AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN A CHATSWORTH SECONDARY

SCHOOL OF THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, DEWNARAIN SANKAR DECLARE THAT THIS DISSERTATION ENTITLED, "AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE. AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN A CHATSWORTH SECONDARY SCHOOL OF THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE.", IS MY OWN WORK AND THAT ALL SOURCES I HAVE USED OR QUOTED HAVE BEEN INDICATED AND ACKNOWLEDGED BY MEANS OF COMPLETE REFRENCES.

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JANUARY 2000

ABSTRACT

Every educational institution depends on people behaving in acceptable ways for its success. Bad behaviour not only hinders and disrupts the educational process but also poses a fundamental threat to the culture and identity of the institution and to those who behave well. This aspect emerged in the report by the Task Team on Education Management Development, initiated by the National Minister of Education in February 1996 entitled Changing Management to Manage Change in Education. In its characterisation of the educational legacy of apartheid, the report highlighted concerns with the breakdown of the culture of teaching and learning in certain schools and acknowledged that poor discipline impacts on the disintegration of learning environments. It further emphasised that good school discipline is an important feature of any effective school.

In addition, the importance of sound discipline in the running of effective schools has been acknowledged as one of the recommendations of the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996, which stipulates that the governing body of each school formulates a Code of Conduct, the purpose of which is to create a well-organised school so that effective learning and teaching take place; to promote self discipline; to encourage good behaviour and to regulate conduct.

There is general agreement that while the process of drawing up the requisite Code of Conduct is an important element in the management of discipline, it is no more than a first step. What is required in each school is the establishment of a strategic management plan, extracted from the school's vision of a safe and secure environment for all. Drawing from this vision the emerging development plan, for the management of discipline, will incorporate strategies from a range of players whose roles inter-relate in the maintenance of discipline: e.g. learners, educators, parents, the governing body, the Department of Education, the community and other partners external to the school.

This research project proposes a possible strategy for managers of education which focuses on the potentiality that good discipline has for the enhancement of learning environments.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1   PREAMBLE

In any school, educators teach more effectively and learners learn best in an environment that is safe and orderly. But in recent years a concern that is emerging more frequently and vigorously is, without doubt, the disintegration of learning environments in schools.

As such, it is the intention of this project to investigate and explore the potentiality that a strategic approach, for the management of discipline, has in the management of change and the immense value it has in restoring the culture of learning and teaching.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The background of the study highlights the concern expressed by managers of education, educators, learners and the school community about the breakdown of the culture of learning and teaching and their feeling of helplessness and inability in coping with the spiralling chaos and violence in many South African schools today.

This concern was underscored by the Ex-Provincial Minister of Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Dr Vincent Zulu, in The Daily News (31 July 1998), where he stated that:

"The lack of order and discipline was being experienced mainly at former black schools, but it was unfortunate that indiscipline was "creeping in" at former Indian schools, which previously ran smoothly together with former white schools."

But the root cause of the disintegration of learning environments, especially in secondary schools, has to be contextualised against a background of the history of apartheid education in South Africa for the past fifty years. Schools became an obvious site for political and educational conflict as the role of education was perceived as a means to perpetuate the apartheid ideology.

Schools were used by a young band of unionised militant educators as a platform to target the Education Department. Principals and their management teams, in the execution of their duties, were caught up in the crossfire of the defiance campaign. The positional power of most principals was being eroded, committed educators began losing their desire to teach and learners, being left unattended for prolonged periods due to repeated strike actions and an absence of sanctions for indiscipline, began to display a range of behavioural problems. Emerging from this total lack of accountability in schools, the culture of teaching and learning began to buckle.

It is against this background of the history of South African education, the scars of which still linger on in most schools today, that fresh attempts be made to address the widely articulated concern about the "state" of discipline in schools and the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching.

Schools, by using a strategic approach, can forge meaningful partnerships with role-players and can develop new levels of management competencies to manage discipline in a way consistent with our new democracy. Failure to use a strategic approach is tantamount to schools flirting with failure.

1.3   FOCUS OF THE PROJECT

Undeniably, a huge body of evidence suggests that in many South African schools the culture of learning and teaching appears to be disintegrating, especially in secondary schools, that significant role-players are overwhelmed by disciplinary problems at school and they lack the capacity to manage this problem effectively.

It is against this background that the focus of this project would attempt to encourage managers of education and other significant role-players to embrace a strategic management approach to restore the culture of learning and teaching in schools. The potential that a strategic management approach has for the management of discipline is immense. Consequently, by drawing from the vast reservoir of international literature in educational management development, a basis on which to structure a plan for the management of discipline using a whole-school approach could be formulated.

Whilst this approach to school development has its origins in other contexts, its inimitable value and potential in addressing change in South African contexts, albeit with modification, cannot be denied. These modifications for bringing about institutional changes in South African schools has to be sympathetically

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undertaken against the backdrop of the historical socio-economic and political context of the legacy of apartheid because they do have a major influence in the character of schools. What is important is an understanding of the cultural factors of the various communities in our South African contexts.

The focus of the project also acknowledges that restoring the culture of learning and teaching is not simply about the acceptance of authority and the imposition of sanctions for misdemeanours in schools. It is about understanding the complex process of learning and teaching and managing and resourcing. It is also about the management of change which leads to a change in management arrangements and hence the culture of the school. It entails involving every significant role-player so that new social relationships, consistent with our new democracy, are developed. Concurrently, it means rebuilding social and material conditions for schooling to take place and capacity building so that new forms of discipline are internalised. It means that there has to be changes in attitudes, skills, competencies and values so that learners can ultimately take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Lastly the focus of the study would derive recommendations for improved management practice as they may relate to the enhancement of school discipline.

1.4 APPROACH TO THE STUDY

The approach to the study will attempt to explore and investigate, in a limited way, the perceptions and opinions of representatives of key constituencies with a

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view to identifying concerns related to the state of discipline in a selected public secondary school in the Chatsworth district of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture.

By drawing from this source a characterisation of the "problem" of discipline in this selected secondary school and the extent of indiscipline as perceived by the principal, governors, educators and learners can be conceptualised.

Further, the approach to the study will attempt to evaluate observed strategic management initiatives aimed at determining the effectiveness of discipline strategies, polices and practices which related to the management of discipline in this school.

The observed policy and practice will be evaluated against current emerging disciplinary legislation, policy, theory and practices related to strategic management, the focus being shorter term development planning and the review of selected literature in education management which focuses on the management of discipline and behaviour. All of these would contribute to a basis on which to specifically structure a strategic plan for the management of discipline aimed at the restoration of the culture of teaching and learning.

1.5   STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

School discipline issues and more especially various kinds of misbehaviour in the classroom interfere with the teaching and learning process. Precious instruction time is taken up in dealing with issues of indiscipline. But there are many schools that have a safe, orderly and well disciplined learning environment, despite their large learner enrolments, poor socio-economic background and disadvantaged

geographic location. These disciplined schools are certainly not the product of chance but are characterised by the application of effective strategic management initiatives.

The project is logically structured to offer a synthesis of findings, from a small scale investigation in a selected public secondary school for the management of behaviour.

Chapter 1 commences with a brief introduction and background to this investigation, the centrality of which is to provide a basis for the succeeding chapters and to provide a conceptual and theoretical framework for the investigation.

Chapter 2 focuses on the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study, derived from the emerging literature in issues of discipline and strategic management. The chapter commences with a re-iteration of the "problem of discipline" in the South African context and looks at current initiatives to manage discipline in schools. The chapter also incorporates documentation covering policy, legislation and regulations in the South African and KwaZulu-Natal contexts, as they relate directly or indirectly to disciplinary concerns. It further explores the potentiality of using a strategic management approach and in particular shorter term development planning for the management of discipline in schools.

Chapter 3 overviews the specific direction of the project and focuses on the research questions to be asked and the research methods to be used in its

conduct. Although, of necessity, the scope of the proposed study is limited, both by the required scale of the management project and resource limitations of the researcher. The main research tool is envisaged to be semi-structured interviews, as the conduct of these is likely to be less time consuming. A public secondary school was chosen because the most patent manifestation of disciplinary problems are encountered in urban settings and they provide greater ease of access to the researcher.

Chapter 4 has the intention of analysing and interpreting the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and attempts to present it in a logical and coherent manner so that it forms a basis to strategically manage discipline in schools.

Chapter 5 focuses on the significance of the research findings and attempts to offer educational representatives of key constituencies practical and procedural recommendations for the management of behaviour in schools. It further highlights the immense potential that a strategic management approach has for the enhancement of learning and teaching environments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The essence of effectively managing discipline is largely characterised by the ability of senior managers to acknowledge firstly, the relevance of theoretical frameworks when conceptualising the problem of discipline in local contexts and secondly, the potential that a strategic management approach has in implementing these frameworks into effective practice.

This chapter attempts to give an overview of theoretical issues which relate to discipline and its management by using a strategic approach, and essentially, comprises two parts.

The first part focuses on an understanding of discipline in general and then characterising the "problem of discipline" in the South African context. It further examines what initiatives, including legislation pertaining to disciplinary policy and procedures, are in place to address the problem of discipline in South African schools.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the theoretical aspects of strategic management, strategic planning and development planning, and examines the potential that a strategic approach has for the effective management of discipline in public secondary schools.

2.2 AN UNDERSTANDING FROM EMERGING LITERATURE ABOUT DISCIPLINE IN GENERAL.

Generally, good school discipline is conceptualised as any initiative undertaken to systematically shape the minds, hearts and attitudes of learners so that they eventually change their behaviour and attitudes in fundamental ways and through self-discipline willingly taking responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. These are vital elements of good discipline and responsible citizenship. Good discipline also underpins every facet of the culture and ethos of any school. A school which has no effective discipline policy, strategies and support mechanisms will fail to function as a centre for effective teaching and learning as poor discipline not only hinders the teaching and learning process, but consumes valuable instruction time in its management.

Whilst it is the desire of every school to have well disciplined learners, in our dysfunctional world the reality is that schools do have learners who choose to behave, for various reasons, in ways contrary to those acceptable to society. This phenomenon of bad behaviour in learners is certainly not a new one and is as old as civilisation itself. This is underscored by Socrates (circa 470-399 B.C.), when he affirms that:

> "Our youth now loves luxury. They have bad manners and contempt for authority. They show disrespect for their elders and love idle chatter instead of exercise."

Good discipline is a highly subjective and controversial issue as it is perceived as a form of control and its understanding differs from school to school. But a

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common thread in almost every school is the reality that educationalists and parents express concern about the rapid erosion of good discipline in schools. This concern, as signalled in numerous press reports, is gaining momentum. Principals, educators, parents and school governors are becoming increasingly anxious about the exaltation in the range and intensity of violent and anti-social behaviours found in many school today. On a daily basis staff and learners endure verbal abuse, physical aggression, bullying and other forms of general hostility. Learners are exposed to bullying, dangerous weapons, the threat of violence, exposure to cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, pornographic literature and school buildings are regularly burgled and vandalised. Schools are no longer safe and secure and the culture of learning and teaching is disintegrating.

However, whilst learners need to understand the importance of a sound education, it must be acknowledged that they have to endure many pressures whilst growing up. These pressures emanate from their interaction with peers, the political system, the socio-economic conditions, the apparent unimportance of what they are expected to learn and the tensions that family interactions bring. All of these bring a fair amount of inter-personal and personal conflicts and it is a combination of these influences that manifest itself outwardly in the form of deviant behaviours in schools, which are seen as convenient sites to vent pent-up emotions.

There is also an outrage in the amount of violence and gore that learners are exposed to every day. Researchers have alluded to the fact that on a daily basis learners are exposed to graphic forms of violence, as romanticised on television, motion pictures and computer games.

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The Sunday Tribune (16 May 1999) makes reference to a study conducted in the United Kingdom that reveals the extent of violent shows on television and states that:

> " ... every day, a child would see four killings, 24 guns and 14 gunshots on television. Even shows like "Tom and Jerry" show violence every 10 seconds"

The press report further commented that in the Columbine High School massacre of April 1999, in the United States of America, where two high school students massacred 13 fellow students and then killed themselves were avid fans of a violent computer game called "Doom".

Researchers are convinced that learners are influenced by constant exposure to video and computer games to the extent that these become so realistic that young learners find it difficult to distinguish between reality and fantasy. This according to them, could be the catalyst that pushes learners to commit acts of violence as they tend to imitate the violent behaviour that they are exposed to in the games.

The management of learners with emotional and behavioural difficulties has always been a source of worry and anguish for many educators as they are the ones who are faced with indisciplined learners.

They typically, respond by blaming parents for the erosion of acceptable family and social values and standards. Parents, in turn, respond by blaming schools for failing to discipline their children. But instead of being counterproductive,

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wasting time assigning blame, managers of education need to devise strategic responses that are practical and realistic in managing discipline in schools. Schools that have already embraced this approach are characterised by their orderly learning and teaching environments despite having large learner enrolments and learners from disadvantaged socio-economic background. The common feature in these schools is that managers have acknowledged that schools are inextricably an extension of society. They also acknowledge that schools mirror beliefs, values and organisational systems and, as such, they need to engage with society in meeting their needs. Further these schools understand that the management of discipline is not the task of any single component of the school community but it is a broad-based responsibility of staff and members of the school community at large. This aspect is emphasised in the following:

> "We draw attention to evidence indicating that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents."
>
> (DES 1989:14)

Essentially, the management of learner discipline is a fundamental aspect of the skills of educators. Therefore, in the management of discipline educators need, first, to take a genuine interest in the problems of each and every learner, secondly, to understand and know the cultural differences that exist beyond the school gates, thirdly, to create a positive environment by nurturing learners and to focus on the development of their self-esteem and self-confidence, fourthly, to always remember that educators who treat learners with dignity are in turn

respected by learners, fifth, to prevent bad behaviour by proactively modifying behaviour patterns and certainly not with reactively punishing it, and lastly to acknowledge and appreciate those learners who behave well.

These are all fundamental and important elements in the effective management of discipline in schools.

Parallel to this, educators themselves need to be supported by a well established network of support systems so that they do not feel overwhelmed and alone in the management of discipline.

Finally, in the management of school discipline it needs to be understood that:

> "Reducing bad behaviour is a realistic aim. Eliminating it completely is not"
>
> (DES 1989:65)

2.3 A REITERATION OF THE "PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE" IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

The problem of discipline in South African schools is unique in that the behaviour of learners, to a large extent, has to be contextualised against the background of the history of the legacy of apartheid education.

The structuralist-marxist perception of the role of South African education, in this era, was conceptualised as functional to capital's labour needs and the reproduction of the working class by providing only a basic education for black learners. Only in South Africa mass schooling was overtly different in that

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apartheid education legislated to keep learners of colour separate at school, unlike in other democracies where there is no separation of learners on the basis of race.

The role of the Education Department was generally seen as serving the function of control and to promote the ideology of the State. The management styles of both the Education Department officials and most principals were authoritarian. Most promotions to principalship were done on the basis of being rewarded for being loyal to the Education Department. (Report on COLTS, Wits., E.P.U. June 1996:24)

Overt opposition to apartheid education erupted in the 1976 era, when predictably, the strains of generating too large a number of learners through the limited resources of secondary schools and the imposition of Afrikaner nationalists to enforce teaching through the medium of Afrikaans, came to a head. Militant educator unions and learners used schools as a convenient springboard to target the Education Department and other apartheid structures. School management teams bore the full brunt of both the young militant educators and learners and this eroded the positional powers of school principals.

Committed educators lost their zest to teach and disciplined learners lost their desire to learn. Educator and learner absenteeism and indiscipline together with the total lack of accountability in schools led to the collapse of the culture of teaching and learning.

On the one hand educators felt intimidated by indisciplined learners who, being left unattended for prolonged periods, began to grow up in the shadows of criminal elements and in school they began to display a range of behavioural

problems. Educators, further accused learners of having no sense of punctuality and accountability and of assaulting and threatening them with weapons. They also felt abandoned and unsupported by parents and the school community at large. Learners on the other hand blamed educators for being indisciplined themselves and for their lack of professional commitment.

Compounding this situation, the advent of democracy in 1994 failed to magically transform historically under-resourced schools, inspite of pre-election promises by glib politicians. The endless budget cuts accompanied by corruption saw the promised resources to schools recede even further.

With a vulnerable and weak education system, schools became easy targets for deviant learners and criminals who began preying on these schools. They carried dangerous weapons, peddled drugs, robbed and committed acts of violence and terror against the school community at large.

Dr Vincent Zulu, the Ex-Minister of Education in the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department, as reported in The Daily News (31 July 1998), told delegates at a conference on the Government's ambitious Culture of Learning, Teaching and Services (COLTS) campaign that:

> " In our situation, kids come in at any time, some with their hands in their pockets and produce guns and the teachers keep quiet."

The validity of this terrifying reality is further substantiated by The Sunday Tribune (27 June 1999) that highlighted cases of violence in KwaZulu-Natal secondary schools, in the first six months of 1999. These are summarised as:

- An alleged shooting of a parent in April 1999. A nineteen year learner of the Shallcross Secondary School in Durban was arrested for the alleged shooting. Angry learners caused extensive damage to the school property and the school was closed for a week.

- Ten learners had to receive medical attention at Drakensberg Secondary School in June 1999, after being pelted with stones and assaulted by fellow learners after an alleged racial remark made by an Indian learner to an African learner.

- A learner at New Forest High School in Montclair, Durban, was allegedly stabbed to death by another learner of the school in June 1999. The motive for the stabbing was unknown.

- Outraged learners at Burnwood Secondary School in Durban went on a rampage and beat an educator in May 1999. It is alleged that the educator made a derogatory remark about them at the school's assembly.

- At Zithokozizwe High School in Scottburgh a learner was killed and two others injured allegedly by the school's principal and his head of department when they demanded a R2 refund they paid for transport for an excursion. The learners became unruly and stoned the school and cars of staff when the refund was refused.

- At Siyahlomula High School in Edendale, it was alleged that learners held management staff and educators hostage in May 1999 when they demanded that a learner charged for attempted murder be released to the school.

- The Mqhawe High School in Ndedwe was set alight by an armed gang of alleged learners from a nearby school in April 1999 destroying two classrooms. The motive is believed to be jealousy because the school had produced good results in the previous year's matric examination and learners wanted to hold a celebration.

- At the Sea Cow Lake Secondary School in Durban a learner was stabbed in the hip, allegedly by another learner at the school in March 1999. The motive for the stabbing was unknown.

- At Ntuli Primary School, Nsuze, in the North Coast of Durban, two educators were gunned down in front of their learners in February 1999. The motive for the shooting was unknown.

- At Thalala High School in Dundee, a learner was murdered. The motive was unknown.

But, the lack of discipline in schools is certainly not confined to learners only. The following cases of indiscipline involved staff of schools as reported by The Sunday Tribune (27 June 1999)

- At Vuyiswa Mtolo High School the principal was assaulted by a teacher in March. The reason was unknown. This prompted the staff to walk out of school claiming that the Education Department was not interested in their problems.

- In Dawnridge Primary School in Chatsworth, an educator was hospitalised after two educators were involved in a brawl in front of learners and parents, allegedly over the redeployment process of staff at school.

With the above state of discipline and the general inability of most schools to contain the spiralling chaos and violence, especially in public secondary schools, any attempt to manage the problem of indiscipline must be contextualised against the historical background of South African education together with economic, social and cultural factors.

This is encapsulated by the Gautent Committee of Culture and Teaching Report (June 1996:10) who urge that:

> " It is vitally important that any attempt to intervene in schools be done on the basis of an understanding of and sensitivity to school cultures. These dynamics are complex and varied and cannot simply be acted upon. Specific dynamics need to be understood sympathetically and role players need to be worked with on an ongoing basis. "

Hence it is vital that schools forge meaningful partnerships with the community

and harmonise with the culture, ethos and values of the school.

Failure to do this is tantamount to schools planning to fail.

2.4 SOUTH AFRICAN INITIATIVES, INCLUDING LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURES, THAT ARE IN PLACE TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE.

When planning for the management of discipline, it must be acknowledged that

no effective strategic planning can take place in a vacuum, without first

considering current national and provincial initiatives which include disciplinary

policies and legislation.

Sadly, to date, there are no concrete structures in place to address the escalating

violence and crime in schools at a national level, except for a publication by the

Interim Unit on Educational Management Development, researched for the

Department of Education by leading educationalists.

However at a provincial level a Committee of Four, headed by the new Minister of

Education, Eileen KaNkosi-Shandu, has been established with the intention of

exploring ways to halt the spiralling violence in KwaZulu-Natal schools.

However, given the unabating violence in schools and the lack of capacity of the

Education Department to address indiscipline in schools, a programme entitled

the "School Watch Project", an initiative of the Chatsworth branches of the

South African Police Services and the City Police, together with the Community

Education Development Trust (CEDT), was launched in the Chatsworth District in

June 1999. The aim of this project is to join forces with other individuals and organisations in a combined effort to promote a safer and effective learning and teaching environment in schools.

A further handicap in the management of discipline in schools is that available documentation and guidelines covering policy, legislation and regulations in the South African and KwaZulu-Natal contexts are somewhat limited. Those that have some value, and do relate directly or indirectly to disciplinary concerns are those signalled in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. This Act focuses on legislation governing compulsory school education, suspensions and expulsion from schools, and states that:

8. (1) Subject to any applicable provincial law, a *governing body* of a *public school* must adopt a code of conduct for the *learners* after consultation with the *learners*, *parents* and *educators* of the *school*.

(2) A code of conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful *school* environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process.

(3) The *Minister* may, after consultation with the *Council of Education Ministers*, determine guidelines for the consideration of *governing bodies* in adopting a code of conduct for *learners*.

(4) Nothing contained in *this Act* exempts a *learner* from the obligation to comply with the code of conduct of the *school* attended by such *learner*. A code of conduct must contain provisions of due process safeguarding the interests of the *learner* and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings.

9. (1) Subject to *this Act* and any applicable provincial law, the *governing body* of a *public school* may, after a fair hearing, suspend a *learner* from attending the *school* -

(a) as a correctional measure for a period not longer than one week; or

(b) pending a decision as to whether the *learner* is to be expelled from the *school* by the *Head of Department*.

(2) Subject to any applicable provincial law, a *learner* at a *public school* may be expelled only -

(a) by the *Head of Department*; and

(b) if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing.

(3) The *Member of the Executive Council* must determine by notice in the Provincial Gazette -

(a) the behaviour by a *learner* at a *public school* which may constitute serious misconduct;

(b) disciplinary proceedings to be followed in such cases;

(c) provisions of due process safeguarding the interests of the *learner* and any other party involved in the disciplinary proceedings.

(4) A *learner* or the *parent* of a *learner* who has been expelled from a *public school* may appeal against the decision of the *Head of Department* to the *Member of the Executive Council*.

(5) If a *learner* who is subject to compulsory attendance in terms of section 3(1) is expelled from a *public school*, the *Head of Department* must make an alternate arrangement for his or her placement at a *public school*.

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10. (1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a *learner*.

(2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

Another document that covers policy, legislation and regulations in the South African and KwaZulu-Natal contexts is a document prepared in 1997 by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture School Governance Training Unit entitled Capacity Building has some value in that it provides guidelines on disciplinary procedures at public schools. It further sets out the principles which underpin disciplinary hearings, offers some guidance to schools on the compilation of the school's Code of Conduct for learners and lists a set of misdemeanours that sanction a warning, suspension or expulsion. In this regard, a disturbing feature that has emerged recently is that the Education Department is rather inconsistent in approving the suspension or expulsion of learners for serious misdemeanours. Therefore many school governing bodies are exercising their legal options by seeking clarification and redress on the many silent sections of the South African Schools Act.

If major educational players are serious in their attempt to restore the culture of teaching and learning then a pre-condition for success is an alliance free of tensions. Any forced readmission of learners recommended for expulsion by the principal and governing body not only damages the reputation of the school but also sours the relationship between the school and the Education Department. This is reiterated by the Ministry of Education's first White Paper on Education and Training where it was affirmed that:

"It is now the joint responsibility of all South Africans who
have a stake in the education and training system to help
build a just, equitable and high quality system for all the
citizens, with a common culture of disciplined commitment to
learning and teaching."

<div align="right">Republic of South Africa (1995)</div>

Thus, in trying to find initiatives to manage discipline in South African schools it is
worthwhile to remember that there are parallel overseas literature that has
immence value for the management of discipline in the South African context as
it focuses on serious issues relating to disciplinary legislation.

Finally, any effective strategic planning for the management of discipline has to
be structured around current disciplinary legislation. Failure to do this would
result in a serious dent in the image of the school and would also leave the
school and educators open to expensive litigation.

The first part of the chapter examined some disciplinary concerns in the South
African context. The second part of this chapter attempts to conceptualise, from
current literature the benefits that a strategic management approach, which
incorporates strategic planning and development planning, has in bringing about
institutional change, especially in the management of discipline.

2.5 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Emerging from the rapid pace of change in South African schools today, the most
daunting challenges facing managers is the way that schools are run. Arguably,

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an essential task for managers is to creatively balance the realities of limited available resources with external pressures for schools to change. But, the management of change depends on the way managers set in place effective structures, processes and procedures to facilitate this change and to ensure that these are not in tension with the vision and values of the school community.

It needs to be acknowledged that a severe handicap in South African schools is that most managers lack the capacity to effect any substantial change planning initiative. This results in school being managed without an organisational framework due to the lack of support in educational management development.

Even the Education Department has acknowledged that there is an urgent need to improve competencies in strategic management through capacity building initiatives so that managers are able to translate vision and values to expected outcomes. This is central to strategic management as good management produces action.

Bush and West-Burnham (1994:97) conceptualise strategic management as being an approach fundamental to the process of linking vision and values to the deployment of resources.

Current literature suggests that a strategic management approach represents a powerful way for managers to organise their activities in a purposeful way so as to substantially address the demands for school improvement and to develop capacities to manage change. Furthermore, the benefits that a strategic management approach in schools has translates to; an improvement in the management of human resources and the overall level of commitment through

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professional development of educators; the management of the curriculum in an inspiring way; the management of external relations through effective partnerships with its customers and the flexibility to provide a leeway for change.

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991:14) crystallise this by concluding that:-

> "Development planning is about the management of change, certainly; but it is also about how the school has to re-create its management so that the *capacity* to manage change is increased. To put the point succinctly, *managing change involves changing management.*"

This is reinforced by Preedy (1992) who states that the fundamental element of development planning is not just about implementing innovation and change, but it is about improving the capacity to manage change by altering traditional management arrangements so that the desired change can take place.

Clearly, in changing the current management arrangements managers, through effective leadership, need to first inspire a sense of total commitment in staff to embrace the values and vision of the school. This entails the redefining of roles and the sharing of power with staff, without fearing the loss of power. Further, all successes of staff need to be acknowledged and celebrated and all suggestions made need to be objectively appraised.

Managers, in turn, need to emphasise the expectations of high quality classroom activities from educators and learners. This can be achieved by providing the necessary support structures to inspire all to aspire to new levels of performance. This empowers staff in that it generates ownership, confidence and commitment for any change that takes place. This is the heart of strategic management.

Finally, inextricably linked to the process of changing management to manage change are strategic planning and development planning. Davies and Ellison (1992:9) conceptualise this as the process or method which provide the mechanism for defining a school's aim and translating it into effective education, thus linking vision and values to any intended change.

2.6 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is essentially a longer term planning process where schools identify, prioritise and plan for change over a time-frame of between three to five years whereas development planning is visualised as detailed planning, supported by working documents, for the attainment of selected priorities over a shorter term of usually a year.

It has been claimed that the purpose of strategic planning is essentially to enable schools to develop a value-based sense of direction and to obviate simple reaction to externally imposed change. (Thurlow, 1996 Lecture Notes).

Bush and West-Burnham (1994:84) claim that strategic planning is:-

> " A process operating in an extended time-frame (three to five years) which translates vision and values into significant, measurable and practical outcomes."

Whilst an important pre-requisite in strategic planning is knowing where the school wants to go, it is only a first step in the strategic management approach. Arguably, what is important is an understanding of the underlying process that brings about this innovation and change. The strategic planning process, as

outlined by Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991:3), starts with managers asking and honestly answering the following basic questions about the school. These questions are: where is the school now ?, what changes do we need to make?, how shall we manage these changes over time?, how shall we know whether our management of change has been successful?

Although the answers are only useful to the extent that they provide a framework for the strategic planning process, Bush and West-Burnham (1994:97) suggest that a number of other management factors need to be integrated into the planning process. These have been identified as: vision, values, the core purpose, external demands, expectations, the influence focus on clients, the prioritising of the deployment of resources, managing complexity and the uncertainty factor. Advocates of school development planning stress that it is these elements, combined with strong leadership qualities, that are fundamental to strategic planning or the management of change.

But in recent years, whilst it is widely acknowledged that school development planning represents a powerful tool in the management of change, some debate has risen around it. Central to this debate is the criticism levelled by Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991:78) who claim that:-

> "Most schools find it relatively easy to produce a written plan. The *process* of creating a workable plan which can be implemented and evaluated to the real benefit of a school often proves to be more troublesome"

Other criticisms from the literature are summarised in the following.

First, critics cite that one of the greatest limitation of strategic planning is that it is still in its infancy and research is lacking in the circumstances and mechanisms involved in the process that lead to the success of strategic planning. Thus they argue that there may be some rejection for its potentiality as a catalyst for the management of change. Secondly, there is agreement that the management of change is a complex process because schools are complex organisations. Yet, strategic planning assumes a high degree of rationality. Many see this as problematic, especially in our South African context, where planning is expected to take place in a turbulent educational environment. To this end, Wallace and McMahon (1994:176 et seq.) argue that institutional planning is often at the mercy of national political and educational policy changes. In our local context, this is further complicated by the ongoing tensions between national and provincial educational policy and practices. Thirdly, strategic planning highlights empowerment of staff. But there is ample evidence which suggest that educator empowerment does not necessarily equate to better learner performance.

This is strengthened by Hargreaves & Hopkins, (1994:17) who caution that:-

> "Development plans can and do create conditions favourable to pupil achievement but by themselves have little *direct* impact on pupil progress."

Hence, any change to the culture of the school is achieved only if behavioural changes lead to new educator practices, positive attitudes and a sustained commitment to innovation.

Finally, very often managers of institutions mistakenly offer simplistic answers to complex problems. Fullan (1992:59) makes reference to studies undertaken by

Lindblom & Cohen (1979), Sarason (1987, 1983, 1990) and Schon (1971) who concede that some problems are so complex and overloaded that in the final analysis they are simply not amenable to solutions because of limited time, energy and resources on hand.

Understandably, as strategic planning which is still in its infancy, the birth of most new innovations obviously have their growing pains. But, there is a positive recognition that the immense value of strategic planning far outweighs their limitations when planning for the management of change.

In the South African context, strategic planning must be seen in the context of a change in culture, identity and values in schools. It is within this context that strategic planning and its related process of redefining roles, responsibilities and change in attitudes that makes it an ideal process for capturing strategic goals and translating them into tangible and measurable educational outcomes through development plans.

2.7 DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

There is agreement that development planning are annual planning cycles which are envisioned as a vital and integral part of school development. It is fundamental in providing a means by which incremental change is achieved and managed in a coherent manner.

Bush and West-Burnham (1994:85) conceptualise development planning as:-

> "A short-term process (12-18 months) which identifies how the strategic plan is to be implemented in a way consistent with the policy. The development plan mediates between the long-term aims and short-term priorities which are supported by the deployment of human, financial and physical resources."

Similarly, Hargreaves & Hopkins (1991:3) and (1994:1) visualise development planning as a whole-school process where priorities for development are selected and planned in detail for a year and are supported by action plans or working documents. Further, they see development planning as a response to the management of multiple innovations and change and the perceived need for a systematic and whole-school approach to planning, especially where schools are expected to be more self-managing.

But development planning is a complex process arising from the fact that each school is unique. As such, there exists no blueprint for a generic development plan for school improvement.

Therefore, the essentials in development planning are first, the quality of leadership and management structures, secondly, a thorough understanding of the development planning process, thirdly, a development plan that is created through collaboration with all role-players and finally the effective implementation of the development plan in order to produce the desired results.

In other words, the process involved in creating a quality development plan has typically *four identifiable stages* viz., *an audit stage, a construction stage, an implementation stage and an evaluation stage.*

The development planning process is initiated with an **audit stage** where the school identifies its current strengths, weaknesses and resource base so that a framework for prioritising the areas of change is secured. It is vital that the audit is contextualised within the vision, values and culture of the school if the development plan intends to support the development and maintenance of change. Once this is done, the process proceeds to the construction stage.

In the **construction stage** the development plan is carefully constructed in detail for the year, against a background of the development of longer term priorities. Central to this stage is the identification of areas that need to be developed and the priorities that will be deferred to later years, the determination of the amount of change to be achieved, the time frame needed to achieve and manage this change, the extent of available external support and how scarce resources would be allocated. It is of immense importance to note that when constructing a development plan, researchers acknowledge that the planning process is more significant than the development plan itself. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991:40), advise that the more care taken in the construction of the plan, the more easier it would be to manage the process of implementation.

It is also vital that role-players be part of the construction and planning process as this motivates and unites people and preserves the inimitable value of the development plan. Being part of a plan creates opportunities for genuine and open dialogue and, more importantly, nurtures ownership and a sense of firm commitment for the corporate development plan.

In this regard, Torrington and Weightman (1989:29) remark that:

> "Without a central sense of unity, schools, like all other organisations, are no more than a collection of people who would rather be somewhere else because they lack effectiveness and conviction"

Once the development plan has been approved by the school community it is now ready to be put into action.

The **implementation stage** is generally considered to be the key stage in the development planning process since set targets are turned into action.

But, as education is a dynamic process, it is extremely rare for any school development plan to run its course unmodified. Therefore development plans need to be fluid and flexible in nature, as they are merely statements of intentions. To serve these changing needs, the plan must be regularly reviewed, revised or even postponed according to the nature of the change in circumstances.

Of critical importance in the implementation of the development plan is the sustained support, acceptance and commitment of every member of staff for the plan because ultimately the onus lies on them to implement it. Therefore, staff development and support structures are crucial elements for the effective implementation of the plan. Areas for staff support should be identified on the basis of needs and circumstances and staff in turn should be encouraged to review and reflect on their own performance for professional development. A vital ingredient in this supportive process is effective communication and appraisal.

Concluding the development planning process is an **evaluation stage** where an evaluation is made to measure the success of what was initiated against what was intended. Emerging from this evaluation stage any recommendations for improvements would be addressed and included in future development plans as the process of development planning is an explicit ongoing process in meeting the challenges of change management.

Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991:17) crystallise this by stating that:-

> "At present, schools are facing two kinds of pressure. The first is
> that of development. Schools cannot remain where they are if
> they are to implement recent reforms. The second pressure is
> that of maintenance. Schools need to maintain some continuity
> with their present and past practices."

The literature has suggested that a strategic management approach is an ideal
and powerful way for schools to change their culture by changing the culture of
their management.

It is now up to forward thinking schools to harness this immense potential through
effective strategic and development planning.

2.8 THE BENEFITS OF USING A STRATEGIC APPROACH IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE

One of the areas that can benefit immensely from a strategic approach to
managing change is, without doubt, the issue of discipline in schools. Concerns
from managers of education, educators, parents and politicians, as signalled in
numerous press reports, stress the urgency to manage discipline more
effectively, as it is seriously impacting on the breakdown of the culture of
teaching and learning.

By changing the management arrangements individual schools can shape and
influence attitudes and performance of both educators and learners, These in
turn substantially shape the quality of discipline in schools.

In this regard, Lord Elton, Chairman of the Committee of Enquiry into discipline in schools, in a research report in England, stresses that:-

> "The behaviour of pupils in a school is influenced by almost every aspect of the way in which it is run and how it relates to the community it serves. It is the combination of all these factors which give a school its character and identity. Together, they can produce an orderly and successful school... ."

(DES 1989:8)

Explicit in this is the forging of effective partnerships between the school and the community which it serves when planning for the management of discipline. Unless key-players are active participants in any development process, any change that is implemented would breed resentment and resistance.

Other benefits of using a strategic approach in the management of discipline can be summarised as follows:-

First, implicit in the vision of schools is the creation of a safe and secure teaching and learning environment. Development planning is a powerful mechanism in translating the school's vision and values into action by pointing the school in a specified direction. (West-Burnham, 1992:71).

Secondly, planning for the management of discipline requires that schools understand disciplinary policies and procedures, including legislation. Development planning allows schools to focus on this in a more purposeful and coherent way. It also allows schools to cope and interpret external policy requirements and to integrate it with its own unique culture and values. (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991:7)

Thirdly, development planning fosters a collegial climate in which there is corroboration amongst staff, the governing body, parents and learners in the selection, planning, implementation and evaluation of a common discipline policy. As a result, morale, communication, commitment and accountability is improved and a trusting partnership between the school and the community is created. Fourthly, development planning entails a shift from traditional management structures of controlling to one where new roles and job descriptions are defined. Educators are able to recognise benefits for themselves as they are recipients of a more sophisticated support and development programme. This builds greater confidence and commitment to implement the disciplinary plans and policies and in doing so creates a system of quality assurance which provides the link between accountability and school improvement.

Fifthly, schools tend to be pro-active in managing discipline. Through developmental planning a continuous process of school evaluation is promoted. This directly impacts on the school's capacity to provide quality education by developing confident educators, who acquire a multitude of teaching skills and strategies. This is vital as most of the work involved in implementing the disciplinary policy plan will fall on them.

Finally, dealing with indisciplined learners result in high levels of stress for educators. Development planning, which is essentially seen as the management of change, increases the ability of educators to exercise greater control over change, by being an integral part of the change process.

2.9 CONCLUSION

It cannot be stressed that there is now, more than ever, pressures on school managers to develop strategies to manage the rapid pace of educational change. If self-managing schools are earnest about meeting the challenges of greater parental demands for the provision of quality and accountability then it is imperative that they develop strategic management capacities to manage change.

This chapter has attempted to evaluate the substantial literature focussing on issues of discipline and strategic management. It further examined the potential and immense value that a strategic management approach has in providing mechanisms for effectively managing the problem of discipline in the South African context in a coherent way.

The intention of chapter three is, through the use of semi-structured interviews and appropriate research methods, to characterise the extent of the "problem" of discipline in a selected secondary public school by eliciting the perceptions and opinions of key representatives. Implicit in this would be an observation of any strategic management initiatives aimed at determining the effectiveness of existing discipline polices and practices which related to the management of discipline in this school.

Finally, using a strategic management approach, these policies and practices will be evaluated and matched against current emerging disciplinary policies and practices which relate, not only in the South African context but also to parallel overseas contexts.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DIRECTION AND RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter highlighted the concerns of principals, educators, school governing bodies, parents and learners about the spiralling violence and general lack of discipline in South African schools and its impact on the disintegration of learning environments, more especially in secondary schools.

The clear message is that for schools to continue to function as effective centres of learning and teaching there is now, more than ever, an urgent need for strategic management interventions to stem the cancerous growth of indiscipline in schools. More importantly, for success, any intervention at school level must lead to significant changes in the culture of schools and ultimately changes in the attitudes and behaviours of its learners.

Further, with the emergence of democracy in South Africa these changes must acknowledge that schools are now a melting pot of diverse cultures and any initiative for the management of change must recognise and embrace these cultural differences. It is therefore vital that perceptions and opinions of key representatives of constituents, especially those from disadvantaged communities, need to be canvassed in order to manage discipline more effectively.

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3.2   THE RESEARCH DIRECTION

Emerging from the literature is a huge body of evidence which suggests that significant role-players are largely overwhelmed by the state of learner indiscipline in South African schools. Arguably, the introduction of the South African Schools Act: 84 of 1996, which signalled the abolition of corporal punishment in schools, has now presented educational managers with a fresh challenge to explore and initiate ways, that are consistent with our new democracy and constitution, when managing discipline in schools today.

It is against this background that the intention of this chapter is first, to focus on the research questions and second, to account for the research methods employed by forwarding reasons for the choice of the research instruments, the sample used, the method of data collection and the advantages and limitations that are experienced in this empirical study.

Background of the researched school

A social inventory of the researched school reveals that the school is situated in the heart of a traditionally "Indian" area with learners coming from families which are predominantly settled middle-class.

The staff at the school comprises a newly appointed female principal, a deputy principal, four heads of departments and 29 educators. The learner population is eight hundred and sixty two of which four hundred and forty nine are boys and four hundred and thirteen are girls.

The school has twenty three graded class units, each averaging approximately thirty seven learners, ranging from Grade eight to Grades twelve. The majority of learners who seek admission at the Grade eight entrance level are from three feeder primary schools in the area.

However with the advent of democracy in the country the school has recently seen an influx of about three hundred and forty five learners from historically disadvantaged backgrounds who travel long distances to attend this school. The reason for this phenomenon is that their parents believe first, that a better and affordable education is delivered in predominantly Ex-House of Delegate schools, secondly, parents want their children to be taught through the medium of English, thus increasing their chances of employment in the economic sector and thirdly, schools in "Indian" areas are perceived to have a safer learning and teaching environment and are free of violence and disruptions when compared to schools in disadvantaged areas.

This school was chosen because the most patent manifestation of disciplinary problems are encountered, to a large extent, in urban settings and this school provides ease of access to the researcher who is employed full time as a principal in a nearby primary school in the Chatsworth District. Also of interest to the researcher is the fact that this school has been plagued with learner indiscipline, arising primarily because the appointment of a permanent principal had only been finalised in 1999 after being vacant from 1997.

Another factor advanced for the poor discipline in the school has been the numerous tensions between the Chairperson of the governing body and the staff of the school, culminating in the entire governing body resigning in June 1999 and a new governing body being elected in August 1999.

Focus of the research

The focus of the research is to elicit the perceptions and concerns of individual key role-players in a public secondary school in the Chatsworth District in Durban. The conduct of this research is by means of an interview schedule.

The first part of the interview schedule covers biographical data, which may have some value in the data analysis. The intention of the second part of the interview schedule, which contains a series of ten questions, relates to the areas to be researched. This will be discussed at a later stage.

The focus of the research is primarily:

1. to explore and characterise the problem of discipline in the selected secondary public school by determining the seriousness of the problem of discipline, the specific types of disciplinary problems they find difficult to deal with and what action they think might best be taken to help manage the problem of discipline in their school. Disciplinary problems experienced are confined to those that occur after the introduction of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 that legislates that the administration of corporal punishment in public schools is a punishable offence.

2. to observe and note existing strategies, practices, disciplinary structures and sanctions that are in place to tackle the problem of discipline and to measure the effectiveness of the school's Code of Conduct and its Disciplinary Committee.

3. to match these observed disciplinary polices and practices, including legislation, against emerging current policies, practices and legislation of existing South African and parallel international contexts.

4. to establish to what extent the school is embracing a strategic management approach in the management of discipline and to determine whether the concerns and suggestions of key role-players, organisations and individuals are incorporated in its management.

3.3   THE RESEARCH METHODS

In any survey, whether it is large-scale or not, Cohen and Manion (1994) assert that one or more of the following data-collection techniques can be used: structured or semi-structured interviews, self-completion or postal questionnaires, standardised tests or attitude scales.

After reviewing a range of possible research methods it was decided to use semi-structured interviews as being the most appropriate research tool to elicit the opinions and perceptions of key constituents.

The structure of the research instrument

In collecting the data for the study in the selected school, semi-structured interviews were preferred because it is a style most favoured in small-scale research projects. It allows the limited number of interviewees to gain confidence

and its flexible style can be adapted to the personality and circumstances of the people being interviewed. (Johnson D : 1994).

As the nature of the study requires an in-depth discussion rather than the provision of curt answers, a less formal approach allows the researcher to probe and elicit a fuller response by allowing the respondents to talk at length. Further, the researcher is able to maintain the sequence of the interview questions and there is scope for questions to be repeated or simplified, unlike in the case of a formal interview.

Permission for research access was obtained from the principal prior to the interviews and the nature of the enquiry was explained to each interviewee. Times for interview appointments were mutually arranged. Confidentiality of the interviews was assured and a feedback of the research findings was promised. Although each interview was scheduled to be approximately thirty minutes in duration, where necessary, respondents were allowed the flexibility of more time.

Each respondent was interviewed by the researcher and all were asked the same ten questions during the interviews. The questions used in each interview was devised from the themes which emerged from the literature in the previous chapter and focused on the areas for research. All responses were immediately written down during the interview.

(see Appendix 1 for the interview schedule.)

The sample

In order to achieve the best possible results in this research project it would have been optimal to survey the perceptions and opinions of role-players in all public secondary schools in the Chatsworth District. However, due to time constraints experienced by the researcher it was decided to confine this small-scale study to a public secondary school in the Chatsworth District only.

For this study a random stratified sample was chosen on the basis that the opinions and perceptions of key-players, each of which has a different role function in the school, would be fairly sufficient to gain the required data regarding disciplinary issues. In the school, the sample consisted of the principal, the deputy principal, who is in charge of discipline in the school, three heads of departments, four educators, a senior learner and a parent who is the Chairperson of the school's Disciplinary Committee.

The following reasons are advanced for interviewing each of the following key-players:

1. The principal, as the head of the institution, is ultimately responsible and accountable for the provision of a safe and secure learning and teaching environment and also her style of management has a profound influence on the behaviour of learners at the school.

2. The deputy principal, since his range of duties include handling disciplinary issues in school on a daily basis and it is his task to present all cases of indiscipline to the Disciplinary Committee for further action.

3. Three heads of departments because they are the first to intervene on disciplinary issues which are brought to their attention by learners and educators.

4. Four educators, because the site of almost all learning, teaching and most disciplinary problems are located within the confines of the classroom. Therefore in trying to characterise the problem of discipline in schools, it is vital to understand the concerns of educators because they are, arguably, the foot-soldiers of the learning and teaching process.

   These educators were chosen without any emphasis being placed on gender, learning areas taught or teaching experience.

5. A senior learner, because central to the management of discipline in schools are attitudinal and behavioural changes in learners. If they are to take responsibility for their own behaviour then it is prudent that their concerns are articulated and addressed.

   This learner is also a member of the school's governing body,

6. A parent who is the Chairperson of the school's Disciplinary Committee. This committee is responsible for managing all disciplinary issues which are referred to the governing body.

Limitations of the study

This small-scale empirical survey is confined to an investigation of the management of discipline in a selected public secondary school in the Chatsworth District of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture. During the conduct of this study there were limitations. These are:

First, being employed as a principal, time constraints and other responsibilities, excluding this research, limited the researcher to restrict the investigation to only a public secondary school, in the Chatsworth District. Crucially, it would be appropriate and ideal to broaden the scope of the research study to a primary public school as well. Whilst it is acknowledged that this restriction will have an impact on the scope of the research findings and range of recommendations, it would certainly not invalidate it in its entirety. Perhaps, a justification is that the nature of this empirical study is limited in that it is intentionally small-scale in design.

Second, any parallels into the management of discipline in rural and other contexts cannot be inferred as this study is essentially confined to an urban setting.

3.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter focussed on the research questions and the research methods used in obtaining data in this empirical study into the management of discipline. It further, revealed the advantages and the limitations in its conduct.

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The intention of the next chapter is essentially to present and interpret the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews in a logical and coherent manner. In this way a characterisation of the problem of discipline in the researched public secondary school can be contextualised and the huge benefits that a strategic management approach has for the management of discipline could be advanced for it potentiality.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter sought to characterise the problem of discipline in a selected public secondary school by examining the perceptions of key constituents. Their views and concerns were identified through the medium of semi-structured interviews, each of which covered the principal, the deputy principal, three heads of departments, four educators, a senior learner and the Chairperson of the school's Disciplinary Committee. The interview schedule contained ten questions.

The chapter also forwarded appropriate reasons for the use of the research methods in collecting the data for this empirical study.

The intention of chapter four is specifically to analyse and interpret the data collected during the semi-structured interviews and to present this information in a logical and coherent fashion in order to structure a framework to strategically manage discipline in secondary schools.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Perception of the seriousness of the problem of discipline in the school

In response to the perception of how serious the problem of learner indiscipline is

at the school all interviewees confirmed that indiscipline in the school is a serious problem but with only about ten percent of learners. Besides routine disciplinary problems which are encountered during the process of teaching and learning, a real concern is that a few learners are resorting to carrying an array of dangerous weapons to school for various reasons. Another noticeable aspect is that many learners are found in possession of cigarettes and, to a lesser extent, marijuana. they added that they suspect drugs are sold on the school premises by some learners who are runners for druglords in the community. Drugs are, however, not taken during school hours.

Specific types of problems encountered in and outside the classroom

When asked about the specific types of disciplinary problems which are encountered in and outside the classroom their responses indicated that the nature of disciplinary problems encountered in the classroom were substantially different to that found outside the classroom. It was stated that this was largely due to the fact that the classroom is perceived to be strictly the locus of teaching and learning, whilst the environment outside the classroom is seen as time-out from academic matters.

In analysing the data in respect of the different types of behavioural problems encountered inside the classroom to those found outside and around the school two tables are presented.

Table A displays the types of deviant behaviour encountered most frequently in the classroom. These behaviours are prioritised from the most frequent to the least as perceived by staff.

Similarly, table B displays the various types of deviant behaviour educators observed most frequently outside the classroom and around the school.

TABLE A

DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE CLASSROOM

NO.	MISDEAMENOURS ENOUNTERED IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY	REPORTED BY STAFF AS A PERCENTAGE	LEARNER DEVIANCE AS A PERCENTAGE
1.	Homework tasks not done, incomplete or copied. Educational equipment and work-books left at home. Not engaged in productive work during lessons.	98	48
2.	Talking out of turn and distracting other learners. Shouting out answers. Passing silly remarks.	98	32
3.	Arriving late for lessons.	85	15
4.	Moving around the class without permission.	70	15
5.	Disregard for dress code.	65	12
6.	Being rude and insulting other learners.	60	12
7.	Passing insolent remarks and responses to educators.	55	10
8.	Eating or chewing gum during lesson periods.	50	8
9.	Shoving, punching, slapping and kicking other learners.	50	8
10.	Blatant disregard for the educators' instructions.	40	7
11.	Writing on furniture, walls and defacing charts and pin boards.	35	7
12.	Bunking classes.	30	5
13.	Verbal abuse and aggression towards educators.	20	5

TABLE B

DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM AND AROUND THE SCHOOL

NO.	MISDEAMEANOURS ENCOUNTERED IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY	REPORTED BY STAFF AS A PERCENTAGE	LEARNER DEVIANCE AS A PERCENTAGE
1.	Lack of respect for fellow learners.	95	40
2.	Rough play, jostling, kicking and slapping.	95	40
3.	Running around the school and generally being noisy.	90	39
4.	Smoking in toilets during and in-between periods.	85	38
5.	Use of obscene language and insulting other learners.	86	36
6.	Returning late to class for lessons.	85	15
7.	Frequenting areas which are out of bounds.	85	15
8.	Learners intimidating and bullying other learners.	80	12
9.	Making offensive remarks and disregarding educators' instructions.	80	10
10.	Physical aggression to other learners resulting in injury.	75	6
11.	Absconding from school.	75	5
12.	Writing graffiti, vandalising and destroying school property.	70	4
13.	Carrying of dangerous weapons to school.	60	2
14.	Experimenting with drugs and other illegal substances.	58	1

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Strategies introduced to manage learner discipline in the school

When asked about what strategies had the school introduced to manage learners with disciplinary problems the general response was that the school now has a Disciplinary Committee and a Code of Conduct for learners. The effectiveness of both are yet to be ascertained. Notwithstanding this, Table C lists some of the strategies that are used by staff when dealing with disciplinary problems in the school.

TABLE C

STRATEGIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE

NO.	TYPE OF STRATEGY USED BY STAFF	% STAFF
1.	Immediately reprimanding the learner in or outside the classroom and then reasoning with him or her.	98
2.	Sending the learner outside the classroom for the duration of the period.	90
3.	Referring the learner to the Guidance Counsellor.	85
4.	Referring the learner to the respective heads of departments for further action.	85
5.	Detaining the learner after school.	60
6.	Referring the learner to the deputy principal or to the principal. This serves as a first warning.	60

After the first warning, if the learner commits another misdemeanour the learner is once again referred to the deputy principal or the principal.

Thereafter the following steps are taken:

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STEP 1.   the principal brings the misdemeanour to the attention of parents. This serves as a second warning.

STEP 2.   the principal requests the parents to call at school to discuss the misdemeanour in the presence of the learner. This serves as a final warning before the matter is referred to the Disciplinary Committee for disciplinary action.

STEP3.   the principal brings the misdemeanour to the attention of the Disciplinary Committee who after a fair hearing recommends an appropriate sanction. This can range from a stern warning, suspension of the learner or a recommendation to the Head of Department for the learner to be expelled.

Specific types of behaviour which are difficult to handle

When the interviewees were asked what specific types of behaviour they found difficult to deal with in school, almost all members of staff replied that none of the routine types of indiscipline encountered in the classroom or around the school were difficult to handle. These misdemeanours were identified as showing lack of respect for other learners, being noisy, loitering in areas demarcated out of bounds to learners, verbally abusing learners, leaving school without permission, late coming to school and the classrooms, high absenteeism rate, vandalism and physical destruction of school property, making insolent remarks to other educators and writing graffiti on walls.

However the learner, who was interviewed, revealed that he had encountered cases of bullying of learners by other learners which they found difficult to handle. Two educators remarked that cases of physical aggression involving learners are disconcerting.

Extent of support and training received to manage discipline

When asked the extent of support and training they received to strategically manage discipline in the school the responses revealed that none of them received any formal training and support, except for those received as part of their educator training programme.

Familiarity with current disciplinary policies, practices and legislation

When the interviewees were asked how familiar they were with current disciplinary policies, practices and legislation, the principal, deputy principal and the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee responded that their knowledge is limited only to the document entitled Capacity Building, a publication by the Provincial Department of Education's Schools Governance and Training Unit.

The heads of departments, educators and the learner replied that their knowledge is limited to the fact that they are aware that the administration of corporal punishment in schools has been abolished. They further stated that they are aware that the school's governing body has the authority to recommend that learners be expelled from school for serious offences. They admitted that they are unaware of the process involved during a disciplinary hearing.

Responsibility for the management of discipline

In response to the question who should be responsible for the management of discipline in the school, the principal, the deputy principal, the heads of departments, two educators, the parent and the learner stated that the management of discipline should be a whole school approach, involving staff, governors, parents, learners and the community. One educator felt that it is entirely the responsibility of Management staff alone to manage discipline. The other educator was adamant that it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are well behaved in school because the role of educators is already stressful and taxing.

Support for deviant learners

In response to what can be done to support and help learners who persist in deviant behaviours there were many diverse responses. The principal, deputy principal, the heads of departments and the parent felt that the home school partnership should be strengthened to improve communication and they indicated that there ought to be greater psychological support systems in place to assist learners with deviant behaviours.

Two educators responded that these learners should be severely punished, whilst the other two were passionate in that these learners be assisted to ameliorate their bad behaviour.

Reasons for the decline of discipline in the school

In response to the question of what are the reasons for the decline of discipline in the school two educators responded by stating that a major factor was that parents have lost control in effecting good values and discipline at home. They added that the morale and motivation of teachers are at an all time low due to job insecurity, large classes, poor salaries, lack of learning resources and the Education Department's rationalisation and redeployment process. They further revealed that there is a serious lack of personal security in schools for both learners and staff members. The principal and the deputy principal stated that discipline is not effected consistently by every educator in the school. They further revealed that learners are not kept fully occupied in the classrooms and educators lack essential group management skills. The principal highlighted the concern of high educator absentee rate, late coming and leave taking for matters that could be expedited after school hours. With the shortage of staff this has a major impact on discipline as learners are sometimes left in the care of prefects and parents who assist with relief teaching.

The parent referred to an increase in dysfunctional families in the community arising from poor parenting skills, family violence, drug and alcohol abuse, the present poor economic conditions which resulted in a high rate of unemployment, the high divorce rate which sees single parents struggling to rear children and both parents being forced to work. As a result children are left at home without adequate adult supervision. The deputy principal highlighted the negative influence of television and unsuitable publications available to learners but added that the extent of the influence was dependant on the level of maturity of the learners.

An educator added that the lack of psychological support systems for learners are contributory factors to indiscipline in schools. Another educator stated that the integration of learners from different cultural groups in school has brought tensions to the surface due to a lack of understanding of cultures.

However all interviewees voiced their concern that the Education Department has reneged on providing quality education by not funding schools adequately. This financial cutbacks and the lack of effective capacity building initiatives in managing discipline has impacted on material and human resources and has provided fertile ground for bad learner behaviour to grow.

The heads of department added that some educators lack professional commitment and accountability. Parallel to this they revealed that educators are not appraised and those who are incompetent are rewarded in the same way as those educators who are committed. Further, they reported that educator strikes actions have not helped to promote good discipline in schools as many learners are sent home early and often end up in shopping malls, parks and other places which parents would not approve of during instruction time.

But, it was the learner who made some startling revelations when he stated that some educators, especially those who have been identified in excess at the school often spent most of their time in the staffroom idly chatting whilst learners are left unsupervised in the classroom.

He stated that educators always sought the support of learners during union strike action. Whilst learners sympathised and supported them on their salary and conditions of employment issues, they feel that they are eventually being used by educators because lost instruction time is very seldom made up.

He continued by stating that he is aware of educators who are employed in other

sectors after school hours and other who are engaged in offering private tuition to their own learners, at a fee.

He confirmed that it is generally these ill prepared educators who gloss over the syllabi in the classroom.

Finally, he conceded that peer pressure often causes learners to break school rules.

Steps that can be taken to improve learner behaviour in the school

When asked what steps the principal, educators, parents and learners can take to improve learner behaviour in the classroom and the school, the principal reported that it is vital that every member of staff be collectively committed in promoting good discipline at the school. Further she stated that the Education Department should provide support, guidance, in-service training to educators in managing discipline and more funding to provide for learning resources. The deputy principal stated that there should be more parental involvement in school activities as only an average of five percent of parents attend school meetings. Two of the four educators reported that there should be tougher sanctions for certain offences. They emphasised that random learner searches should be conducted for dangerous weapons, cigarettes and drugs. They also felt that establishing smaller classes would curb the rate of indiscipline.

The other two educators replied that more support for educators ought to be available from the management staff and colleagues who have more experience in dealing with disciplinary issues.

The Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee stated that changing the learning and teaching environment and improving communication between the school and

home will help to promote good discipline in the school. He emphasised that educators must be appraised for the sake of accountability and those who lack professional commitment should be recommended for dismissal by the governing body.

The learner replied that the curriculum should be meaningful and educators should make their teaching style more interesting. He suggested that educators ought to provide bridging classes in English to learners who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. He further emphasised the need for educators to respect and listen to the views of all learners. He concluded by saying that learners will only be motivated to behave well if educators set the example by being good role models.

Regarding parents, he stated that they need to give their children their own "space" as many learners from strict homes use the school as a site to vent their anger and frustrations.

4.3 INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Perception of the seriousness of the problem of discipline in the school

In analysing the evidence about how serious the problem of indiscipline is at the school it is important to note that the educators' gender, age or learning areas did not appear to influence the perception of the seriousness of the problem of discipline in the school. However, it was observed that educators, who have fewer years of teaching experience tend to perceive indiscipline at the school as being slightly more serious when compared to the evidence of those who are teaching for longer periods.

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Specific types of misbehaviour encountered in and outside the classroom

In analysing the evidence regarding the specific types of misbehaviour encountered inside and outside the classroom, it was reported that these behaviours were different with a large proportion of misbehaviour in the classroom being of a routine nature. These mainly tend to disrupt the flow of lessons, while outside the classroom it was one of general rowdiness together with a few cases of indiscipline of a more serious nature. In the classroom educators had to deal with offences, which centred around those reflected in Table A.

Other offences reported were more infrequent, but were considered serious and they include learners making rude remarks to other learners, insolent remarks by learners to educators, vandalism, bunking of lessons and disregard of educators' instructions. Those educators who reported these offences were confined mainly to younger inexperienced educators. Regarding discipline out of the classroom it was found that they are again mainly of a routine nature as reflected in Table B.

Of concern was that educators reported that some of their learners were not punctual for lessons. On closer examination it was ascertained that they were part of the group of learners who smoke during change of periods and during recess. It was further established that many learners, including girls, smoke on the school premises on a daily basis during recess and in between periods. Further, the report that about eight learners are experimenting with drugs and illegal substances gives rise for concern. This has yet to be substantiated by stronger evidence. Some of the offences committed by learners, like smoking in

toilets during breaks and in between periods and absconding from school, seem to suggest that learners are grossly under-supervised, especially during recess. Similarly, the problem of learners frequenting areas demarcated as areas which are out of bounds and the fact that five percent of learners are absconding from school particularly after the second registration, highlights the lack of vigilance on the part of educators and the school's management team.

The problem of learners who disregard the instruction of educators should be addressed by the provisions contained in the Code of Conduct. Failure to do this immediately would send the signal to learners that the school is not serious about managing discipline. Other serious offences reported by staff indicate that some learners and outsiders are responsible for the destruction and defacing of school property, mainly in the form of writing graffiti, breaking window panes, damaging external lights and other fixtures, breaking asbestos wall panels and generally using the school premises as a venue to smoke marijuana take drugs and consume alcohol. They qualified this by stating that serious instances of destruction, vandalism and burglary, are committed during weekends and school recess. Perhaps, this problem can be controlled with the employment of a full time security guard and a request for more frequent patrols from the South African Police Services.

Of growing concern was the increase of intimidation of smaller learners by learners who are predominantly from the higher grades. Allied to this is the report that some learners are carrying weapons which are considered dangerous. It was ascertained that learners who carry dangerous weapons are those that travel long distances by bus or trains. It is here that many learners are exposed to undesirable elements who prey on learners, assaulting them and robbing them

of money and other valuables. It is for this reason that many learners carry weapons for self protection. As this is a serious issue, the school needs to immediately bring this to the attention of the South African Police Services.

Whilst the school has been fortunate that none of the learners showed signs of physical aggression or threats of physical attacks towards educators, it was learnt that learner aggression towards educators has been progressively more aggressive over the last five years.

Strategies that are employed to manage learner discipline in the school

With regard to the strategies employed by the school, which are listed in TABLE C, to manage discipline it was reported that not all educators are consistent in upholding the school's Code of Conduct. This sends the signal to learners that they can overstep the boundaries of unacceptable behaviours and not be reprimanded.

However, a reason forwarded by an educator for this inconsistency was that when deviant learners are sent to the principal or senior management staff members for an appropriate sanction, learners were let off too lightly. This made her feel dejected as her judgement was compromised.

But, it has to be pointed out that educators need to acknowledge that it is procedurally correct for senior staff to firstly, listen to both sides of the situation, secondly, to consider any contextual factors and background of the learner which educators are sometimes unaware of and thirdly, to dispense sanctions within the parameters of current disciplinary legislation.

Regarding those educators who make constant referrals to the principal for relatively minor offences, it needs to be stated that this not only compromises her

time but also her function as manager who ought to be seen as a final arbiter in serious cases of indiscipline.

It was also revealed that some educators frequently sent learners outside the classroom for the duration of the lesson. In this regard, many educational psychologists feel that this is not an appropriate form of sanction as learners would be missing out on valuable instruction time and they also may suffer a loss of self-esteem as they are in full glare of other learners of the school. Perhaps, detention is considered by many to be a better alternative.

Specific types of behaviour that are difficult to handle

Regarding the specific types of behaviour they found difficult to deal with in school, interviewees stated that whilst they regarded many disciplinary problems encountered in and around the classroom and the school generally as routine problems, they assert that what stresses and overwhelms them is the endless stream of relatively minor misdemeanours they are inundated with. An educator further commented that teaching is becoming more of a battle as it is frustrating and stressful. She added that motivating learners to learn is becoming increasingly more difficult.

This point is underscored by (Kyriacou :1986) who states that educators who lack skills in classroom management are likely to succumb to higher levels of occupational stress.

A female head of department reported that in cases of violent outbreaks of assaults that result in injury, although these occurred very infrequently, it frightened her and she added that these incidents do have a negative impact on the general tone, morale and atmosphere in the school.

Extent of support and training received to manage discipline

It was surprising to note that interviewees, when asked to what extent they received support and training to strategically manage discipline in the school, their response revealed that none of them received any structured or formal training in managing discipline. In this regard, it is important to note that the Elton Report, concerning discipline in schools, emphasises that group management skills are probably the single most important factor in achieving good standards of classroom behaviour. It further concludes that ineffective management of learner behaviour must not be seen in terms of the educator's personal inadequacy or negligence but in the lack of training in classroom management skills.

Knowledge of current disciplinary policies, practices and legislation

When interviewees were asked to disclose their knowledge of current disciplinary policies, practices and legislation when handling disciplinary issues, it was disturbing to note that they are totally unfamiliar in this area. This aspect needs to be addressed as soon as possible as the rights of learners may be compromised and educators themselves may be open to legal action due to lack of knowledge of current educational legislation. It must be pointed out that any legal action brought against an educator leaves a severe mark not only on the image of the school but also on the reputation of the educator.

Responsibility for the management of discipline in the school

In response to the question who should be responsible for the management of discipline in the school, the perception that it is the responsibility of parents only to promote good discipline needs comment. The view of attributing "problem learners" to "problem parents", because these parents failed to enforce discipline at home was rejected because it is common knowledge that only certain educators experience problems with a particular set of learners whilst others do not. Further, these educators who experience disciplinary problems seem to lack confidence in their own abilities and see their class as potentially hostile. They tend to be confrontational rather than disarming and learners use this weakness by gaining status with their classmates when challenging the teacher's authority. An educator conceded from hindsight that the manner in which conflict situations are handled by many educators had a direct bearing on the outcomes of educator-learner conflict.

Support for deviant learners

In response to what can be done to support and help learners who persist in deviant behaviours the consensus was that the intention of any imposed sanctions on deviant learners ought not to be seen as being punitive, per se, but as a reminder to learners to ultimately take responsibility for their own behaviour. In this regard, schools should cater for the special educational needs of learners with emotional and behavioural problems. Effective support systems should be provided by the Education Department by making available specialist educators and educational psychologists to schools.

Social workers ought to work in tandem with schools in assisting learners who come from homes that are identified as dysfunctional.

The ideal would be for educators to pro-actively identify high risk learners and to put in place interventions strategies to rehabilitate them before these learners commit offences.

The deputy principal added that parents should not abdicate their responsibility of promoting good attitudes and values through moral, religious and spiritual teachings. Furthermore, parents must develop good working partnerships with educators through effective channels of communication.

Reasons for the decline of discipline in the school

When asked for the reasons for the decline of discipline in the school, an educator pointed out that the status of educators in the eyes of parents and learners has declined over the years. This was largely due to the numerous unionised strike action where learners are left unattended for prolonged periods without adequate supervision. Another educator remarked that the insecurities of the restructuring and redeployment process, cutbacks in education, poor salaries and working conditions and an increase in the workloads of educators have left them insecure and demotivated. He further stated that classes are now too large and felt that smaller classes would be beneficial in dealing with indiscipline more effectively, especially in classes with lesser abilities.

But research conducted by Rutter (1979) found no significant relationship between smaller classes and improvement in discipline.

The startling revelation that some educators lack professional commitment and accountability by leaving learners unsupervised in the classroom, moonlighting in

other sectors after school hours and are engaged in offering private tuition to their own learners at a fee, needs to be addressed immediately by the principal of the school. If this is swept under the carpet then the school is abdicating its responsibility of being an effective centre of learning and teaching.

Steps that can be taken to improve discipline in the school

Regarding the steps that can be taken by role-players to improve the quality of discipline, it was generally agreed that the management of discipline can only succeed if there is a firm commitment and partnership among educators, parents, learners, the Education Department, psychological support services and Non-Governmental Organisations. Another educator thought that harsher sanctions should be in place for more serious offences, or if this was not possible then corporal punishment should be re-introduced. She added that some learners can only display good behaviour if they are threatened with physical punishment as they were conditioned in this way at home.

This argument is totally rejected, not because corporal punishment is illegal to administer in schools, but because it is not an effective form of deterrent as many learners who are physically punished repeat offences. More importantly, to strike a learner is primitive and sends the signal that violence is acceptable in society. Our society is already traumatised by violence and crime. Schools need to develop other strategies to manage discipline. They need to find the root cause of the deviance and ameliorate it and then build their self-esteem and confidence. Also, there is a need to re-organise the classroom, to carefully plan and prepare lessons, to vary teaching strategies, to improve the quality of learning activities, to create an atmosphere that stimulates learners and not making them think

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about being destructive and disruptive in the first place.

Schools should give learners responsibilities and recognise their non-academic achievements. Only in this way will learners internalise self-discipline.

The principal emphasised the point that parents need to make every effort to attend parent/teacher meetings and educators and learners also need to be encouraged to actively participate in all facets of school life, especially in shaping the school's Code of Conduct. Their school attendance must be monitored and maximised and schools should report businesses that employ under-aged learners during instruction time to the relevant authorities for prosecution.

The governing bodies should select managers who possess strong leadership and management styles. The Education Department must have effective support structures for managers and in-service training for educators in classroom management. Finally educators need to involve themselves in the personal welfare of their learners as their commitment is the single most important factor in the management of discipline.

In the final analysis, there was a strong sense amongst most of the interviewees that there are no simple answers to the problem of school discipline. They agreed that acceptable standards of behaviour can only be achieved and sustained if the school's Code of Conduct is consistently applied by all. Only if there is acceptance of collective responsibility will a strategic approach, for the management of discipline, have any hope of success.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed at analysing and interpreting data collected during a series of semi-structured interviews. It further presented this information in a logical and coherent manner with the intention of structuring a framework for the strategic management of discipline in secondary schools.

The intention of chapter five is to firstly, provide a brief overview of the underlying theme of this small scale study and secondly, to present a set of emerging recommendations from the evidence.

The primary intention is to address some of the concerns articulated by key constituents, regarding the state of indiscipline in secondary schools. It has, at its heart, the explicit desire to uncover the benefits that a strategic approach has in the management of discipline in public secondary schools.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of the previous chapter was essentially to analyse and classify each question from the research data in a logical and coherent manner so as to provide a basis on which a strategic management approach for the management of discipline in public secondary schools could be structured.

The intention of this chapter is briefly to summarise the underlying theme of this research project and to offer emerging recommendations for an overall strategy when managing discipline in public secondary schools.

A brief overview of this small scale empirical study which was conducted in a selected public secondary school in the Chatsworth District attempts to address the genuine concerns articulated by the various role players by characterising the problem of discipline in secondary schools. It draws from current disciplinary legislation, literature on strategic management in educational settings and in particular, literature in the management of discipline, including those from parallel overseas contexts which has inimitable value in creating and sustaining positive learning environments in schools.

The outcome of this investigation sees the presentation of a range of recommendations, the intention of which is not to present a magic formula for success, but has at its core the motive to move schools a little closer to improving

and sustaining the culture of learning and teaching services by capturing the benefits that a strategic management approach has for the management of discipline. Some of these recommendations are:

❖ Whilst the researched school has recently initiated policies and procedures for the management of discipline it needs to be reiterated that the management arrangements of the school and the way they relate to the community that it serves have a profound influence on the behaviour of learners.   It is the combination of these factors that gives a school its character and identity. Together they can produce an orderly and successful school. (DES 1989:8). Emerging from this, is the vital message that school managers must develop a multi-agency approach into the management of discipline by involving key constituents of the school community. Only in this way will the school secure a higher level of staff and community commitment which matches its expectations of appropriate learner behaviour.

❖ As the educator's classroom management skills is the single most important determinant in maintaining good classroom behaviour any lack of management skills ought not to be seen as educator incompetence but as a cue for managers to provide professional development and support to educators who lack group management skills. Induction programmes should be made available to new educators.   In this way educators, who are considered to be the foot soldiers of the educational process, will know that they are not alone as a network of support systems is available to them when they need it.

❖ Maintaining good discipline is a fundamental aspect of the daily lives of educators and successful educators are those who create a purposeful learning environment by their skillful management styles and create a system of incentives and support for their learners. Their lessons are thoroughly prepared and their constant self-appraisal reflects a genuine commitment to themselves, their colleagues, their learners and their profession. They engage in managing learner behaviour rather than controlling them and they acknowledge and recognise that the nurturing of the learners' self-esteem and self-confidence are central to the management of learner behaviour. In this regard, teacher training institutions should assess an applicant's ability to relate well to learners before admission is confirmed.

❖ Staff should be encouraged to accept responsibility for maintaining and sustaining good behaviour throughout the school. Very often learner behaviour, that is unacceptable, is ignored by some educators. Learners test the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and educators need to confirm these boundaries firmly and immediately. Educators need to be constantly visible, especially when there is mass learner movement during recess. Failure on the part of educators to do this will allow the problem of indiscipline to fester and grow.

❖ Many well-disciplined schools have principals who are visible to learners in the school, informally engaging with educators and learners and expressing an interest in them and their activities. These managers often talk informally with both educators and learners whose names they know and they get learners to confide in them with their personal experiences and problems.

❖ It is recommended that the Education Department provide managers with adequate training in strategic management. With this capacity principals can develop and implement strategic plans for the management of change in schools successfully. Parallel to this, in-service courses for educators must have clearly identifiable elements in respect of the management of learner behaviour and that any outcomes of research and good practice should cascade to all schools on a regular basis. This initiative will reduce educator stress and burnout as they will be empowered to exercise greater control over change instead of feeling overwhelmed and controlled by it.

❖ That understanding learner indiscipline demands an analysis not just of the learner but an appreciation of the social context in which the behaviour takes place and it is important that this analysis precede intervention. Such a social analysis can be made at many levels beginning with the learner's social skills, the social judgements of those with whom the learner interacts, their peers, family influences and finally to the very fabric of the society of which the learner, the school and the family are all members. (Varma 1993:85)

❖ The current concern articulated by key constituents highlights the influence that violent television programmes, video material, violent computer games and undesirable publications have on learner behaviour. It is recommended that parents carefully monitor their children's school performance, their choice of friends, social outings, accessibility to drugs, cigarettes and alcohol, access to undesirable television programmes and publications and sections of the internet which transmit anti-social and violent messages and images.

❖ Whilst it is acknowledged that current educational transformations are placing severe financial constraints on schools, the provision of basic teaching and learning resources are a pre-requisite to the promotion of the culture of learning and teaching. Also, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that well maintained and clean schools have a positive influence on learner behaviour. It is therefore essential that the Education Department make available extra funding for building maintenance and security at schools.

❖ Parents themselves are expected to serve as exemplary role models to promote and encourage socially responsible behaviour in their children. Through good parenting skills, any form of deviant behaviour should be addressed immediately and ameliorated with firm guidance. It is recommended that the net of culpability be widened to include parents so that they are held legally accountable for the behaviour of their children at school. Therefore, schools need to ensure that parents and their children understand the school's curricula and behavioural expectations through effective communication.

❖ When learners are expelled from school it simply means that schools are displacing the learners' problem to a different sector in society. It is suggested that the Education Department create a Support Unit for deviant learners who are difficult to manage in mainstream schools. These learners could be helped over a period of time until they are ready to be sent back to their schools. If all efforts to rehabilitate the learner have failed, it is suggested that the expulsion of learners from a school be sanctioned by the governing body and the Education Department only as a last resort. Further, it is suggested

that the Education Department support the sanctions imposed by the school and not work in tension against fair recommendations made by the governing body and the principal.

❖ When learners are unhappy the natural consequence is often rebellion. Whilst there are frustrations in life, schools often nurture it by showing a lack of love and respect for learners as individuals. Rigid rules are enforced without considering individual circumstances and by not providing the opportunity for every learner to experience success in the school, by not considering their concerns and by burdening them with expectations beyond their ability levels. If these are considered then frustration and destructive behaviour will be minimised. Managers of education are urged to strike the delicate balance between the motivational needs and interests of individual learners, especially those who are not successful academically, and the school's curriculum. Also schools need to focus on providing opportunities for every learner, by listening to them, by respecting that each learner is a unique person who is to be loved, respected and nurtured and any achievement, irrespective of its magnitude, needs to be recognised and celebrated.

❖ Principals, educators and parents need to take action to minimise unauthorised absence, absconding from school and truancy. School attendance, truancy and late-coming should be monitored effectively and promptly. A partnership involving the police, the Education Welfare Department and parents in establishing a School Anti-Truancy Watch would be beneficial, in monitoring shopping malls and other popular haunts of learners during school hours. Help could also be elicited from shop-keepers,

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sales assistants and ordinary shoppers who should be encouraged to report, where possible, cases of truancy to the police, principals and parents. Further, it is encouraged that principals develop clear understandings with the police and parents about the conduct of random searches for dangerous weapons, drugs and undesirable publications and how intruders in their schools should be dealt with.

❖ Learners must be given the opportunity to air their opinions. Suggestion boxes placed strategically, coupled with learner publications could provide this opportunity for learners to air their views and also signal to them that their opinions are valuable. Although many suggestions and some articles in the publications may be considered cynical or ridiculous, a few of their opinions will have merit. If the concerns of learners are acknowledged and implemented then the school's management of discipline policy will be seen as being pro-active rather than re-active.

❖ With the changing complexion of schools today, learners from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds are no longer artificially separated. Poor communication among learners themselves, ironically is a source of much conflict and this can surface as racial conflicts or conflict between cliques. Much of these tensions spill into the school from society itself. There is a real need for all learners to respect different cultural and ethical characteristics. Learners want to be recognised for who they are, having their ethnic background and culture respected. A failure not to allow learners to respect cultural diversities increases the potential for misunderstanding and racial tensions. The formation of multi-racial learner committees serve as an

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excellent vehicle to provide constructive dialogue between ethnic groups and to develop an understanding of the different customs and cultures. In this way minority groups in schools will have respect for school policies because they see themselves as genuine members of the school community since many groups already lack self-esteem and self-confidence due to a certain degree of polarisation. In this regard educators should not interpret and misunderstand non-verbal gestures and loudness of speech of learners from different cultural backgrounds as being signs of arrogance. However, it must be clearly communicated to· staff that any form of racial harassment or discrimination will necessitate a disciplinary action.

❖ As many schools in the Chatsworth District are experiencing an increase in enrolment of learners from previously disadvantaged black communities, it is suggested that the composition of educator staff at these schools be demographically aligned and represented, in terms of race and gender at all post levels, so that it closely corresponds to the multi-racial mix of its learners. In this way the needs of every learner can be understood and the instances of indiscipline will be considerably lessened.

❖ Schools should ensure that rewards and punishment be seen as fair and consistent and disciplinary problems be dealt with objectively and firmly. The humiliation of learners should be avoided. To increase self-esteem and self-confidence learners should be given responsibilities and their progress reported to parents through regular feedback on their childrens' successes, difficulties and behaviour at school. The Education Department is urged to provide psychological support services to schools to ensure that learners with

behavioural difficulties are assisted by psychologists, who could service a clusters of schools within a district. It is further recommended that these counsellors net-work closely with social support agencies like the Child Line, Life Line, Family and Welfare Societies, Abused Desk for Women, the Child Protection Unit of the South African Police Services and other Non-Governmental Organisations.

❖ There is abundant evidence to suggest that the status and commitment of educators has declined in recent years due to job insecurities, educator shortages in predominantly rural schools, the rationalisation and re-deployment initiatives of the Education Department and the subsequent increase in workloads and larger classes. This has led to educator morale and motivation reaching new lows with educators resorting to industrial action. Some educators remain in staffrooms whilst learners are left unattended in the classrooms and this impacts negatively on the management of discipline in the school. As a result partnerships among educators, learners and parents are being polarised with many parents and learners arguing that it is incongruous for undisciplined and non-committed educators to promote learning and manage discipline effectively. If these educators, who after being appraised and professionally supported, are still found to be ineffective classroom practitioners, uncommitted and unaccountable to their profession and clients, then the principal and the governing body should recommend that they be dismissed.

❖ There is an urgent need for managers and educators to be apprised of surrounding legal issues when developing and implementing disciplinary

strategies as the South African Schools Act has necessitated, inter alia, that schools create a more explicit and comprehensive disciplinary policy. It is usually the untrained educator in legal issues and processes who is most prone to be involved in legal involvement with learners. Educators should make it a point of learning the constitutional rights of learners and the procedure employed in any disciplinary hearing. Generally these are:

a) a right to notice of charges

b) a right to counsel

b) a right to cross-examine witnesses before an impartial hearing

c) a right to remain silent to avoid self-incrimination

d) a right to appeal against any unfair decision.

Failure to do this will certainly see the law intervening should the constitutional rights of learners be infringed. The effects of any legal intervention may dent the school's image and compromise any future disciplinary proceedings and initiatives.

A final recommendation is that if schools are to be seen as effective centres of learning and teaching it is vital, according to Jennings (1979) and Chamberlain and Carnot (1974) that school managers recognise the potential that a strategic management approach, through a well structured development plan, has for the promotion of good learner behaviour. It is widely acknowledged that development planning provides the mechanisms for translating the school's aims into effective education.

Further, the immense benefits of structuring a sound development plan for the management of discipline are first, that it is cemented in collaborative partnerships with all members of the school and the wider community and it is driven by sound leadership.

Second, a good development plan recognises that preventative management is an absolute necessity in schools and planning encompasses strategies and support mechanisms that are available to all members of the school community.

Third, it accepts that bad behaviour in schools is not to anyone's advantage and therefore needs to be managed in a way that focuses on learners and their environment.

Fourth, development planning has immense value in that it is based on an overall strategy which seeks to change unacceptable behaviour by persuasion rather than by force and culminates in learners ultimately accepting responsibility for their own behaviour.

Fifth, it recognise that the boundaries of acceptable behaviour can be developed, implemented, evaluated and sustained by strategies that require considerable professional commitment from managers and key players.

Sixth, a quality development plan, is widely acknowledged to be a critical determinant for school effectiveness.

Finally, development planning also allows managers of education to manage change more effectively, given the reality that schools are now self-managing and multi-cultural. For disciplinary policies and practises to serve the primary function of regulating learner behaviour, it is vital that they be implemented in a context where schools can now be used as a springboard to unite previously separate communities for the purpose of nation building.

All in all, It would be inappropriate to conclude that when managing discipline in schools the above recommendations are exhaustive in its extent because they are certainly not. The intention of these recommendations is merely to offer key constituents with a few strategic suggestions from which they could perhaps draw from and improve bad behaviour, within their own local context.

5.2 CONCLUSION

If schools are to serve the function of, inter alia, developing the potential of learners to live autonomous and harmonious lives in society by respecting themselves and others, then they certainly need to create an environment conducive to serious teaching and learning. Without doubt, any successful management of discipline initiative in schools must be seen as learners eventually managing their own behaviour without authority figures. But, undeniably, the management of discipline in schools is a complex issue as revealed in this small scale study.

The evidence has highlighted the real concern of key constituents that South African schools and classrooms are increasingly becoming battlegrounds.

On the one hand managers of education and educators feel that they are left to their own devices in managing discipline and these daily demands are a potential source of stress. They contend that parents are failing to be socially responsible by allowing and tolerating unacceptable standards of behaviour at home.

Parents and the community, on the other hand, blame schools for the breakdown in the culture of learning and teaching services and the erosion of a safe and secure learning and teaching environment. But for learner behaviour to be clearly

understood and managed effectively in South African schools, it needs to be contextualised against the background of the legacy of apartheid education which, undeniably, has been the catalyst in producing a traumatised society with behaviour patterns to match. Schools, which are inextricably linked and embedded in the very society that it serves, inevitably reflect peculiar behaviours found in society, through its learners. Schools alone cannot change the way its learners behave. Good behaviour fundamentally underpins the foundations of society and features in every aspect of school life. Therefore the promotion of socially acceptable behaviour of learners becomes the responsibility of each and every member of the school community.

In conclusion, if managers of education are seeking a generic solution that eliminates all school disciplinary problems, such a blueprint simply does not exist. The on-going struggle is to reduce the instances of indiscipline to manageable levels by acknowledging the potential that a strategic approach has for the management of discipline in schools.

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APPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION A :   GENERAL INFORMATION

1. PRESENT RANK OR POSITION

☐ PRINCIPAL   ☐ DEPUTY PRINCIPAL   ☐ HEAD OF DPARTMENT

☐ EDUCATOR   ☐ LEARNER   ☐ PARENT

2. GENDER

☐ MALE   ☐ FEMALE

3. AGE IN YEARS

☐ 16-20 YEARS   ☐ 21-25 YEARS   ☐ 26-30 YEARS

☐ 31-35 YEARS   ☐ 36-40 YEARS   ☐ 41-45 YEARS

☐ 46-50 YEARS   ☐ 51-55 YEARS   ☐ 56-60 YEARS

4. QUALIFICATION

☐ TEACHERS DIPLOMA   ☐ DEGREE(S) AND TEACHERS DIPLOMA

☐ DEGREE(S) ONLY   ☐ OTHER

5. EDUCATORS TEACHING EXPERIENCE

☐ 1-5 YEARS   ☐ 6-10 YEARS   ☐ 11-15 YEARS

☐ 16-20 YEARS   ☐ 21-25 YEARS   ☐ 26 YEARS AND OVER

6. SUBJECTS AND GRADES CURRENTLY TEACHING (FOR EDUCATORS)

SUBJECTS	GRADES

SECTION B : QUESTIONS FOR ALL INTERVIEWEES

1. THERE IS A PERCEPTION THAT THE STATE OF DISCIPLINE IN MANY KWAZULU-NATAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS IS GIVING RISE FOR CONCERN. HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEMS OF LEARNER INDISCIPLINE IN THIS SCHOOL ?

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2. WHAT SPECIFIC TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS ARE ENCOUNTERED IN THE CLASSROOM AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM ?

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3. WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE THE SCHOOL INTRODUCED TO DEAL WITH LEARNERS WITH DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS ?

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4. WHAT SPECIFIC TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR DO YOU FIND DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH ?

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5. WHAT TYPE OF SUPPORT AND TRAINING DID YOU RECEIVE TO STRATEGICALLY MANAGE DISCIPLINE IN YOUR SCHOOL. ?

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6. HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH CURRENT DISCIPLINARY POLICIES AND PRACTICES, INCLUDING LEGISLATION, WHEN HANDLING DISCIPLINARY ISSUES ?

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7. WHO DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL ?

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8. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SUPPORT AND HELP LEARNERS WHO PERSIST IN DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR ?

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9. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECLINE OF DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS ?

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10. WHAT STEPS CAN THE PRINCIPAL, EDUCATORS, PARENTS AND LEARNERS TAKE TO IMPROVE LEARNER BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM AND THE SCHOOL ?

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