CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Discipline often poses a great challenge in schools today because of the pressures society has imposed on individuals and families. The effects of drug abuse, spouse abuse and neglect, community and media generated violence, poverty and single parenting reverberate in schools (Marlyn & Grootman, 1997:5).

In the past, corporal punishment was administered in South African schools as a lawful means of disciplining learners. However, in terms of the relevant sections of the constitution, corporal punishment has been declared unconstitutional and was banned in schools (Department of Education, 1996).

Discipline is a fact of life, a normal part of the process of growing and developing and therefore, a normal part of the classroom experience. All children begin life not knowing any of the life skills of self control, yet they need to learn them to become independent, responsible, happy and well-adjusted members of society (Marlyn & Grootman, 1997:6). Discipline is a crucial aspect of educators and learners in classroom lives. It is a way through which learners' academic, personal and social growth can be promoted (Rogers, 2002:4).

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors that cause disciplinary problems among primary school learners in Maokeng, Kroonstad

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The school managers will benefit from this study as they will learn about various forms of discipline as distinguished in South African education system and thus be able to deal with these according to the code of conduct for learners.

The educators and learners will benefit from the study since the factors that cause poor discipline among learners will be identified, and advice on how to handle these factors will be given.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The research problem is to acquire a better understanding of factors that contribute to poor discipline among grade 7 learners in schools. Many township primary schools are characterised by a lack of good discipline, and this has a negative impact on effective teaching and learning (Marlyn & Grootman1997:5).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the light of the above problem the following questions arise:

- What are the main causes of poor discipline at schools?
- What strategies can educators in primary schools implement to ensure discipline in schools?
- What should government and schools do to address poor disciplined in schools?

1.5   AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate factors contributing to poor discipline among Grade 7 learners in Maokeng Primary schools in the Free State Province.

In order to accomplish this aim, the following objectives should be realised:

- to identify factors that contribute to poor discipline in the primary schools;
- to identify strategies that educators in primary schools can implement to ensure positive discipline in schools
- to determine measures that can be taken to maintain discipline in the primary schools in Maokeng township.

1.6   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The theoretical framework upon which this study is based, is called the social interaction model. According to the social interaction model the emphasis is based on social understandings and skills (Murray, 2000:25). This model helps learners to learn social skills and to think and inquire about important social and public issues.

This model rests firmly on the body of thought that has shaped democratic process and helped learners to inquire into social policy and the values behind human behaviour. (Bryman, 2001:6). .

1.7   RESEARCH DESIGN

1.7.1 Research methodology

1.7.1.1   Quantitative research

Education research makes use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.   The difference lies in the manner the two approaches collect and present their results. The quantitative approach presents data in amounts: that are measured, whilst the qualitative approach presents data in terms of opinions, feelings and perceptions (Harry, 2001:84). What makes the two approaches different is the way they view reality and the world. The quantitative approach measures the reactions of many people to a limited set of questions, this facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:16; Mullins, 2005:905).

Quantitative means the research is designed to produce numerical data, and proceeds by measuring variables (Punch, 2003:3). The quantitative research uses statistics as a method of organising data, facilitating the organisation and interpretation of numbers.

In this study, quantitative research will be used to collect numerical data, which will be very important for providing a broad picture of the subjects and their circumstances, as well as for aiding interpretation and analysis of the situation. While through qualitative research individuals can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world including texture of everyday life (Mason, 2002:1).

1.7.1.2   Qualitative research

According to Welman and Kruger (2001:172) qualitative methodologies are best applied in the description of small groups, communities and organisations in which the persons' lived experiences, behaviour, emotions and feelings are studied. The data collected is rich and powerful because it allows for a fuller understanding of what is being studied in the social, historical and temporal context (Best & Kahn, 2003:243).

Qualitative research has the following five characteristics or features:

- the natural setting is the data source, and the researcher is the key data collection instrument;
- the researcher attempts primarily to describe and only secondarily to analyse;
- the concern is with the process, that is, with what has transpired, as much as with product or outcome;
- its data are analysed inductively, as in putting together the parts of a puzzle; and
- it is concerned essentially with what things mean, that is, the why as well as the what (Flick, 2004:4).

With qualitative research, the primary aim is to obtain "in-depth description and understanding of actions and events" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270). The qualitative research method will be employed during the course of the envisaged research.

1.7.1.3   Validity and Reliability

According to Welman and Kruger (2001:135) validity refers to the appropriateness of a statement and it is important to determine whether data is valid and is used to measure what it is intended for. Construct validity refers to the instrument used to measure the variable and must measure that which is supposed to measure (Welman & Kruger 2001:135). Furthermore the instrument used to measure a variable should remain constant over time.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:140) maintain that reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same results each time.

If one has a reliable indicator or measure, it is expected that the same results will be given each time the same thing is measured. Reliability implies that information provided by the indicators is not affected by the characteristics of the indicator, the instrument or the measurement device. This is important because chances of error are reduced during the research process.

Reliability can also be measured by giving data to another researcher to see if   they reach similar conclusions (Gray 2004:172). Instruments like questionnaires were used by the researcher to measure reliable data from the respondents.

Validity and reliability are mainly relevant in a purely quantitative study. In this study, however, it was ensured that conditions for responding to the questionnaire are conducive, and the responses from educators are truthful.

1.7.2 Instruments

1.7.2.1   Questionnaires

Questionnaires would be distributed to educators occupying post level one. The purpose is to gather information from people who are actively involved in the classroom setting. A questionnaire is an instrument which attempts to obtain comparable data from all participants because the same questions are asked to all research participants (Gay & Airasian, 2000:280). The researcher will construct a set of questions or statements appropriate to the research problem.

1.8   POPULATION AND SAMPLING

1.8.1   Population

The population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the results are intended to be generalised (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:164). For the purpose of this study, the population will consist of Grade 7 educators in Maokeng township, in Kroonstad, in the Moqhaka Municipality.   There are 12 primary schools with Grade 7 in the Maokeng township, with a total of about 60 Grade 7 educators.

1.8.2 Sample

The sample is a small group which adequately and accurately represents the characteristics of the population (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999: 232). Bryman (2001:20) asserts that sample size varies across studies and that qualitative research investigates a small number of cases because an in-depth understanding of each case is done.

The sample for this study consists of 20 Grade 7 educators from Maokeng township primary schools. The purpose is to gather information from people who are actively involved in the grade 7 classroom setting.

1.8.3 Sampling technique

The sampling technique to be used in this study will be random sampling. Statistical theory states that the most reliable way of obtaining a representative sample is to use random sampling whereby each case, whether that is an individual, household, or organisation, has an equal probability of being selected (Burton, 2000:309)

For the purpose of this study, members of the population will be allocated numbers, from 1 to 60, and each third Grade 7 educator was selected.

1.9 DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire will be administered to 20 educators from Maokeng township primary schools, whereby subjects respond to written questions or statements appropriate to the research problem and attempt to find justification of such a problem and the extent of its influence.

1.10   DATA ANALYSIS

In this study data analysis will be mainly qualitative. The codes will be allocated to data obtained through the questionnaires, for the purposes of establishing patterns (Creswell, 2001:140; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:464). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:358), qualitative data analysis is the non-numerical assessment to observations made through participant observation, content analysis, in depth interviews, and other qualitative research techniques. Although numbers and graphs will be used, their purpose is to enhance understanding. Therefore, qualitative interpretations and value of the numbers and graphs will be important

1.11   ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Permission was obtained from the Free State Department of Education to undertake this study in schools, as well as from the principals of the selected schools. The participants were informed that participation was voluntary, and that their identities, responses and schools would remain confidential.

1.12   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.12.1   Educator

An educator means any person who teaches, or trains, other persons at an educational institution or assists in rendering education services or educational auxiliary or support services by or in an educational department (Department of Education, 1996:16).

According to (Guskey & Sparks, 2000:225) an educator is regarded as

someone who helps the learners to find the best instructional path and who leads the child to adulthood

1.12.2   Learner

A learner means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education (Department of Education, 1996:10).   Accepted definition is that a learner is a person with a purpose to learn and thereafter applies knowledge and skills to achieve academic goals.

1.12.3   School

The South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) define a school as a public or independent institution which enrols learners in one or more grades between grade R and grade twelve.

1.12.4   Primary school

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary 2004, primary school is a public or independent institution which enrols learners from age 5 to 13 years.

1.12.5   Delinquent behaviour

Delinquent behaviour is behaviour that is considered inappropriate for a setting or situation in which it occurs, some of which might occur inadvertently while others can be intentional (Bekink & Brand, 2000:41).

In this study, delinquency and problem behaviour is viewed as a generalised response class of relative behaviours that include antisocial behaviours, such as aggression, noncompliance, bullying, intimidation and sexual harassment; as well as violent behaviour officially recorded by the legal system, such as assault, drug and alcohol crimes, rape, murder and serious property destruction (Bekink & Brand, 2000:41).

1.12.6 Discipline

Discipline refers to the act of guiding and equipping the child or learner, not only to recognise the regularities, but also to conform in his or her own life to God's will. It also means guiding children or learners on the right road, to correct deviant behaviour in a loving and caring way, and to warn and support the child or learner where necessary (Van Dyk, 2000; 239-240).

1.12.7 Classroom management

The South African Schools Act of 1996 (Act No 108 of 1996) defines classroom management as the ability to use the results of performance for diagnostic purposes, remedial work and for adapting teaching programmes.

Classroom management shows evidence of discipline, guidance and support, leading to sound reinforcement, encouragement and appropriate admonition and effective, regular and varied assessment of learners' efforts.

1.12.8 Punishment

Punishment means providing a consequence that decreases the likelihood that bad behaviour will be repeated (Kauffman, Mostert, Trent & Pullen, 2006:66).

1.12.9 Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is "physical punishment as distinguished from pecuniary punishment or a fine; any kind of punishment of or inflected on the body" or "the infliction of the pain by an educator or other educational

official upon the body of the learner as a penalty for doing something which has been disapproved of by the punisher" (Maree, 1995:68).

1.13 CONCLUSION

The importance of good discipline in schools cannot be overemphasised. The success of effective teaching and learning depends on discipline. It is, therefore, important that discipline is maintained in schools for them to become learning centres. The study primarily focuses on factors that contribute to poor discipline among Grade 7 learners in primary schools, and how these factors can be addressed.

The next chapter deals with literature study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The South African society has undergone major social, economic, political and educational changes during the 1990s, as the country sought to establish a democratic and humane nation. Among the many changes in the education sector, the introduction of the code of conduct for learners and the provision to parents of an unprecedented involvement in school affairs in terms of Section 8 of the South African Schools Act of 1996, deserve mentioning.

The existence of disciplinary problems among learners at schools has given rise to intense speculation about causes of such behaviour; with the media, politicians and some educator unions suggesting a range of "ills" which may have contributed to poor discipline. The goal of discipline is accomplished by setting limits, giving learners responsibility, helping them develop confidence in their abilities, and teaching them how to solve problems and make good judgements as well as by correcting misbehaviour (Maree, 1995:12).

The home background of learners, their cultural practices and the disciplinary practices in the home have a great influence on discipline at school (Mayer, 2002:90). Consequently, the involvement of parents or guardians is important in the maintenance of discipline at school. For instance, the regular use of corporal punishment in the home may make other disciplinary measures ineffective. This could be a serious problem among the African learners, since the use of corporal punishment has been more prevalent in the African homes over many years and through many generations (Mposula, 2000:4).

2.2   DISCIPLINE AND CULTURE

Discipline in the home is always related to the culture and the belief structure of the family (Makapela, 2006:12). For instance, the Spartans believed in a strong body, and the use of corporal punishment was viewed as a form of strengthening the body while building the character (De Wet, 2007:1). Many American, Israeli and Muslim families administer corporal punishment on their children since they believe that it is effective for the maintenance of good order in the family (Wilson, 2002:30).   In the African culture parents believe that boys should be physically and emotionally stronger than girls, and consequently, apply harsher measures of punishment, including corporal punishment, on boys than on girls (Mposula, 2000: 4).

In the past, because of cultural practices and belief structures, corporal punishment was one of the most commonly used form of discipline in many countries. Corporal punishment is described as any deliberate act of inflicting physical pain or discomfort on a child or learner , which may include spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, throttling and hitting with an object such as a belt, cane, shoe or ruler (International Human Rights Instruments, 2007; Holtman, 2008:8). Corporal punishment may also include denying or restricting the child's use of the toilet, refusing the child to drink or to eat, and forcing the child to sit or stand in an uncomfortable position (Holtman, 2008:9). However, attitudes and legislation in some countries have changed in recent years, and corporal punishment has been outlawed in a number of countries in the world (Holtman, 2008:84). Although the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the child regularly urges the democratically elected governments to prohibit the administration of corporal punishment on children and learners (Murray, 2000:13), the practice is still common in some countries, especially many Asian, African and Caribbean countries.

Apart from corporal punishment, other measures used to maintain discipline at schools included the following: manual work, detention, solitary confinement and denial of privileges; and in extreme cases, suspension and expulsion (Ezekiel, 2003:2). However, there had always been strong opposition to all or most forms of punishment, especially from religious and human rights groups (Star, 2003:1). For instance, detention was viewed as equivalent to imprisonment as it also implied holding the learners against their will (De Villiers , Wethmar & Van der Bank 2000:3)

2.3   FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR DISCIPLINE

2.3.1 Factors within the school

2.3.1.1   Bullying

Bullying is defined as the intentional and repeated hurtful words or acts or other behaviour committed by a child or children against another child or other children (Neser, 2005:215). The act of bullying is characterised by the following:

- intent to harm others;
- intent to find pleasure in taunting others;
- power and control over the victim because of the bully's age, size, strength or gender;
- lack of support experienced by the victim;
- underreporting of incidents of bullying;
- long periods of suffering by the victim of bullying, and
- The victim's withdrawal from school activities (Neser, 2005:220).

Bullying has a negative effect on schooling since it may lead to the following:

- fear of school, regular absenteeism and truancy;

- stunted academic progress;

- low school adjustment and bonding;

- poor relationships with classmates and greater loneliness, and

- dropping out of school (Wilson, 2002:18).

Weeks (2000:15) believes that there is a relationship between bullying and ant-social behaviours such as verbal and physical aggression and violation of rules among learners.

Bullying has become a major problem in many countries, and may include intimidation, racial discrimination and sexual harassment (Ezekiel, 2003:2). Bullies use physical force to secure financial or other benefits. Many victims of school bullying remain victims once they leave school, and suffer academic and social harms that may destroy their future ambitions (Matula, 2001:20). Therefore, failure to prevent bullying in classrooms or on school grounds might have long term negative effects on the learners' lives.

2.3.1.2   Drug and alcohol abuse

Drugs in the school can be the source of behavioural problems. Learners who do not feel worthwhile or accepted by educators use drugs as a means of coping with rejection and a low self-concept (Ezekiel, 2003:2). Laboratory studies have found that acute intoxication with alcohol is related to aggression when an individual is provoked (Matula, 2001:12). Alcohol and substance abuse may contribute to reduced intellectual functioning, depression, and reduced self awareness (Matula, 2001:12). The impact of alcohol and drug abuse on the physique of the individual is enormous. These could include lung cancer, asthma, heart attack and stroke (Burton, 2000:15). The direct results of alcohol and drug abuse are poor academic performance, high rates of absenteeism and high dropout rates (Capazorio 2006:1).

Learners who abuse drugs may no longer have any future ambitions, or they may have realised that their drug addiction has jeopardised their chances of achieving their future goals, and consequently, they may become aggressive, violent and disruptive (Pannozzo, 2005:33) – an indication of feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. It is for this reason that (Oosthuizen, 2002:68) believe that the application of discipline should not be construed as solely a clamp down on unruly, mischievous and disruptive behaviour, but as a means of entering into a loving, caring, guiding relationship with learners.

2.3.1.3   Crime

Weeks (2000:79) mentions that modernisation has removed African people from the traditional support group and led them into isolation removed from the values and norms of their upbringing and faced with the unknown values and norms of western society. This implies that the practice of 'ubuntu', which is fundamental to the lifestyle and culture of the African people, has disappeared. Consequently, black townships are characterised by high rates of crime, lack of role models and low moral standards (Flick 2004:17). Learners living in such areas may become impressed by criminal activities, and even join in the perpetuation of criminal activities. Such learners may want to practice the criminal activities on the school premises. Therefore, criminal acts that occur on the school premises, such as stealing from fellow learners, fighting and selling drugs may be a continuation of activities which some learners perpetuate outside the school.

Poverty and unemployment of parents may contribute to the involvement of learners in crime.(Narayan & Petesch, 2002 : 254) Learners who experience poverty have to fend for themselves since parents cannot afford to adequately provide for necessities such as food, transport to school, cell-phones and clothing (Ezekiel 2003:2). Learners are thus compelled to engage in criminal activities in order to meet these needs.

Such learners become trouble-makers at school. It is for this reason that the moral example set by educators as partners in education is pivotal (Zastrow 2004:12).

2.3.1.4 Violence

According to (Furlong, Morrison, Skiba & Cornell 2001:71), school violence is a multifaceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, which inhibits development and learning, as well as harming the schools. Punch (2003:20) observed that violence in schools involves learners carrying weapons to school, educators being beaten by learners and the dark sarcasm experienced by other learners in the classroom.

The carrying of weapons to school is risk related behaviour Masten (2001:227). South African children are exposed to violence and have been associated with a wide range of consequences of a previous injury, including internalising and externalising disorders and substance abuse and conduct problems (Lynch, 2003:265).Aside from the distress they cause children ,they also interfere with their school performance Birmaher , Bridge, Williams, Brent, Dahl, Axelson, Dorn & Ryan (2004:839)It is therefore important to take holistic approach that deconstructs the problem, rather than to deal with its symptoms(Reid, Hunter ,Clark & van Rooyen ,2006:5)

In France, learners go to school armed because they fear both their fellow learners and the community (Hyman & Snook, 2000:8). Harber (2004:42) mentioned that if those in authority are violent, and abusive towards children, this negative behaviour becomes normal to children and they will perpetrate this violence in their own relationship with others. Violence free schools cannot exist in some of the most violent countries in the world, such as Palestina, Sudan and Turkey (Punch, 2003:5).

Conflict and wars in countries such as Palestina, Sudan and Turkey resulted in numerous schools being closed as a result of being targeted (Williams, 2004:476). The constant violence in society moves into the schools and children start to imitate what they learn in their communities, violence and from the media. The problem of violence in schools began to take place and a series of school shootings draw more attention to violence on school premises at the Columbia schools (Furlong, Morrison, Skiba & Correll, 2001:6). These incidents that occur within schools and leave individuals dead and number injured, and people began wondering whether schools are safe and began to be intimidated (Capazorio 2006:1). In South Africa, many children today continue to suffer from the legacy inequalities of the apartheid era within the area of education. This is largely due to political and ethnic rivalry fuelled by the apartheid regime that has spilled over into our classrooms and schools (Ntshoe, 2000:1). All these factors contribute to disruptions that took place at school and impact negatively on school discipline.

Despite the remark by the general secretary of the SADTU "classroom becoming war zones", "many cases" [of school violence] went unnoticed because they had not resulted in death (Bailey 2008:4). The subsequent exposition revealed that newspapers reported fairly comprehensively on different types of school violence in South Africa. Findings by Burton (2000) indicated that assault is the most common form of violence occurring at schools. Bailey (2008a:5) mentions that stabbing of learners with scissors and a screw drivers are common in schools.

This observation was further shared by the deputy chairperson of the commission for the promotion of Rights of Religious, Cultural and Linguistic Communities and the moral Regeneration Movement:"What we see in schools is a microcosm, of what is happening in the community" (cited in Monama, 2008b:11) and Myburgh (cited in Daily News 22-08:3): "We ourselves are contributing to the problem all the way from parliament to the family structure",

Violence has become a part of everyday life in schools. The Centre for the study of violence and reconciliation (Mogano, 2003:40), lists a number of incidents where educators were murdered. Conditions within schools, poor observation of norms and values, and poor social relationships could also contribute to violence (Farrington & Welsh, 2007:255). Therefore, failure to implement preventative measures could result in school rampages.

Parents send children to school in the hope of securing quality education for them in a safe and secure environment. However, this is not the case. Schools should provide a safe environment for learners to develop academically, relationally, emotionally and behaviourally (Wilson, 2002:293). Violence has a debilitating effect on the morale of school and discipline of learners. As Devine and Lawson (quoted in Cremin 2003:938) warn: "when the problem is ignored and neglected, violence is reinforced or condoned".

Williams (2004:80) revealed that in the USA, learners are often involved in physical fighting on the school property. Research has revealed that common assault is also the most common form of violence occurring at residential areas or in the communities (Flick, 2004:17; Van Heerden, 2000:19). The view is confirmed by Bekink and Brand (2000:46) in the following statement:

"We are a violent nation… if people can't get their way, violence is the answer… Schools are just a mirror of our sick society. How does one expect schools to correct the wrongs we have created in our homes? Schools can only build on the foundations started by parents."

The causes of violence at school are many and varied. The abuse and selling of drugs, depression, anxiety and feelings of insecurity are the main causes of violence among learners. In many European Union countries, racial tensions are the main causes of school violence (Smith 2003:3). The increase of young people in schools from immigrant

groups, the different expectations and priorities, as well as experiences of frustration, discrimination and deprivation by the minority groups lead to violent confrontations between locals and immigrant groups. Hence there is a need for education for citizenship and for the rights of any individual to live a life free from fear and intimidation.

2.3.1.5   School values

Educators face challenging behaviour on the part of pupils who lose interest in scholastic tasks and are out of control. Values are the result of the application of a person's principles which they obtain from their worldview, which is grounded in their religion (Mark, 2006:219). It promotes the inculcation of values such as equity, tolerance, openness, accountability and social honour (James, 2000; 1).

Values are directive when an individual has to make choices. In every choice values will influence their decision, for example, to be obedient to the instructions of the educator in the classroom. Halstead and Taylor (2000:169) emphasise this by describing values as the fundamental convictions which act as a general guideline to behaviour, the standards by which particular actions are to be good or desirable. Unsound values prevailing at school may have a negative impact on the discipline of learners.

In a positive sense in a scholastic environment the word "discipline" actually refers to learning regulated scholarship, guidance and orderliness (Prinsloo & Mabeba, 2000:1).

In addition, the lack of morality in residential areas, the lack of role models and the increase in criminal activity may contribute to lack of values among learners (Codrington, 2000:31). Learners with no values have a tendency not to obey authority and to have behavioural problems.

2.3.1.6   Gangsterism

A gang can be seen as a group of young people who form an alliance for a common purpose. Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2003:1) state that the motivation for females to join gangs is friendship and self-affirmation. Gang members have a poor school attendance record and are inattentive in class, often exhibiting disruptive behaviour. They are frequently suspended or expelled from school. According to Ezekiel (2003:1), male youth gangs are linked to serious crime problems in elementary and secondary schools in the USA. A strong correlation between the presence of gangs and both guns and drugs in schools were found. The presence of gangs doubled the likelihood of violent victimisation at schools.

In the Western Cape, the control of the drug market is the main cause of gangsterism (Finn & Frone, 2003: 47). Consequently, learners become involved as users and traffickers of drugs for a certain gangster. Since different learners within the same school premises may work for different groups, violence may occur as one group wishes to have a larger clientele among learners of the school as compared to the client base of the rival group (Finn & Frone,2003;47).

2.3.1.7   School policy and Code of conduct

A school's policy is the formal representation of its vision and of how behaviour will be managed (Chaplan, 2003:83, as quoted in Madiba, 2004). With regard to discipline the school policy should clearly pronounce itself on the following:

- promoting among learners, self-discipline and proper regard for authority;

- encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of learners and in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among learners;

- securing that the standard of behaviour of learners is acceptable; and

- Otherwise regulating the conduct of learners (Prinsloo & Mabeba, 2000:1).

The objectives of the code of conduct are to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment (DoE, 1996). Furthermore, discipline problems tend to be exacerbated by many schools having behaviour programmes that are outdated and which fail to take account of modern disciplinary approaches.

Disregard for the school policy and the code of conduct could lead to delinquent behaviour such as physical assault, violence, rape, etc. When this kind of behaviour spins out of control, it could very well become a threat to an orderly school environment which is essential for effective learning. The objectives of the code of conduct are to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment (DoE, 1996 b).

2.3.1.8   Unsafe conditions

Squelch (2000:137-149) defines a safe school as a healthy school in that it is physically and psychologically safe, which is characterised by good discipline, a culture teaching and learning, good governance and management practices, and an absence of crime and violence. The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (Yell & Rozalski , 2008:14), considers a school safe when it is a place where:

- learners can learn, develop and enjoy themselves;
- where educators can teach without threats, violence and crime;
- human rights are respected and learning is developed;

- parents are welcome for the exchange of ideas about learning and development; and

- the community can be involved in supporting and taking joint responsibility in interaction with educators and school governing body.

In contrast to this explanation, schools have become highly volatile and unpredictable places. In many schools, structures of control are virtually non-existent; discipline continues to be considered a major problem by educators and learners (Prinsloo & Mabeba, 2000:2).

2.3.1.9   Educational neglect

Nyberg (2000:595) explains educational neglect as a matter of course that little or no demands are made on children regarding self discipline. Learners do not acquire positive norms and they are not required to comply with demands. Flick (2004:116) further explains that because of a lack of involvement and role modelling children often display a weak will, lack of moral feeling and self control and little empathy with others.

Kapp (2000:117) explained that this neglect lead to serious deficiencies in children's psychological growth and this in turn lead to clashes with educators.

2.3.1.10   Abolition of corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is a form of disciplinary measure that uses physical forces with the intention of causing a child to experience pain but not injury for the purpose of correcting their behaviour (Madiba, 2004:1) at school. In many schools the situation is so serious that numerous educators believe that the use of corporal punishment should be reinstituted at schools since its ban left no effective method to enforce discipline (Herald, 2003:1; Molefe, 2004:1; Ezekiel, 2003:1). Thus, the

abolition of corporal punishment is weakening the educators' grip on handling learners (Ezekiel, 2003:2). Furthermore, when corporal punishment was outlawed in South Africa, many school principals and educators found it even more difficult to manage discipline (Molefe, 2004:1). It was for this reason that many school principals and educators disagreed with the abolition of corporal punishment (Morrell, 2002:292; Porteus *et al.*, 2003:1).

Because of the abolishment of corporal punishment numerous townships schools were experiencing increasing incidents of ill discipline and uncertainty about which disciplinary measure to use to maintain discipline (Rautenbach 2006:1). Learners misbehave intentionally because they believe that their constitutional rights prohibit educators from taking any disciplinary measures against them (Star 2003:1). The misinterpretation of constitutional rights by learners may have led to the escalation of bad behaviour among learners, leading to the state of unruliness which currently prevails at schools.

Makapela (2006:1) believes that the abolition of corporal punishment led to learners deliberately misbehave with the knowledge that they will not be physically punished. Oosthuizen (2002:68) believes that the abolition of corporal punishment in schools has left a gap in learner discipline, and has led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in schools (Rodgers, 2002:151). Therefore, the power of maintaining discipline has been significantly diminished at schools (Natal Witness, 2003:1). Consequently, many educators hold the proscription of corporal punishment responsible for disciplinary problems at schools (Star, 2003:1).

However, harsh corporal punishment adversely affects academic performance and produces low self-esteem and anti-social behaviours (Cherian, 2000:96). An HSRC report on school discipline found that most educators equated discipline with corporal punishment and believed that "... it was the responsibility of the parents to teach children

obedience, responsibility, respect for others, self control and discipline"
(Dimbaza, 2006:15). These are wrong perceptions which could
discourage educators from carrying out their responsibility of disciplining
learners.

2.4   FACTORS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

2.4.1   Home background

The roles of both the father and the mother are important in maintaining
discipline in the home. Van Heerden (2000:32) believes that the youth
from incomplete families are likely to become involved in crime and other
risky behaviour. Van Heerden (2000:32) indicates that youth who come
from single headed households, with ruptured family ties and families
without a father figure, are more at risk of engaging in anti-social
behaviour than those from families with both parents present. Learners
from one-parent families who often have to live in conditions of
economic hardship, are at risk of developing behavioural problems as
single parents are inclined to be vulnerable to the effects of stress and to
becoming depressed (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009:44).

However, children who live with both parents are also not always safe.
For instance children who are treated harshly or rejected by both
parents, may rebel against authority at school, or may project anger and
resentment onto a figure of authority in school or on to a fellow (De Wet
2007:253). Children from homes where there is tension and fighting
between the parents show anxiety and lack of concentration in the
classroom (De Wet 2007:263). A stressful life experience in everyday life
contributes to feelings of insecurity and isolation, and promotes problem
behaviour (Nyberg 2000:595). This is confirmed by the Department of
Education White Paper 6 (2001) by mentioning that children's exposure
to levels of frustration and increased aggression, have given rise to
problems within the education system. Children want to be educated and
guided to act in a socially acceptable way and to benefit from

opportunities which will provide them with a feeling of self actualisation by being creative and having done useful work (Weeks, 2000:215). It is essential that the atmosphere in the home be of such a nature that children can develop a sense of trust and positive self-esteem and a feeling of independence and self-actualisation.

The negative influence of the home background is worse in cases where families live in informal settlements and are also disadvantaged or poor. The schools situated in and serving areas for the poor and disadvantaged, have learners who may be exposed to models of disruptive behaviour and lack of interest in scholastic achievement (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009:37). In such communities, it is commonplace that social problems from the home and the community often promote disregard for rules, respect, honesty and fairness; and are connected with fostering a poor school environment in which anti-social behaviour prevails (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2009:37). The source of school violence and misbehaviour may therefore also lie in contexts outside the school, which interact and transact with each other over time to shape individual anti-social behaviour.

2.4.2   Role of parents

Bryman, (2001:18) states that bad treatment by parents, as well as the observation of inter-parents aggression provides examples of aggression that the adolescent internalises. Through witnessing violence in the home or being abused by the family the adolescent may be conditioned to regard violence as a legitimate and acceptable means to obtain a goal, establish authority and satisfactorily resolve disputes in one's favour. Weeks (2000:3) further indicates neglect or a lack of supervision as one of the strongest predictors of the development of delinquency and violence in youth as they are drawn into the street and a subsequent breakdown in family life. Weeks (2000:2) also indicates that the level of aggressiveness used by parents when disciplining their children predicts violent behaviour at a later stage.

It is generally accepted that poorly equipped parents may fail to reinforce the good intentions of behavioural interventions at the domestic level where programme outcomes are dependent on understanding, support and meaningful interactions from their side (Van Jaarsveld, 2008:175). In this regard parents themselves often require skills training on parenting and on ways in which they may relate and react to their children (Van Jaarsveld, 2008:175). Nevertheless, evidence supports a focus on parenting and family relation as risk factors in the child's anti-social behaviour if parents' use of physical discipline continues through childhood; by the time their children are teens, they are more likely to have behaviour problems (Van Jaarsveld, 2008:175). The implication of the above discussion is that the influence of parents on children and their behaviour is important. Therefore, working with children at school without the support of their parents may not be helpful. Parental involvement is one of the most essential measures of discipline both within the school and out of the school. Van Jaarsveld (2008:175) found that poor parental discipline and monitoring amongst other factors have been responsible for the occurrence and persistence of conduct problems during middle childhood and adolescence.

The Department of Education (2000:22) declared that parents should take responsibility for the discipline of their children at home as well as becoming involved in the activities both of the child and the school. (Marshall, 2002:51) believes that by becoming involved with children, parents ensure that the values, direction and the character of the community are established and maintained at school. The United States Department of Education (1989:1) believes that learning occurs when all stakeholders, including parents, are continuously involved in setting limits, encouraging desired behaviours and making decisions about managing children. Dimbaza (2006:12) found that parental involvement is associated with more positive experiences in children in the school environment. The morality of learners is the product of affective or

emotive, cognitive and social powers that lead to a growing moral consciousness (De Klerk & Rens, 2003:353).

2.4.3 Poverty

According to De Wet (2007:673), poverty is a condition that causes its victims to live in ways in which they cannot fully participate in the range of activities expressive of their nature as human-beings – due to a lack of economic resources. Children in poor households are seen to be vulnerable to violence and many anti-social behavioural trends, and they are, consequently, more exposed to anxiety, lack of support and lack of supervision. Smith (2003:46) found that poor parents are more concerned with basics such as food, shelter and employment, and less concerned with issues related to the schooling of their children. Van Heerden (2000:4) mentions that adverse home conditions may result in a child bringing anxieties about the family situation into the school, and this may lead to a lack of concentration or difficulty in learning, as well as to disciplinary problems. Rogers (2002:10) found that a lack of proper care for the children in the home may promote that some of these children deliberately misbehave at school as a way of looking for attention.

2.4.4   Media

Examples of anti-social behaviour which learners perceive via the media, especially television, could be a cause of misbehaviour and disciplinary problems at school. It is via the media that the youth encounter the examples of ill-disciplined people whom they perceive to be role models (Codrington, 2000:32-35). The shootings in American schools did not only lead to the media reports giving the public the impression that all is not well in the American schools, but also promoted copy cat shootings among learners (Yell & Rozalski, 2008:7). The negative media coverage of the shootings in America also led to the Federal government's funding for more police officials in schools and the

broadening of parameters for school expulsions and suspensions (Yell & Rozalski, 2008:74).

2.4.5 Economic stresses on single parent families

In 2001, one in three American babies was born to a single mother due to the increase in the divorce rate and women giving birth out of wedlock (De Jong, 2000:339). In many instances, the income of single women is barely above poverty level, so that the role of single parents, the only caregivers for their children, becomes an economic and emotional stress. Studies by social services indicate that the number of fatherless children has reached 17 million and this absence of fathers produces profound problems for schools (De Jong, 2000:339). Children from these homes have been found to be both less productive in school and responsible for a high percentage of criminal behaviour. The statistics from the Department of Social Services of Connecticut demonstrate the following statistics of these children: They are

- five times more likely to live in poverty;
- more likely to bring drugs and weapons to school;
- twice more likely to commit a crime;
- twice more likely to drop out of school;
- twice more likely to end up in jail; and
- Four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioural problems (Herald, 2003:1).

2.5 FACTORS WITHIN THE LEARNERS' ENVIRONMENT

2.5.1 Peer influence

When learners find themselves in a large group of people, their natural inclination is to follow the herd and behave in a way in which they might not behave in when they were on their own (Ezekiel 2003:2).

De Villiers, Wethmar & Van der Bank(2000:91) found that a child's association with deviant peers increases the likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviour. There is fear that if the child does not follow the bad behaviour of the peers, they may be rejected by the group (Gray 2004:81). Peer pressure is, therefore, a crucial aspect in behaviour. There is a great deal of pressure on young people to follow their friends and to win their approval. The problem is that bad friends may be involved in bad behaviour – implying that the school has a number of learners who misbehave, and who have the potential to make the school environment hardly conducive for the inculcation of true discipline in learners.

2.5.2 Vandalism

Vandalism can be described as the purposeful damaging, violation, defacement or destruction of public or private property by persons who are not the direct owners of the property (Holtman, 2008:70). The criminal term for vandalism is "injury to property". According to Black (2002:2), the following types of vandals exist within the school premises:

- vindictive children who harbour revenge against an educator or other members of staff of the school;
- malevolent children who enjoy causing problems;
- learners driven by ideologies, or those who wish to draw attention to a specific problem or issue;
- bored children who commit vandalism in search of excitement;
- Frustrated children filled with anger – they feel that the school and community are hostile to them.

Weeks (2000:70) mentions that school vandalism is mostly committed by the school's own learners. They break windows and cause damage to classrooms, furniture and books as well as sport apparatus and fields.

Learners sometimes destroy their schools to an extent that teaching and learning collapse, and learners and educators become exposed to health risks (Matavire, 2000:1). If schools ignore learners' intellectual abilities and differences in personality, this may lead to vandalism or learner misconduct (Mayer, 2002:5). Black (2002:2) found that learners who do not take part in school activities often commit acts of vandalism. Black (2002:2) found that there is a link between the size of the school and vandalism: if the school is small, there are little incidents of vandalism since it is easier to exercise control and discipline; but too big schools have more incidents of vandalism.

Hood (1994:5) found that there exists a relationship between vandalism and academic failure, as well as between vandalism and lack of discipline. It is, therefore, important to establish a healthy school environment and a feeling of security.

Vandalism negatively influences the learning environment and results in huge financial losses for both the Department of Education and parents (Cummins 2003:1). Vandalism also leads to a feeling of powerlessness, uncertainty and fear among both educators and learners in Education (Asmal 1999:3). The school programme also suffers since it is often interrupted to repair vandalised structures (Strang 2002:2; Perry 2001:1).

2.6 FACTORS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

2.6.1 Poor classroom management skills

Classroom management means establishing and maintaining a routine in the classroom that allows teaching and learning to proceed effectively (Kauffman, Mostert, Trent & Pulloen, 2006: 22). This could be done by means of classroom rules; the rules could set limits to learners' behaviour and make them aware of the conditions required for success

(Kauffman *et al.*, 2006:22). The classroom rules should address issues such as talking without permission, disruptive behaviour, refusing to do school work, insults, backchat and ill-discipline (Demir 2003: 1; Halstead & Taylor, 2000:169). The educator should take control of classroom activities, and not allow learners to promote disorder (Flick, 2004:463; Harry, 2001:40).

Holtman (2008:8) discovered that newly qualified educators find classroom control the most demanding aspect of their new profession. These educators use punishment and scare tactics to gain control over learners and make learners accept their authority (Morrell, 2002:292). Failure to gain control over learners has been regarded as one of the principal causes of the violence and disruptive behaviour in many schools (Collins & Adamson, 2004:60). It is, therefore, important to effectively manage classrooms, and to avoid misconceptions about bad behaviour and certain measures of punishment (Harry, 2001:50).

The issue of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds also complicates classroom management. For instance, African learners may present a mixture of African and Western cultures, with some learners being more African in their behaviour while others being more Western (De Jong, 2000:339). Such diversity of backgrounds solicits a great variety of management techniques and strategies to accommodate these differences. The reality of this heterogeneous situation, especially among learners, means that educators should understand the ethnic setting in which the school is located as these learners bring to class different historical backgrounds, religious beliefs, and day-to-day living patterns (Punch, 2003:5).

2.6.2 Poor lesson presentation

Learning becomes effective when learners take in and use information to build on and extend their understanding about their world. Ezekiel (2003:2) states that valuable learning experiences allow children to

integrate new experiences with familiar ones by constructing and refining knowledge schemes. Many of the discipline related problems revolve around poor lesson presentation and the educator's inability to keep learners busy (Ezekiel, 2003:1). Inappropriate curriculum, which fails to address the learners' immediate needs, may also promote poor learner involvement in lesson presentations (Williams, 2004:56).

Of all the school related factors capable of influencing learners' responsibility in classroom, educators discipline strategies are among the most important factors (Farrington & Welsh, 2007:40) that ensures that learners behave responsibly in classroom. Without satisfactory levels of learner responsibility, the best planned and potentially most engaging lesson may fail to have the desired impact and fail to promote effective learning among the learners (Hyman & Snook 2000:489).

2.6.3 Inadequate materials

Jones and Charlton (2000:40) mentioned that the state of schools in previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa is still unacceptable: they still do not have basic facilities such as running water, toilets, tables and chairs for learners to use in the classroom. These schools also experience serious shortages of textbooks, teaching and learning aids, laboratory and library material, and tools for practical work (Jones & Charlton, 2000:41). The situation may create a sense of relative deprivation and a negative self-esteem amongst learners at public schools. Learners in such schools may lack pride in schooling, and thus misbehave (Capazorio, 2006:2). The learners may also have low morale and poor commitment (Cameron & Sheppard, 2006:16). These conditions may lead to problems such as vandalism, theft and socially unacceptable behaviour (Black, 2002:2).

2.6.4 Overcrowding

South African primary schools in general, have larger class sizes when compared to similar schools in countries with similar economic status such as Brazil, Mexico and Chile (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconstruction 2000). More learners are taught in classes where there are more than 41 learners in the classroom when compared to learners in these three countries (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconstruction 2000). Therefore, many primary schools have background noise levels that potentially interfere with lesson presentation and understanding. Consequently, learners may misbehave due to these distractions.

Overcrowding also implies competition for inadequate space, resources and facilities (Holtman, 20008:21). There is a greater possibility that learners may fight or clash over scarce resources, with the risk of such clashes becoming frequent and planned, and leading to behaviours related to gangsterism, bullying and harassment of smaller and weaker learners.

2.6.5 Academic failure

Children who fail to acquire basic academic skills in the early grades are at risk of being mocked by peers, losing a sense of personal worth and dignity, and demonstrating a variety of behavioural problems (Van Dyk 2000:17). Such learners may see themselves as failures and may, therefore, develop delinquent tendencies – which may disrupt the schooling of other learners. The situation creates the opportunity for negative peer associations, suspension, expulsion and dropping out of school (Van Heerden, 2000:50).

Academic failure is an important factor in predicting future criminal behaviour: Steenkamp (2006: 15) found a strong association between academic failure and delinquent behaviour. Van Dyk (2000:18) also

found that low education levels are associated with high crime levels, particularly crimes of violence that are prevalent in developing countries.

2.6.6 Irrelevant Curriculum

The curriculum is one of the main concepts that will have to be considered when searching for ways to minimise ill-discipline and manage discipline effectively.

Holtman (2008:3) believes that what schools offer and how they offer it, helps determine whether learners respond in desirable or undesirable ways; and that the reason for pupils' misbehaviour may have much (if not more), to do with their experience at school than those experiences they encounter in the home. The statement leads to questions such as: Does the curriculum address the needs of the learners? Is the curriculum too content orientated? Does the curriculum prepare the learners for the real world? In addressing these questions, Makapela (2006:15) puts forward the view that violence is higher in schools where the curriculum and instruction are not aligned with the interests and needs of the learners. James (2000:318) argues that a certain way of promoting ill-discipline in the school is to provide a narrow, rigid curriculum that stresses content and neglects feelings and emotions. Marshall (2002:51) identifies a curriculum which is matched to learners' present and future needs, as characteristic which is likely to impact positively on learner behaviour. The curriculum is one of the main concepts that may have to be considered when searching for ways to minimize ill-discipline among learners and manage discipline effectively.

Learning content should be embedded in the context of the children's culture and life world in order to be meaningful to them. Learners who find the curriculum pointless and meaningless, and not targeted at an appropriate level , or who even view it as irrelevant to their future work-related needs, distance themselves from the task of learning and may, as a consequence, display various forms of unacceptable behaviour

(Jones & Charlton 2000:19). Such behaviour may typically include not paying attention in class, not completing their homework, not preparing for tests and in certain circumstances, even truancy (Jones & Charlton 2000:19).

2.7   FACTORS RELATED TO THE EDUCATOR

2.7.1   Demotivated educators

The issues related to salary, conditions of service and worker rights play an important role in the motivation and job satisfaction of educators (De Villiers et al, 2000:30). The purpose of joining Unions is to ensure that these issues, which affect the welfare of educators, are adequately taken care of (Van Kerken 2003;155) any perceptions by educators that their welfare is not seriously considered could lead to poor teaching, high rates of absenteeism and low morality among educators (De Villiers, 2000:40). Poor teaching, high rates of absenteeism and low morality among educators may have a negative effect on the education of learners, and may contribute to mischievous behaviour among learners (Van Kerken, 2003:155). The factors which negatively affect the educators' self-confidence, generally, create uncertainty and confusion among learners.

Educators' negative perceptions may have a profound impact on learners' behaviour and their identities (Drasgow & Yell, 2002:129). Consequently, learners may develop negative feelings, lack interest in academic matters and may establish closer ties with other troubled learners.

Mark (2006: 219) found that learners with verbally hostile educators may likely act with peers in hostile ways, as they may have copied some of the behaviours exhibited by educators. Thomas (2005:40) supports the contention that children develop behavioural habits through observational learning, the learners add behaviour to their repertoire that they see someone else perform or model. Educators may have great

influence with learners seeking to acquire greater mastery and range in their interpersonal behaviours and those who may see the ways more coercive behaviours can help actors achieve their goals.

2.7.2   School Organisation

To be organised means that educators know the learning material well and are prepared to teach it well in each lesson (DoE, 1996). To be unprepared and unsure of what to teach and how to teach it is an invitation for disorder and disruption (Dimbaza, 2006:15). Lessons should be carefully planned, teaching materials should be well prepared and ready to use, and learners be actively involved in the lesson. Learners who are continuously involved in the learning activity may not easily disrupt others (Dimbaza, 2006:15).

In large schools, with large grounds and scattered buildings, it is important for both learners and educators to observe time in order to maintain good organisation and orderliness, and to avoid rush and stampede. Being late may be associated with bottlenecks in narrow corridors or stairs, pushing and jostling, and simple disorder (Department of Education and Science and the Welsh office, 1989:120). This could lead to lessons starting late, learners fighting and exhibiting problematic behaviour, damaging of school equipment and property, and a generally negative school atmosphere (Department of Education and Science and the Welsh office, 1989:120).

2.7.3 Abuse of Power

Educator authority and educator relationships appear to be integral features in the management of discipline in public schools. Codrington (2000:50) mentions that educators should be aware of the need for a positive loving relationship if learning is to take place. It is clear that in a relationship of trust, positive educative learning can be achieved. If trust is lacking, the educators is in a position of power instead of authority

(Oosthuizen. 2002:68). Educator power implies that the learner is not viewed as a partner in the education process, but at the mercy of the educator. This view has a tendency to make learners stubborn and vengeful (Noguera, 2003:300). According to Williams (2004:10), the educator-learner relationship is an example of influential relationship in which the educators are constantly modifying the behaviour of their learners. Authority appropriately applied can be described as invitational education towards the learners to develop their potential to become responsible adults (Williams, 2004:102).

2.8 WAYS OF DEALING WITH POOR DISCIPLINE

2.8.1 The importance of dealing with poor discipline at home

Parents have a role to play in dealing with discipline. Parents are expected to teach their children values such as mutual respect, patience, sympathy and empathy (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002:2). By planning for discipline both before and after it is administered, parents are more likely to meet the goal of correcting behaviour (Donald *et al.*, 2002:2). It should also be noted that the youth become exceptionally vulnerable to dangerous influence from peers and the media (Farrington & Welsh, 2007:253). Parents are needed to help the child to overcome this problem. It is generally accepted that poorly equipped parents may fail to reinforce the good intentions of behavioural interventions at the domestic level where programme outcomes are dependent on understanding, support and meaningful interactions from their side (Van Jaarsveld, 2008:7). In this regard parents themselves often require skills training on parenting and on ways in which they may relate and react to their children.

2.8.2 The importance of dealing with poor discipline at school

Children spend large parts of their day in the school environment where they are supposed to learn effectively and develop intellectually and

emotionally with minimal environmental constraints (Van Jaarsveld, 2008:8). However, in disadvantaged communities it is not always the case where social problems from the home and community often disrupt this positive process and are connected with fostering a poor school environment in which anti-social behaviour prevails (Wilson, 2002:60).

The school environment is a place where young people are taught constructive social skills, which are considered important for their healthy functioning in society. The source of school violence and misbehaviour may, therefore, lie in contexts outside the school, which interact and transact with each other over time to shape individual anti-social behaviour (Collins & Adamson, 2004:62).

The purpose of discipline is to develop and entrench desirable social habits in learners, as well as to foster sound judgement and morals to the learners so as to enable them to maintain self-discipline throughout their lives (Wilson, 2002:60). The school, as a micro community, is seen as the appropriate place for instilling discipline among learners.

2.9 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN POOR DISCIPLINE

Corporal punishment is by its very nature anti-human and ultimately an abusive practice that entrenches the idea that violence provides a solution to every problem (Department of Education, 2000:1). The removal of corporal punishment and the elimination of other de-humanising practice in schools are necessary steps towards the development of a culture of human rights in the country (Department of Education, 2000:1). However, it is important to bear in mind that:

- many educators have to deal with disruptive learners;
- corporal punishment has been part of the history of many learners and educators;
- change in itself often a difficult process; and

- discipline is a recognised area of struggle for many educators.

Thus, it is not surprising that there are educators and parents who find this a difficult shift to make (Department of Education, 2000:9).

According to the DoE (2000:12), a classroom climate based on mutual respect where learners feel safe and affirmed may decrease the need for disciplinary action and develop ability to practice self-discipline. By implementing a proactive approach, educators may help to safeguard the culture of learning and teaching in their classrooms. Educators need to look at basic issues such as:

- preparing lessons;
- exercising self-discipline;
- having extension work available;
- ensuring that teaching and learning happen consistently;
- ensuring that learners are stimulated;
- establishing class rules with learners;
- making a space for time out or a conflict resolution corner;
- affirming learners;
- providing a rationale for all classroom activities;
- building positive relationships with learners (DoE, 2000:12)

All these strategies can set the stage for a positive learning environment and can significantly reduce problems within the classroom.

Through the SASA (DoE, 1996), schools are empowered to develop their own disciplinary code. The code of conduct must be subject to the Constitution of South Africa (RSA 1996), the SASA (DoE, 1996), and provincial legislation. It should reflect the Constitutional democracy, human rights and transparent communication which underpin South African society (Squelch, 2000:50). According to the DoE (2000:20), the

code of conduct is as much about the school values, ethos and mission as it is about rules and regulations.

If learners violate reasonable school rules by behaving in ways that are prohibited, they should be held accountable such accountability usually implies that violators will be subject to disciplinary sanctions or consequences.

Because of the prevalence of drugs and other contraband in public schools and the levels of violence in schools, the sequence of searches of learners and their property has increased (Yell & Rozaliski, 2008). However, learner's privacy rights are protected by the fourth Amendment to the U.S constitution, which prohibits unreasonable searches of persons (Yell & Rozaliski, 2008). The over-emphases of individual rights, the negligence of personal responsibility, the lack of a fully-fledged public value system, failure by learners to be self-disciplined, failure of the system to guide learners, to think and judge for themselves, and the absence of self-disciplined role models made the government to fail in restoring order and discipline in schools (Yell & Rozaliski, 2008:16).

2.10   DISCIPLINE AND DEMOCRACY

Disciplinary measures are devised to promote and maintain a well disciplined school environment and prohibit and punish unacceptable conduct through measures that also encourage the culprits to improve their behaviour (De Villiers, Wethmar & Van der Bank, 2000:310).

The Constitution, the education legislation and the school's code of conduct demand that learners behave in ways which respect the dignity, safety and welfare of others (Dugmore, 2006:12). However, learners who misbehave disregard the welfare of others. In implementing and enforcing disciplinary measures, the school authorities would ensure that the welfare and safety of others are respected (Bekink & Brand, 2000:44-45). Within the school conduct, the school and its governing

body work together in a relationship of trust to promote quality education for all the learners in the school. Against this background school discipline should be implemented and enforced in a democratic manner, with respect for the human rights of all involved.

2.11 CONCLUSION

The factors contributing to poor discipline in schools are many and varied. These factors could be within the school, or outside the school. The home background and parents play an important role in discipline, since the disciplinary practices applied at home greatly influence response to disciplinary practices in the school. Therefore, cooperation between parents and educators is extremely important.

The next chapter deals with methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented a literature review that focused on the factors that contribute to poor discipline in schools. It was revealed that although corporal punishment is viewed as having an important role to play in the maintenance of discipline in schools, it was no longer popular as more democratic and humane ways of disciplining learners are preferred.

This chapter deals with the research design. The research approach used in this study, as well as the instruments used will be discussed. The population, sample and the sampling technique will also be discussed. The issues around data, particularly how it will be collected, and how it will be analysed will also receive attention.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1 Research methodology

The study will apply both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. Waghid (2003:42) agrees that investigation can be strengthened by supplementing a qualitative approach with a quantitative approach.

Each of the two approaches will be briefly discussed.

3.2.1.1 Qualitative approach

The qualitative approach is mostly conducted in a natural setting, and it describes human behaviour, actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions as they occur or as they are experienced (Cresswell, 2001:14). It is an approach which is more relevant in human studies since it accommodates aspects that cannot be quantified, such as emotions, feelings and perceptions. Therefore, the qualitative approach can explore various dimensions of the social world, including the texture of everyday life (Mason, 2002:1).

In this study, the qualitative approach was used to interpret data collected through the questionnaire. Although numbers, percentages, tables and graphs were used in this study, the emphasis was on the qualitative element of those aspects. These quantities only helped to enhance understanding. The use of numbers in a qualitative study is acceptable, as long as the emphasis is not on the numbers and quantities, but on the feelings and expressions of the participants about their situation (Silverman, 2001: 38)

3.2.1.2 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research uses statistics to present, collect and analyse data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:16; Mullins, 2005: 905). The quantitative approach measures the reactions of many people to a limited set of questions, this facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:16). Neuman (1997:14-15) contends that in most quantitative techniques large volumes of data are condensed in order to focus on certain key aspects.

In this study the elements of the quantitative approach, such as numbers, tables and graphs were used. The purpose of using the elements of a quantitative approach was to enhance understanding. Silverman (2001:38) believes that some quantitative techniques can

offer a means to survey the whole corpus of data which could be ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research.

3.2.2 Instruments

3.2.2.1   The questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed with the purpose of soliciting information that can be analysed, and that may help the researcher to answer the research question(s) (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:246). The following guidelines were considered when developing questions for the questionnaire:

- Avoid double-barrelled questions;
- Questions should be relevant;
- Use mainly short questions, and
- Avoid biased questions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:248).

3.3   POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.3.1 Population

The population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which the results are intended to be generalised (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:164). For the purpose of this study, the population will consist of Grade 7 educators in Maokeng township, in the Moqhaka Municipality. There are 12 primary schools with Grade 7 classes in the Maokeng township, with a total of about 60 Grade 7 educators.

3.3.2 Sample

The sample is a small group which adequately and accurately represents the characteristics of the population (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999: 232).

The sample for this study consisted of 20 Grade 7 educators from Maokeng township primary schools.

3.3.3 Sampling technique

The sampling technique used in this study was random sampling. Random sampling implies that each and every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected or of forming part of the sample (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:174).

For the purpose of this study, members of the population were allocated numbers, from 1 to 60, and each third Grade 7 educator was taken.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire was used for collecting data. The questionnaire was distributed to 20 Grade 7 educators from Maokeng township primary schools, and it was collected after 5 working days.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

In this study data analysis was mainly qualitative, although some elements of quantitative data analysis were also used. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:358), qualitative data analysis is the non-numerical assessment to observations made through participant observation, content analysis, in depth interviews, and other qualitative research techniques. In this study the qualitative analysis of the content or responses of the participants was very important. The responses

were grouped, codes were allocated and patterns were established (Creswell, 2001:140; McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:464). The use of quantitative approach was limited to graphs, percentages and totals. The purpose of these graphs, percentages and totals was to enhance understanding (Silverman 2001:24). Therefore, qualitative interpretations and the qualitative value of the numbers and graphs remained the focal point of analysis in this study.

3.6   CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the methodology that was applied in the study. The population and sample techniques, data collection and analysis, and the instrument were discussed.

The next chapter deals with the results of the empirical study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research methodology used in this study was described.   In this chapter the results of the empirical study are discussed.

4.2   RESULTS

4.2.1 Biographical data of participants to pilot study

Figure 4.1: Profile of respondents
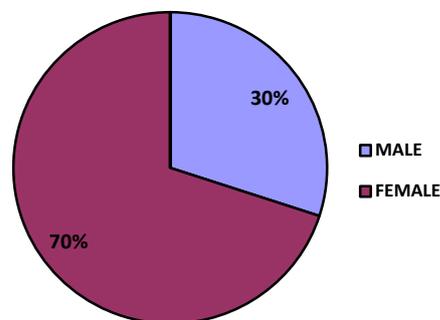
Of the 20 respondents, 13 (70%) were males and seven (30%) were female. The reason for this difference could be that male educators were allocated senior classes because they were more qualified and command better subject knowledge than female educators.

The implication is that the senior educators in the schools surveyed interact with male educators more than they do with female educators.

Figure 4.2: Age of participants
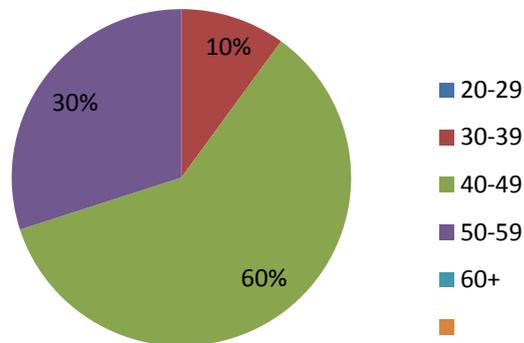
Of the 20 respondents, 12 (60%) were between 40 and 49 years old; six (30%) were between 50 and 59 years old, and only two (10%) were between the ages of 30 and 39 years.

The implication is that the majority of respondents surveyed are older and matured, with the possibility of good experience of handling children.

Figure 4.3: Teaching experience
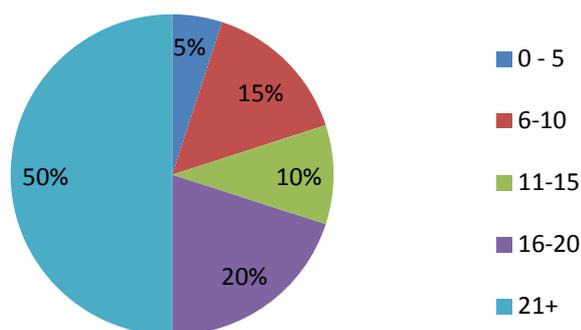
Of the twenty participants, four (20%) had teaching experience of 16-20 years, while ten (10%) had teaching experience of twenty one years, plus teaching experience and others had less than 16 years teaching experience.

Figure 4.4: Professional qualifications
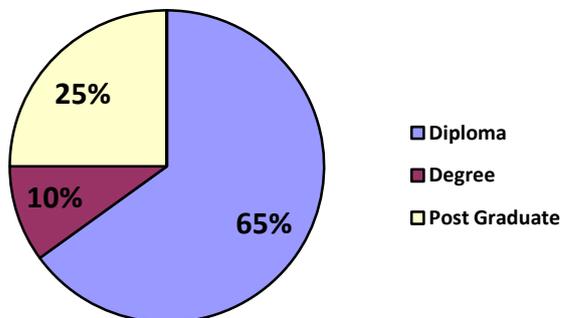
Of the 20 respondents, 13 (65%) held a three-year teaching diploma; five (25%) held a post-graduate qualification, and two (10%) held a Bachelors' degree.

The implication is that the educators of the schools surveyed are properly qualified to teach at the primary school, with others holding higher qualifications than required at a primary school.

4.2.2 Demographical data

Figure 4.5: Learners per school
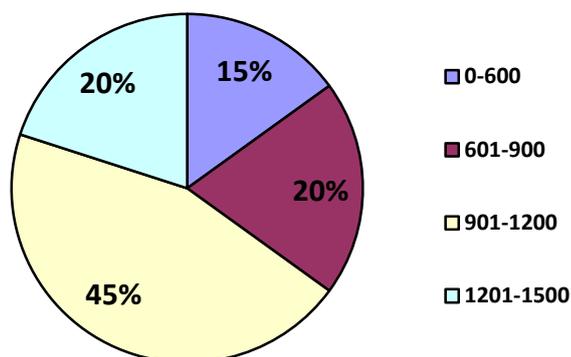
Of the twenty participants, nine (45%) worked at schools with learners between 900 and 1200; four (20%) worked at schools with learners between 600 and 900; four(20%) work at schools with 1201-1500

learners, and only three (15%) educators worked at schools with 0-600 learners.

The implication is that the majority of educators worked at schools where there were more than 1000 learners. This could make it difficult to maintain discipline effectively.

Figure 4.6: Hours spent on discipline
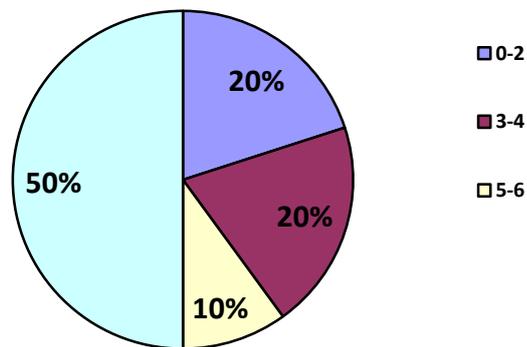
Of the twenty participants, ten (50%) of respondents indicated that they spent 7-8 hours on discipline; four (20%) reported that they spent 3-4 hours doing so; four (20%) spent 3-4 hours and others spent more than 2 hours.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they spent many hours on discipline. The implication is that time for teaching and learning is lost while disciplining learners.

Figure 4.7: Numbers of educators per school
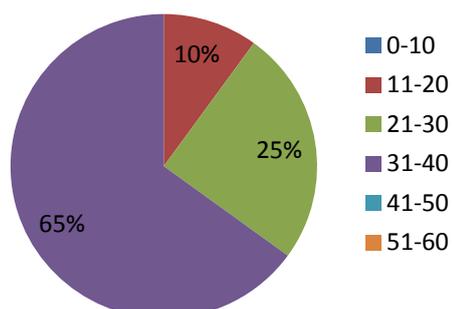
Of the twenty participants, more than half of the respondents 13 (65%) indicated that there were 31-40 educators at their schools and five (25%) of educators mentioned that there were 21-30 educators at their schools and others had less than 20 educators at their schools.

The implication is that the majority of schools surveyed were fairly big, implying a high number of educators and that of learners. The possibility of ill-discipline is higher in big schools than it is the case in smaller schools; or phrased otherwise, smaller numbers of learners are easier to control and manage than it is the case with big numbers of learners.

**Figure 4.8: Number of learners per class**
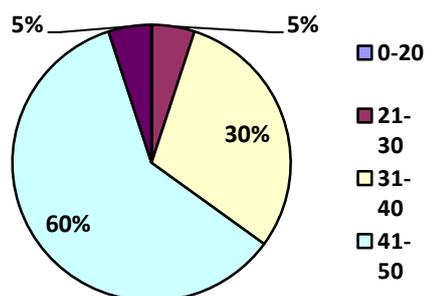
Of the twenty participants, 12 (60%) of respondents mentioned that there were 41-50 learners in the classroom and six (30%) of the educators had 31-40 learners in classrooms and others had less than 30 learners and only one (5%) of the twenty indicated that there were more than 50 learners in their classroom.

This implies that educators have to deal with high numbers of learners in the classroom and educators get so frustrated and over burdened that they often just refuse to even hear about some problems and this has a negative impact in their involvement with the discipline of learners because they feel that they do not have the time and energy to become involve.

**Figure 4.9: Number of classrooms**
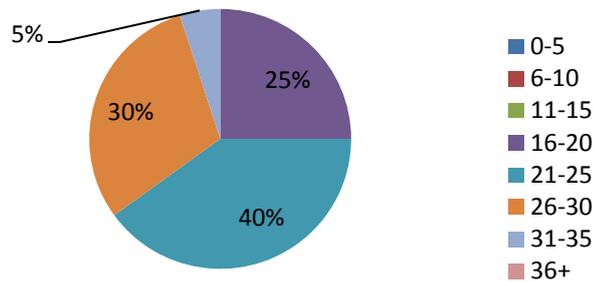
Of the 20 participants, eight (40%) indicated that there were 21-25 classrooms at their schools while six (30%) mentioned that there were 26-30 classroom and only five (25%) indicated 16-20 classrooms and others had more than 30 classrooms.

The implication is that the majority of schools surveyed have more than 30 classrooms. This could be an indication that that the majority of schools surveyed was big, with high numbers of learner and educators. The high numbers of learners are associated with higher levels of noise and ill-discipline. The high numbers of learners could also contribute negatively to the workload and stress levels of educators.

Figure 4.10: Number of laboratories
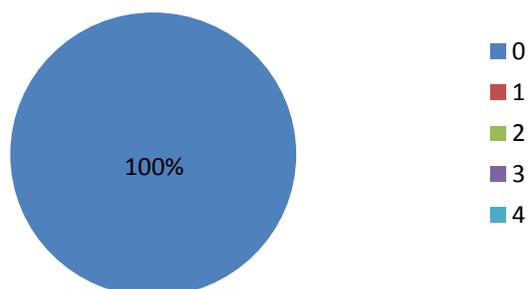
Of the twenty participants, 20 (100%) of the respondents indicated that there were no functioning laboratories in their schools

This implies that learners have to do practical work in their classrooms and this is time consuming and it might cause a lot of disruption for the whole school.

Figure 4.11: Number of libraries
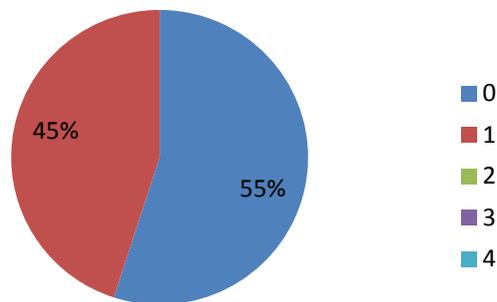
Of the twenty participants, 11 (55%) had indicated that there were no libraries at their schools and 9 (45%) used only one library at their schools.

The implication is that educators have to bring along text books to classrooms whenever there are some activities that learners have to complete and make some research, sometimes learners are left unattended because educators need to go and fetch teaching aids from libraries.

Figure 4.12: Number of play areas
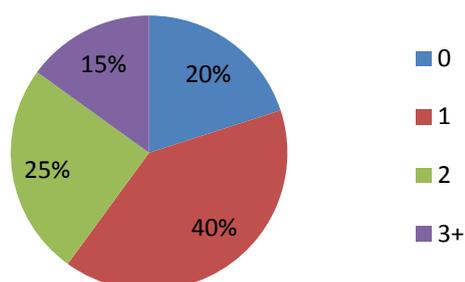
Of the twenty participants, eight (40%) made use of only one play area and five25% used two play areas for the whole school and three (15%) had three play areas while four (20%) had no place for learners to play.

The implication is that the majority of schools have no adequate place for learners to play; and without play areas, learners tend to become bored and may start misbehaving.

Figure 4.13: Number of staff rooms
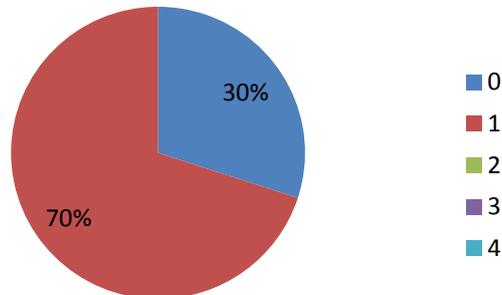
Of the twenty participants, 14 (70%) used only one staffroom and six (30%) did not have any staffroom.

The implication is that the majority of schools surveyed may not have adequate facilities for educators to meet and to discuss. Meeting with colleagues and sharing experiences could help educators to feel better, and, thus, lower their stress levels. The opposite could be true if educators do not meet: they may not have emotional support in handling difficult situations at school.

**Figure 4.14: Numbers of assembly halls**
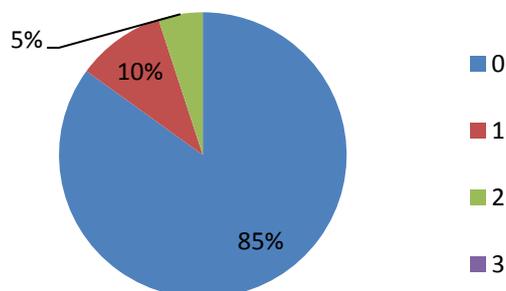
Of the twenty participants, 17 (85%) had no assembly halls and two (10%) had only one assembly hall while only one had more than one assembly hall.

The implication is that the majority of schools use open grounds to hold assemblies. This could be problematic in big schools with many learners: problems related to noise, unnecessary movements and audibility may be experienced.

### 4.2.3 Section C: Frequency of use of disciplinary practices by educators

Figure 4.15: Peer Pressure
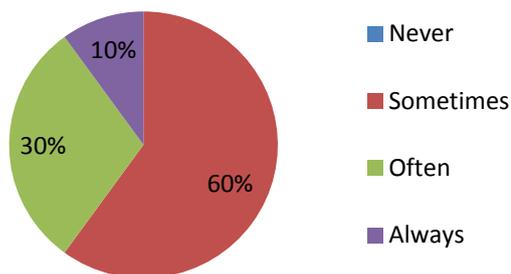
Of the twenty respondents, 12 (60%) indicated that learners sometimes misbehaved due to peer pressure; six (30%) said this was often the case, and two (10%) said this was always the case.

The implication is that peer pressure plays an important role in discipline. Learners need to belong, and being part of a group is important at this stage of their lives. Therefore, the company that a learner keeps could contribute greatly to the discipline of the learner. The school's code of conduct and even-handed handling of disciplinary problems could help influence good behaviour among many learners and groups.

Figure 4.16: Corporal punishment
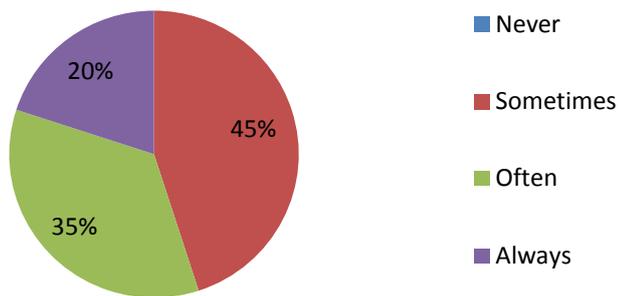
Of the 20 respondents, nine (45%) indicated that school discipline was sometimes poor because of the abolition of corporal punishment; seven (35%) said this was often the case, and 4 (20%) said this was always the case.

The implication is that the majority of educators believe that the abolition of corporal punishment led to an increase in disciplinary problems among learners. It is for this reason that many educators are calling for the return of corporal punishment. This could indicate a need for retraining educators in discipline and disciplinary procedures. The information on the legal implications of administering corporal punishment on learners could also be given to educators.

Figure 4.17: Drug abuse
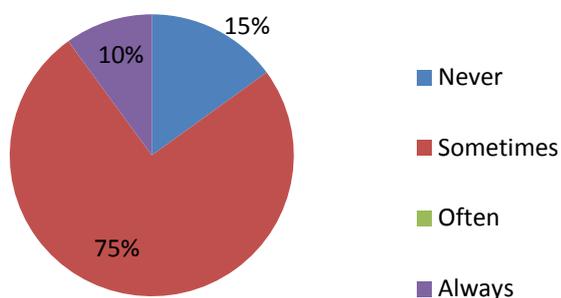
Of the 20 respondents, 15 (75%) indicated that the abuse of drugs sometimes caused learners to misbehave; and three (15%) said this was never the case, and two (10%) indicated that this was always the case.

The implication is that drug abuse is a problem at the surveyed primary schools, and it has a negative effect on discipline among learners in Maokeng township.

Figure 4.18: Sending learners to the principal
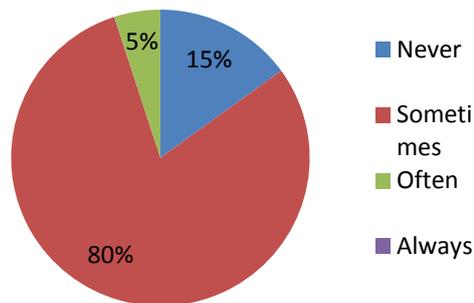
Of the 20 respondents, 16 (80%) indicated that they sometimes sent misbehaving learners to the principal; 3 (15%) said they never did so, and one (5%) often did so.

The implication is that the majority of educators do not want to handle misbehaving learners, but refer such learners to the school principal. The reason could be the legal implication of punishing learners, with some measures viewed as assault – for which educators could be prosecuted. hence the majority of educators avoid taking these risks by referring such learners to the school principal. This practice could have other implications, such as learners viewing the educators as being unable to handle them. They could, therefore, defy or undermine the educator's authority.

Figure 4.19: Discipline in class
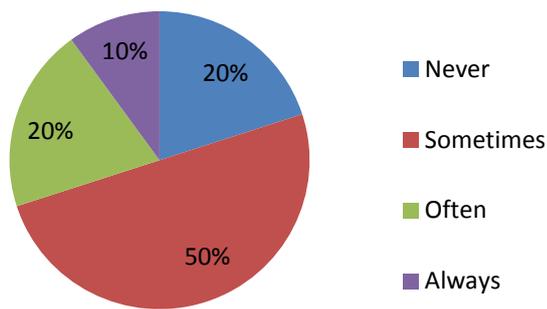
Of the 20 respondents, ten (50%) indicated that they sometimes struggled with poor discipline in their classes; four (20%) indicated that they often struggled with poor discipline in their classes; another four (20%) indicated that they never struggled with poor discipline, and two (10%) indicated that they always struggled with poor discipline in their classes.

The implication is that the majority of educators spend a lot of time dealing with disciplinary problems in their classes or during lessons. This could mean that the time and energy which are crucial for the lesson are spent on disciplinary issues.

Figure 4.20: Administering corporal punishment
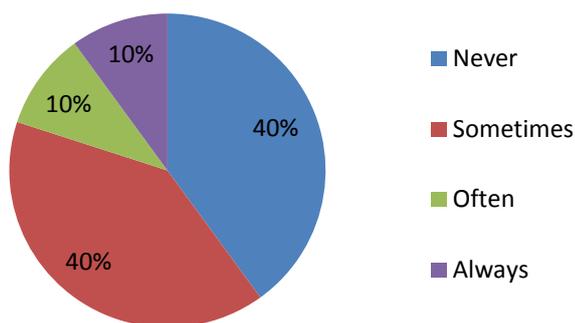
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) never administered corporal punishment to misbehaving learners; another eight (40%) sometimes did so; two (10%) often did so, and another two (10%) always did so.

The implication is that the majority of educators in the schools surveyed risk prosecution by administering corporal punishment to misbehaving learners. It could be that corporal punishment is viewed by many educators as effective. Therefore, the need for retraining of educators on alternative disciplinary measures is crucial.

Figure 4.21: The seriousness of disciplinary cases
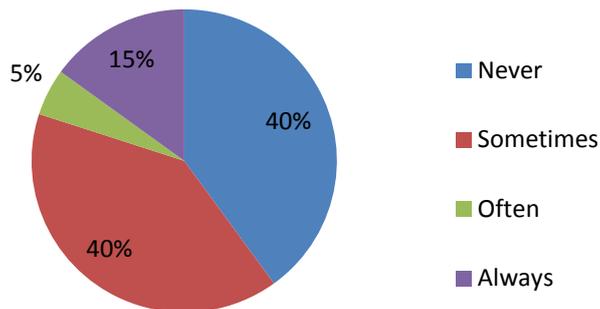
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) never referred cases of misbehaviour to the SGB; another eight (40%) sometimes did so; three (15%) always did so, while one (5%) often did so.

The implication is that the nature of misbehaviour is sometimes so serious that it warrants the attention of the SGB. This could be an indication of the seriousness of the discipline situation in the schools surveyed.

Figure 4.22: Poor and rich learners
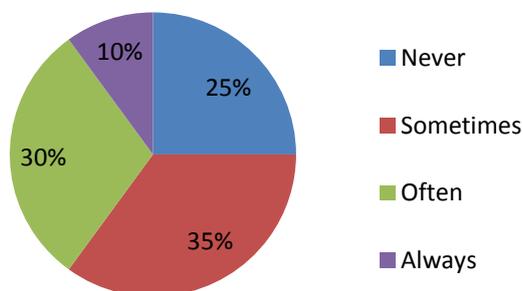
Of the 20 educators who responded to the questionnaire, seven (35%) indicated that learners from poor families sometimes misbehave more than learners from rich families; six (30%) said this was often the case;

two (10%) said this was always the case, and five (25%) said this was never the case.

The implication is that learners from poor families display bad behaviour as compared to learners from rich families. The reason could be that poor families are more concerned with basics such as food and shelter, and neglect issues related to morals and behaviour. The other issue could be that some poor learners may be from the informal settlements, where crime and disorder are common.

Figure 4.23: Behaviour vs Performance
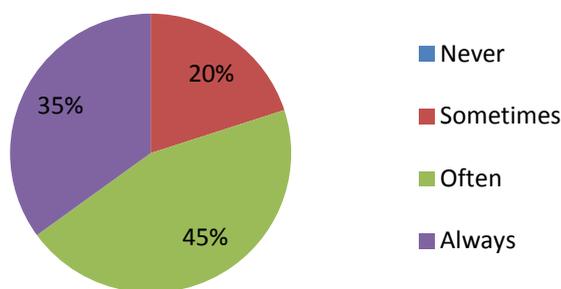
Of the 20 respondents, nine (45%) indicated that learners with disciplinary problems often displayed poor academic performance; seven (35%) indicated that this was always the case, and 4 (20%) indicated that this was sometimes the case.

The implication is that there is a clear relationship between behaviour and academic performance, with specifically misbehaving learners performing badly in academic assessment.

Figure 4.24: Overcrowding
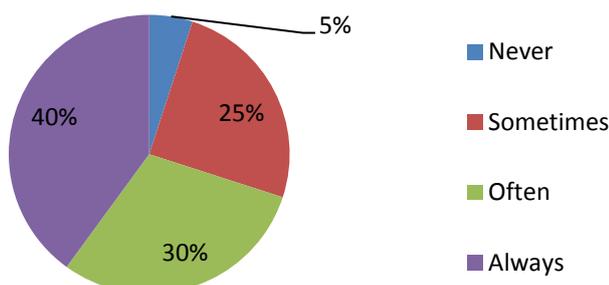
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) indicated that overcrowding promoted poor behaviour; six (30%) said this was always the case; five (25%) said this was sometimes the case, and only one (5%) said this was never the case.

The implication is that overcrowding has a negative impact on discipline in the schools surveyed. Learners may feel uncomfortable in an overcrowded venue. That feeling may lead to anger, pushing and fighting among learners.

Figure 4.25: Resources
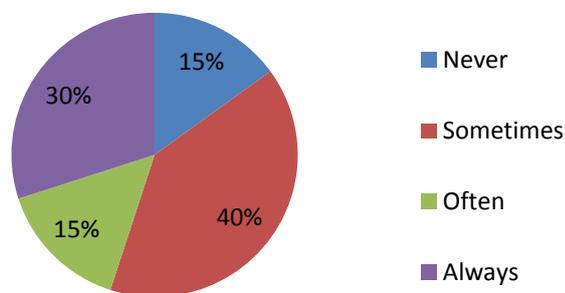
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) reported that the shortage of resources and materials in the school sometimes caused poor behaviour; six (30%) said this was always the case; three (15%) said this was often the case, and another three (15%) said this was never the case.

The implication is that the shortage of resources and material contributes negatively to the issue of discipline in the surveyed schools. The shortage of resources also means that learners may be fighting for the scarce resources, with the stronger ones always securing the use of the resources. Educators may also be struggling to secure the use of important resources. This could also cause tension among educators. The overcrowding in many schools surveyed implies that the shortage of resources is a common problem in these schools.

Figure 4.26: Drug and alcohol abuse
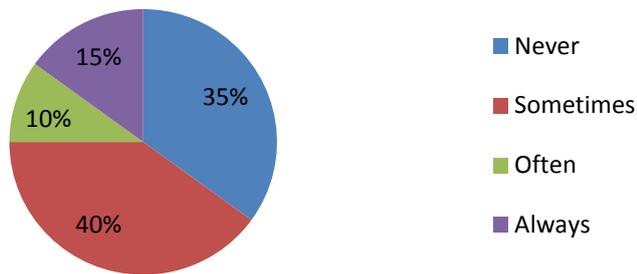
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) reported that drugs and alcohol abuse sometimes promoted ill-discipline among learners in the surveyed school; three (15%) reported that this was always the case, while two (10%) reported that this was often the case. Seven (35%) reported that drugs and alcohol abuse never promoted ill-discipline among learners in the surveyed school.

The implication is that the availability of alcohol and drugs to primary school learners has a negative impact on discipline among learners.

Figure 4. 27: Informal settlements
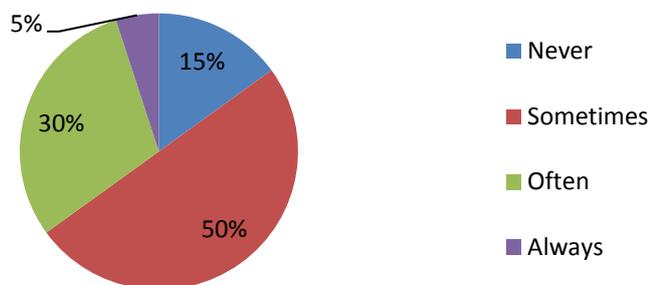
Of the 20 respondents, ten (50%) reported that learners coming from informal settlements sometimes had more behavioural problems than learners coming from formally built houses; six (30%) said this was often the case, and one respondent (5%) said this was always the case. Three respondents (15%) said that learners coming from informal settlements never had more behavioural problems than learners coming from formally built houses.

The implication is that informal settlements promote bad behaviour among learners. This could be so because informal settlements are known for lawlessness and for housing wanted criminals.

Figure 4.28: Necessity of corporal punishment
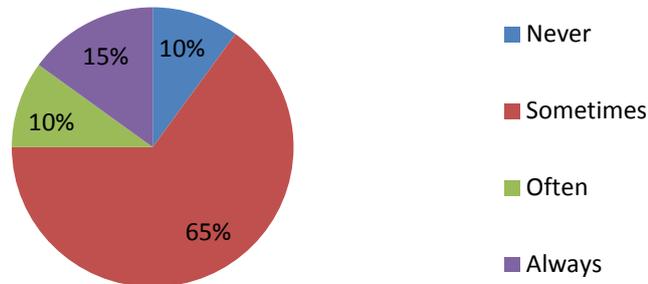
Of the 20 respondents, 13 (65%) reported that corporal punishment was sometimes necessary in order to maintain discipline at schools; three (15%) said this was always the case; two (10%) said this was often the case, while another two (10%) said this was never the case.

The figures above indicate that the majority of educators in the schools surveyed believe that corporal punishment was the necessary measure for dealing with disciplinary problems. It is for this reason that many educators call for its unbanning.

Figure 4.29: Single parents
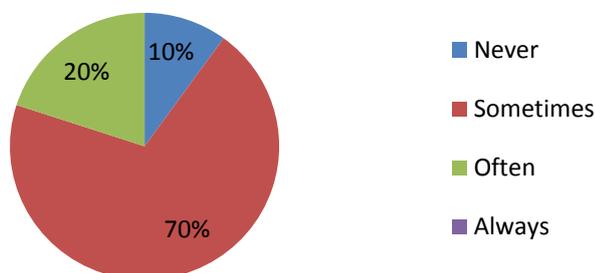
Of the 20 respondents, 14 (70%) reported that learners from single parent families sometimes misbehaved more than learners from families

with both parents; 4 (20%) said this was often the case, while two (10%) said this was never the case.

The implication is that single parent families are viewed as contributing negatively to discipline. The reason could be that the influence of one of the parents in discipline is missing, and this may affect the child negatively. Many single parent families are headed by mothers. In many instances boys undermine the authority of the mother. Therefore, boys from such families may disregard authority, especially authority of female teachers.

Figure 4.30: Grandparents
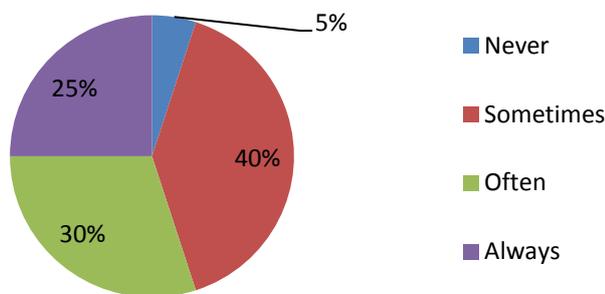
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) reported that learners living with grandparents sometimes misbehaved more than learners living with their own parents; six (30%) said this was often the case; five (25%) said this was always the case, while only one (5%) said this was never the case.

The implication is that the majority of educators view grandparents as not effective in disciplining learners. This could be because grandparents are old and no longer have the stamina to scold or punish learners when they misbehave at home.

Figure 4. 31: Parents' cooperation with school
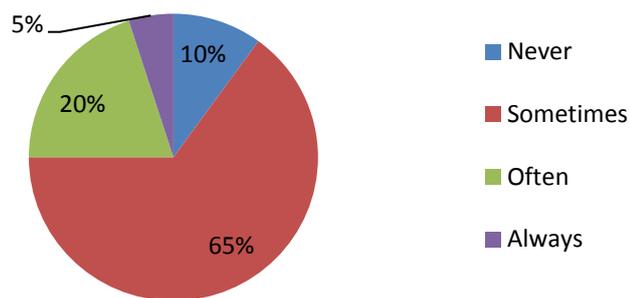
Of the 20 respondents, 13 (65%) reported that most parents sometimes cooperated with the school in disciplining their children; four (20%) said this was often the case, and two (10%) said this was never the case. Only one (5%) respondent reported that most parents always cooperated with the school in disciplining their children.

Parents are expected to always cooperate with the school in disciplining children. However, only one educator reported that this was always the case. The implication is that the cooperation from parents in matters of discipline is inconsistent and inadequate.

Figure 4.32: Discipline without corporal punishment
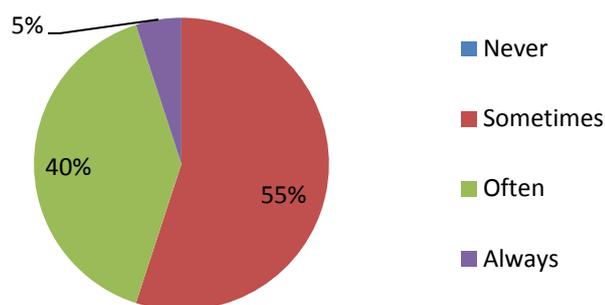
Of the 20 respondents, 11 (55%) reported that It was sometimes possible to maintain discipline without corporal punishment; eight (40%) said it was often possible to do so, and one (5%) said it was always possible to do so.

The implication is that the majority of the respondents felt that it was not always possible to maintain discipline without corporal punishment. Many educators believe that corporal punishment is the most effective measure of maintaining discipline in schools. This perception needs to be addressed through training of educators in handling discipline.

Figure 4.33: Code of Conduct
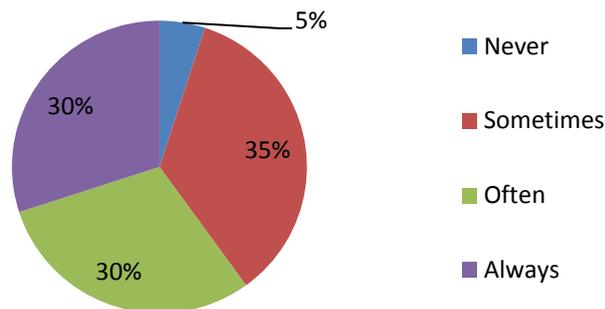
Of the 20 respondents, seven (35%) reported that adopting a code of conduct had sometimes helped to deal with disciplinary problems in the school; six (30%) reported that this was often the case; another six (30%) reported that this was always the case, while only one (5%) reported that this was never the case.

The implication is that adopting a code of conduct could help to deal with disciplinary problems in the school.

Figure 4.34: Noise, fighting and swearing
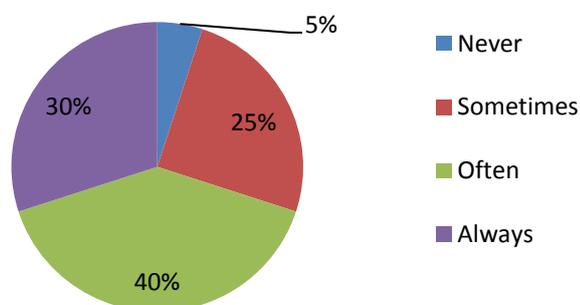
Of the 20 respondents, eight (40%) reported that noise, fighting and swearing were often common behavioural problems among s; six (30%) said this was always the case, and five (25%) said this was sometimes the case. Only one (5%) said noise, fighting and swearing were never common behavioural problems among learners.

The implication is that most learners make noise, fight each other, and swear at each other. Given the high number of learners in the schools surveyed, the problem of dealing with these offences could be overwhelming.

4.3   SECTION D: ANALYSIS OF THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

In this section participants had to answer open-ended questions. The participants' key responses or statements are indicated below:

1   What can parents do to help educators with discipline at school?

Participant A: "Charity begins at home, so the parents should discipline their children at home".

Participant B: "Parents should be interested to check their school work (s work daily) should contact educators at least weekly or monthly to know how their children behave".

Participant C: "Attend parents meeting, come to school when requested so. Give love and care to their children at home. Try to set agreed rules at home and be exemplary to their children".

Participant D: "Monitor learners work".

Participant E: "They can teach their children how to respect the old people, to listen to them, not to answer them when they give them instructions".

Participant F: "They must be involved in daily affairs of their children".

Participant G: "Discipline their children from home".

Participant H: "Talk to their kids and teach them not to do wrong things a school. They should discipline them from home".

Participant I:" Be cooperative".

Participant J: "Communicate with the school regularly and come to school if called".

Participant K: "Parents should visit the school and ask educators about the behaviour of their learners".

Participant L: "Talk to their children and bring them closer to them. Also they can check on the type of friends their children hang out with."

Participant M: "They can help learners with school work and discipline them at home".

Participant N: "Work together with educators".

Participant O: "They should always come to school, when needed and check their learner's books and control them".

Participant P: "Parents should come to school if the educators want them".

Participant Q: "By being actively involved in school activities and by being part of the solution".

Participant R: "If they are more involved in their children's school work:

Participant S: "They must see to it that s do school work at home. Check their books to identify if they are always present. Visit the school and talk to educators to see their children's behaviour".

Participant T: "Have a good cooperation with parents".

The majority of educators feel that if parents could be involved in school activities, it would be the best way to maintain discipline at school. However, some respondents said that parents could start disciplining them at home.

2   *What is the best form of punishment for disciplining misbehaving learners?*

Participant A: "Talk with the s about dos and don'ts".

Participant B: "They should be suspended according to their misbehaviour. If you send a child home will feel a pain because those who s/he impressed would be at school. H/She would be serious after "suspension" three to six days".

Participant C: "Let them forfeit some of their privileges. Give yourself time to politely speak to them. Apply detention in an effective and reasonable way".

Participant D: "Debiting the learners when they misbehave".

Participant E: "Is the points system to weight the mistake made by its merit and must be proportional to punishment".

Participant F: "Detention".

Participant G: "By using a demerit system. Taking away some of the learners' privileges".

Participant H: "To ignore them and keep on teaching".

Participant I: "Extra work".

Participant J: "Give them work to do outside the classroom after school".

Participant K: "Detention".

Participant L: "Learners should be deprived opportunities at school like e.g. not going on school tour, not to play sport or other activities at school".

Participant M: "Corporal punishment".

Participant N: "Learners are given work during break and after hours".

Participant O: "Using of light stick to punish them. One or two strokes to be used on hands or buttocks rather than suspension from class, or better punish them by doing manual work for some hour or any other relevant method".

Participant P: "The best punishment to disciplining learners is corporal punishment".

Participant Q: "Verbal warning. Demerits (removing merits and privileges already gained".

Participant R: "Parents involvement. Referrals to the SBST".

Participant S: "Give learners some points, when they have exceeded certain numbers, parents can be called in and explained to that they must be suspended".

Participant T: "Detention".

In response to this question, most respondents thought that extra work after school would be the best solution to reduce the problem of bad behaviour at school. Some of the respondents thought detention was the best form of punishment, while other mentioned that learners should be deprived of some of their privileges at school.

3   *What are the main causes of discipline problems?*

Participant A: "Stubborn and cheeky".

Participant B: "The learners who lack discipline are those who don't like to be controlled. No matter rich or poor. No matter single or two parents, no matter grandparents or not but if a not like to be controlled will not be disciplined. Will drink alcohol, smoke, use drugs, latecomer at home (night rider)".

Participant C: "Learners not taught effectively or left unattended. Peer pressure or mixing with wrong friends. Learners who are not loved and cared for at home and seek attention. Background of broken families".

Participant D: "Sometimes drug and alcohol abuse and poverty from other learners".

Participant E: "Favouritism makes the learners to be out of discipline".

Participant F: "Children don't play".

Participant G: "Overcrowding of classrooms – peer pressure".

Participant H: "Poverty and peer pressure".

Participant I: "Stage, abuse, negligent".

Participant J: "Overcrowded classrooms, drug abuse, peer pressure, living with grandparents".

Participant K: "Learners are not always involved".

Participant L: "Parents who don't monitor their children's daily activities. Children who stay with elderly people and children from poor families".

Participant M: "Lack of parental involvement in school work, school activities and discipline of learners".

Participant N: "Drug abuse, peer group pressure".

Participant O: "Not doing work, late coming, habitual behaviour, using drugs sometimes".

Participant P: "Lack of respect, not be at time during school hours, dressing of our learners".

Participant Q: "Peer pressure, single parenting where the other parents I absent, educators going to class unprepared and overcrowding in classes".

Participant R: "Children are most of the time on their own after school. Some parents are working and often come home late.

Some don't even notice when learners don't attend school regularly".

Participant T: "Drugs, broken families, unemployment".

In responses to this question, alcohol, drug abuse, poverty and peer pressure were regarded by most educators as the causes of disciplinary problem at schools.

4   What are the signs of poor learners discipline among children?

Participant A: "Not having a good listening skill".

Participant B: "Bad clothing (shirts outside trousers), hair style not combing hair) drat's. Always have red eyes. Black mouth (burned by cigarettes)".

Participant C: "Absenteeism from school or skipping periods, also arriving late for school. Fighting with other learners and also using vulgar words. Not doing their work in time or not doing it at all. Stealing from others".

Participant D: "Noisemaking, vulgar language, lack of respect".

Participant E: "Keeping quite".

Participant F: "Hyperactive".

Participant G: "They are disruptive in class. Usually do not participate in extra mural activities".

Participant H: "Stealing pens and other resources of other learners. Up and down of learners during school hours".

Participant I: "Fighting and stealing".

Participant J: "Making noise in class, fighting, swearing".

Participant K: "Learners restlessness".

Participant L: "Lack of concentration. Being playful in class to disturb others".

Participant M: "Lack of attention in class, restlessness and poor performance in school work".

Participant N: "Stealing, work not done, talkative, absenteeism".

Participant O: "No response".

Participant P: "No response".

Participant Q: "Disruptive behaviour, truancy, bullying and dishonesty".

Participant R: "Coming late to school. Not doing their homework. Not having enough work in the classrooms".

Participant S: "Absenteeism, noisiness, swearing, fighting and not writing homework and investigations".

Participant T: "Truancy".

The responses to these questions were varied. Some respondents mentioned stealing, noisemaking, not listening, not attending classes and bad clothing as some of the signs of poor discipline. The other educators responded that the learners were lazy when they had to perform their work.

5   How in your opinion, can discipline at your school be improved?

Participant A: "DEC, parents, educators and stakeholders come together and discuss form of discipline".

Participant B: "The most important thing is a learner's parents. If parents are supporting the school, the learners will be disciplined. If an educator invites parents, a parent should respond immediately".

Participant C: "Involved parents and the community at all times. Effective teaching and learning to take place at all times. Time is available for morals teaching".

Participant D: "Team work (all educators must be involved because discipline is not one man's duty. Inviting different ministers to the school motivational talks".

Participant E: "Concentrate, listen to educators, and respect each other".

Participant F: "All stakeholders must participate".

Participant G: "Adopted code of conduct by having school rules that are understood by all the stakeholders".

Participant H: "Yes, it can still be improved only if parents can cooperate with educators by helping with discipline as from their homes".

Participant I: "When the parents, community and educators can work together to discipline these learners".

Participant J: "Being shown the consequences of doing mistakes".

Participant K: "Communication".

Participant L: "Parents should always be engaged to be part of the solution whenever the child is ill-disciplined".

Participant M: "By employing more male educators by constant feedback to parents about progress and discipline of learners".

Participant N: "Have talk shows; encourage taking part in extra mural activities".

Participant O: "Team work, parents abide by the school rules when they are called at school. Educators to always honour their periods, SMT to attend the classes of absent educators".

Participant P: "If our educators come to school on time. If parents tell the learners about the aim of the school".

Participant Q: "By adopting a code of conduct, that is approved by all stakeholders where learners know the results of the types of the offence committed. By having school rules that help to make the school environment orderly and safe. Plus the sanction that go along with disobeying school rules".

Participant R: "If all educators and parents work together. Parents get more involved in their children schoolwork. Parents attend meetings".

Participant S: "The school must adopt a code of conduct and must strictly be followed. Misbehaving s must also be reported to their parents and the record must be held".

Participant T: "By involving all stakeholders (parents, educators and the community)".

Most respondents indicated that team work, involving all stakeholders could be the best way to improve conditions at school. Cooperation and good communications between parents, educators and learners could help to address disciplinary problems at school. The adoption of the code of conduct and effective teaching and motivational talks were also viewed as important in addressing disciplinary problems at school.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The results of the study confirm that the problem of discipline among learners is a serious matter at schools. The time educators spend on dealing with disciplinary problems of learners is also a cause for concern, since that time could be spent on the academic development of learners.

The above figures also confirm that school discipline is not only a school problem, but it is also a problem of the family. Factors that are often beyond the control of the school, include poverty, unemployment, broken families, drugs and alcohol.

Chapter five deals with the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the conclusion, findings and recommendations of the study are made.

5.2   FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.2.1   Findings from literature

Literature review highlighted the following factors as contributing to poor discipline at school:

- Factors within the school included bullying, gangsterism, violence, drug and alcohol abuse (cf. par 2.3).
- Factors outside the school included inadequate home background, clashing cultural practices, poverty and media (cf. par 2.4).
- Factors within the school included peer influence and vandalism (cf. par 2.5).
- Factors within the classroom included poor classroom management skills, poor lesson presentation, inadequate materials and overcrowding (cf. par 2.6).
- Factors related to the educator included demotivated educators, unionisation and poor self-management (cf. par 2.7).

5.2.2 Findings from empirical study

From the empirical study the following emerged:

The ages of the majority of educators ranged from 40 years to 50 years, their teaching experience ranged from 20 years and longer, and they were married. This implied that the majority of educators had better understanding of learners because of their maturity and teaching experience.

The majority of schools from which the educators worked were fairly big, with numbers ranging from 900 to 1200, and educator numbers ranging from 30 to 40 or more per school. Because of the high number of learners, educators may have had problems of discipline.

The home background and the role of parents played an important role in discipline. Specifically, the different disciplinary practices applied at home and at school, as well as the lack of cooperation of parents worsened the disciplinary problem of learners at school.

Overcrowding in the classrooms made controlling and disciplining of learners difficult for educators. Because of the high numbers of learners per educator, it was difficult for educators to effectively discipline learners.

The serious shortage of teaching and learning materials such as teaching aids, as well as the lack of facilities such as playgrounds, libraries and laboratories contributed greatly to the issue of ill-discipline in schools.

The economic background of learners or their parents, particularly the high levels of poverty and unemployment, also contributed enormously to poor discipline among learners.

The acts of criminality, substance abuse and violence were found to be prevalent in the schools surveyed.

The poor discipline which exists in schools has a negative impact on the health and well-being of educators, with the result that many of the experience high levels of stress.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1   Involve parents in discipline

School managers, especially those serving township schools should go to great extremes to encourage parental involvement in school matters. This could be done by developing parents serving in the SGB. Frequent meetings with other parents are also important in order to appraise parents about the progress of the learners, especially grade 7 learners.

5.3.2   Support schools in the implementation of the Code of Conduct

The DoE and parents need to help schools in implementing the Code of Conduct.

5.3.3   Employ the services of police and security on the school premises

For the safety and well-being of learners and educators, and for creating a secure school environment, the Department of Education should allow the police to conduct regular searches of learners for dangerous weapons and illegal drugs.

5.3.4 Provide schools with resources

The DoE has to provide schools with teaching and learning material, as well as with the necessary facilities for effective teaching and learning. The provision of adequate classrooms, libraries and laboratories could help in alleviating ill-discipline among learners.

5.3.5 Train educators in conflict and discipline

The DoE needs to introduce an educator training programme to deal with issues around conflict management and discipline. In this way educator could identify conflict situation and deal with them before they become problems.

5.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The educators were not keen to participate in this study, hence some questionnaires were returned after a long time, and after much persuasion.

The lack of research experience among township school educators was also a problem: many educators were suspicious about the questionnaires and thought they could be followed up or victimised by school authorities if responses were negative. The researcher had to explain issues of confidentiality at length.

5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH

It is important to investigate the following:

- Since it was found that learners from poor families are likely to misbehave more than learners from rich families, which factors or characteristics of poverty and informal settlements contribute negatively to discipline?

- Should security and police be allowed on the school premises, what impact would this have on the psychological and emotional being of learners and educators?

5.6 THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY

First, the data were from educators themselves (self-reports). Corroborating data from other informants (e.g. learners, parents and school management) would have made the findings more robust.

Second, the sample size for data analysis was too small to make any firm conclusions.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Despite various measures implemented by schools, poor discipline is still affecting many educators and learners in schools. A more broader and inclusive approach to address this problem is required. This could imply the involvement of various government departments and various communities sectors, including youth movements. The influence of poverty and crime in ill-discipline also needs attention. Many learners are forced to misbehave because they are not well taken care of, or parents are unable to provide for them.

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ANNEXURE A

Tel: 0739594741

Fax: (056) 2142303   KC. KIRI

Boikemisetso P School

Box 5013

Lengau

9499

9 September 2010

The Head: Education

Room 1213, CR Swart Building

Private Bag x20565

Bloemfontein

9300

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN THE FEZILE DABI DISTRICT

I am a Post Graduate at CUT University, Welkom Campus and would like to be given permission to conduct a research in the Fezile Dabi District. The title of my research is:

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR DISCIPLINE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

If given permission and there is a positive response from the educators, the study will involve educators to participate in this research whereby they will complete questionnaires which will take about 20 minutes.

I hope my request will be positively attended to. The findings of the study will be disclosed to the Department as soon as it is accepted by examiners.

Yours faithfully
MRS K.C. KIRI

ANNEXURE B

Tel: 0739594741

Fax: (056) 2142303

KC. KIRI

Boikemisetso P school

Box 5013

Lengau

9499

9 September 2010

The Principal

....

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a Post Graduate at CUT University, Welkom Campus and would like to be given permission to conduct a research in the Fezile Dabi District. The title of my research is:

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR DISCIPLINE IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

If given permission and there is a positive response from the educators, the study will involve educators to participate in this research whereby they will complete questionnaires which will take about 20 minutes.

I hope my request will be positively attended to.

Yours faithfully

MRS K.C. KIRI

ANNEXURE C

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR EDUCATORS

SECTION A: <u>BIOGRAPHICAL DATA</u>

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross on the relevant number.

1   Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2   Age

20 – 29	1
30 – 39	2
40 – 49	3
50 – 59	4
60 +	5

3   Teaching experience

0 – 5	1
6 – 10	2
11 – 15	3
16 – 20	4
21 +	5

4   Professional Qualifications

Certificate e.g. PTC	1
Diploma e.g. PTD	2
Degree e.g. BA	3
Post-graduate e.g. BEd(Hons)	4
Others	5

SECTION B: <u>DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA</u>

Indicate data applicable to you by making a cross on the relevant number.

1   **Number of s in your school (school roll)**

0 – 600	1
601 – 900	2
901 – 1200	3
1201 – 1500	4
1500 +	5

2   **Number of hours spent at school dealing with discipline**

0 – 2	1
3 – 4	2
5 – 6	3
7 – 8	4
9 – 10	5
11 +	6

3   **Number of educators in your school**

0 – 10	1
11 – 20	2
21 – 30	3
31 – 40	4
41 – 50	5
51 - 60	6

4 **Number of learners per class in your school**

0 – 20	1
21 – 30	2
31 – 40	3
41 – 50	4
51 - 60	5
61 +	6

5 **Number of classrooms in your school**

0 – 5	1
6 – 10	2
11 - 15	3
16 – 20	4
21 – 25	5
26 – 30	6
31 – 35	7
36 – 40	8

6 **Number of laboratories in your school**

00	1
01	2
02	3
03	4
04	5

7 **Number of libraries in your school**

00	1
01	2
02	3
03	4
04	5

8   Number of play areas at your school

00	1
01	2
02	3
03+	4

9   Number of staff rooms at your school

00	1
01	2
02	3
03+	4

10   Number of assembly halls at your school

00	1
01	2
02	3
03+	4

SECTION C

Answer the following questions by choosing one of the following options:

Only make a cross (X) on the appropriate number of your choice.

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

1   Learners misbehave because of peer pressure

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
2 School discipline is poor because of the abolition of corporal punishment	1	2	3	4

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4
3 Learners misbehave because they abuse drugs				

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
4 I send misbehaving learners to the principal	1	2	3	4

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
5 I struggle with poor discipline in my class	1	2	3	4

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

6 **I am compelled to administer corporal punishment to misbehaving learners**

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

7 **The seriousness of s' disciplinary cases require referring to the School Governing Body**

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

8 **Learners from poor families misbehave more than learners from well-off families**

9   **Learners with disciplinary problems display poor academic perform**

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

10   **Overcrowding promote poor behaviour**

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

11   **Shortage of resources and materials in the school cause poor behaviour**

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

12	Drugs and alcohol abuse promote ill-discipline among learners in my school	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
		1	2	3	4

13	Learners coming from informal settlements (shacks) have more behavioural problems than learners from formally built houses.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
		1	2	3	4

14	Corporal punishment is necessary in order to maintain discipline at school.	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
		1	2	3	4

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
15 Learners who come from single parent families tend to misbehave more than learners with both parents	1	2	3	4

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
16 Learners living with grandparents misbehave more than other learners	1	2	3	4

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
17 Most parents cooperate with the school in disciplining their children	1	2	3	4

18 It is possible to maintain discipline without corporal punishment.

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

19 Adopting a code of conduct has helped to deal with discipline problems at school.

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

20 Noise, fighting and swearing are common behavioural problems among learners

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

SECTION D

1. **What can parents do to help educators with discipline at school?**

_____
_____
_____

2. **What is the best form of punishment for disciplining misbehaving learners?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. **What are the main causes of discipline problems?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. **What are the signs of poor discipline among children?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. **How in your opinion, can discipline at your school be improved?**

_____
_____
_____
_____