are usually willing to accommodate. Glasser (1998) believes that fun is as basic as any other need.

De Klerk and Rens (2003) argue that the problem with discipline in South Africa is that the consequences of ill-disciplined behaviour are not brought home to the transgressors. They conclude that learners should learn that they have freedom of choice, but not freedom from the consequences of their choices. Glasser (1998), who developed choice theory, contends that learners have a choice to follow the appropriate behaviour or not, and that nobody can force them to choose. However, he insists that educators should not accept excuses for misbehaviour, that learners should experience the consequences, pleasant or unpleasant, for the choices they make (Mohapi, 2007).

Glasser (2000) states that unhappiness, combined with the strong feeling in the perpetrator that others should be punished for the way he or she feels, is by far the main reason why anyone strikes out at another human being. He furthermore says that the reasons why an unhappy learner would lash out at a particular time cannot be predicted. However, what can be predicted is that almost all unhappy learners carry within them the potential for violence. This could be a factor in many of our most violent South African schools. Glasser (2000) recommends that the key to reducing violence is to do what he believes can be done in every school, to reduce the number of unhappy learners.

2.7.3 Assertive Discipline model

Furthermore, another teacher control discipline model is the assertive discipline model developed by Canter (2007). Assertive discipline is an approach to the management of

discipline in schools which was introduced to primary and secondary schools in the United States of America during the 1980's by Lee and Marlene Canter (Blandford, 1998). Canter and Canter (1992) suggest the following limit-setting approaches that could be followed as a discipline plan in schools. Their assertive discipline plan requires that the teacher sets limits on learners' behaviour so that order is maintained in an effective and efficient learning environment through teaching obedience to authority, but at the same time giving support to their learners. Canter's basic assumptions associated with assertive discipline focus upon rules for providing a framework for a discipline management plan. The teacher is in control and is expected to become assertive as necessary using eye contact, verbal warnings, proximity control, and manipulator student behaviour through use of positive reinforcement and punishment.

Canter further suggests that teachers need to make sure that they have the power to put an immediate stop to behaviour that is offensive or disruptive. Canter and Canter (1992) conclude that the following actions could be followed when misbehaviour occurs: tell the child to stop the particular behaviour, set out the sanctions that will occur if he or she does not, and offer the child a choice. Canter and Canter (1992) furthermore stress the fact that assertive discipline can only be effective in schools where the school community has been involved in the implementation and development of the discipline plan for the school. This is also recommended in Section 3 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, (RSA: 1996b), i.e. that school governing bodies should involve all stakeholders (parents, educators, learners, and non-educators at the school) to contribute when drawing up a code of conduct and school rules (Smit, 2010).

2.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, international and local literature on school discipline was reviewed. This included the legal framework governing discipline in South African schools. This further included the causes of learner discipline problems; the role of educators in the management of learner discipline problems; the prevention of learner discipline problems. Lastly, the theoretical frameworks that inform the study were also provided. The next chapter deals with the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the literature review and theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. This chapter outlines the research design and methodology for the study. The chapter also gives a brief explanation of the paradigm in which the research is based, as well as the approach followed in the research. Methods employed in the research to generate data on which to base the findings of the study are also discussed. The ethical measures which are taken into consideration before and during the research are briefly outlined.

3.2 Research design

Mouton (2001) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting ones research. Leedy and Ormrod (2001) state that the research design provides the overall structure for the procedure that the researcher follows, the data collected and the data analysis conducted by the researcher. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011) state that some authors refer to design as all those decisions a researcher makes in planning the study. Others on the other hand, use the term to refer only to those groups of small, worked-out formulas from which perspective (qualitatively oriented) researchers can select or develop one (or more) that may be suitable for their specific research goals. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) hold that research design is governed by the notion of fitness of purpose. This means that the research design is determined by the purpose of the research. The design is discussed under the following headings, namely, the paradigm, approach and strategy.

3.3 Qualitative research approach

In order to understand the perceptions educators have about the challenges they face in managing learner discipline problems in schools, a qualitative research approach is used in

the study, employing a case study. As pointed out by Leedy and Ormrod (2001) in a case study, the researcher collects extensive data on the individual(s), or event(s) on which the investigation is focused. These data often include observations, interviews, documents, past records and audiovisual materials. In many instances, the researcher may spend an extended period on site and interact with the people who are being studied.

Struwig and Stead (2001) maintain that qualitative research allows the researcher to understand the participants' thoughts, feelings and viewpoints on certain issues, whilst Mouton (2001) sees the qualitative method of research as a 'naturalistic' research method as it describes and evaluates the performance of programmes in their natural settings. Likewise, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) argue that qualitative researchers believe that the researcher's ability to interpret and make sense of what he/she sees is critical for an understanding of any social phenomenon. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the qualitative researcher studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research can be seen as subjective, value-laden, biased, a process that accepts multiple realities by studying a small sample (O'Leary, 2004). In addition, Silverman (2000) states that the methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a 'deeper understanding' of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data.

As an educator and a member of the SGB in a school in the Inchanga Ward, Pinetown District, the qualitative research approach was best suited to my study. It enabled me to gain an insider's view of the issue under investigation. The fact that qualitative research places much emphasis on the created or intentional reality and focuses on discovering the multiple perspectives of all participants in a natural setting, made it well suited for giving voice to the educators as professional role players within the school. Furthermore, qualitative research was best suited to allow me, as the researcher, to gain an understanding of the perceptions, values, actions and concerns of the participants of my study, namely the educators.

3.4 Interpretive paradigm

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), a paradigm may be seen as a set of basic beliefs which represents a worldview. In order to explore the challenges faced by educators in managing learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools, the study utilises an

interpretive paradigm. The study attempts to understand the social world of the participants, and therefore falls under the interpretive paradigm. This allows me as the researcher to build a relationship of trust with the participants, namely the educators of the participating schools. This relationship of trust leads to participants freely expressing themselves and generously sharing their perceptions and experiences of managing discipline in their respective schools.

Researchers working in this paradigm assume that people's subjective experiences are real and should be taken seriously (ontology); that we understand other's experiences by interacting with them and listening to what they tell us (epistemology); and that qualitative research techniques are best suited to this task (methodology). Willis (2007) states that ontology is concerned with the nature of reality (or being or existence), and various ontological positions reflect different prescriptions of what can be real and what cannot. Interpretivists assert that all research is influenced and shaped by the pre-existing theories and world views of the researchers. In addition, research is thus a socially constructed activity, and the "reality" it tells us about therefore is also socially constructed (Willis, 2007, p. 96).

Epistemology is concerned with what we can know about reality and how can we know it. Interpretivists tend to use more qualitative methods such as case studies and ethnography, and the reports they write tend to be more detailed (Willis, 2007). Esterberg (2002) states that the interpretive tradition requires of the researcher to immerse herself or himself in the world inhabited by those they wish to study. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that interpretivists state that it is possible to understand the subjective meaning of action, yet do so in an objective manner. In order to understand the intersubjective meanings of human action, the researcher may have to participate in the life-world of others. It is thus evident that interpretive researchers want to develop an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.5 Sampling

A sample is an example or small amount of something that shows you what all of it is like. It is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics, representative or typical attributes of the population on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a judgement is made about which subject should be selected to provide the best information to

address the purpose of the research (White, 2005). Frankael and Wallen (2003), point out that in educational research, the population of interest is usually a group of persons who possess certain characteristics. Sampling means to make a selection from the population (a concrete listing of the elements in the population) in order to identify the people or issues to be included in the research (McMillan, 2000). According to De Vos, *et al.* (2011), we study the sample in an effort to understand the population from which it was drawn. De Vos, *et al.* (2011) further cite Arkava and Lane as saying that a sample comprises the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. Qualitative researchers use sampling to select a wide variety of data sources (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2010). Sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours and/or social processes to observe. Furthermore, the sampling procedure most often used in qualitative research is purposive sampling. The goal of purposive sampling is to select persons, things, or places that can provide the richest and most detailed information to help answer the research questions (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2010).

In this study, a purposive sampling was used which is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), in purposive sampling the researcher identifies information rich participants for the reason that they are possibly knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. Participants were selected on the basis that they could supply information relevant to the problem in question. Therefore, a purposive sample of eight educators (four were from a primary school and the other four from a secondary school) were selected. The target sample consists of the principal, one HOD and two Post Level one educators in each of the selected schools. The school principals and HODs are chosen for the reason that they are in the School Management Team, and that they are possibly knowledgeable about the cases of learner indiscipline brought to them by educators. They deal on a daily basis with discipline problems and have a good knowledge of the current situation regarding discipline and violence in schools. Furthermore, it was expected that they were familiar with all the policies concerning discipline, the code of conduct and school rules, and were able to inform the researcher on this. Dladla (2006) states that good discipline is an important management function in a school. Principals and educators have a duty to maintain proper order and discipline in school.

In a primary school, one educator from the foundation phase and one from the senior phase are chosen. The foundation phase educator is chosen for the reason that, firstly, learners in

this phase are in a developmental stage where they need to seriously master the laws of society and learn to abide by rules and behave in appropriate ways. Secondly, this developmental stage coincides with the beginning of formal schooling when the learning environment is structured according to the rules applicable to formal schooling. Thirdly, this stage is also the appropriate time to focus on managing disruptive behaviour as a means of assisting learners to cultivate a self-disciplined lifestyle (Meier & Marais (2010). The senior phase educator is chosen because most learner discipline problems are in the senior phase. In a secondary school, two educators are chosen for the reason that they experience more challenges of learner misbehaviour in their classrooms. Forms of learner misbehaviour which include aggression, disruption, violence, defiance, non-cooperation, non-compliance, refusal, manipulation, confrontation, physical abuse, verbal abuse, bad attitude, swearing, bullying, absconding (Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe & Van der Walt, 2004).

3.6 Data generation tools

Qualitative data derive from many sources, for example, interviews; observation; documents and reports; field notes, etc. (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011). The main sources of data generation in this study were in-depth interviews with eight educators and documents review. Individual interviews and documents review were the most suitable instruments to be used to obtain in-depth information about the management of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools. Open-ended questions were used. The interviews were conducted in English and be voice-recorded (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001).

The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypothesis, and not to evaluate as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 2006). Furthermore, interviews enable the researcher to converse naturally with the participants. They allow participants to freely express their feelings. Moreover, the researcher is able to probe on answers given by the participants and to observe their body language. Four individual interviews were conducted and these four educators were selected from the two selected schools. Data was analysed in order to identify themes and categories (Creswell, 2005). The themes and categories that were identified during the data analysis process were compared with relevant literature to validate consistency.

3.6.1 Interviews

According to Cohen, *et al.* (2011) the interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard. In addition, the order of the interview may be controlled whilst still giving space for spontaneity, and the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but for responses about complex and deep issues.

Interviewing the participants of my study by using semi-structured interviews enabled me to gain insight into the challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools. These interviews also served to inform the investigation of what the participants' thoughts and feelings were on how educators can effectively manage discipline at their respective schools. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006) state that the interview can be regarded as one of the most widely used methods for gathering qualitative data. Interviews are used to gather data on subjects' opinions, beliefs and feelings about the situation in their own words. Similarly, Yates (2004) argues that interview literally means to develop a shared perspective and understanding (a view) between (inter) two or more people. In other words, the researcher and the participant develop a shared understanding of the topic under discussion.

De Vos, *et al.* (2011) also refer to two types of interviews as data collection methods, namely: one-on-one interviews and focus groups. Ary, *et al.* (2006) are of the opinion that in all qualitative interviews the questions are open-ended and designed to reveal what is important to understand about the phenomenon of the study. Welman and Kruger (2001) indicate that semi-structured interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data. They can be used with all age groups, and allow the interviewer to use probes with a view to clearing up vague responses, or asking for elaboration in case of incomplete responses. They allow participants to freely express their feelings and also enabled the researchers to observe the body language of participants (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). This study decided to make use of the semi-structured one-on-one interview. The aim was to gain insight into how individual participants feel about or perceive their own role in managing discipline. The individual interviews were conducted with the principal, one HOD and two Post Level one educators of the selected schools. A total of four individual interviews were conducted. These interviews took place at a time specified by the school. The interviews allowed the interviewee to speak from his/her own experiences whilst the use of an interview guide ensured that the

information shared during the interview remained focused on relevant issues pertaining to the study. The researcher tried as far as possible to create an atmosphere which allowed participants to feel at ease and for me, the researcher, to be attentive to their views and to listen with empathy. Before starting the interview, the researcher gained the interviewee's permission to record the interview. The interviewee was also reminded of the ethical issues namely, confidentiality, his/her right to stop the interview and my responsibility to ensure that he/she is not compromising in any way.

3.6.2 Documents review

Cohen, *et al.* (2011) state that a document may be defined briefly as a record of an event or process. Such records may be produced by individuals or groups, and take many forms. For this study, it was necessary to undertake a document analysis in the various schools selected. Documents such as the School Policy, the Code of Conduct for Learners' policy, minutes book of the SGB where issues of discipline are discussed and recorded, meetings of School Disciplinary Committee were the focus of the study. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book were also extensively studied.

According to De Vos, *et al.* (2011), official documents or non-personal documents imply documents that are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by large organisations such as government institutions. Such documents are more formal and structured than personal documents. Therefore, official documents were used to corroborate the interviews thus improving the trustworthiness of the findings. The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through the interviews. This view is also affirmed by Cohen, *et al.* (2011) who states that documents are useful in rendering more visible the phenomena under study.

3.7 Trustworthiness of findings

According to Cohen, *et al.* (2011), threats to validity can be minimised in the design stage by selecting appropriate instrumentation for gathering the type of data required. The researcher makes sure that each interviewee understands the questions. Silverman (2000), cited in Cohen *et al.* (2011) suggests that it is important that each interviewee must understand the questions in the same way in order to enhance the reliability of the interviews. The researcher

gave a copy of the interview guide before the scheduled interview to each participant to study. She also asked the participants to feel free to contribute or share any other relevant information during the interview. This gave the participants an opportunity to speak freely.

According to Richard (2005) triangulation is the term widely used for research designs where different forms of data or methods of handling data are brought to bear on the research questions. In this study triangulation was achieved through individual interviews and documents review. Triangulation can enhance the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of one's data collection techniques. Thus, different methods of data gathering are employed, to enhance the validity and reliability of the research (Richard, 2005).

Cresswell (2005) states that throughout the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher needs to ensure that his/her findings and interpretations are accurate. De Vos, *et al.* (2011) mention four criteria that should be followed if a researcher wishes to ensure trustworthiness. These are: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

3.7.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the measure of the researcher's confidence in the findings. Triangulation is regarded as an approved way of ensuring credibility in qualitative research. Creswell (2005) refers to triangulation as a primary form used by qualitative researchers to validate findings. De Vos, *et al.* (2011) describe triangulation as a method whereby the researcher seeks out several different types of sources that can provide insights about the same events or relationships. In this study, triangulation is employed by means of the different methods of collecting data, namely, individual interviews and documents review.

3.7.2 Transferability/Applicability

Transferability/applicability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other settings or groups (De Vos, *et al.* (2011). In this study, detailed and comprehensive description of the research methodology was given. Interviews were voice-recorded and summaries served as a database.

3.7.3 Dependability

According to Bisschoff and Koebe (2005), dependability refers to whether the findings of the research would be consistent if the study was repeated with similar subjects in a similar context. This research ensured consistency by using rich, detailed descriptions of the research methodology, as well as the availability of audio-recordings, and triangulation of different methods of data gathering.

3.7.4 Conformability

This study made allowances for conformability by keeping records of the raw data collected through individual interviews and documents review, as well as records of data analysis. Every effort was made to have planning and debriefing sessions with my supervisor who, with his vast experience in conducting research, assisted in validating my findings.

3.8 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). Recorded data was transcribed and analysed by the researcher to be able to identify relevant themes. Qualitative data collected was analysed using themes derived from the research questions that guided the study. Different themes were identified and code those encountered by means of a line-by-line analysis of each interview transcription (De Vos, *et al.* 2011). The researcher played and replayed audio recordings in order to become familiar with data, furthermore, attentive to words and phrases in the participant's own vocabularies that capture the meaning of what they do or say (De Vos, *et al.* 2011). Furthermore, reporting of data took the form of thick description and verbatim quotations. Patton, (2002) points out that qualitative researchers have an obligation to monitor and report the analytic procedures they use in their work.

The data was discussed in the following sequence: the perceptions of educators regarding the challenges they face; the perceptions of educators regarding the causes of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools; the perceptions of educators regarding their role in the management of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools and the

perceptions of educators on the preventative measures of learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools. The data with regard to identifying the causes of discipline problems in primary and secondary schools were categorized and then consolidated into themes. Data analysis and interpretation approached in three stages. In stage 1 data on the causes of learner discipline problems were divided into categories. In stage 2 these categories were consolidated into themes, and in stage 3 the data was interpreted (Meier & Marais, 2010).

3.9 Ethical considerations

Frankael and Wallen (2003) point out that ethics refers to questions of right and wrong. When researchers think about ethics, they must think if it is right to conduct a particular study or carry out certain procedures. Is there some kind of studies that should not be conducted? According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), most ethical issues in research fall into one of the following categories: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues, confidentiality and anonymity, the right to equality, justice, and the participants' right to withdraw or terminate participation at any time. A statement of the purpose of the interview was explained to the participants before the interview process, and a promise of confidentiality and an assurance that there is no right or wrong answers. The participants also received a clear explanation that they need to be part of the study and they must have the freedom to withdraw at any time. Pseudo names were used to protect the identity of the participants. Participants were also assured that data collected will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study.

Therefore, I first applied to the Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal for approval to do the research. Secondly, I applied to the Research Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education for permission to do research at specific schools in the province. Thirdly, whilst waiting on responses from the UKZN and the KZN DoE, I made appointments with the principals of two different schools in the Pinetown District. During these meetings, I submitted letters seeking permission to use the educators of the schools as participants in my study. I also gave each principal a brief overview of what my study would entail. Fourthly, on receiving letters of approval from the UKZN as well as the District Director of the DoE, I contacted the principals concerned to get their response to my request for permission to use their schools in my study (Oosthuizen, 2009). Lastly, I also

requested permission from the research participants and encourage them to take part in the study by informing them of the credentials and proposed aim of the research. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) define informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely to influence their decisions. The participants were then told that they will have to sign a consent form before they participate in the study.

3.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the research design and methodology were described. A brief explanation of the paradigm in which the research is based as well as the approach followed was also be given. The suitability of the mainly qualitative method in the research design was emphasised and the choice of the participants in the interviews was discussed. The researcher also described the logical procedure employed in analysing the data to arrive at answers to the research questions. The ethical measures which were taken into consideration before and during the research were also outlined. The next chapter deals with data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology. This chapter presents and discusses data from the field. It also focuses on the interpretation of findings that emanated from the semi structured interviews and documents review on the challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in the two researched schools. The research sought to answer the questions posed in the research problem: The challenges faced by educators in the management of learner indiscipline in schools.

Semi structured interviews with a principal, one HOD and two PL1 educators as well as documents review in each of the selected schools were the most suitable instruments used to obtain in-depth information about the challenges of managing learner discipline problems in primary and secondary schools. Qualitative data collected were analysed using themes derived from the four research questions that guided the study. Reporting of data took the form of thick descriptions and verbatim quotations to ensure the participants' voices were not lost.

4.2 The emerging themes

4.2.1 Challenges encountered by educators in managing learner discipline

4.2.1.1 Bullying and intimidation

It became evident from the data that schools faced major challenges of managing learner discipline. The majority of the participants identified challenges faced by educators such as sexual harassment, swearing, smoking, using of vulgar language, bullying, theft, missing lessons, absenteeism, assaults and vandalising of school property. Mr Khondo, the principal of Nozigaba Primary School commented:

Some cases of bullying and intimidation have occurred in our schools.

Miss News, PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary also commented on bullying as a serious problem that they face in school and she said:

Some of our learners are bullied by other learners and even assault them during school hours.

It was clear from the above educators' sentiments that bullying was a serious problem that occur in schools. For example, in Nozigaba Primary, it was clearly stated in the school's correction register the names of learners, grades, ages, types of offences as well as corrective measures that would be taken in cases of misconduct. Furthermore, in the school's correction register bullying was the common offence which appeared the most. In Labalaba Secondary, the incidents book clearly stated some of the incidents for learner indiscipline and the corrective measures that were taken by the school such as sending a learner home to call a parent, after school detention and doing menial tasks.

The above findings are also corroborated by scholars such as Mugabe and Maposa (2007) who state that common acts of misconduct in Zimbabwean secondary schools include fighting, truancy, bullying, taking drugs and insubordination to teaching staff. Bullying can be either overt or covert. According to Shariff (2004), overt bullying involves physical aggression, such as beating, kicking, shoving, and sexual touching which could be accompanied by covert bullying, in which victims are excluded from peer groups, stalked, stared at, gossiped about, verbally threatened, or harassed. Covert bullying can also be random or discriminatory, racial, sexual, homophobic or based on social class, abilities, or disabilities (Shariff, 2004).

Gale, *et al.* (2004) warn that intimidation and bullying could cause psychological harm, not only to victims but also to bystanders. In addition to the psychological harm caused through violence or situations in which there is a threat of violence, developmental harm may also occur in the form of anxiety about the threats of harm. This happens because anxiety of this sort can disrupt the educational process. A form of bullying other than physical bullying, which has become increasingly common, especially among girls, is "Cyber-bullying". This is a form of covert bullying that involves the use of mobile phones or the Internet. Perpetrators make anonymous, malicious comments or threats, tease and engage in gossip through online chat rooms such as "Facebook" and "Twitter", or use e-mail or mobile phones to intimidate others (Shariff, 2004, p. 223). Govender (2008, p. 1) states that "it is an easier way to humiliate abuse and threaten others because mobile messages can remain anonymous." It was

reported that many victims of cyber-bullying are so traumatised and disempowered by the bullying that they often express, in therapy, a desire to die rather than suffer further humiliation and abuse (Govender, 2008). De Klerk and Rens (2003) argue that the problem with discipline in South Africa is that the consequences of ill-disciplined behaviour are not brought home to the transgressors. They conclude that learners should learn that they have freedom of choice, but not freedom from the consequences of their choices. Glasser (1992), who developed choice theory, contends that learners have a choice to follow the appropriate behaviour or not, and that nobody can force them to choose. However, he insists that educators should not accept excuses for misbehaviour, that learners should experience the consequences, pleasant or unpleasant, for the choices they make (Mohapi, 2007).

Ginott (1972) advises educators to have a solid, reliable system of discipline in place; class rules need to be discussed and formulated into class agreements. Furthermore he suggests that teachers need to make sure that they have the power to put an immediate stop to behaviour that is offensive or disruptive. Canter and Canter (1992) conclude that the following actions could be followed when misbehaviour occurs: tell the child to stop the particular behaviour, set out the sanctions that will occur if he or she does not, and offer the child a choice.

4.2.1.2 Sexual harassment

The majority of the participants seemed to identify sexual harassment as a major discipline problem faced by schools. Miss Reeds, the principal of Labalaba Secondary mentioned sexual harassment of girls as a discipline problem in her school. She said:

The problem that we face in secondary schools is sexual harassment of girls.

Miss News, the PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary also pointed out that there are cases of sexual harassment that have occurred in school. She explained:

Learners are sexually harassed by other learners in the school.

It was also necessary to undertake a documents review in the researched schools. Documents included the learner code of conduct, records of disciplinary problems and disciplinary measures taken by the school, and parent and departmental involvement in addressing some

serious disciplinary problems. When reviewing the documents, it was also found that sexual harassment of girls was a major discipline problem in both schools.

Naylor (2002) states that South Africa reportedly has one of the highest rates of violence against women in the world. Schools have to consider the fact that some of the children whom they teach frequently have to endure abuse and violence or even rape at home. This makes education a daunting task. The Human Rights Watch Report (2001) found that South African girls of every race and economic class encounter sexual violence and harassment at school; this impedes their realisation of the right to education (Naylor, 2002). For girls in particular there are high levels of sexual violence and abuse. The Human Rights Watch Report (2001) further concluded that, until schools themselves are places in which children are safe in an environment that is conducive to learning and equally accessible to all children, the prevention of abuse and neglect will be impossible, and the rights of children to education will not be protected and realised.

What is really alarming is the fact that the Human Rights Watch (2001) further found that, at most of the previously disadvantaged schools, there was very little or no monitoring of what happened on school premises during and after school hours. Learners were being abused in toilets or secluded classrooms where there was no supervision. Naylor (2002) claims that, the misuse of alcohol and drugs on school premises also contribute to the problem of sexual violence.

Glasser (2000) states that unhappiness, combined with the strong feeling in the perpetrator that others should be punished for the way he or she feels, is by far the main reason why anyone strikes out at another human being. He furthermore says that the reasons why an unhappy learner would lash out at a particular time cannot be predicted. However, what can be predicted is that almost all unhappy learners carry within them the potential for violence. This could be a factor in many of our most violent South African schools. Glasser (2000) recommends that the key to reducing violence is to do what he believes can be done in every school, to reduce the number of unhappy learners.

4.2.1.3 Drugs and alcohol abuse

It became evident from the data that alcohol and drug abuse have a negative influence on the behaviour of learners, as Miss Flora, the PL1 educator of Nozigaba Primary explained:

Learners are using drugs which make them disrespect their educators.

Mr Kaizer, the HOD of Nozigaba Primary was complaining about learner misconduct caused by the using of drugs. He commented:

Educators also have to cope with much more serious misconduct like smoking of dagga and cigarettes.

Miss Gas, PL1 of Nozigaba also complaining about the learners who bring alcohol and drugs to school, and said:

Our learners bring drugs and alcohol on school premises which make them being rude to educators.

It was clear from the above educators' sentiments that schools are faced with serious problems of learners who use alcohol and drugs in schools, which make them, disrespect their educators. Furthermore, when reviewing the code of conduct for learners, it was clearly stated all the do's and don'ts including the use of drugs and alcohol at school.

The above findings were supported by Edwards and Watts (2004) who state that a problem often associated with inappropriate behaviour is substance abuse, either by the learners or by a person residing in the same home. Using or selling illegal drugs not only influences learners' behaviour directly but also alters the general atmosphere of the school. Substance abuse and its associated violence have become so severe in many schools that school officials must enlist the help of law enforcement personnel to maintain order (Edwards & Watts, 2004).

It was found that in South African schools, dagga (cannabis) is the most common drug of choice because it is cheap and easy to access (Neser, *et al.* 2000). The research findings of Neser, *et al.* (2000) showed that dagga was easy to get hold of and could be bought within an hour. This ready availability has contributed to a widespread substance abuse market. According to Neser *et al.* (2001), one third of the respondents in their survey admitted to having smoked dagga. Learners in more affluent schools who receive more pocket money can afford to buy drugs, while poorer learners who reside in the townships and who have developed the habit could easily become involved in violence to obtain the money to pursue it. This suggests that the proportion of illegal drug use is not negligible, and it places young people at risk of negative health and legal consequences that could impact on their education.

In the Eastern Cape, a few cases have been reported of drug and alcohol abuse at school, the latest being in 2008 between Queens's College and the Department of Education. In a dispute between the school and the Department of Education, the school reacted according to its code of conduct and safety policies, and suspended eleven learners for drinking alcohol and smoking dagga on the school's premises, requesting the Department of Education for assistance to expel them. The Department of Education, however, refused to expel the learners and reacted as though it was a minor offence. Queen's College took the case to court and won the case against the Department of Education (Prince, 2008)

Alcohol and drug abuse require early identification and intervention to avoid the vicious cycles associated with long-term abuse. There is a range of organisations, of which some are contactable in most major cities, which specialise in helping to deal with such problems. The organisations include Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Narcotics Anonymous, and branches of the South African Council on Alcoholism (SANCA). The efforts of other family members should be involved in coping with any instance of abuse. Use the advice from professional colleagues to determine the best way in which to inform and to involve parental figures (Porteus *et al.*, 2001).

4.2.1.4 Carrying of dangerous weapons to school

The participants seemed to be having serious problem of learners who come to school in possession of illegal and dangerous weapons. Miss Sakha, the PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary commented:

Learners also bring dangerous weapons to school such as knives and screwdrivers.

When asked about the discipline problems they face in school, Mr Motala, the HOD of Labalaba Secondary replied:

In this school, there are number of cases of attacks, stabbings and shootings of learners by other learners on the school premises.

A study by Eliazov and Frank (2000) of twenty schools in the Western Cape Province showed that the carrying of weapons was particularly widespread where intimidation, drug abuse and gangsters were present. Thus, early intervention methods addressing bullying, drug abuse and gangsters may well help to eliminate the use of weapons in schools. Furthermore,

in the past, educators and principals have frequently found it necessary to search learners for items which may be harmful to them or to others. Today, however, the prevalence of drugs and guns or other dangerous weapons has increased the importance of school searches as being in the best interest of all learners. The study by Eliazov and Frank (2000) shows that knives were identified as being present in all schools while, in eleven out of twenty schools, pupils were found to be in possession of firearms.

Incidents of school stabbings are commonly reported in the media in the Eastern Cape: “Boy stabbed to death at rural school” near Qumbu in the Eastern Cape (Ngcukana, 2007, p. 2); “Teenager in teacher assault suspended after stabbing”, in East London (Prince, 2008, p. 1); “Schoolboy from Peddie in the Eastern Cape stabbed after bad joke”; “Classmates watch in horror as pupil stabbed to death” in Mthatha, Eastern Cape (Ngcukana, 2008, p. 1) and “Pupil tries to save his friend stabbed at school” in East London, Eastern Cape (Sokopo, 2009, p. 1). These are just a few of the incidents that have caught the public’s attention. It is a pity that unfortunate incidents like these first have to happen before people become aware that there might be a problem. One incident that caused a major call to action by teachers to search for weapons was the case of the Krugersdorp “ninja death”. Here, a matric boy killed a fellow learner with a sword and attacked another three people: “School boy appears over sword death” (Sapa, 2008, p. 1).

Also, in South Africa, school shootings are periodically reported: “Horror school shooting with police service pistol of 14-year-old at a Pretoria private school” (as cited in Prinsloo, 2005, p. 5). In Delft in the Western Cape, a teacher was held at gunpoint in a classroom, and in Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal, a high school learner went on a shooting spree. In this case, no one was reported to be hurt (Dibetle, 2008).

4.2.2 The causes of learner discipline problems in schools

4.2.2.1 Lack of parental involvement

It seems as if the lack of parental involvement is of great concern to many teachers, since the latter see the role of parents as playing an important part in how learners react towards discipline at school. Some of the participants agreed that lack of parental involvement have a strong influence on behaviour of learners. Miss Flora, PL1educator in Nozigaba Primary said:

I think some of the causes are: problems originating from home. Lack of parent involvement is the biggest cause of disciplinary problems. Some of the parents do not give enough attention and love for their children

Miss Gas, PL1 in Nozigaba Primary mentioned:

There are parents who have little regard for education. Their children are unlikely to see any reason to obey school rules. Parents criticise the educator in front of their children.

Documents such as the attendance register for parents at school during the meetings were reviewed. The attendance register showed that the parents' attendance rate at school meetings was very poor.

The above findings are supported by Wolhuter and Oosthuizen (2003) who mention that from a learner's perspective, lack of parent involvement is the biggest cause of disciplinary problems. Furthermore, another challenge is that most parents of learners who are truant are not supportive. Schools are not getting the full support from parents with regard to learner misbehaviour management (Flannery, 2005). The findings also supported Edwards and Watts (2004) who indicate that disciplinary problems do not just emanate from nowhere; they always have a root cause, such as the society from which learners come from, the home, the school and the peer's learners associate with.

Alidzulwi (2000) like most authors, regards parents as of the greatest importance in creating a conducive teaching and learning atmosphere. It seems that the lack of parental involvement is the major cause of disciplinary problems in secondary schools (Alidzulwi 2000). Alidzulwi (2000) also points out that many parents in Venda are not involved in the education of their children, causing poor results, high drop-out rates, and the absence of discipline in schools. Bowman (2004) is of the opinion that parents' failure to teach their children discipline is identified as the greatest contributing factor to disciplinary problems in schools. Furthermore, many parents are uninterested and negative towards the school, they have limited time, and there exists a total separation between the school and the parents. There was a total lack of the implementation of the ideas of educators on parental involvement.

To complement the findings made above, Rossouw (2003) points out that teenager parents are afraid of their children and end up feeling helpless. He further indicates that parents

expect the schools to teach their children proper conduct, without admitting their own responsibilities. This is considered one way of passing the buck. Canter and Canter (1992) in assertive discipline model stress the fact that assertive discipline can only be effective in schools where the school community has been involved in the implementation and development of the discipline plan for the school. This is also recommended in Section 3 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996b, i.e. that school governing bodies should involve all stakeholders (parents, educators, learners, and non-educators at the school) to contribute when drawing up a code of conduct and school rules.

4.2.2.2 Home and family background

It came out of the research findings that home and family background have a negative influence on learner discipline. Miss Sakha, PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary commented:

Home experiences and background have an influence on children's behaviour. Some of the parents spend little time at home and even when they are at home they fail to talk to children about behaviour. This will result from children being influenced by peers.

Miss Flora, the PL1 educator of Nozigaba Primary explained:

Another cause is that some of the learners live in a split family; with single parent or step-parents.

According to Wikstrom and Butterworth (2006), the role of living in a split family, either with a single parent or step-parents has been highlighted as a potential risk factor. Miss Gas, also highlighted that it is difficult for a school to deal with learners who come from different backgrounds, whose values, beliefs and approaches to life differ totally. Learners, who do not get enough attention at home, usually seek attention from their educators. Another cause is that some of the parents are involved in drugs, so their children feel alone because parents are never always present at home. The parent's attention is distracted by the use of drugs. This is also affirmed by Masekoameng (2010) who states that the important predictors of juvenile conduct problems uncovered by a vast amount of research include factors such as poor, harsh

or erratic discipline, parental conflict, poor supervision of the child, and parental attitudes and actions that condone the child's bad behaviour.

Rayment (2006) also points out that certain parents display violent and aggressive behaviour towards school staff and that their children also show signs of violent, aggressive and antisocial behaviour. It is also found that ten percent of respondents professed to often seeing their parents verbally or physically fighting. It stands to reason that if children are exposed to aggressive displays between the adult partners who are their role models at home, they will carry these experiences with them into the school.

4.2.2.3 Abuse of various types

The majority of the participants confirmed that abuse of various types has a negative influence on learner discipline. Miss Gas, PL1 educator of Nozigaba Primary explained:

Some of our learners suffer from various types of abuse at home or witnessing domestic violence and this may cause them to be rebellious at school.

When commenting on various types of abuse, Miss News, PL1 of Labalaba Secondary said:

Some of the learners have been physically abused by their parents at home.

The above findings were echoed by Edwards and Watts (2004) who state that, learners who suffer various types of abuse at home or witnessing domestic violence, are not able to articulate the problems confronting them. Sensitive educators become aware of these abuses by observing their learners' behaviour.

Furthermore, according to Edwards and Watts (2004), when learners have been physically abused they may act nervously, hyperactively, aggressively, disruptively or destructively, be unduly compliant, withdrawn or passive, express little or no emotion when hurt or be wary of contact with adults. Older learners who have been sexually abused may exhibit delinquent or aggressive behaviour, show signs of depression, or display self-injurious behaviour such as substance abuse, self-mutilation and attempts at suicide and prostitution. In cases such as these, the educator and the school administrator need to search for the reason behind the behaviour so that the school acts to assist the learner, rather than causing further abuse by punishing the learner for the inappropriate behaviour (Edwards & Watts, 2004).

Glasser (2000) recommends that the key to reducing violence is to do what he believes can be done in every school, to reduce the number of unhappy learners. Glasser's reality therapy method of counselling describes that learners can be persuaded to empower themselves by providing an environment that is warm, friendly, supportive, encouraging initiative and being non-punitive. Glasser (1992) advocates that in such an environment learners will learn to trust others and in turn will want to contribute positively to the school (Mohapi, 2007). Glasser (2000) believes that the fewer unhappy learners there are in a school, the fewer school problems, including violence, will there will be.

4.2.2.4 Balance between learner rights and responsibilities

The balance between learner rights and responsibilities has a negative influence on learner discipline in schools. Mr Motala, the HOD in Labalaba Secondary pointed out that the democracy in South African school system in line with the new democratic constitution enacted upon attainment of independence in 1994 has brought with it emphasis on respect and preservation of children's rights. He further stated that they are faced with a problem of trying to respect children's rights and at the same time finding adequate and meaningful measures to deal with learner indiscipline without infringing on their rights. He further indicated that what made it worse for teachers to fail to maintain discipline in schools was the awareness by the learners that they have rights. Learners now feel completely liberated and as teachers they now feel powerless because the learners they teach have rights and they know it. He commented:

Our learners know that they have rights. They also demand a range of rights not formerly accorded them including the right to be heard or the right to freedom of speech, whether written or oral. When these demands are not met learners become more strident and vociferous in their approach.

Mr Kaizer, the HOD of Nozigaba Primary also saw the balance between learner rights and responsibilities as a major cause for indiscipline of learners. He commented:

The child has more rights than a teacher. Learners are not only aware of their rights but very sensitive to them. You only need to teach and whether these learners listen or do assigned work it's not our concern, for any attempt to deal with them is putting your future at risk.

The study findings were also affirmed by Rossouw (2003) who indicates the over-emphasis placed on children's rights as one of the factors confusing principals, educators and learners in matters relating to the discipline of learners at school. He further indicates that some principals are under pressure to recognise learners' rights, and do not know to which point they should make allowance for their learners' voices. He mentions that educators have reported that they are uncertain, confused and afraid of infringing upon learners' rights, and of being accused of misconduct. He furthermore points out that the over-emphasis placed on learners' rights may cause a "don't-care attitude" and a lack of regard for the educators' role in the classroom. This may cause some learners not to strive to excel. Instead, they try to influence their classmates negatively to exhibit the same lack of discipline.

4.2.2.5 Problems created by teachers

The study findings revealed that teachers can invite discipline problems if they use discipline procedures that promote misbehaviour at school. Mr Motala, the HOD in Labalaba Secondary highlighted:

School factors such as educators and the principals can be another cause for learner discipline problems. Effective teaching minimizes disciplinary problems in schools and educators are recommended to promote good learner behaviour by teaching effectively and consistently. Educators who behave in uncaring ways, impact negatively on discipline management in schools.

Miss Sakha, PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary explained:

Educators should not rely too much on punishment, but rather use it judiciously as a corrective measure. They should work as a team and apply disciplinary measures consistently so that learners will understand and stick to them. They do not discriminate unfairly against any learner.

Mr Motala, the HOD in Labalaba Secondary also commented that there are cases of educator misconduct such as being unprepared or ill-prepared for lessons, neglecting teaching learners while furthering their own studies, being absent without reason, alcohol abuse and engaging in sexual intimacy with learners, and are all factors which contribute to disciplinary problems at school. Without realising it, many educators convey non-acceptance to some of their learners. When educators ask learners to do a task in a prescribed way, they implicitly show

a lack of confidence in the learners' ability to make decisions about their own work. The simplest way to avoid conveying non-acceptance is to permit learners to evaluate themselves more and more to establish their own directions and expectations. Learners must compare their own performances over time to achieve a sense of their own growth and to learn and accept the value of their efforts (Edwards & Watts, 2004).

Mwamwenda (2004) states that some teachers come to class unprepared, or they even arrive late at school. Furthermore, they even turn up drunk or improperly dressed. Therefore, the key to positive and effective discipline lies in the personality of the teacher. Disciplinary efforts tend to be unfair and ineffective when teachers display angry or harsh behaviour.

According to Porteus (2001) it is a necessity for educators to model a good behaviour. An educator who is effective at working with learners is herself a living example of good behaviour and earning values. The importance of modelling good behaviour is rooted in the simple fact that children learn from the role models around them. Mtsweni (2008), links the authoritarian style of leadership to autocratic communication, the excessive control of learners, and domination, as well as to unpedagogic and compulsive exercising of power that undermine the learners' feelings of freedom and security. He further indicated that an authoritarian style of leadership causes learners to resort to violence, because they are frustrated by not having a say in what concerns their well-fare and well-being at school.

Kounin (1976) emphasizes the fact that the best way to maintain good discipline is to keep students actively engaged in class activities, while simultaneously showing the individual attention. He identifies a number of strategies that educators can use to engage students in lessons and thus reduce misbehaviour. One such technique is, when an educator is busy with one group of learners and simultaneously also observes that two other learners are not busy with their class work. Kounin believes that it is far better to stop a behaviour when one child engages in it than to wait until the entire class has begun imitating it. He refers to this technique as the "ripple effect". Furthermore Kounin (1976) recommends that educators should have an attitude of "with-it-ness", which implies that the educator must be able to know and see what is happening in the class at all times. Although Kounin provides good suggestions on classroom management, he does not tell educators how to deal with a situation when a learner is misbehaving.

4.2.2.6 Peer pressure and indiscipline at school

The study findings revealed that the participants agreed that peer pressure can be the cause and influence the behaviour of a child at school. Mr Kaizer, the HOD in Nozigaba Primary claimed that one of the major causes is peer pressure. He commented:

If you try to give learners the right way, they ignore what you are saying. They prefer what they are told by their peers than by their educators.

Miss Reeds, the principal of Labalaba Secondary explained:

Learners choose to associate with their peers.

Edwards and Watts (2004) supported the above findings by saying that peer pressure, which is part of everyday life at school, contributes significantly to shaping the learners' behaviour both positively and negatively. The positive influence of peer pressure is evident when peers encourage one another in career choices, values and social decision making. This positive effect of peer pressure is often overlooked by parents and educators and can be used as a strategic measure in academic development, social skills development and behaviour management. On the other hand, where families have poor interaction styles, lack status, have inferior relationships and weaker ties, learners become affiliated with, and are influenced to a greater extent by their peers than by their families. In this case the learner's peer group may take over the role of the family and influence inappropriate school behaviour, social behaviour, career choices, school exit points, sexual activity, substance abuse and delinquency (Edward & Watts, 2004).

Skinner (1992), in his behaviour modification model state that many primary grade teachers use behaviour modification to teach learners desirable behaviour, rewarding students who behave acceptably and withholding rewards from those who misbehave. Mohapi (2007) observes that more overtly punished learners might get the negative attention they are seeking from their peers, and then persist with negative behaviour in the hope of gaining more attention. Behaviour modification seems to work well with younger children, especially with more difficult cases, but as learners mature they might feel embarrassed to be singled out for praise in front of their classmates, and punishments in the form of withheld rewards may lose their "sting".

4.2.2.7 Media and learner indiscipline

The majority of the participants also stated that the role of media was one of the factors that negatively influence learner discipline. Miss Sakha, PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary commented:

The role of the media can also cause problems among our learners.

Miss News, PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary said:

A lack of control at home means children often watch TV programmes which send out wrong messages to them.

Miss Reeds, the principal of Labalaba Secondary affirmed:

Television also influences behaviour negatively.

These findings were also affirmed by Rayment (2006) who points out that watching television, as well as playing computer and videogames, influences young people to be heroes and stresses the need for power, control and aggressive behaviour. The media therefore inspire learners to emulate what they see. Observing entertainment-based power and control affects learners' day-to-day behaviour and temperament, and this influence is carried with them into schools. According to Coleman (2002) television watching can also reduce the effectiveness of students' learning. It fails to promote logical, sequential thinking, which is essential to an understanding of cause and effect relationships. These problems are closely tied to children's intellectual and behavioural or emotional difficulties including violence. It may be that the nature of television is a greater risk factor for promoting violence than the content. TV and computers can diminish creativity, imagination, and motivation and depress attention span and the desire to persevere.

4.2.2.8 Politics and community influence of learner indiscipline

The findings also revealed that the politics and the community play an important role in causing learner misbehaviour. The community too, must bear its share of responsibility for the misbehaviour of children at school. What happens at school is merely a reflection of what is going on in society. Mr Khondo, the principal of Nozigaba Primary explained:

Some of our learners are involved in politics and this may cause them to be rude towards educators and parents.

Miss Reeds, the principal of Labalaba Secondary commented:

One of the biggest causes which are associated with inappropriate behaviour is substance abuse; using or selling illegal drugs influences learners' behaviour and also changes the general atmosphere of the school.

It became clear from the above educators' sentiments that the community and politics are the major causes of misbehaviour. The findings were also supported by Rossouw (2003, p.419) who states that the political situation in South Africa is also blamed for children's misbehaviour. He further states that that the involvement of the youth in the liberation struggle which ended in 1994 caused them to develop "...arrogance towards adults, that is, both educators and parents". Rossouw (2003) also blames the political situation of the nineties in South Africa where the causes of violence in schools were politically motivated. He mentions gang activities, the lack of transformation, learners carrying guns and smoking dagga, a lack of counselling services, the intolerance of school management towards some groups, and parental apathy.

Edwards and Watts (2004) states that family influences and social influences on discipline problems are usually interrelated. Rejection at home, for example, may encourage learners and young people to search elsewhere for acceptance. Rejected young people are often attracted to gangs. As evidence of their worthiness to join a gang, learners are sometimes expected to participate in acts deplored by the rest of society – examples would be armed robbery or mugging and they may be periodically required to repeat such acts to confirm their commitment to the gang's value system. When gangs become established, school officials may have considerable difficulty dislodging them.

These findings also supported behavioural modification model by Skinner (1992) who sees all behaviour as being controlled all the time. By this Skinner implies that there are always external factors from the environment that constantly impinge on the individual; these consciously or unconsciously influence his/her behaviour. He also points out that organised control, e.g. by the educator, is often arranged in such a way that it reinforces the behaviour of the controller at the controllers expense.

4.2.3 The role that educators play in managing learner discipline in schools

4.2.3.1 The duty of care

It also came out of the study findings that educators play an important role in the management of learner discipline. When asked about the role of educators in managing learner discipline in school, Miss Reeds, the principal of Labalaba Secondary explained:

Educators are responsible for managing discipline in school. They have a duty of care towards all the learners to act in loco parentis, as if they assume the position of a responsible parent. They share with parents the responsibility of providing safety and security among learners in school.

When asked about their role in the management of learner discipline in school, Mr Motala, an HOD of Labalaba Secondary replied:

As educators, we provide proper supervision, instructions and control to learners to ensure their safety. It is our duty and responsibility to provide sufficient supervision, and to safeguard learners from reasonable foreseeable harm or danger. The educator is expected to act as a prudent father of the family, because in his status and position, is delegated to act in the place of the parent (in loco parentis). The educator fulfils his/her duty of care in such a way that a safe environment which is conducive for learning is created.

Mr Kaizer, the HOD in Nozigaba Primary said:

Firstly, as educators, we are working together and involving learners when designing and developing the class rules about good behaviour. These rules will be displayed on the wall of the class so that learners will always be reminded of them and also try to make some corrections. As educators we make them feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe in order for them to be self-discipline.

Teachers, by virtue of their profession and by law, are obliged to maintain discipline at school and to act *in loco parentis* in relation to the learner. Prinsloo (2005) states that the functions that educators should fulfil in terms of the common law principle, *in loco parentis*, include the right to maintain authority and the obligation to exercise caring supervision of the learner. In addition, there are two sides to the *in loco parentis* role of educators: the duty of care (the obligation to exercise caring supervision) and the duty to maintain order (the

obligation to maintain authority or discipline over the learner). When the child enters the school, the duty of care of the parent or guardian is delegated to the educator or the school. Thus, educators have a legal duty to ensure the safety of learners at school. Ensuring the learner's safety at school is thus the educator's pedagogical and legal function. Oosthuizen *et al.* (2004) state that the law expects the educator to caringly see to the physical, psychological and spiritual well-being of the learner. The law expects him/her as a professionally trained person to fulfil this role with the necessary skill.

It was clear from the above findings that all the participants agreed on the role they play in the management of learner discipline. The HOD in Nozigaba Primary was of the view that educators should have class rules in place that all learners should adhere to. Problematic learners should be given responsibilities because some of them suffer from rejection, either from home or by fellow learners. Educators should provide pastoral care to their learners. They should also create a safe and positive environment that promotes participation from all learners. According to the PL1 educator of Labalaba Secondary, educators are required to handle disciplinary problems in their classrooms, as well as play their part in the general maintenance of positive learner discipline. Furthermore, according to PL1 educator of Nozigaba Primary, in instilling discipline, there should be no discrimination at school. This is regardless of race, religion, culture and gender, doesn't matter where the children live, what language they speak and what sort of family they come from, whether they are rich or poor. Children must be the primary concern when decisions affecting them are made. When educators make decisions, they should think about how their decisions affect learners. Lastly, learners' views must be respected. Children have the right to influence decisions that affect them.

When asked about the Code of Conduct for learners, both principals of the two schools stressed that it is a very important document that a school must have. The school's code of conduct is the document which contains rules which regulate learner behaviour or discipline. It would be difficult to talk about misconduct of learners if there is no guiding document regarding acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Relevant stakeholders must see to it that the school's code of conduct is put in place. As indicated in the South African School Act (1996) Section 8 (1), a Code of Conduct is a written statement of rules and principles concerning discipline in schools. It explains the kind of behaviour educators expect from each learner, and the standard of behaviour a school has to maintain. The Department of Education (2000) stresses that the Code of Conduct as drawn up by the individual schools

may not contradict the Provincial or National Code of Conduct, which embraces the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Country and the Schools' Act. Lekalakala (2007) indicates that a school's Code of Conduct contains a legal obligation, binding learners to comply with the conduct of the school which the learner is attending. A Code of Conduct should therefore not conflict with the existing laws and legislations which include the legislation, instructions, policies, and directives of the Department of Education.

The participants' views are also corroborated by Canter (2007) assertive discipline model. Assertive discipline is an approach to the management of discipline in schools which was introduced to primary and secondary schools in the United States of America by Lee and Marlene Canter. Canter and Canter (1992) suggest the limit-setting approaches that could be followed as a discipline plan in schools. Their assertive discipline plan requires that the teacher sets limits on learners' behaviour so that order is maintained in an effective and efficient learning environment through teaching obedience to authority, but at the same time giving support to their learners. Canter's basic assumptions associated with assertive discipline focus upon rules for providing a framework for a discipline management plan. The teacher is in control and is expected to become assertive as necessary using eye contact, verbal warnings, proximity control, and manipulator student behaviour through use of positive reinforcement and punishment.

4.2.4 The alternative methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the DoE

4.2.4.1 The usefulness of the alternatives methods to corporal punishment

It became evident that alternatives methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the Department of Education were not working in the researched schools. The majority of the participants agreed that the suggested alternatives measures to corporal punishment were not very effective in curbing learner indiscipline in schools. Miss Gas, PL1 educators of Nozigaba Primary explained:

Most of these alternative methods are actually time wasting. A teacher would spend weeks just trying to deal with the case of a child who is not doing his or her work at school. This takes a lot of the teacher's time and also disturbs serious learners as the teacher may not attend classes while attending to disciplinary hearings or talking to parents summoned to the school.

On the issue of his awareness of alternative disciplinary measures to corporal punishment, Mr Khondo said he was aware of the suggested alternatives and he indicated that he had a copy of the “Alternatives to Corporal Punishment” document somewhere in his files. He said that the alternatives were a problem and further complicated the issue of disciplining learners. He said:

It is very difficult, for example, to suspend a learner from school. There should be permission from the department and the justification for suspension; has to be substantiated and a decision is arrived after many long and winding meetings.

The majority of the participants indicated that although there were several suggested alternative disciplinary measures, these were not as effective as corporal punishment. To them corporal punishment was effective as a deterrent measure because learners were afraid of suffering the pain. Asked on what alternative methods and strategies they particularly implemented in their schools, they all agreed on the after-school detentions; revocations of privileges like recess; cleaning the school yard; cleaning the toilets. Learners who transgress the rules of the school are removed from other learners and asked to do their class work or assignments in isolated classrooms.

It was also necessary to undertake a documents review in the researched schools. Documents such as the learner code of conduct, records of disciplinary problems and disciplinary measures taken by the school, and parent and departmental involvement in addressing some serious disciplinary problems. When reviewing the documents, it was also found that in Nozigaba Primary, the School Policy document regarding discipline indicated the card system which was used by educators in case of transgressions. The green card which is handled by the class teacher serves as the first warning; the yellow card which is handled at mentor level whereby parents are informed in writing of the transgressions serves as second warning; the red card whereby parents are informed in writing of the transgressions serves as final warning; and the blue card which is handled by the portfolio manager, whereby parents are informed in writing regarding the disciplinary hearing by the SGB and the decisions are ratified by the SGB.

On the other side, Mr Kaizer, the HOD in Nozigaba Primary saw these strategies and methods useful because by detening learners an educator also give them a chance of doing their work and this method reduce and eliminate indiscipline. Even in the school as a whole, this method has a good outcome because the incidents of indiscipline drop down alarmingly.

Miss News, PL1 educator in Labalaba Secondary said that she also talks to the learners in private by providing possible ways to improve the learners' conduct. Talking to a learner in private is of utmost importance since it provides an opportunity to detect the root cause of misbehaviour. Another strategy that is used is counselling since it works best and really helps in shaping the learner's life.

Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2001) and Pienaar (2003) point out that in 1996 the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 banned the use of corporal punishment in all South African Schools. The abolition of corporal punishment in schools has left a gap which cannot be filled and this led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in schools (Oosthuizen, 2002). These discipline problems refer to disruptive behaviour that affects the fundamental rights of the learner to feel safe and to be treated with respect in the learning environment (Rodgers, 1994). In 2000 a national project on discipline in South African schools was undertaken and many of the results were incorporated in the booklet titled *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: the learning experience*. This booklet was distributed to all South African schools in 2001 by the Department of Education. The booklet contains guidelines for dealing with alternatives to corporal punishment in an effort to combat the fast-escalating problems with discipline, as well as examples of disciplinary action for dealing with misconduct, ranging from verbal warnings and community service to suspension from all school activities.

The participants' views were also corroborated by Kubeka (2004) who reported that teachers argue that, without corporal punishment, discipline could not be maintained. Their power as educators had been taken away; corporal punishment was quick and easy to administer, while other methods required time, patience and skill, which educators often lacked. Maphosa and Shumba (2010) are of the same opinion with Kubeka (2004), that educators generally feel disempowered in their ability to maintain discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. This concurs with Makapela's (2006) findings that learners literally take advantage of educators because they know fully well that whatever punishment that is given, will not equal the pain of corporal punishment.

Canter (2007) in his assertive discipline model suggests that teachers need to make sure that they have the power to put an immediate stop to behaviour that is offensive or disruptive. This alternative to corporal punishment emphasizes the need for every school to have a discipline policy. This involves the whole school in a concerted effort to improve and maintain discipline through a clearly understood behaviour framework, emphasizing positive

encouragement as well as clear sanctions. It focuses on the emotional motivation of teachers to implement plans to ensure their right to teach. It also stresses the need for a positive disciplinary system that is readily integrated into the classroom atmosphere and not something added to deal with the misbehaving pupil.

4.2.4.2 Implementation of the alternatives methods to corporal punishment

Both HODs from the two schools saw the alternatives methods as a problem and further complicated the issue of disciplining learners. It was clear from them that maintaining learner discipline in schools was a nightmare for teachers and that they were very frustrated by the situation. They said:

Health is a challenge; some of our learners are infected with HIV/AIDS. It must be kept in mind at all times when instilling discipline at school that an infected person cannot always be treated in the same way as an uninfected person.

Some alternative measures cannot fit all learners due to cultural diversities and health status. Teachers are finding it difficult to discipline learners due to health circumstances, since our country is highly infected by HIV/AIDS. It must be kept in mind at all times when instilling discipline at school.

It was clear from PL1 educators of Labalaba Secondary that alternative disciplinary measures had proved ineffective and time consuming for her. They commented:

We find it difficult to choose and implement the correct alternatives to corporal punishment. Teachers now devote most of their time to disciplining pupils, since it is time consuming and requires close supervision of the teacher. Alternatives to corporal punishment negatively affect pupils' discipline at schools because learners no longer have fear of consequences of any disruptive behaviour.

Miss News, PL1 educator in Labalaba Secondary points out that, some of the alternative methods of maintaining discipline are useful and working. For example, isolating the learner from others by putting him in a special place or sending him out of the room takes away his opportunity to continue the misconduct and symbolically demonstrates that the offender must be isolated from those learners who are behaving well. Learners also change behaviour when given additional academic work. This minimises indiscipline, especially noise making

or swearing. When calling in the parents to talk to them and giving them information about their children's conduct, helps to solve disciplinary problems at schools.

According to another PL1 educator from Nozigaba Primary, these methods do not reduce or eliminate violence and restore discipline at school. Some disciplinary measures need to be applied with close supervision of the teacher. For example, while detention after school will not disturb classroom lessons, the teacher and more of his/her time will be needed to supervise the detainees. A school cannot suspend a learner for more than one week at a time. There should be permission from the DoE. The teacher concerned will be disadvantaged by using his/her spare time on such supervision. Secondly, when you punish learners by standing on one leg, other learners in the class enjoy that. Thirdly, when you punish latecomers by picking up papers or washing the toilets, there will be more latecomers the following day because learners enjoy being out of the class.

When reviewing the documents, in Labalaba Secondary, a copy of the school rules and code of conduct was neatly typed. The code of conduct seemed to present a list of do's and don'ts, and the consequences of not following the rules.

According to Whittaker (2006), the essence of alternatives to corporal punishment is to reflect a non-violent, non-abusive, respectful and constructive approach to discipline learners. The purpose is to ensure beneficial learners' behaviour change. Whittaker, a psychologist argues that teachers can oversee classrooms and develop their pupils' knowledge, skills and aptitudes through means other than corporal punishment. For example, they can involve learners in making the school rules, which may significantly reduce disciplinary problems. He further argues that alternative methods of discipline are more beneficial and less detrimental to a child's development than corporal punishment. Joubert *et al.* (2004) assert that the direct involvement of different role players in managing school discipline has proved to be one measure that is effective. They further state that one example of this is the buddy system in which learners are paired off in order to take responsibility for each other. From the literature studied, it would seem that it is commonly accepted that ensuring school discipline is everyone's job. Educators, parents, community members and learners should all commit to meet the challenges of assisting learners who are ill-disciplined.

According to Canter and Canter (1992) assertive discipline has a take-charge approach for teachers to control their classrooms in a firm and positive manner. They argue that the goal of assertive discipline is to teach students to choose responsible behaviour and in doing so, raise

their self-esteem and enhance their academic success. They also maintain that teachers have the right and responsibility to: establish rules and directions that clearly define the limits of acceptable and unacceptable student behaviour; teach these rules and directions and ask for assistance from parents and administrators when support is needed in handling student behaviour. Canter and Canter (1992) conclude that the following actions could be followed when misbehaviour occurs: tell the child to stop the particular behaviour, set out the sanctions that will occur if he or she does not, and offer the child a choice.

4.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, findings from the interviews that were conducted with principals, HODs and PL1 educators were discussed. Emerging themes were also highlighted. Documents from the two selected schools were reviewed. From the interviews that were conducted, specific discipline problems were revealed. Findings revealed that disciplinary problems in learners come from learners' origin. This refers to where the learner comes from, particularly the family from which he/she is raised. On the other hand, indiscipline can result from various environmental factors. Educators and principals experience problems with regard to the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment. Disciplining learners in schools is not easy, since educators are not provided with specific alternatives to maintain discipline among learners. Educators and principals concluded that disciplinary problems have a negative impact on learners' learning as well as on their teaching. Educators are finding it difficult to discipline learners due to health circumstances, since our country is highly infected by HIV/AIDS. Another factor is poor involvement of parents as far as their children's' education is concerned. The next chapter will summarise the study and draw conclusions pertaining to the research questions, based on data collected. The chapter will conclude by making recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings obtained from interviews and documents review. After a careful consideration of the data, certain clear conclusions emerged in terms of the critical questions formulated in the introductory chapter. Based on the findings outlined in Chapter Four, this chapter presents the summary, the conclusions and pertinent recommendations of the study are made.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter One entailed the rationale and background of the study. This chapter also provided the research questions and research objectives. Furthermore, a brief description of the research methodology and clarification of certain relevant concepts were clarified.

Chapter Two outlined the literature review on the challenges of managing learner discipline in schools and the theoretical frameworks upon which this study is based. In this chapter, discipline problems that educators faced in schools, causes of discipline problems, the role of educators in the management of learner discipline and the alternative methods of maintaining discipline, internationally and locally were discussed.

Chapter Three discussed the research design, methodology and ethical issues of the empirical study. This chapter further provided the discussion of the qualitative research methodology and the data generation strategies such as interviews and documents reviews that the researcher used to investigate the challenges of managing learner discipline in schools. This chapter also described how data analysis was conducted and discussed the issues of reliability and validity. The limitations of the study were also outlined.

Chapter Four consisted of the detailed findings, presentation and analysis of the research data. The discussion focused on the qualitative data collected by means of semi structured

interviews as well as documents review. The discussion also focused on the challenges of managing learner discipline in schools.

Chapter Five summarised the whole study and draws conclusions that emanated from the findings of the study. It also made recommendations based on the findings of the study that will assist educators on the challenges of managing learner discipline in schools.

5.3 Conclusions

After careful consideration of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were reached:

The current state of discipline in the schools under investigation made it difficult for educators to perform their task effectively. Learners no longer listen to educators and do not obey school rules. The schools were experiencing disciplinary problems. The most common disciplinary problems experienced at the schools were bullying and intimidation, sexual harassment of girls, drugs and alcohol abuse and carrying of dangerous weapons to schools.

Educators commented on bullying as a serious problem that they face in schools. Some cases of bullying and intimidation have occurred in schools. Some of the learners were bullied by other learners and even assaulted them during school hours. The majority of the participants also seemed to identify sexual harassment of girls as a major discipline problem faced by schools. Learners were sexually harassed by other learners in the school. It became evident from the data that alcohol and drug abuse had a negative influence on the behaviour of learners. The participants commented that learners were using drugs which make them disrespect their educators. Educators also have to cope with much more serious misconduct like smoking of dagga and cigarettes. Learners bring drugs and alcohol on school premises which make them being rude to educators. The participants seemed to be having serious problem of learners who come to school in possession of illegal dangerous weapons. Learners bring dangerous weapons to school such as guns, knives and screwdrivers. In the researched schools, there were number of cases of attacks, stabbings and shootings of learners by other learners on the school premises.

Lack of parent involvement seemed to be the biggest cause of disciplinary problems. Some of the parents do not give enough attention and love for their children. There is lack of interest by parents in the education of their children. They are not supervising their children's schoolwork, and not attending parents meetings, which makes it difficult for the school to maintain effective discipline. Home experiences and background have an influence on children's behaviour. Some of the parents spend little time at home and even when they are at home they fail to talk to children about behaviour. This will result from children being influenced by peers. Another cause was that some of the learners live in a split family; with single parent or step-parents. Abuse of various types contributes a lot on learner misbehaviour. Some of the learners suffer from various types of abuse at home or witnessing domestic violence and this may cause them to be rebellious at school. Some of the learners have been physically abused by their parents at home.

Educators can invite discipline problems if they use discipline procedures that promote misbehaviour at school. The participants commented that there are cases of educator misconduct such as being unprepared or ill-prepared for lessons, neglecting teaching learners while furthering their own studies, being absent without reason, alcohol abuse and engaging in sexual intimacy with learners. The participants agreed that peer pressure can be the cause and influence the behaviour of a child at school. Learners choose to associate with their peers. If you try to give learners the right way, they ignore what you are saying. They prefer what they are told by their peers than by their educators.

The balance between learner rights and responsibilities has a negative influence on learner discipline in schools. The child has more rights than a teacher. Learners are not only aware of their rights but very sensitive to them. They also demand a range of rights not formerly accorded them including the right to be heard or the right to freedom of speech, whether written or oral. When these demands are not met learners become more strident and vociferous in their approach. Furthermore, the role of the media can also contribute to deviant behaviour at school. Some of the learners are involved in politics and this may cause them to be rude towards educators and parents.

In terms of the role educators play in the management of learner discipline problems, educators have a duty of care towards all the learners to act *in loco parentis*, as if they assume the position of a responsible parent. They share with parents the responsibility of providing safety and security among learners in school. Educators provide proper supervision,

instructions and control to learners to ensure their safety. It is their duty and responsibility to provide sufficient supervision, and to safeguard learners from reasonable foreseeable harm or danger. They are expected to act as a prudent father of the family, because in their status and position, are delegated to act in the place of the parent (*in loco parentis*). The educator fulfils his/her duty of care in such a way that a safe environment which is conducive for learning is created.

It became evident that alternatives methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the Department of Education were not working in the researched schools. They seemed to be ineffective in curbing learner indiscipline in schools. Most of these alternative methods are actually time wasting. A teacher would spend weeks just trying to deal with the case of a child who is not doing his or her work at school. This takes a lot of the teacher's time and also disturbs serious learners as the teacher may not attend classes while attending to disciplinary hearings or talking to parents summoned to the school. Educators are aware of the suggested alternatives but the alternatives were a problem and further complicated the issue of disciplining learners. It is very difficult, for example, to suspend a learner from school. There should be permission from the department and the justification for suspension; has to be substantiated and a decision is arrived after many long and winding meetings.

When implementing the alternative methods, it came out of the findings that health was a challenge; some of the learners were infected with HIV/AIDS. It must be kept in mind at all times when instilling discipline at school that an infected person cannot always be treated in the same way as an uninfected person. Some alternative measures cannot fit all learners due to cultural diversities and health status. Teachers are finding it difficult to discipline learners due to health circumstances, since our country is highly infected by HIV/AIDS.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings in Chapter Four and the conclusions above, the following recommendations were made:

5.4.1 Challenges encountered by educators in managing learner discipline

At the beginning of the school year, the principal and educators should orientate learners about the code of conduct and school rules. Rules and the consequences of breaking them should be clearly indicated to learners during assembly. In the process of life-skills education, educators should include topics on moral issues, tolerance, conflict management, problem solving. Learners are expected to learn basic moral values like to be loyal, to be honest, and have respect for authority and their fellow human beings. This can be done through class discussions, debates and role play. Educators should develop classroom rules and sanctions with inputs from learners. The class rules should be placed on the notice board where they can be seen. Learners should sign it as an agreement with everybody in class. Schools must arrange workshops and/or motivational talks for learners in which the issues of self-discipline and self-image are addressed. Schools, parents and communities should all encourage learners to act responsibly in their relationships with others and in school activities. Learners should experience that morals and values are being demonstrated in the lives and attitudes of their educators and in the approach of the school as a whole towards discipline. Schools should encourage and acknowledge good behaviour by, for example, giving awards for positive, disciplined behaviour. Security cameras may enhance student safety in schools. Random searching of learners is important in schools to ensure that learners do not carry and use dangerous weapons on the school. Learners should be empowered to report observed cases of indiscipline in order to deal with cases of indiscipline before they lead to injuries or fatalities.

5.4.2 Causes of discipline problems in schools

Parents need to set clear guidelines for their child's behaviour, both at home and at school. Active parental involvement in the lives of their children is crucial for the management of discipline at school. The parents should become involved in their children's homework and extra-mural activities by supervising homework, signing the learner's books and as far as possible, be present at school functions, meetings and extra-curricular activities. Each learner's unique family/home circumstances should be taken into account when dealing with this particular learner. Staff and management need to interact with learners in a sensitive, caring and humane manner. Educators should promote good learner behaviour and learning by teaching consistently and effectively. Educators should be well-prepared, keeping

learners actively busy in the classroom in order to eliminate misbehaviour. Managers need to ensure that educators prepare their lessons well by monitoring this matter. The issue of lesson preparation by educators is of vital importance. Lessons that are well-prepared enhance discipline in class. Learners respect educators who are prepared, are knowledgeable about the subject they teach, and are authoritative in their instructional and teaching style.

5.4.3 The role of educators in the management of learner discipline in schools

Teachers should acquaint themselves and learn to know learner home backgrounds in order to understand learners they are dealing with. Co-operation or teamwork in the execution of school rules and codes of conduct should be promoted at each school. Educators should, therefore, model self-discipline, so as to inculcate self-discipline in learners. Educators should also approach the problem of discipline with empathy for the possible problems the learners may be experiencing at home or at school that cause their poor behaviour.

Each school should draw up an explicit school safety policy and a system of safety rules. This is to ensure that behaviour expectations and procedures are clearly communicated, consistently enforced and applied fairly. The enforcement procedures should be in line with SASA. Each school should establish a response team that comprises volunteer teachers, learners, parent (as part of school governing body) and members of the community. This team should receive training which covers areas such as conflict resolution, anger management, breaking up fights, mediation techniques and first-aid. The main team might be subdivided into sub-teams that will be assigned specific responsibilities.

5.4.4 The alternative methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the DoE

In-service workshops for all teachers across the country to be trained in alternatives to corporal punishment should be organised by the DoE. The government policy should be made clear and clear indications should exist about how to deal with misbehaviour. Educators should be staff-developed on the use of co-operative and supportive disciplinary approaches. This would arm them with skills necessary to administer discipline at all times without resorting to corporal punishment. The Department of Education must make available relevant resources such as books on alternatives to corporal punishment to educators.

Professional support i.e. psychologists or educational counsellors should be increased to support schools.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided a summary of the whole study and the conclusions. Furthermore, based on the findings and conclusions, relevant recommendations that I believe would assist educators in overcoming the challenges of managing learner discipline problems in schools were made.

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APPENDIX B

(PERMISSION LETTER TO THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION)

P.O. Box 341

Cato Ridge

3680

8 August 2012

Attention: The Head of Department (N.S.P. Sishi)

Department of Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Florence Zandile Nene, M.Ed student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in two schools under your jurisdiction in and around Pinetown. The schools are: Nomfihlela Primary School and St Julius Secondary School. The title of my study is: **The challenges of managing learner discipline in schools: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.**

This study aims to explore if there are challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools. The study will make contribution to national and international debates by providing insights into how educators deal with learner discipline problems in schools. The study will also contribute to an increased awareness of causes of disciplinary

problems in learners and thus may help to control bad behaviour and to maintain discipline in schools. The study may also bring about changes in the approach and strategies in maintaining discipline, especially at a time when corporal punishment of children is no longer legal in schools (Tungata, 2006). The planned study will focus on school principal, one Head of Department and two Post level one educators in each of the selected schools. The study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the school principal, one HOD and two Post Level One educators in each school. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. Written documents such as the School Policy, the Code of Conduct for Learners' policy, minutes book of the SGB where issues of discipline are discussed and recorded, meetings of School Disciplinary Committee shall be the focus of the study. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book shall also be extensively studied.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Siphwe E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 260 1870; Cell: 073 377 4672

E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za.

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me directly using the following contact details: Florence Z. Nene; Tel: 031 7828173; Cell: 072 934 1000 or 084 259 0944

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Miss F.Z. Nene

APPENDIX C

(PERMISSION LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)

P.O. Box 341

Cato Ridge

3680

8 August 2012

Attention: The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Florence Zandile Nene, M.Ed student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree requirement. I am also awaiting permission from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **The challenges of managing learner discipline in schools: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.**

This study aims to explore if there are challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools. The study will make contribution to international and national debates by providing insights into how educators deal with learner discipline problems in schools. The study will also contribute to an increased awareness of causes of disciplinary problems in learners and thus may help to control bad behaviour and to maintain discipline in schools. The study may also bring about changes in the approach and strategies in maintaining discipline, especially at a time when corporal punishment of children is no longer

legal in schools (Tungata, 2006). The planned study will focus on school principal, one Head of Department and two Post level one educators in each of the selected schools. The study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the school principal, one HOD and two Post Level One educators. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. Written documents such as the School Policy, the Code of Conduct for Learners' policy, minutes book of the SGB where issues of discipline are discussed and recorded, meetings of School Disciplinary Committee shall be the focus of the study. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book shall also be extensively studied.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

You and educators will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Sipiwe E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 260 1870; Email: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Florence Zandile Nene; Tel: 031 782 8173; Cell: 072 934 1000 or 084 259 0944

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Miss F.Z. Nene

APPENDIX D

(LETTER TO THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)

P.O. Box 341

Cato Ridge

3680

8 August 2012

Attention: The Head of Department

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Florence Zandile Nene, M.Ed student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree requirement. I am also awaiting permission from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **The challenges of managing learner discipline in schools: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.**

This study aims to explore if there are challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools. The study will make contribution to international and national debates by providing insights into how educators deal with learner discipline problems in schools. The study will also contribute to an increased awareness of causes of disciplinary problems in learners and thus may help to control bad behaviour and to maintain discipline in schools. The study may also bring about changes in the approach and strategies in maintaining discipline, especially at a time when corporal punishment of children is no longer legal in schools (Tungata, 2006). The planned study will focus on school principal, one Head

of Department and two Post level one educators in each of the selected schools. The study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the school principal, one HOD and two Post Level One educators. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. Written documents such as the School Policy, the Code of Conduct for Learners' policy, minutes book of the SGB where issues of discipline are discussed and recorded, meetings of School Disciplinary Committee shall be the focus of the study. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book shall also be extensively studied.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may receive as part of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

You and other educators will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Sipiwe E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 260 1870; Email: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Florence Zandile Nene; Tel: 031 782 8173; Cell: 072 934 1000 or 084 259 0944

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Miss F.Z. Nene

APPENDIX E

(PERMISSION LETTER TO POST LEVEL ONE EDUCATOR)

P.O. Box 341

Cato Ridge

3680

8 August 2012

Attention: The Post Level One educator

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Florence Zandile Nene, M.Ed student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). I am required to conduct research as part of my degree requirement. I am also awaiting permission from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. The title of my study is: **The challenges of managing learner discipline in schools: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.**

This study aims to explore if there are challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in schools. The study will make contribution to international and national debates by providing insights into how educators deal with learner discipline problems in schools. The study will also contribute to an increased awareness of causes of disciplinary problems in learners and thus may help to control bad behaviour and to maintain discipline in schools. The study may also bring about changes in the approach and strategies in maintaining discipline, especially at a time when corporal punishment of children is no longer legal in schools (Tungata, 2006). The planned study will focus on school principal, one Head

of Department and two Post level one educators in each of the selected schools. The study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the school principal, one HOD and two Post level One educators. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes and each interview will be voice-recorded. Written documents such as the School Policy, the Code of Conduct for Learners' policy, minutes book of the SGB where issues of discipline are discussed and recorded, meetings of School Disciplinary Committee shall be the focus of the study. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book shall also be extensively studied.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

You and other educators will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact my supervisor, Sipiwe E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 260 1870; Email: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672

In addition, should you have any queries please feel free to contact me using the following contact details: Florence Zandile Nene; Tel: 031 782 8173; Cell: 072 934 1000 or 084 259 0944

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Miss F.Z. Nene

APPENDIX F

The challenges of managing learner discipline in schools: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.

Semi-structured Interview Schedule for Principals.

This Interview schedule is designed to explore the challenges of managing learner discipline. This schedule will be used with the school principals.

1. Biographical Information of the School Principal

- a) Age:
- b) Gender:
- c) Educational qualifications:
- d) Work experience (Number of years involved in education, positions held, etc.):

2. Duration of Principalship:

- 2.1 How long have you served in this position?

3. Tasks/ roles:

- Schools face multiple challenges in maintaining discipline and safety among learners. Can you share with me some of these disciplinary challenges and how you deal with them?
- As a school, do you have a Code of Conduct for learners? Were all the stakeholders involved in its crafting? Please explain.
- In your school, do you also have a Discipline, Safety and Security Committee (DSSC) or a similar structure and could you also explain how it works and who its members are?
- As a school principal, what are your perceptions and experiences of indiscipline and violence at your school?
- How should educators manage their classes in order to maintain discipline at school?

- What are discipline problems that educators face in school?
- What are some of the causes of learner discipline problems in the school?
- In instilling discipline among learners, as the school, how do you ensure that your school does not reinforce violent attitudes and add to learners' experience of school as violent? Please explain.
- What alternative methods and strategies to corporal punishment can educators implement in maintaining discipline at school?
- How successful are these methods and strategies seen as being reducing or eliminating violence and restore discipline at school?
- How do you find the alternative methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the Department of Education working?

APPENDIX G

The challenges of managing learner discipline: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.

Semi-structured Interview Schedule for HODs

This Interview schedule is designed to explore the challenges of managing learner discipline. This schedule will be used for the Heads of Departments.

1. Biographical Information of the HOD

- a) Age:
- b) Gender:
- c) Educational qualifications:
- d) Work experience (Number of years involved in education, positions held, etc.):

2. Duration in the position:

- 2.1 How long have you served in this position?

3. Tasks/ roles

- Schools face multiple challenges in maintaining discipline and safety among learners. Can you share with me some of these disciplinary challenges and how you deal with them?
- As a school, do you have a Code of Conduct for learners? Were all the stakeholders involved in its crafting? Please explain.
- In your school, do you also have a Discipline, Safety and Security Committee (DSSC) or a similar structure and could you also explain how it works and who its members are?
- As HOD, what are your perceptions and experiences of indiscipline and violence at your school?
- How should educators manage their classes in order to maintain discipline at school?
- What are discipline problems that educators face in school?

- What are some of the causes of learner discipline problems in the school?
- In instilling discipline among learners, as the school, how do you ensure that your school does not reinforce violent attitudes and add to learners' experience of school as violent? Please explain.
- What alternative methods and strategies to corporal punishment can educators implement in maintaining discipline at school?
- How successful are these methods and strategies seen as being reducing or eliminating violence and restore discipline at school?
- How do you find the alternative methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the Department of Education working?

APPENDIX H

The challenges of managing learner discipline in schools: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for Post-level one educators

This Interview schedule is designed to explore the challenges of managing learner discipline. This schedule will be used with the Post-level one educator.

1. Biographical Information of the Post-level one educator

- e) Age:
- f) Gender:
- g) Educational qualifications:
- h) Work experience (Number of years involved in education, positions held, etc.):

3. Tasks/ roles

- Schools face multiple challenges in maintaining discipline and safety among learners. Can you share with me some of these disciplinary challenges and how you deal with them?
- As an educator, what are your perceptions and experiences of indiscipline and violence at your school?
- How should educators manage their classes in order to maintain discipline at school?
- What are discipline problems that educators face in school?
- What are some of the causes of learner discipline problems in the school?
- In instilling discipline among learners, as the school, how do you ensure that your school does not reinforce violent attitudes and add to learners' experience of school as violent? Please explain.
- What alternative methods and strategies to corporal punishment can educators implement in maintaining discipline at school?

- How successful are these methods and strategies seen as being reducing or eliminating violence and restore discipline at school?
- How do you find the alternative methods of maintaining discipline suggested by the Department of Education working?
- How does indiscipline and violence in schools influence access to education for all and the quality of education provided?
- How does indiscipline and violence in schools influence access to education for all learners/ OR are you aware of any learners who may have dropped out of school as a result of violent behaviour on them either by other learners or by teachers? Please explain.
- As a way forward, are there any other suggestions you would like to make regarding the challenges faced by educators in the management of learner discipline in school?

APPENDIX I

The challenges of managing learner discipline: The case of two schools in Pinetown District.

Documents Review schedule

The document that will be reviewed will not be older than two years and will include:

1. The School Policy Document
2. The school's Code of Conduct for Learners' policy shall also be the focus of the study,
3. Documents such as minutes book of the SGB where issues of discipline are discussed and recorded.
4. Meetings of School Disciplinary Committee will be studied.
5. The school's Log Book and the Incidents Book shall also be extensively studied.

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2005) official documents or non-personal documents imply documents that are compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by large organisations such as government institutions. Such documents are more formal and structured than personal documents. Therefore, official documents will be used to corroborate the interviews thus improving the trustworthiness of the findings. The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through the interviews. This view is also affirmed by Cohen, *et al*, (2007) who state that documents are useful in rendering more visible the phenomena under study. Extensive notes will be taken on matters relating to discipline and school-based violence.

