

**EXPLORING THE ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN
BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

By

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF EDUCATION**



**In the Faculty of Education
University of the Free State
Bloemfontein**

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February 2021

DECLARATION

I declare that **EXPLORING THE ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete list of references.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my Almighty God for providing me with strength and courage to keep on and never tire or give up; without Him this would not be possible.

Thanks to my supervisor (Dr Ntsala, SA) for your support throughout the study. I appreciate your guidance and the direction you offered.

My husband, namely Ntele for his patience even though that was not easy in some instances. You are a good father and a gift from God to me. Thank you.

My only daughter Grace, for assistance with her high technological competence and a source of encouragement when I felt like giving up. I appreciate all that you do for me. Thank You.

My sincere gratitude to Thabi Mosoetsa, your willingness to academically guide, advise and give your full support during this journey is incomparable. You have been a beacon of light in my life. I could never repay you. Thank you a million.

A very special thanks to all principals from the three primary schools who permitted me to conduct research in their schools.

A special thank you to all the educators from those primary schools who availed themselves and made this journey a success. I appreciate your time and patience with me.

I would like to extend a warm thank you to the Free State Education Department, specifically Motheo District for granting me an opportunity to conduct research in their schools.

Thanks to my only principal, Mrs. Lephephelo, and my colleagues for their continued support. Much appreciated.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my granddaughter Lesedi, who was always around keeping an eye on me with her stories and endless questions.

This is for you baby girl. I love you!

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to explore the possible strategies that could be used to address problems of poor learner discipline in primary schools based in Botshabelo, Mangaung Metropolitan District in Motheo Education jurisdiction. The researcher employed a qualitative approach where semi-structured interviews were conducted with the six participants who were qualified educators at the respective schools, with each of them having varying teaching experience.

The results of the study, emanating from thematic analysis revealed that there are indeed disciplinary problems experienced at the primary schools, but the magnitude and intensity varied across. They mentioned challenges such as disruptive classroom behaviour, vandalism, non-adherence to the school's code of conduct, defiance of school authority, etc. Participants held the opinion that the use of adverse punitive measures, such as corporal punishment should be avoided at all cost, as it is illegal in South Africa. They emphasized that effort should be placed in using positive disciplinary measures, such as pep talks, collaborative decision-making and using the both the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment and SASA documents as a guiding tool to implement discipline in schools. This study made the following recommendations for future research:

The use of a larger sample to ensure representativeness, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection to maximize validity and reliability. Thirdly, future research should explore the causes of disciplinary problems in in order to generate more data. Lastly, the study recommends that future research to be conducted in other districts in the Free State province.

Keywords: Teacher leadership, Continuous Professional Development, Sustainable Teacher leadership, Leadership succession.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|---|
| CT | Complexity Theory |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| GHREC | General Human Research Ethics Committee |
| RIMS | Research Information Management System |
| SASA | South African Schools Act |

CHAPTER 1 :

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The issue of a lack of discipline in schools has been a topic of discussion among academics around the world. Disciplinary problems are not only unique to South Africa, in fact, the National Institute of Education in the United States of America has reported that 64% of junior high school educators said that learners hurled insults at them and that there is hesitation by the educators to confront misbehaved learners out of fear of own safety (in Masekoameng, 2010:1). The local situation seems to be worse as educators regard this profession as dangerous and stressful. Today, now more than ever, discipline in schools and disciplinary measures are areas of discussion and debate, needing constant innovative approaches. This chapter concentrates on exploring the phenomenon of discipline and gives an overview of the background of the study, the rationale, the research problem, the research design and data collection methods, ethical considerations and the value of the proposed research study. The limitations, recommendations and implications of the study on the teaching profession are explored in Chapter 5.

1.2 THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 The concept of discipline

As previous studies have indicated, schools have historically been characterized by learners misbehaving and educators experiencing disciplinary problems that are difficult to deal with (Mohapi, 2014:436; Feldehof, 2007:71). Carnavale and Pisano (2019) define discipline as the practice of teaching others to abide to rules or norms through the use of punishment to correct ill-behaviour. The existence of good discipline among learners is a requirement for effective teaching and learning at schools (Masilonyana, 2020:22). When learners do not obey school authority, neglect school-work, and deter from obeying school rule, discipline becomes compromised and the school suffers as a result (Masilonyana, 2020:23). The management of poor discipline among learners has become a serious challenge for the education system and it is

necessary for approved and acceptable measures to be employed as poor discipline can be bad in a number of ways.

1.2.2 The benefits of discipline

In a classroom setting, discipline is essential to ensure that routine is maintained, school rules are enforced, and that teaching, and learning can take place in a safe environment (Carnavale & Pisano, 2019). The goal of using discipline is to enable learners to attain academic achievement and to know boundaries. In order for educators to succeed in the classroom, they ought to know how to manage learners and to respond appropriately to their behaviour (Makendano, 2016:2). Without discipline, effective teaching and learning cannot take place. Therefore, it is important to put in place provisions and measures that are deemed necessary to create, establish and maintain order (Bechuke & Debelia, 2012:242).

1.2.3 Causes of poor discipline

Research findings by Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002) attribute the causes of poor academic performance at most schools in South Africa, to a lack of discipline in classrooms. In his research, Ndamani (2017:177) identified that causes of misbehaviour at schools are linked to problems at home and society in general. The findings by the researcher revealed that parents themselves contribute to a lack of discipline in their children by shifting parental roles to educators. Consequently, this creates problems educators as they too need support from the parents in dealing with disciplinary problems (Ndamani, 2017:177). Furthermore, the researcher ascertains that misbehaviour is not only caused internally, but it is a result of the interaction between learners and their environment. For example, over-crowding in classrooms can contribute to a lack of discipline, thus leading to a teaching space where the education needs of each individual learner are compromised (*cf.* 2.7, Chapter 2). The causes of poor discipline are further explored in the Literature review section of this paper.

1.2.4 Discipline in the context of South Africa

As previously mentioned, schools all over the world are characterized by learner misbehaviour and this affects the effective functioning of the education system. In South Africa specifically, the banning of corporal punishment has left educators with feelings of helplessness as the only perceived way of maintaining discipline in the classroom has been discouraged and banned (South African School Act, Act 84 of 1996 (SASA)). The culture of teaching and learning is believed to be going in a downward spiral as lax disciplinary measures are put in place to deal with issues related to poor discipline (Mohapi, 2014:433). It is the opinion of the researcher that due to these revelations, educators are increasingly concerned with the alarming rates of poor learner discipline at South African schools, which has contributed significantly to poor academic performance across the nine provinces (Mtsweni, 2008).

In a study by Masitsa (2008:236) on *Discipline and disciplinary measures in Free State*, findings revealed that township schools in the Free State are experiencing increasing incidents of ill-discipline problems. The media portrays the learners in township schools as arrogant, unruly, abusive, rude and intimidating towards other learners, involved in gang violence, to name but a few. In some instances, educators are faced with the problem of learners coming to school under the influence, or substance abuse (Natal Witness, 2003:1; Masitsa, 2008:236). Another study conducted in Mpumalanga by Mohapi (2014:268) revealed that the use of drugs, especially 'Nyaope' was one of the contributing factors to school violence, together with bullying. The interviewed educators indicated they experience bullying from male learners who went to initiation schools and harassment is also rife. In all the schools under the study, the consensus from educators, parents and learners was that violence severely impairs on the teaching and learning process (Mohapi, 2014:268).

Notably, A survey conducted in South Africa on educator morale, found that 1000 educators, are of the consensus that learners misbehave intentionally, because they believe that the abolishment of corporal punishment protects them against the disciplinary measures that should be imposed on them (Masekoameng, 2010). Nevertheless, as already noted, others have criticized this abolition approach, as it does not remedy the problem of poor discipline at schools, but rather encourages it. Furthermore, the abolition of corporal punishment has led to educators feeling like their authoritative position over the learners has become futile.

This appears to be true, as the learners' perspectives on this are parallel to what the educators feel, namely that there is a significant loss of power over them (Masitsa, 2008:237). Educators seem not to have faith in the document 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment' issued by the Department of Education for addressing poor discipline at schools. They are of the opinion that the disciplinary measures that have been suggested by the Department are inadequate and ineffective. They lament that the problem of poor discipline has been trivialised and its magnitude and impact are not taken into consideration (Masitsa, 2008:238). The solution proposed here is to train educators in the implementation of alternative methods of discipline.

In the Venda district in South Africa, severe disciplinary problems have also been reported in schools (Alidzulwi, 2000). It has been documented that schools have become battlegrounds in which learners carry weapons such as guns and pangas to school. Moreover, incidences of educator and principal stabbings have also been reported in the district. A survey conducted by the South African Institute for Race Relations (SAIRR) found that only 23% of students felt safe at schools while a study conducted by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) reported that 33% of learners were victims of verbal abuse at schools (Mohapi, 2014:263). In his research, Fraser (in Smith 1999:362), found that there are serious cases of learner violence in the provinces of Gauteng and Kwazulu-Natal. These incidences included the burning down of school property, setting fire to educator's cars and attacking educators. Fraser attributes such behaviour of violence to the social conditions in which the learners live in. These include low income households, poor social facilities, unemployment of parents, poor living conditions, etc.

According to Masekoameng (2010:4), other factors outside the school environment also play a role in the lack of discipline in schools. Existing literature shows that learners, who exhibit anti-social and aggressive behaviour, come from homes where their daily needs are not satisfied. This may include a lack of parental control, neglect and no clear boundaries or rules in the household (Masekoameng, 2010:4). In his study, Alidzulwi (2000), found that there is a lack of parental involvement in schools in Venda. This is especially true for black families where parents are hardly involved in the education of their children. Consequently, this lack of involvement results in poor academic performance for the district, high drop-out rates and absenteeism. It is the opinion of the researcher that bad behaviour can be seen to have its roots in the quality of parenting (Varma, 1993:76). Likewise, other factors that may contribute to poor discipline include the size

of the school, the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners and the managerial skills of the principal (Masekoameng, 2010:4).

1.3 RATIONALE BEHIND THE STUDY

Against the background mentioned above, this study aimed to explicate discipline related issues in the context of three Botshabelo primary schools in the Free State. And based on the findings from the study, it was revealed that poor learner discipline remains a problem for the educators. Issues such as neglect of schoolwork, vandalism, violent behaviour hinder the educator's objectives of reaching academic goals (Treadwell, 2007:104). In the researcher's opinion, existing studies do not adequately present the strategies that can be used to remedy the problem of poor discipline in schools (Masilonyana, 2020; Mohapi, 2014; Legotlo *et al.*, 2002; & Alidzulwi 2000). The studies only highlight the types of disciplinary problems experiences in South African schools, but they do not explicitly mention the ways of making the alternative disciplinary measures affective and implementable. As previously mentioned in the Background section of the study (*cf.* 1.2.4), educators do not have faith in the 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment' document, and therefore, the researcher holds the view that it is necessary for more training to be provided to educators in order to promote the use of these methods/alternatives to corporal punishment. Thus, the rationale behind the study is to put in place provisions and procedures that can help create and establish an environment conducive to teaching and learning (Mohapi, 2007).

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM

As previously mentioned, the issue of a lack of discipline in schools has been a topic among scholars and urgent attention needs to be placed on the phenomenon of poor -discipline. Educators are experiencing low levels of morale and a negative teaching environment may incline them to leave their profession much earlier than anticipated. Masekoameng (2010, in Makendano, 2016:2), expresses that for a positive teaching experience to take place in the classroom, and for discipline to be established, educators need to learn how to manage learners and to gage how to appropriately respond to their behaviour. Relevant role players, the parents, the principals, the school Governing Body (SGB) and the Department of Education officials, need to work together

to encourage a more cooperative and supportive approach to discipline in classrooms. Although there are several studies addressing the issue of poor discipline in schools, information on this matter is scant, especially concerning primary schools in Botshabelo. Against this background, the aim of the study was to explore the possible strategies that could be used to address problems of poor learner discipline in the Botshabelo primary classrooms.

1.5 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This study was based on the assumptions and precepts of the complexity theory. Both the classroom and the school at which poor learner discipline manifests itself, were viewed as an open social system within a social setting. According to Anish and Gupta (2015:1), Hasan (2014:148), and Reyes (2013:99), the complexity theory presents new ways of thinking in dealing with problems and challenges. It emphasizes the significance of small events that result in large-scale changes (Walby, 2003:12). Anish and Gupta (2015:2) further note that the complexity theory comprises a large number of entities that interact with one another, together with the environment.

As advanced by Reyes (2013), it is envisaged that through the use of the complexity theory in this study as a theoretical framework, it will be highly possible to develop diagnostics and more accurate and reliable predictions in terms of social and psycho-social Behaviours. It is further anticipated that this theory will contribute immensely towards predicting the development and behaviour of relationships or networks and major organizational and functional protocols that are related to the formulation of strategies to deal with issues of poor learner discipline.

1.6 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of this study was to explore the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo primary schools. Therefore, the primary and overarching research questions posed for this study are:

1.6.1 Primary research question

Which strategies can be used to enhance learner discipline in the Botshabelo primary schools?

To refine the main research question, the following subsidiary research questions were developed:

1. What does the concept ‘discipline’ mean for a primary classroom?
2. What are the challenges faced by educators in enhancing discipline in their classrooms?
3. What strategies are currently used by educators to enhance discipline in their classrooms?
4. What suggestions can be made in terms of how discipline can be promoted in the primary schools?

1.6.2 The research objectives

The research objectives are to ascertain which disciplinary measures can be used to enhance learner discipline in primary classrooms.

The following objectives accompany the main question:

- To determine the meaning of the concept ‘discipline’ in a context of a primary classroom.
- To determine the primary school educators’ perceptions in terms of how they experience discipline in their schools.
- To identify if the disciplinary processes utilised by the primary school educators resonates with the “alternatives to corporal punishment”, as proposed by the Department of Basic Education.
- To propose alternative disciplinary strategies for a primary classroom.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Research design

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define the research design as a laid-out plan that describes the conditions and processes for gathering and analyzing data, and the research methods or steps used to collect and analyse the data. They further argue that the research design serves a purpose of generating empirical evidence that is used to answer the research question(s). On the other hand,

methodology refers to how the research process will proceed and how assumptions about knowledge, nature of reality, values, theory and practice converge (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:52). Methods are the ways in which data is collected and are an important part of methodology.

The study was grounded in the interpretive paradigm. The philosophical underpinnings of the interpretive paradigm (Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology and Phenomenology) are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (*cf.* 3.2.2). This paradigm was important for this study as it typically uses qualitative methodology and a research design that is rooted in an interpretive framework (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:53). Moreover, this paradigm enabled the researcher to understand and document the views of educators in Botshabelo primary schools regarding the problem of poor discipline in their classrooms and which disciplinary practices or measures are put in place for effective teaching and learning could take place (Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012:126-132).

Using Phenomenology as a theoretical lens, the researcher wanted to understand the experiences of educators regarding poor discipline in their primary schools and which strategies could be employed to remedy the problem. Phenomenological studies focus on the meanings that lived experiences hold for participants. Thus, the purpose of this research design was to understand and evaluate the phenomenon in Botshabelo primary schools (Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012:132).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As the study was grounded in an interpretive paradigm, qualitative research methods were used to generate data. Qualitative research concerned with understanding participant's views, meanings and experiences (Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012:126). Furthermore, Lichtman (2013:325) emphasizes that it leads to understanding human behaviour in its natural settings. As such, a qualitative research approach allowed the educators to express how they understand and experience the management of learner discipline at the primary schools (Makendano, 2016:9). This method also enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the views, as well as perception of the educators, regarding learner discipline.

1.8.1 Participant selection and sampling

The schools in Botshabelo served as the population for this study. Details about Botshabelo are presented in Chapter 3 (*cf.* 3.3.2). Creswell (2012:381) defines a population as a group of individuals who possess a similar characteristic, which distinguishes them from other groups of people (Johnson & Christensen, 2014:669). A sample of six participants were drawn from three primary schools in the Botshabelo area, in the Free State. Participants were chosen irrespective of their defining characteristics (e.g. race, gender, socio-economic background, or sexual orientation). A purposive sampling approach was employed for this study (Masekoameng, 2010:9). Purposive sampling refers to a type of sampling where data are gathered from participants who share defining characteristics and who can supply relevant information from the representative population about the topic at hand. According to Makendano (2016:10), this form of sampling allowed the educators to provide rich information, regarding poor discipline in their respective schools. Furthermore, this purposefully informed an understanding of the study's research problem (Creswell, 2007:125 cited in Makendano, 2016:10).

1.8.2 Data collection

Data was collected through the method of scheduled semi-structured interviews. The researcher commenced with the data collection by planning, acting and reflecting on what was assessed in the interviews (McTaggart, 1991:175). Creswell (2012:217) points out that a qualitative approach allows interview questions to be elaborate when the researcher asks participants open-ended questions and voice record their answers. These types of questions are flexible, adaptable, and very interactive in a sense that they allow the researcher to probe and pursue relevant themes that may emerge from the respondents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2012:205).

The interviews were then followed by a meeting between all role players (educators, principals, the school governing body and officials of the Department of Education, to discuss an intervention strategy. The meeting allowed for meaningful discussions on which disciplinary strategies could be implemented in the primary schools in question. The educators then implemented the strategies proposed, while maintaining the process of keeping records for the Department of Education.

1.8.3 Data analysis

Gray (2004:680) refers to the analysis of data as the usage of either qualitative or quantitative methods to systematically identify special categories, classes or characteristics. The data collection and analysis happened concurrently (Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2011:537).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used a thematic analysis of data to come to conclusions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative method that involves the identification, organization, description and the reporting of relative themes found within the dataset. The researcher used a rigorous thematic analysis process in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and to produce insightful findings. The practical processes, which the researcher used to meet the trustworthiness criteria, are discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1.

1.9 VALUE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH

A comprehensive examination and understanding of the strategies that can be used to deal with poor learner discipline in the classrooms, will assist educators in designing and implementing preventive measures against acts of bad behaviour. It will also serve as a guide and manual to all educators on how to deal with poor learner discipline. Based on the study findings, this study created a framework that can be used to support the alternatives to corporal punishment. It empowered educators with skills and strategies to handle and deal with learners whose behaviour is not acceptable and does not promote optimal teaching and learning, which will also improve their morale and the learners' academic performance. Thus, this study benefitted all the stakeholders in education, namely the educators, parents, learners and the Department of Education (DoE).

1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical aspects of research should always be taken into consideration for a proper scientific research to take place. As such, this study aimed to uphold the ethical principles of autonomy, confidentiality, voluntary participation, privacy and informed consent (Johnson & Christensen, 2014:669; Lichtman, 2013:53; Creswell, 2012; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:487). The

participants were required to provide informed consent and to read the information sheet provided by the researcher. This allowed them to make an informed decision on whether to participate in the study or not. The researcher communicated to the participants that confidentiality would then be assured in a way of anonymity (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002:65-67). It was also stressed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point in the study, should they wish to (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:65-67). In addition, the principle of non-maleficence was regarded with utmost importance, as to ensure that there was no harm inflicted to participants (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:65). Notably, no risk was foreseen to the researchers themselves.

1.10.1 COVID-19 Protocols

Conducting research amid COVID-19 pandemic requires adaptation, while ensuring that the quality of research is maintained (Tremblay, Castiglione, Audet, Desmarais, Horace & Pelaez, 2021:2). Due to the urgent need to respond to the pandemic, the researcher followed all COVID-19 protocols that are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, section 3.3.4.1.

1.11 DELINEATING THE RESEARCH STUDY

The overall considerations for this study was to delineate three issues associated with the project. The three issues were sample size limitation, geographical demarcation, and methodological limitations.

1.11.1 Sample size limitation

Firstly, the fact that the sample size for this study was too small, means that the results of the study are not generalized across the whole population (Stangor, 2015:116). Small samples often do not provide an adequate representation of the characteristics of the population of interest as they are too selective (Stangor, 2015:116).

1.11.2 Geographic demarcation

Mothibeli (2017:20), states that geographical delineation refers to division based on a particular region or neighborhood in the study conducted. In this context, the study focused only on three primary schools in Botshabelo, in the Free State province as the Mangaung Metropolitan District is big and the researcher was not able to access all schools in the five districts (e.g. Fezile Dabi, Lejweleputswa, Xhariep, Thabo Mofutsanyana and Mangaung Metropolitan District). Secondly, with not enough information concentrated on township schools, local information and statistics proved hard to obtain (Masitsa, 2008:236-238).

1.11.3 Methodological limitation

Lastly, the researcher holds the perspective that the methods of data collection employed in this study were limiting. Therefore, the researcher mainly advised the use of larger samples and employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection in order to maximize representativeness and ensure generalizability of the finding to a wider population (Stangor, 2017:21).

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLAY

This aspect aims at highlighting the way chapters in this research study are organized and their respective contents.

Chapter One: Of significance to this study are the following aspects: The Introduction and background; the aim of the study will be highlighted; the theoretical framework; the research questions, aims and objectives; outline of literature review consulted as well as ethical considerations to be incorporated.

Chapter Two: In this chapter the, existing literature on discipline will be consulted. Focus will be placed on discipline as a process, the causes of poor discipline, the effects of poor discipline on the learning process. Other aspects such as the suggested strategies to deal with poor discipline will be explored. The Complexity Theory (CT) will be dissected.

Chapter Three: The focus in this chapter will be on the Research Methodology utilized for this study. This includes the research design, research methods, population, area of study, and the research sample. Other aspects that will be discussed are trustworthiness and the ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: The content of this chapter will focus on Data Presentation and Data analysis. It discusses the analysis of data as well as the results of the study.

Chapter Five: In this chapter, focus will be on the discussion of findings, conclusions, recommendations for future research, implications on the teaching profession and the limitations of the study.

1.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an overview of what all the upcoming chapters covered. The background and the rationale of the study was briefly described, the nature of the research design explained, together with the methodology. Furthermore, the data collection techniques, such as the semi-structured interviews were regarded as best suited for the study, as they allowed rich data to be gathered by the researcher. Lastly, the choice of sampling method was described and chosen to be best suited for this study. The next chapter focuses on literature review and the choice of the Complexity Theory (CT) as the basis for the articulation of the critical lens from which the study will be supported and looked at.

CHAPTER 2 :

LITERATURE REVIEW ON EXPLORING ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to explore the possible strategies that could be used to address problems of poor learner discipline in the primary classrooms. The study is placed in the context of three primary schools in Botshabelo in the Mangaung Metropolitan District, Motheo Education jurisdiction. This particular study adopted the Complexity Theory (CT) as the basis for the articulation of the critical lens from which the study was supported and looked at.

This chapter presented an analysis and examination of literature related to poor learner discipline and strategies that can be implemented or adopted to deal with it. The causes of poor learner discipline (including political factors, human rights, the influence of peer pressure, and educator factors) was also discussed comprehensively in this chapter. Additionally, this chapter also deliberated on the theoretical framework (e.g. the Complexity Theory) that underlies this study and its applicability and relevance to the current study. Literature review was used to provide some preliminary answers to the research questions raised in the study and also served as a basis to validate, accept or reject the study findings.

A detailed and in-depth review of relevant literature plays an arguably fundamental role towards the successful implementation of any research study. In the current study, it is an account of what has already been published on the general causes and effects of poor learner discipline and strategies that can be adopted to deal with it, by accredited scholars and researchers. As such, according to Imenda and Muyangwa (2006:75), literature review places the problem or phenomenon being investigated, within its appropriate conceptual and theoretical framework. It makes the researcher aware of what is already known in that specific area of interest and prevents the researcher from reinventing the wheel.

According to Creswell (2012:328; 2006:271), a literature review is defined as a written summary of journal articles, books and other documents that describe the past and current state of

information on a particular topic. In the same breath, Lichtman (2013:196) summarises it as a representation of what already exists about a specific topic. On the other hand, Burton, Brundett and Jones (2014:39) perceive it as a holistic and detailed account of what has been published on a specific topic by accredited scholars and researchers.

2.2 CONCEPTUALIZING DISCIPLINE AS A PROCESS

Various scholars and authorities have defined school discipline in different ways. Bechuke and Debeila (2012:242) define school discipline as strategies that are used to coordinate and regulate individuals, as well as their activities in the school. Discipline should suggest a range of practices that contribute to a well-managed classroom in which learners go about the business of learning in an environment conducive to teaching and learning, because without an appropriate classroom environment, discipline, teaching and learning might be difficult. Bechuke and Debeila (2012:242) applaud this view of discipline for being comprehensive and all-inclusive in providing a starting point, upon which school discipline can be understood and perceived. They argue that this is because it includes all mechanisms used to maintain discipline. Such mechanisms can range from cruel and coercive to nurturing and liberating.

In the same vein, Ferreira, Jacobs, Manning and De Wet (2009:29) provide another equally important perspective in defining school discipline. They argue that educators, who operate from a traditional view of discipline, may define school discipline as ranging from all the activities that are implemented to control learner behaviour, to enforcing compliance and order to the notion of freedom where any external discipline or guidance is meant to restrict the autonomy of learners.

However, there also some scholars, such as Felderhof (2002:71) who believes that the quality and complexity of human behaviour calls for a more constructive approach to school discipline. This argument suggests that learners should increasingly accept responsibility for their behaviour, and actions and that good discipline has to be founded on human values, as opposed to punitive rules. Accordingly, this investigation draws from the views and philosophies of educators operating from a progression paradigm. Bechuke and Debeila (2012:241) note that the progressive approach or paradigm to school discipline, regards school discipline as all activities that seek to contribute to the intrinsic motivation, self-management and decision-making skills of learners.

According to the Department of Education (2012:4), discipline is the practice of teaching or training a person to obey rules or a code of conduct, both in the short-term and long-term. It goes on to distinguish between discipline and punishment by noting that discipline is meant to develop the behaviour of children, while punishment seeks to control that behaviour. Similarly, Khuluse (2009:19), defines learner discipline as the development of self-control, orderliness, character and efficiency by the learners.

The Department of Education (2012:4) points out that the ultimate goal of discipline is to make learners understand their own behaviour, take initiation, accept responsibility for their choices and have respect for themselves and for those around them. In the same vein, discipline implies that educators need to exercise their authority in the best interests of learners, emphasizing the development of self-discipline, independence and maturity. As such, it is imperative that discipline is always firm, consistent and positive.

From the various perspectives of school discipline presented above, the researcher therefore defines school discipline as a continuous process in which educators and all the other significant stakeholders involved in teaching and learning, design and implement mechanisms that are aimed at monitoring, controlling and regulating the behaviour of learners to support teaching and learning. School discipline is further regarded as any attempt aimed at ensuring that learners act and behave in ways that are consistent with what is expected of them in an ideal classroom or school.

2.3 DISCIPLINE PROCESS IN SCHOOLS

Nthebe (2006:39) points out that since the abolishment of the use and administration of corporal punishment in South African Schools in 1996, educators have been experiencing some challenges in dealing with poor learner discipline. According to Jacobs, Vakalisa and Gawe (2011:201), while the South African Constitution endorses children's rights to free and fair education; this education is meaningless if learners cannot pursue their educational rights in an environment that is safe and secure. Research findings by Asikhia (2010:4), Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera (2010:15); and Legotlo, Maaga, and Sebego (2002:9) demonstrated that poor learner discipline in most schools across the globe, still remain the biggest and most serious threat to effective teaching and learning in the classrooms.

As noted by Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:1), South African schools are faced with the challenge of poor learner discipline, with the most serious aspect being finding solutions to poor discipline problems. This finding is also endorsed by Mohapi (2014:433), who argues that discipline is one of the most serious challenges in schools. This is supported by Zulu and Wolhuter (2013:3), who argued that poor learner discipline continues to be a major problem for all the stakeholders in education, particularly the educators, principals and parents and has become both a national and international problem. Research findings by Mohapi (2014:132), Khuluse(2009:12), and Legotio, Maaga, and Sebege (2002:4) pointed to poor learner discipline as one of the major causes of poor academic performance in most schools. In light of these problems, there is an urgent need to deal with poor learner discipline in innovative ways, which was created by the abolition of corporal punishment.

In South Africa, this fact is highlighted by Wolhuter, Oosthuizen and Du Toit (2003:438) who argue that the abolition of corporal punishment created a huge vacuum in methods of dealing with serious learner misconduct in schools. In terms of the provisions of section 10 of the South African Schools Act (SA 1996e), corporal punishment is prohibited in South African schools. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) and the application of the Bill of Rights, as contained in Chapter 2 of the Constitution, provide a legal foundation upon which any mechanisms that seek to address poor learner discipline, can be built. This legislation has some significant implications on the overall approach to poor learner discipline.

As revealed by Zulu and Wolhuter (2013:2), good learner discipline and behaviour is one of the essential requirements for creating classroom conditions that support optimal teaching and learning. The purpose of schooling and effective teaching and learning cannot be achieved in chaotic classrooms that are characterised by poor learner discipline and its generic features. As such, the effectiveness of any teaching and learning activities at school, as well as the job satisfaction and morale levels of educators, are often a result of several variables operating within the immediate environment where teaching and learning takes place.

Learner discipline is one of such factors that has some huge implications, not only in teaching and learning, but in any country's education system (Masekoameng, 2010; Ndamani, 2008), and this raises the need to develop some alternatives that can be adopted to deal with it. To be able to develop possible strategies that can be used to address poor learners' discipline in the

classrooms, it is necessary to investigate its likely causes so that each strategy will serve to deal with a specific cause. This is also consistent with Skinner, who argued that the best way to understand human behaviour is to examine the causes of an action and its consequences (Snowman, McCown & Biehler, 2012:241; McLeod, 2007).

2.4 CAUSES OF POOR DISCIPLINE

Learner discipline in all schools across the world is an educational phenomenon that has been supported by a rich culture of research. According to Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:11), poor learner discipline translates to discipline problems in schools. It can be defined as disruptive behaviour that adversely and significantly affects the rights to be safe, to be treated with respect and to learn. Poor learner discipline is not an educational problem, which is only limited to the South African education system. It is a universal phenomenon, which also happens to have universal causes, roots and effects.

In light of the above, various studies (Mohapi, 2014; Nene, 2013; Oosthuizen & Van Staden, 2007; Bowman, 2004; Rossouw, 2003; Allie, 2001; Alidzulwi, 2000) have been conducted to investigate the causes of poor learner discipline and the majority of them yielded similar research findings. They range from political, to socio-economic and school-related causes. Investigations by Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:4), and Mash, and Wolfe (2010:6) showed that in certain cases, poor learner discipline is caused by school difficulties and Mash and Wolfe (2010:6) identified school failure as an early indication of poor learner discipline problems among learners.

The upcoming section will focus on the causes of poor learner discipline, as identified by literature.

2.4.1 Political factors

According to Rossouw (2003:22), the involvement and participation of the youth in the liberation struggle, which came to an end in 1994, has caused them to develop arrogance towards adults. Such adults include their parents and educators. Since the abolition of corporal punishment in 1996 and the democratization of the South African education system, schools face a dilemma in trying to respect and upholds learners' right at the same time, trying to find appropriate and

meaningful measures to deal with learners' poor discipline without violating those said rights (Chisholm, 2007, in Maphosa & Shumba, 2017:387). The South African constitution Act of 108 of 1996 states that "everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way." Resultingly, educators express that learners have no fear and they lack respect for authority, because they are aware that nothing will be done to them as they are protected by the law. Corporal punishment is a form of disciplinary measure meant to cause a child to experience bodily pain or discomfort, but essentially not to harm them. The sole purpose of this act is to correct misbehaviour (Madiba, 2004:1). Due to the physical, emotional, and psychological pain suffered by learners, schools are encouraged to adopt functional disciplinary measures to deal with poor learners discipline (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:387-388). These measures should not be tortures or demeaning to the learners.

Current research shows that after the abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools, concerns of safety and the smooth operation of classrooms have risen. In addition, educators feel powerless and report that they are not in control of their classes as they are unable to institute discipline in their schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:387). Recent study findings by Mohapi (2014:114), which corroborates youth involvement in politics as a serious concern for all the stakeholders involved in the South African education system. This has made them resent authority and instructions from those above them. Such resentment is commonly manifested in poor learner discipline, especially among high school learners.

An investigation by Naong (2007) on educator morale and their views regarding discipline after the abolition of corporal punishment revealed that educators felt that poor discipline was a major concern at schools and that other disciplinary measures besides corporal punishment were not as effective. Furthermore, they lament that academic performance has significantly declined over the years due to corporal punishment being outlawed. Overall, the results of the study also indicated that 99% of the educators resorted to other methods of maintaining discipline in their classrooms (Naong, 2007).

2.4.2 Overemphasis of human rights

In reaction to the escalating cases of child abuse and the lack of a human rights culture during the apartheid era, a lot of emphasis has been put on human rights (Rossouw, 2003:23). Unfortunately, this overemphasis of human rights, especially on children's rights has led to poor learner discipline. In many schools in South Africa, educators believe that the banning of corporal punishment has led to a loss of power to those responsible in maintaining discipline in classrooms (Masitsa, 2008:237). Educators also emphasize that learners are aware of their rights and this awareness has led to misbehaviour to the point of unruliness (Masitsa, 2008:237). Unfortunately, this overemphasis of human rights, especially on children's rights have led to poor discipline in schools.

South Africa has several laws in place to protect learners from corporal punishment and potential abuse (Ebrahim, 2017). Firstly, the constitution, section 12(1), states that everyone the right to freedom and security, including the rights to be free from all forms of violence, not to be tortured, treated or punished in a cruel and inhumane way. Section 28(1) of the constitution further protects children from maltreatment, neglect or abuse. The second law, which is the South African Schools Act makes the provision that no corporal punishment should be administered against a learner (SASA Act 84 of 1996, subsection 10(1)) This act further explains that any person who does not follow this instruction may risk imprisonment for assault. More importantly, the act stresses the importance of adopting a school code of conduct after consultation with the learners, parents and the educators of the school (SASA Act 84 of 1996, Subsection 8(1)) (Ebrahim, 2017). The code of conduct is there to ensure that a disciplined school environment is established, and that the quality of the learning process is not compromised (SASA Act 84 of 1996, Subsection 8(2)). The third law, which is the Children's Act, section 7(1) emphasizes that any behaviour that inflicts pain or suffering to a child is not allowed. Thus, it is the researcher's opinion that any form of discipline which violates any one of the above-mentioned laws is not permissible (Ebrahim, 2017).

Maree (2000:31) supports Rossouws's (2003:23) observation by noting that the overemphasis of learners' rights, both at home and at school, mislead learners and make them to show very little responsibility towards meeting their obligations. Learners have developed a very reckless and care-free attitude and have little insight about their duties and responsibilities in the process of

teaching and learning. Learners who display little concern over their studies, as a result of poor discipline, usually try to influence the whole class to imitate them and act in a similar way. This takes us to peer pressure as another cause of poor learner discipline (Rossouw, 2003:23).

2.4.3 Peer pressure

Researchers on causes of poor learner discipline agree that peer pressure plays an important role in worsening its prevalence in schools. Maree (2003) notes that learners can negatively influence each other. As a matter of principle, the majority of learners in a classroom tend to admire and imitate their classmates, who are unruly and arrogant towards educators. Misbehaviour and poor discipline are often perceived as heroism and bravery by learners and bring popularity.

Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:35) share the same view that younger learners often admire and imitate older individuals that are often troublesome. The authors point out that misbehaviour by learners can be an indication of attention-seeking, that is the desire to have power which can be in the form of influence or intimidation, revenge (retaliation or vendetta) or a simple display of inadequacy (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:35). Previous research has also indicated that learners who feel that they are not respected or recognized, incite misbehaviour in fellow learners and consequently, the educator spends a lot of time trying to establish order for the whole class (Lewis, 1991:23). As an educator in a primary school, there have been incidences where peer bullying takes place, because a fellow learner refuses to be disrespectful to authority. This results in other learners yelling insults to the victim or threatening to hit them after school. Indeed, peer pressure is a powerful tool that learners can use to take advantage of other learners who are compliant to school rules (Rossouw, 2003:42).

2.4.4 Parental Factors

Bowman (2004:36) cites a lack of parental involvement as one of the main reasons for poor learner discipline in schools. Parents who show little or no interest in the education matters of their children make it easily possible for such learners be poorly disciplined. This is also endorsed by Zulu and Wolhuter (2013:2), who alluded that parents are not cooperating with

schools in promoting learner discipline, which is conducive for effective teaching and learning.

As mentioned earlier in this study learners are human beings who are still developing and progressing towards maturity. Thus, they require a lot of monitoring, supervision and guidance from parents who are their primary educators. If learners are left on their own, to navigate through their education alone, they are bound to go astray in terms of morals and behaviour. Schools and educators alone cannot enforce and instill discipline in learners, because sometimes most of the causes emanate from the home environment. For instance, through informal conversations with the educators under this study, it was expressed that often, the learner's attitudes stem from a lack of home values where parents do not show respect towards anyone in authority in the wider community. Consequently, learners in Botshabelo primary schools show little regard for authority, including the educators (Masekoameng, 2019:19).

Masekoameng (2010:73) further notes that a lack of discipline by parents at home can also be a contributing factor. Learners imitate the bad behaviour of their parents and exhibit it at school. Most parents expect the schooling system and educators in particular to address the disciplinary problems of their children. Rossouw (2003:42) also adds that parents disrespect educators in front of their children, which will make such learners to misbehave and undermine the authority of educators as echoed by Masekoameng (2010:19).

Ndamani (2008:55) mentions that sometimes parents interfere with school processes and refuse to allow their children to be punished for poor discipline. If parents question educators about their punishments and disciplinary systems, they indirectly cause the learners to undermine such measures and disregard them. Parents therefore should play a supportive role in promoting learner discipline and stop interfering unnecessarily.

A lack of parental care has also been pointed out by Masekoameng (2010:72) as a parental factor that contributes towards poor learner discipline. Children who are neglected or who receive very little care tend to seek attention through bad behaviour. Learners who suffer social rejection and alienation from their parents and adults usually exhibit signs of poor discipline. Learners need to have a sense of social belonging and acceptance for them to shape their behaviour accordingly. Unstable and dysfunctional homes also create a breeding ground for poor learner discipline (Rossouw, 2003:42). In such homes, there is no order and the power of rules and regulations in all spheres of life is disregarded. This makes learners to misbehave when at school.

Since the schools under this study are based in the township, Masilonyana (2020:25) explains that township schools are situated in disadvantaged communities characterized by over-crowding, uninspired educators, and a lack of privileges and incentives. The author mentions that the unavailability of resources such as isolation spaces, detention centers or a lack incentives cannot promote the implementation of alternative disciplinary measures in schools. Consequently, the schools have to resort to non-violent punitive measures like excluding learners from class activities, ignoring misbehaving learners or calling parents to intervene as such is the case with the primary schools under study (Masilonyana, 2020:25).

2.4.5 Educator factors

Masekoameng (2010:72) points out that bad relations between learners and educators can potentially create poor learner discipline. Educators who cannot get along with some learners or a class, as a result of personality clashes or their approach to teaching and learning, create room for learners to misbehave in retaliation. In a study by Mtsweni (2008), it was established that educators play a significant role when it comes to the management of school discipline. An educator who is actively involved in the teaching process and who treats learners as autonomous people, who are capable of independent thinking, will experience less disciplinary problems than an educator who does not actively involve learners in classroom activities. It is important that educators recognize classroom maintenance as vital for the effective functioning of the school at large.

Moreover, Rossouw (2003:42) points out that poorly qualified educators, who are usually incompetent, play a role in poor learner discipline. In most cases, such educators do not have enough and effective classroom management skills, which may worsen an already delicate situation. Where a culture of teaching and learning is non-existent in malfunctioning schools, educator misconduct can also contribute towards poor learner discipline.

2.4.5.1 Educator absenteeism

Mohapi (2014) echoes a sentiment in which he points out that educator absenteeism is one of the causes of poor learner discipline that is on the rise. Educator absenteeism is defined as the number of educators who are in fact present at school, but they are not necessarily in the classroom teaching (Mothibeli, 2017:2). This definition further includes educators that are not present at school for whatever reasons. In essence, absenteeism is generally perceived as failure of an employee to report for or remain at work as scheduled (Mothibeli, 2017:2).

Existing literature shows that the issue of educator absenteeism is a worldwide phenomenon and not only unique to South Africa (Mothibeli, 2017:3). Educator absenteeism has been shown to negatively affect the smooth running of schools and the education system as a whole. Malungo (2010:9) argues that educators arriving late for work, finishing early and engaging in poor time keeping contribute to the low academic performance of schools. The author further describes that sometimes schools have more than one educator absent in school in a given day and this may be due to a myriad of reasons such as family responsibility, tardiness, union activities, workshops, etc. When faced with such challenges, school management usually combines one or two classes together or make use of a relief educator who may not be familiar with proper class management. Shortages of educators at school during school hours also imply that the school does not have enough personnel to enforce school rules and maintain discipline throughout the day. Mohapi (204:348) highlights that these kind of problems leads to poor learner discipline and disorder in the classrooms.

In addition to the problems mentioned above, the minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshega, revealed statistics on educator absenteeism in South Africa and it was found that on any given day, 10% of educators are not present at school and this equates to about 39 000 absent educators every day (Mothibeli, 207:3). Interestingly, the majority of these leave instances, 77% are for one or two days and they are regarded as discretionary leave as they do not require one to present a medical certificate (Mothibeli, 2017:3).

On the other hand, a study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2010), revealed that 40 000 educators out of an estimated 400 000 in South Africa, are absent every day. In attempt to explain the high rate of educator absenteeism, researchers have looked at the lack of motivation on part of the educators (Narayan & Mooij, 2010:2). It was revealed that educators feel

that overcrowded classrooms, unfilled vacancies, too many non-academic tasks to be completed, poor infrastructural facilities, and a lack of adequate training and incentives contributes to low morale on part of the educators. Consequently, these issues lead to educators feeling depressed and eventually staying away from school (Narayan & Mooij, 2010:4).

2.4.5.2 Overcrowded classes

Educators around the world face many obstacles when attempting to teach in overcrowded classes (Oliver, 2006). Research shows that the overcrowding of classrooms has detrimental effect on teaching and learning. That is, educator morale and enjoyment of profession is significantly decreased, and discipline problems incur (Fin, 2003; Oliver 2006). According to Venketess (2011), educators struggle to carry on with lessons when learners are literally stacked on top of each other and pass out due to heat exhaustion. In his study, Muthusamy (2015:2), observed that some classes in South African schools are beyond capacity with up to 60 learners crammed into one classroom. This poses a challenge for the education system as educators are not in control of load management of classes (Muthusamy, 2015:2).

Mohapi (2014:83), further states that some schools have overcrowded classrooms, mainly as a result of shortages of educational resources, such as educators and classrooms. In such situations, the author explains that disruptive behaviour is likely to ensue. Muthusamy (2015:3) postulates that educators are facing difficult challenges that arise in overcrowded classrooms which in-turn affect the quality of teaching and learning. Educators become frustrated when they cannot reach their educational outcomes and learners become discouraged as well. In addition, it becomes difficult for the educator to know the individual circumstances of each learner (Muthusamy, 2015:4).

According to Levin and Nolan (1996), there are several discipline problems that educators face in overcrowded classrooms. Such problems include bullying, the use of vulgar language, teasing, inattention, object throwing, theft, etc. To provide an anecdotal experience, the researcher has held the view that larger classes are much noisier and are prone to more disciplinary problems than smaller classes. The researcher also holds the same perspective as Muthusamy (2015:16) that overcrowded classrooms can limit educators in achieving educational goals and

being effective. This view is also substantiated by Oosthuizen and Van Staden (2007:19), who included overcrowded classes among their list of various causes of poor learner discipline. The difficulty in controlling overcrowded classes results in a strained relationship between the educator and the learner, which results in disruptions and behavioural problems in the classroom (Oliver, 2006).

2.4.5.3 Staff ratio

Nene (2013:122) supports the argument raised by Rossouw (2003:49) about the ratio of educators in a school as a cause of poor learner discipline. According to Rossouw (2003:52), the male-female ratio of educators also influences the degree of poor learner discipline in most schools. It was reported that the levels of poor learner discipline were reasonable in schools with a high percentage of male educators. Although this may be very debatable, research findings point to the inability of female educators to maintain learner discipline, especially in higher grades (Nene, 2013:122).

2.4.5.4 Perceptions and personal outlook

As noted by Van der Walt (2004:13), poor learner discipline is a product of the post-modern outlook on life. Its characteristics are a quest for personal freedom and autonomy, as well as reluctance towards being subjected to force and power of a superior or order of discipline. Accordingly, the post-modern individual refuses to sacrifice freedom, so as to fit into a given set-up such as a classroom. As such, this approach has culminated in significant differences between those who should be subjected to discipline, who in the current study are the learners and the authorities who have the positional power to maintain order in schools. Such symbols of authority are the educators and in some cases the School Governing Body (Van der Walt, 2004:14).

2.4.5.5 Existing legislation on learner discipline: Corporal punishment

According to Carvel (2002, in Mohapi, 2014:433), in a survey of 1000 parents living in England and Wales, 51% were of the opinion that corporal punishment should be reintroduced in schools. A study by Epp (1996:177) also found that all role players in the education system (e.g. parents,

educators, principals, school board trustees and the Department of Education officials) contend that corporal punishment is justified. However, the situation in South Africa paints a different picture in that corporal punishment in the country is banned, as evidenced by section 10 of the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996). Mohapi (2014:433) notes that social conservationists and liberals argue that authoritarian or strict disciplinary measures only produce learner alienation and exclusionary school discipline. This finding is also endorsed by Makendano (2016:2), who argues that corporal punishment is not conducive for effective teaching and learning. Likewise, beating school children only guarantees silence, but it does not guarantee future cooperation. Although corporal punishment is seen as a positive disciplinary measure for some, it remains a controversial topic of discussion for others. For example, UNICEF (2012) supports the abolition of corporal punishment, because of the implications it has for children's rights and well-being.

National laws also agree that children, although dependent on adults, are individuals that are autonomous with rights warranting protection (Lubaale, 2019:37). According to Mohapi (2014:76), educators blame the current legal framework that regulates issues, relating to learner discipline, such as punishment and the protocol to be followed as one of the reasons for poor learner discipline in schools. Rossouw (2003:64) laments the fact that the country's legal framework and legislation, which guides the disciplinary action against learner misconduct, is not in the best interest of promoting learner discipline. It is argued that the current legislation hampers timeous action against misconduct, which can lead to further disruptions. The process is very long and time-consuming and has been widely criticized by educators as not applicable and suitable for learner discipline (Mohapi, 2014:76-77).

2.4.5.6 School composition

Masekoameng (2010:28) alludes that in a school the composition of the student population can also promote poor learners' discipline. As the new education system of South Africa has evolved, educators are encouraged to move from an authoritarian style of teaching towards a new democratic style of education (Kirkpatrick, 1996). As such, a multicultural class is important in a learning environment to promote tolerance and empathy for other learners. Kirkpatrick (1996) defines a multicultural class as one where pupils do not have one unifying culture but possess their own unique and individual cultures. According to Masekoameng (2010:28),

multicultural schools are more prone to poor learner discipline than schools whose learners are of a similar ethnic and cultural background. This is problematic as learners' views and personalities will clash and a conducive teaching environment compromised.

Some of the most generalised causes of poor learner discipline to have emerged from empirical studies, as identified by Masekoameng (2010) and Maree (2000), are gang activities, dangerous weapons, lack of transformation, drug and substance abuse, lack of counselling services, lack of religion, child abuse, racism and poverty, exposure to unruly behaviour and violence on television programs, as well as intolerance of management towards some groups within the school and community. The size of the school has also been identified as a possible cause. Large schools experience serious issues of poor learner discipline, as opposed to relatively smaller schools. Masitsa (2008:236), assert that the establishment of a disciplined school environment depends on educators informing learners on what are the expectations from them in terms of proper school conduct and what consequences can come into effect should there be incidences of misconduct.

2.5 THE EFFECTS OF POOR DISCIPLINE ON THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Van der Walt (2004:35) cautions about the importance of not underestimating the extent and gravity of the effects of poor learner discipline in South Africa. Thus, a comprehensive review of literature on the effects of poor learner discipline on teaching and learning, as well as on educator morale was made and the following were revealed.

In an investigation conducted by Maree (2000:73), it was reported that some schools are increasingly resembling war zones. Thus, not all schools are safe and free to teach and learn, as a result of poor learner discipline. It is important to point out that the levels of concentration and productivity of both educators and learners get compromised if they worry about their safety.

Thus, poor learner discipline also negatively affects the safety and security of both educators and learners at school. It is associated with disruptive behaviour and aggression, both of which adversely compromise effective teaching and learning and the ultimate academic performance.

Rossouw (2003:93) acknowledges that learners' conduct is one of the most prominent factors that influence teaching and learning. Poor learner discipline negatively affects teaching and learning in schools. It leads to disruptive behaviour in which education cannot be achieved. Poor learner discipline defeats all the efforts towards restoring and creating a culture of teaching and learning in a South African education system that is struggling to create and foster such a culture. Mohapi (2014:163) warns that the culture of teaching and learning tends to deteriorate in schools that are characterised by poor learner discipline.

Smit (2013) notes that poorly disciplined learners are frequently absent from school, which negatively affects their academic performance. This finding is consistent with the earlier study findings from an investigation carried out by Nthebe (2006:152), who established that poor discipline contributes significantly in many cases and incidents of learners being absent from school or not attending classes. Arising from the above, very few ideals and objectives of education can be realised amid chaotic classrooms and when not, all learners are present in the class.

The overemphasis of human rights is prevalent in most schools and the educational approach of many parents puts a lot of pressure on educators. Schools are under tremendous pressure to recognise and uphold learners' rights at all costs. In a study conducted by Rossouw (2003:163), educators reported being uncertain, confused and afraid as they may unknowingly and unintentionally infringe upon learners' rights and be accused of misconduct and violation of learners' rights. Educators, for instance, indicated that they were reluctant to suspend a disruptive learner from class, since this is against the learner's constitutional right to education.

- Poor educator morale: The morale of educators is negatively affected by poor learner discipline;
- Educators also experience stress and low job satisfaction, which may force them to resign;
- Poor educator morale results in decreased productivity and burnout in some instances;
- According to Smit (2013:102), educators feel disempowered in terms of dealing with poor learner discipline, especially in light of the current legal framework, as earlier mentioned;
- According to Masekoameng (2010:179), educators are frustrated by the levels of high energy they spend addressing poor learner discipline in the classroom. Educators complain that they should profitably and meaningfully use this time and energy on teaching and learning rather than dealing with disciplinary issues; and

- More still, educators invest their valuable time developing and designing academically exciting and powerful lessons, which are negatively affected and spoiled by poor learner discipline, which is very discouraging.

2.5.1 Relevance of the effects of poor discipline to the primary schools in Botshabelo

As previously discussed in Chapter 1 (*cf.* 1.2.1), the primary aim of this study was to explore the possible strategies that could be employed by educators to curb the issue of poor discipline at the three primary schools in Botshabelo region. A discussion with an official at the Free State Department of Education expounded the reality that discipline remains a major problem in the provincial schools, especially Botshabelo. What this communicates is that drastic action is necessary seeing that ill-discipline has a negative effect on education in several ways. For instance, poor learner discipline impacts directly on educator morale (as highlighted by Rossouw (2003:163)). It has been revealed by the educators at the schools under study that they experience stress, apathy and reduced motivation to report for work. Although educator absenteeism was not highlighted as a big issue at the schools under study, participants expressed that at times they have thought about leaving their profession as they are unhappy with the education system (Masekoameng, 2010, Muthusamy, 2015). The researcher concurs with the views of the participants as she feels like the education system sometimes fails. There is little transformation at department level in terms of training of educators and there are no incentives to boost motivation.

With regards to dealing with the issue of poor discipline in light of the current legal framework, participants felt that they are okay with what the law says in terms of protecting learners and the aspect of discipline. Most of the participants referred to the SASA document and the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment document in dealing with poor discipline among learners (*cf.* 4.5.4, Chapter 4). The educators at the three schools seem to have faith in the documents developed by the DoE (Masitsa, 2008:238).

2.6 STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

According to Allie (2001:71), the issues of poor learner discipline in most schools across the country emerged and rose to alarming rates after the abolishment of corporal punishment. This spontaneous increase in disciplinary problems among learners prompted the then Minister of Education to introduce the famous Alternatives to Corporal Punishment in the year 2000. According to Lemmer, Meier and van Wyk (2009:117), educators are increasingly concerned with the alarming rates of poor learner discipline in South African schools, which have contributed significantly to poor academic performance. As such, Lemmer *et al.* (2009:187) admit that there is an urgent need to identify and implement practical solutions to the management of poor learner discipline in schools.

2.7 RESEARCH STUDIES ON STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH POOR LEARNER DISCIPLINE IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Research investigations into learner discipline problems have revealed that educators are failing to come up with and adopt sustainable strategies to promote discipline in the classrooms. Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:25) lament that the current existing literature on strategies of maintaining and promoting learner discipline, simply present a host of strategies without offering some clear-cut guidelines and instructions on how to implement them in the classrooms and at school. This creates confusion among educators and other people involved. Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:28) further bemoan that these strategies presented in the current literature, fail to address the causes of poor learner discipline and ignore the psychic dynamics and social context factors, responsible for poor learner discipline in the classroom and at school.

According to Nthebe (2006:141), a substantial amount of literature has been published over the years on factors that should be taken into account when dealing with poor learner discipline. These include school level, family, societal factors and the spiritual and societal functioning of the learners. An investigation by Wolhuter and Van Staden (2009:13) on learner discipline in a South African context, revealed that the biggest challenge in dealing with poor learner discipline, lies in managing the problems that emanate from it.

Previous investigations into the strategies on dealing with poor learner discipline done in South Africa have largely concentrated on the educators' methods of promoting and maintaining learner discipline in the classroom. Among others, these investigations include the ones by Biemond, Van der Walt and Wolhuter (2010:102), Van der Walt, Potgieter and Wolhuter (2010:23), and Wolhuter, and Van Staden (2010:31). As such, Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:32), point out that many questions have been raised by contemporary researchers regarding the design of strategies to be adopted in the classrooms and schools. They further warn that ways policymakers, researchers and clinicians decide on the type and nature of intervention for learners with poor discipline problems, are very questionable and debatable.

These interventions have been criticised for failing to adequately take into account ecological variables and other complex interactional processes that occur within the classroom and inside the school system and contribute to poor discipline problems among the learners. As such, Schmidt and Neven (2010:78) warn that these shortfalls or limitations result in incorrect and sometimes counterproductive interventions and strategies.

An investigation by Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:13) suggested that a more holistic and integrated perspective of poor learner discipline problems and their causes is required to effectively deal with poor learner discipline at school and in the classrooms. Henceforth, they advocated for an inclusive and comprehensive approach, which addresses the entire spectrum of factors involved. This suggestion corroborates the earlier findings by Wright (2010:133) and Nthebe (2006:127), who both argued that dealing with poor learner discipline requires an all-inclusive approach or policy in which all the factors and stakeholders are placed at the centre of the strategies and mechanisms.

Thus, the available literature calls for an approach which brings together, under the same roof the learners' personal history and intrapsychic life or dynamics, the quality of the family relationship, the educators' attitude, as well as teaching style, the school's organizational and societal characteristics and the nature of the society within which the school functions.

2.7.1 Suggested strategies

The Department of Education (2012:16) warns that understanding the context and circumstances that shape the behaviour of learners is very important in finding solutions to poor discipline among learners and in preventing unfair punishment, which usually leads to anger, resentment and disruptive behaviour. Accordingly, the Department of Education (2012) notes that discipline should not be punitive and punishment-oriented, but instead, it should promote constructive learning.

As such, the Department of Education (2012) warns that discipline should be informed by values and attitudes of peace, tolerance, respect, dignity and human rights. For this to manifest, techniques for better classroom discipline should include positive discipline, assertive discipline, direct instruction and environmental control. An investigation by Nthebe (2006:2), whose aim was to examine the management of poor learner discipline in selected schools, recommended that solutions and strategies for poor learner discipline should be informed by legislation.

The above sentiments of Wagner, Botha and Mentz (2012:64-67) are also consistent with the suggestions of the Department of Education (2012:5) also endorses the positive discipline approach, which it says is based on respect for human rights, emphasizes safe schools, which are free from violence and seeks to build a culture of human rights in which all stakeholders are protected from harm and are treated with dignity and respect.

The Department of Education (2000:9) cautions educators to use discipline proactively and constructively, as opposed to punishment. Learners must be exposed to a corrective approach where they can learn exercising self-control, respects towards others, as well as accept and embrace the consequences of their actions. Educators are urged to design and implement alternatives to corporal punishment for effective discipline. These alternatives include emphasizing positive behaviour, rewarding learners for good behaviour, involving learners in setting up and creating rules, adopting alternatives that are built on empathy and an understanding of the needs, circumstances, abilities and stages of development of individual learners, as well as participatory decision-making. It would seem that all the available alternatives from the literature review that were suggested after this guide was developed, were designed to incorporate such alternatives in different ways.

Rossouw (2003:82) suggests that schools should empower learners with different life skills that can prepare and help them to act as responsible and effective law-abiding citizens, both at school and at home. A religious approach can also be used as a possible alternative. Religion plays a totally significant role in shaping the mind and behaviour of children. It can thus be used in ways that are consistent with both primary and subordinate legislation to create and foster a sense and culture of good learner discipline. Most religions advocate for peace, order, good morals and regard to rules and laws.

In addition, learners should be educated about the greater obligations and responsibilities that are associated with their rights. According to Nene (2013), when a responsibility is neglected, the privilege may be suspended. Most learners do not know that they have to uphold certain duties and responsibilities before they can claim their rights and privileges as enshrined in legislation.

Moreover, the collective adoption of a set of school code of conduct can be considered a viable alternative. Learners need to be involved in the process to ensure compliance. Schools can create constant awareness among learners of what constitutes good and bad behaviour. Learners need to be reminded regularly about the school rules that bind them and their expected kind of behaviour. However, as noted by Rossouw (2003), the existence of school rules does not guarantee and confirm compliance and good behaviour. This explains why school rules must be used and applied in conjunction with other alternatives.

A significant amount of research studies (Mohapi, 2014; Nene, 2013; Ndamani, 2008) have provided a host of alternatives, which educators can consider in their classrooms. Among others, these include, the establishment of parent-school partnerships, counselling, special schools for problematic learners with specially trained educators, community service, detention, cleaning of school premises, such as playgrounds and classrooms, credit points, rewards, such as free refreshments from the school tuck-shop and modelling-educators should always serve as role models of good morals and behaviour.

2.7.2 Relevance of the suggested strategies to the primary schools in Botshabelo

Considering the above suggested strategies, it is the opinion of the researcher that the disciplinary measures are not only theoretical but are practical measures that can be applied in the context of

Botshabelo primary schools. In line with the guidelines of the Department of Education (2012), the researcher agrees that discipline should not be punitive in nature, but rather promote constructive learning. A more corrective approach should be considered by educators so that learners become self-aware of their actions and consequences, learn respect for others, and exercise self-control (DoE, 2008:9). As outlined in chapters 4 and 5, the recommended solutions and strategies by the educators point to the fact that they should be informed by legislation (Nthebe, 2006:2). That is, educators are urged to design and implement alternatives to corporal punishment for effective discipline (Nthebe, 2006:3)

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter looked at the theoretical framework within which this study was grounded. It also deliberated on the conceptual framework which the researcher has developed from the analysis and interpretation of both literature review and the complexity theory. Both the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework have been considered in the light of the study phenomena.

2.9 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THIS STUDY

According to Rakotsoane and Rakotsoane (2007:15), theoretical framework refers to the conceptual underpinning of a research study, which is either based on theory or a conceptual model. As such, a theoretical framework looks at the significant underlying tenets, philosophies and assumptions within which a specific study has been developed and designed around. The theoretical framework serves the purpose of guiding the researcher in analyzing, explaining and interpreting data.

2.9.1 Complexity theory as a theoretical framework

This investigation will be grounded in the assumptions and principles of the complexity theory. Both the classroom and the school in which poor learner discipline manifest itself will be viewed as

an open social system within a social setting. According to Hasan (2014:148), Reyes (2013:99); and Anish, and Gupta (2010:1), the complexity theory presents new ways of thinking in dealing with problems and challenges. It emphasizes the significance of small events, which result in large scale changes (Walby, 2003:12). Anish and Gupta (2010:2) further note that the complexity theory comprises of a large number of entities that interact with each other, together with the environment.

2.9.1.1 Assumptions and principles of complexity theory

According to Morrison (2006:23), the complexity theory is a theory of transformation, evolution and adaptation, usually in the interests of survival, through a combination of cooperation and competition. It offers straightforward cause-and-effect models, linear predictability and a reductionist, atomistic analytically fragmented approach to understanding and comprehension of phenomena and replace them with organic, non- linear and holistic approaches, which emphasize interconnected networks or variables.

The complexity theory draws from a set of fundamental principles, which are used to illuminate social systems and understand how individual members within the open social system can contribute towards creating change and how this change can be maintained (Anish & Gupta, 2005:3). Hasan (2014:148) views these principles as guidelines which one needs to follow when using the complexity theory to address challenges that one encounters in life. She emphasizes the imperativeness of identifying situations and problems that are complex and identifying the main problem, as well as determining high-level aims and objectives.

According to Reyes (2013) and Alemi, Daftarifard, and Patrut (2011:34), and Anish and Gupta (2010:3), the complexity theory assumes that a huge number of components are connected to each other in one way or the other. This implies that a single effect over one component within the system will result in a tremendous change in the whole system. To contextualise this assumption to this study, classrooms and schools have many dynamic and heterogeneous learners whose behaviour and attitude towards teaching and learning and schooling are completely different from each other. However, even though they may be heterogeneous in many aspects, a change of behaviour, or attitude in one learner can also result in a change in all the other learners in the classroom, even though this change may be in different ways and degrees.

On the other hand, Anish and Gupta (2010:3) identify those major principles and present them sequentially. The first one is self-organization and emergence. This principle refers to the coming together of individuals to form a group, in order to execute a task. This group will direct its actions on its own without external influence and will generate knowledge and ideas from its interactions. This principle is then followed by chaos, which according to Reyes (2013:33), is when individuals in the group who do not hold any position of authority, significantly influence the organization through their actions. The group will then have to demonstrate adaptive behaviour. According to Anish and Gupta (2010:4), this is the experiential learning of the group, embedded in an interacting network. The principle of adaptive behaviour is followed by co-evolution, which implies that the individual members and the group as a whole, share a common eco-system, thereby influencing each other spontaneously. Self-similarity is the last principle whereby scaled versions of a common group, organizational or corporate culture are shown by the members in the group and at different levels.

According to Alemi *et al.* (2011:34), a complex system is open to import energy from the external environment. This results in the emergence of new order from the disorders. The system is thus viewed as dynamic and moves through space and time. Thus, complex systems have the ability and potential to redefine, renew and transform themselves. Alemi *et al.* (2011:35) further note that there are numerous independent variables in a complex system that interact with each other continuously and at the same time organize and reorganize themselves into a more multifaceted system.

Reyes (2013:34) is in agreement with Alemi *et al.* (2011:34) about the features or characteristics of complex systems, just like classrooms and schools. They are unanimous that typical of classrooms and schools, complex systems have a large number of similar, but independent elements. This is also corroborated by Kramsch (2012), who suggests that complex systems are made up of various components, which interact with each other. To bring this to the context of this study, this refers to the learners and the educators in the classrooms and at school.

Learners are grouped into similar classrooms, based on their grades and sometimes subjects at school, yet they are autonomous beings who will function independently, based on their personalities and traits.

In addition, in complex systems, just like in the classrooms and schools, there is constant movement and responses to other agents. In the current investigation, this was illustrated by the interactions between the learners and educators and their responses thereto. Learners are always in constant contact and interactions with each other in the process of negotiated teaching and learning. Learners and educators do not engage in teaching and learning activities in isolation, individually, divorced from each other, but collaborate with each other to achieve the set educational aims and objectives. In these interactions, they both respond and react to each other.

Alemi *et al.* (2011:36) further point out that another feature of complex systems is their adaptiveness to ensure survival. This is also supported by Morrison (2006) who notes that all the elements in a complex system always have to adapt to the prevailing conditions in the environment within which they find themselves, so as to survive. Kramsch (2012) subscribes to this claim by noting that change is central to complex systems. As such, Kramsch (2012) argues that complex systems adapt through interaction with the environment and through self-organization or internal reorganization.

Morrison (2006) goes further to explain that according to the complexity theory, an organism senses and responds to its environment and this changes that environment. This also changes that organism as well. As such, Morrison argues that the complexity theory suggests that there is a dynamic relationship between the organism and its environment, because they both change and transform each other. The complexity theory further rejects the idea that one can consider the organism without taking into account its environment and it also emphasizes collective, rational behaviour, solipsism and isolation. The complexity theory acknowledges that the whole is always greater than the sum of its individual components and that these components interact in dynamical, multifarious ways, culminating in new realities and new relations.

To support the above claims, Morrison (2006) (in Waldrop, 1992:294-9) too have argued that complex systems scan through and sense the external environment and then adjust and develop themselves internally to survive in such changing external environments. To bring this feature to the context of this investigation, learners always have to adapt to the prevailing classroom and school conditions to fit in. More than often, learners have to change and modify their behaviour, based on the classroom and school rooms and rules that are meant to regulate and guide their behaviour.

Anish and Gupta (2010:3), Reyes (2013) and Alemi *et al.* (2011:35) are of one voice that complex systems also have the characteristic of self-organization in which the system forms order spontaneously. According to Morrison (2006), self-organization and auto catalyst are the processes that contribute to such changes, whereby the organism itself is the catalyst of change. Reyes (2013), and Anish and Gupta (2010:3), further assert that complex systems have local rules that apply to each agent. To bring this to the context of this study, all classrooms and schools have clearly defined set rules, which are meant to establish, promote and maintain order by providing minimum standards on acceptable behaviour and conduct of their inhabitants. Educators and learners are both bound by such rules and are always expected to abide by them for order to prevail.

Closely related to the above features of complex systems is the characteristic that they can develop into a condition of self-organization in a manner that sets behaviour between order and disorder (Alemi *et al.*, 2011:35). Owing to the classroom and school rules and code of conduct, learners are always aware of the acceptable behaviour, which is required for order to prevail in the classroom and at school. They are also aware of the kind of behaviour and conduct in the classroom and at school, which can result in disorderly and chaotic situations.

Furthermore, Reyes (2013) alludes to the sentiments of Alemi *et al.* (2011:36) that complex systems are also characterised by unpredictability and sub-tractivity. and to this effect, complex systems function under conditions that are unbalanced. Morrison (2006) further argues that complex systems are characterised by a progression to enlarge the system and make it more sophisticated.

2.9.1.2 The relevance of complexity theory to the study

The complexity theory draws its impetus and attraction from the fact that it brings together several key elements or variables into a more unified theory. This illuminates the study phenomena in which it is used as a theoretical framework. Its assumptions have been found to be very consistent with the current investigation, especially considering that the overarching aim of this study was to identify strategies that can be used to deal with and address the problem of poor learner discipline in the classroom and at school.

According to Morrison (2006), while the complexity theory has been widely used and applied in the spheres of natural sciences, anthropology and economics, its application and usage in education has been considerably and comparatively very limited, piecemeal and spasmodic. Morrison (2006) further argues that the entry of the complexity theory in education is still in its early stages and points out that this theory is much more applicable to education and has the potential to offer some significant contributions to this field. The claims by Morrison (2006) are also reinforced by Alemi, *et al.* (2011:34) who corroborate that the complexity theory is one of the most recent conceptually linked and related theories in all disciplinary areas, which is founded and rooted in mathematics.

In addition, the complexity theory is a theory of transformation, evolution and adaptation, usually in the interests of survival through a combination of cooperation and competition. As noted by Reyes (2013), the complexity theory offers and provides some essential theoretical elements regarding the spheres of planning, organization and management. Those who advocate for the use and applicability of the complexity theory in educational studies, such as Bechuke and Debeila (2012), Kramsch (2012), and Morrison (2006) argue that one of its main strengths is that it provides for a useful conceptual framework for dynamic and flexible analysis of the school and classroom situations, a strength which is regarded as highly effective for conducting more comprehensive investigations.

As pointed out by Hasan (2014), the complexity theory comes into perspective in this current study, because just like the classroom and the school climate, the environment in which human beings live and interact with each other have become highly unpredictable and uncertain. This theory therefore offers educators and all the other stakeholders involved in dealing with poor learner discipline, some degree of predictability and certainty, noting its view of complex systems and how they relate to typical classrooms and schools. The complexity theory provides a bigger and more comprehensive picture of the environment in which life unfolds.

According to Kramsch (2012), complex systems have no clearly defined boundaries, they merely exist as a result of the fluxes that feed them. In the absence of such fluxes, they tend to disappear. In this regard, Osberg (2008) concludes that a complex system is therefore dynamic rather than static.

A complex system exists in the midst of interactions between components and is thus nothing on its own. It is therefore assumed that for a complex system to come into being, there has to be interactions between various components, which find themselves in such an open system.

Kramersch (2012) argues that complex systems are open and dynamic, like weather, economic systems and human learning. Kramersch (2012) further advances that, because complex systems are open, they are exposed to unexpected and unplanned occurrences that may take place at any time. It is also assumed that even though the components of a complex system may change, as they seek to fit and have a sense of belonging, its structure is always maintained.

The major underlying assumptions and principles and of the complexity theory provide the researcher with a more defined method of studying and investigating the research problem and the study phenomena under investigation. This argument is also supported by Reyes (2013) and Morrison (2006) who argued that the complexity theory helps the researcher to illuminate the research problem and formulate sound strategies. In this regard, Reyes (2013) argues that the complexity theory provides the researcher with a wide spectrum of approaches that can vary in their philosophical orientation and application.

According to Morrison (2006), educational systems, institutions and practices portray several features and characteristics of complex adaptive systems. This is so because they too are dynamical and emergent, unpredictable, non-linear organizations, which function and operate in unpredictable and are constantly changing external environments. Like complex systems, these educational systems, institutions and practices shape and adapt to macro and micro-social changes and through self-organization, they respond to and shape the environment where they find themselves.

The complexity theory will contribute towards developing innovative, flexible, creative and adaptable solutions to learner discipline, both in the classroom and at school level. As noted by Hasan (2014), this theory will be used to formulate meaning and make sense of complex situations and to resolve complex problems. The majority of such problems are typical aspects of reality and contemporary life of both the educators and the learners. Through the application of its underlying principles in this study, the complexity theory was used to portray classrooms and schools, as social systems which can transform themselves for the better.

This will contribute towards effectively dealing with problems and challenges found in those systems, which in this study was poor learner discipline.

As advanced by Reyes (2013), it is envisaged that through the use of the complexity theory in this study as a theoretical framework, it will be highly possible to develop diagnostics and more accurate and reliable predictions in terms of social behaviours and psycho-social actions. It is further anticipated that this theory will contribute immensely in predicting the development and behaviour of relationships or networks and major organizational and functional protocols that are related to the formulation of strategies to deal with issues of poor learner discipline.

As enshrined in the underlying assumptions and principles of the complexity theory, the development of strategies to deal with poor learner discipline in the classroom should therefore take into consideration the sequential processes and outcomes that are generated in the dynamic behaviour of interactions and relationships of all the learners and other significant stakeholders involved. According to Alemi *et al.* (2011:34), complexity is achieved through chaotic situations. Such are typical classrooms and schools, which educators have to deal with on a daily basis. The application of the complexity theory in this investigation therefore, points to a search for a cause and effect connection among a host of variables involved in the study phenomena of poor learner discipline.

This chapter looked at the theoretical framework within which this study was grounded. It also deliberated on the conceptual framework which the researcher has developed from the analysis and interpretation of both literature review and the complexity theory. Both the theoretical framework and the conceptual framework have been considered in the light of the study phenomena.

In addition, the complexity theory is a theory of transformation, evolution and adaptation, usually in the interests of survival through a combination of cooperation and competition. As noted by Reyes (2013), the complexity theory offers and provides some essential theoretical elements regarding the spheres of planning, organization and management.

Both the classroom and the school in which poor learner discipline manifest itself will be viewed as an open social system within a social setting. According to Anish and Gupta (2010:1), Hasan (2014:148), and Reyes (2013:99), the complexity theory presents new ways of thinking in dealing

with problems and challenges. It emphasizes the significance of small events, which result in large scale changes (Walby, 2003:12). Anish and Gupta (2010:2) further note that the complexity theory comprises of a large number of entities that interact with each other and together with the environment. Scholars express major differences of approaches and understanding, even within single disciplines, and this is highlighted by Cairney and Geyer (2017:1-11).

According to Hasan (2014:149), the complexity theory can be used to make sense of complex situations and resolve complex problems, many of which typify contemporary life.

2.9.1.3 Characteristics of complexity theory

The development of a conceptual framework of this study was informed by the literature review and the researcher's understanding of the assumptions and principles of the complexity theory and its applicability to the study phenomenon.

According to Morrison (2006:23), the complexity theory is a theory of transformation, evolution and adaptation, usually in the interests of survival, through a combination of cooperation and competition. It offers straightforward cause-and-effect models, linear predictability and a reductionist, atomistic analytically fragmented approach to understanding and comprehension of a phenomena and replaces them with organic, non-linear and holistic approaches, which emphasise interconnected networks or variables. The group will then have to demonstrate adaptive behaviour. According to Anish and Gupta (2010:4), this is the experiential learning of the group, embedded in an interacting network. The principle of adaptive behaviour is followed by co-evolution, which implies that the individual members and the group as a whole, share a common eco-system, thereby influencing each other spontaneously.

The complexity theory draws from a set of fundamental principles, which are used to illuminate social systems and understand how individual members within the open social system can contribute towards creating change and how this change can be maintained (Anish & Gupta, 2010:3). Hasan (2014:148) views these principles as guidelines, which one needs to follow when using the complexity theory to address challenges that one encounters in life. She emphasises the imperativeness of identifying situations and problems that are complex and identifying the main problem, as well as determining high-level aims and objectives. In this regard, Osberg (2008)

concludes that a complex system is therefore dynamic, rather than static. A complex system exists in the midst of interactions between components and is thus nothing is on its own. It is therefore assumed that for a complex system to come into being, there has to be interactions between various components, which find themselves in such an open system.

According to Kramsch (2012), complex systems have no clearly defined boundaries, they merely exist as a result of the fluxes that feed them. In the absence of such fluxes, they tend to disappear. In this regard, Osberg (2008) conclude that a complex system is therefore dynamic rather than static. A complex system exists in the midst interactions between components and is thus nothing on its own. It is therefore assumed that for a complex system to come into being, there has to be interactions between various components, which find themselves in such an open system.

Kramsch (2012) argues that complex systems are open and dynamic, like weather, economic systems and human learning. Kramsch (2012) further advances that because complex systems are open, they are exposed to unexpected and unplanned occurrences that may take place at any time. It is also assumed that even though the components of a complex system may change, as they seek to fit and have a sense of belonging, its structure is always maintained.

According to Reyes (2013), Alemi, Daftarifard, and Patrut (2011:34), and Anish, and Gupta (2010:3), the complexity theory assumes that a huge number of components are connected (interaction) to each other in one way or the other. This implies that a single effect over one component, within the system, will result in a tremendous change in the whole system. To contextualise this assumption to this study, classrooms and schools have many dynamic and heterogeneous learners whose behaviour and attitude towards teaching and learning and schooling are completely different from each other. However, even though they may be heterogeneous in many aspects, a change of behaviour, or attitude in one learner can result in a change also in all the other leaners in the classroom, even though this change may be in different ways and degrees.

On the other hand, Anish and Gupta (2010:3), identifies those major principles and presents them sequentially. The first one is self-organization and emergence. This principle refers to the coming together of individuals to form a group, in order to execute a task. This group will direct its actions on its own without external influence and will generate knowledge and ideas from its interactions. This principle is then followed by chaos, which according to Reyes (2013:33), is when individuals in the group, who do not hold any position of authority, significantly influence the organization

through their actions. Self-similarity is the last principle whereby scaled versions of a common group, organizational or corporate culture is shown by the members in the group and at different levels.

According to Alemi *et al.* (2011:34), a complex system is open to import energy from the external environment. This results in the emergence of a new order from the disorder. The system is thus viewed as dynamic and moves through space and time. Thus, complex systems have the ability and potential to redefine, renew and transform themselves. Alemi *et al.* (2011:35) further note there are numerous independent variables in a complex system that interact with each other continuously and at the same time organize and reorganize themselves into a more multifaceted system.

Reyes (2013:34) is in agreement with Alemi *et al.* (2011:34) about the features or characteristics of complex systems, just like classrooms and schools. They are unanimous that typical of classrooms and schools, complex systems have a large number of similar, but independent elements. This is also corroborated by Kramsch (2012), who suggests that complex systems are made up of various components, which interact with each other. To bring this to the context of this study, this refers to the learners and the educators in the classrooms and at school. Learners are grouped into similar classrooms, based on their grades and sometimes subjects at school, yet they are autonomous beings who will function independently, based on their personalities and traits.

In addition, in complex systems, just like in the classrooms and schools, there is constant movement and responses to other agents. In the current investigation, this is illustrated by the interactions between the learners and educators and their responses thereto. Learners are always in constant contact and interactions with each other during the process of negotiated teaching and learning. Learners and educators do not engage in teaching and learning activities in isolation, individually, divorced from each other, but collaborate with each other to achieve set educational aims and objectives. In these interactions, they both respond and react to each other.

Alemi *et al.* (2011:36) further point out that another feature of complex systems is their adaptiveness to ensure survival. This is also supported by Morrison (2006) who note that all the elements in a complex system always have to adapt to the prevailing conditions in the environment within which they find themselves, so as to survive.

Kramersch (2012) subscribes to this claim by noting that change is central to complex systems. As such, complex systems adapt through interaction with the environment and through self-organization or internal reorganization.

Morrison (2006) goes further to explain that according to the complexity theory, an organism senses and responds to its environment and this changes that environment. This also changes that organism as well. As such, Morrison argues that the complexity theory suggests that there is a dynamic relationship between the organism and its environment, because they both change and transform each other. The complexity theory further rejects the idea that one can consider the organism without taking into account its environment and it also emphasizes collective, rational behaviour, solipsism and isolation. The complexity theory acknowledges that the whole is always greater than the sum of its individual components and that these components interact in dynamical, multifarious ways, culminating in new realities and new relations.

Reyes (2013), Alemi *et al.* (2011:35), and Anish and Gupta (2010:3), are in one voice that complex systems also have the characteristic of self-organization in which the system forms order spontaneously. According to Morrison (2006), self-organizations and auto catalyst are the processes that contribute to such changes, whereby the organism itself is the catalyst of change. Reyes (2013), Alemi *et al.* (2011:35), and Anish and Gupta (2010:3), further assert that complex systems have local rules that apply to each agent. To bring this to the context of this study, all classrooms and schools have clearly defined set rules, which are meant to establish, promote and maintain order by providing minimum standards on acceptable behaviour and conduct of their inhabitants. Educators and learners are both bound by such rules and are always expected to abide by them for order to prevail.

Closely related to the above features of complex systems is the characteristic that they can develop into a condition of self-organization in a manner that sets behaviour between order and disorder (Alemi *et al.*, 2011:35). Owing to the classroom and school rules and code of conduct, learners are always aware of the acceptable behaviour, which is required for order to prevail in the classroom and at school. They are also aware of the kind of behaviour and conduct in the classroom and at school, which can result in disorderly and chaotic situations.

Furthermore, Reyes (2013) alludes to the sentiments of Alemi *et al.* (2011:36) that complex systems are also characterised by unpredictability and sub-tractivity. To this effect, Alemi *et al.*

(2011:37) point out that complex systems function under conditions that are unbalanced. Morrison (2006) further argues that complex systems are characterised by progression to enlarge the system and make it more sophisticated.

The complexity theory draws its impetus and attraction from the fact that it brings together several key elements or variables into a more unified theory. This illuminates the study phenomena in which it is used as a theoretical framework. Its assumptions have been found to be very consistent with the current investigation, especially considering that the overarching aim of this study was to identify strategies that can be used to deal with and address the problem of poor learner discipline in the classroom and at school.

2.9.1.4 Complexity theory and education

The discussions above have already indicated that data analysis focused on the prevalence of the characteristics in the sampled schools. As pointed out by Hasan (2014), the complexity theory came into perspective in this current study, because just like the classroom and the school climate, the environment in which human beings live and interact with each other have become highly unpredictable and uncertain. This theory therefore, offers educators and all the other stakeholders involved in dealing with poor learner discipline some degree of predictability and certainty, noting its view of complex systems and how they relate to typical classrooms and schools. The complexity theory provides a bigger and more comprehensive picture of the environment in which life unfolds.

According to Morrison (2006), educational systems, institutions and practices portray several features and characteristics of complex adaptive systems. This is so, because they too are dynamical and emergent, unpredictable, non-linear organizations, which function and operate in unpredictable and constantly changing external environments. Like complex systems, these educational systems, institutions and practices shape and adapt to macro and micro-social changes and through self-organization, they respond to and shape the environment in which they find themselves. Those who advocate for the use and applicability of the complexity theory in educational studies, such as Bechuke and Debeila (2012), Kramsch (2012), and Morrison (2006) argue that one of its main strengths is that it provides for a useful conceptual framework for

dynamic and flexible analysis of the school and classroom situations, a strength which is regarded as highly effective for conducting more comprehensive investigations.

The complexity theory will contribute towards developing innovative, flexible, creative and adaptable solutions to learner discipline, both in the classroom and at school level. As noted by Hasan (2014), this theory will be used to formulate meaning and make sense of complex situations and to resolve complex problems. The majority of such problems are typical aspects of reality and contemporary life of both the educators and the learners. Through the application of its underlying principles in this study, the complexity theory will be used to portray classrooms and schools as social systems, which can transform themselves for the better. This will contribute towards effectively dealing with problems and challenges found in those systems, which in this study is poor learner discipline.

As advanced by Reyes (2013), it is envisaged that through the use of the complexity theory in this study as a theoretical framework, it will be highly possible to develop diagnostics and more accurate and reliable predictions in terms of social behaviour and psycho-social actions. It is further anticipated that this theory will contribute immensely in predicting the development and behaviour of relationships or networks and major organizational and functional protocols that are related to the formulation of strategies to deal with issues of poor learner discipline.

As enshrined in the underlying assumptions and principles of the complexity theory, the development of strategies to deal with poor learner discipline in the classroom should therefore take into consideration the sequential processes and outcomes that are generated in the dynamic behaviour of interactions and relationships of all the learners and other significant stakeholders involved. According to Alemi *et al.* (2011:34), complexity is achieved through chaotic situations. Such are typical classrooms and schools, which educators have to deal with on a daily basis. The application of the complexity theory in this investigation therefore points to a search for a cause and effect connection among a host of variables involved in the study phenomena of poor learner discipline.

2.9.1.5 Complexity theory and research

As discussed, and pointed out in (*cf.* 2.9) above, the major underlying assumptions and principles and of the complexity theory provide the researcher with a more defined method of studying and investigating the research problem and the study phenomena under investigation. This argument is also supported by Reyes (2013) and Morrison (2006) who argued that the complexity theory helps the researcher to illuminate the research problem and formulate sound strategies. In this regard, Reyes (2013) argues that the complexity theory provides the researcher with a wide spectrum of approaches that can vary in their philosophical orientation and application.

The next aspect for discussion is the summary of the literature review and the conclusion.

2.10 SUMMARY ON LITERATURE REVIEW

In the final analysis of the perceptions of educators on the causes of poor learner discipline, its effects on teaching and learning and on their morale, it can be concluded that educators are in agreement that parental factors, such as a lack of parental involvement in the education of their children, a lack of cooperation from parents towards promoting learner discipline and parents who misbehave and disrespect educators in front of their children ,are at the forefront of causing poor learner discipline. In addition, most educators also blame the current legislation around learner discipline and the extremely liberal and democratic approach to discipline. Legislation, such as human rights have also done very little to promote learner discipline.

School related reasons cited by educators are overcrowded classrooms. They were silent about their contribution to poor learner involvement through factors such as incompetency, not getting along with learners and their absenteeism. However, the government is viewed as a major role player in driving and implementing mechanisms that can instill discipline among learners. Educators are also unanimous that poor learner discipline poses some serious challenges to teaching and learning and compromises the effectiveness of their efforts to educate the nation.

This is evidenced by poor academic results by learners in most schools. Additionally, they also believe that poor learner discipline reduces their levels of job satisfaction, as they are constantly

blamed by parents and the Department of Education for not doing their teaching duties properly and effectively every time learners fail. This has reduced their morale, as they believe that they are merely being treated as scapegoats for the failure of the system to uphold and promote good learner discipline.

Discipline starts at home and parents should be the primary source of learner discipline; this is the view of educators as far as effective alternatives to corporal punishment are concerned. Educators believe that there is a need for schools to establish and maintain strong partnerships with parents that are aimed at promoting good learner discipline. Learners should know and feel that there is no hiding place for poor discipline and both parents and schools should adopt a zero-tolerance approach to poor learner discipline. The majority of them also agree on participative school and classroom management where learners are involved in the drafting of rules that bind them and in determining the consequences.

2.11 CONCLUSION

Based on its underlying assumptions and principles, the complexity theory has been found to be compatible with this investigation. Its view on complex open systems plays a significant role in illuminating the study phenomena and contribute towards one's understanding of the classroom and the school as complex systems. This understanding is regarded as highly important towards the formulation and implementation of strategies that can be used to address the problem of poor learner discipline in the classroom and at school. The complexity theory views and portrays classroom and schools as open systems and thus provides a justification for the application of its assumptions and principles in the study. It provides educators with practical step-by-step guidelines on how to deal with and address poor learner discipline in the classroom and in their schools.

CHAPTER 3 : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the basic concepts of qualitative research were introduced and discussed. The research questions that the researcher established called for qualitative enquiries. Therefore, the definition of what makes good qualitative research was explored so that an appropriate methodology for a qualitative research study was employed. This chapter explicated semi-structured interviews as a data collection strategy, as well as ensuring that this research study met the requirements of trustworthiness (Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012:125). All these with the aim of answering the following research questions.

Primary research question:

Which strategies are being used to enhance learner discipline in the Botshabelo primary schools?

To refine the main research question, the following subsidiary research questions were developed:

1. What does the concept 'discipline' mean for a primary classroom?
2. What are the challenges faced by primary school educators in Botshabelo in enhancing discipline in their classrooms?
3. What strategies are currently used by the Botshabelo primary school educators to enhance discipline in their classrooms?
4. What suggestions can be made to promote discipline in the Botshabelo primary schools?

In order to answer the research question(s), the researcher decided to employ a qualitative research design that is rooted in an interpretative framework. Furthermore, the researcher wanted to understand the experiences of educators regarding poor discipline in their primary schools and which strategies could be employed to remedy the problem. What follows is a discussion of what the interpretivist paradigm is, the philosophical underpinnings of the paradigm and an overview of the value systems and ethical principles, together with the assumptions about the nature of research and knowledge related to the paradigm.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 The interpretivist paradigm

According to Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:51), interpretivism is a concept that is used by researchers to address the understanding of the world as others experience it. In fact, interpretative paradigm is holistic in nature, and the aim is to understand social life, and the meaning that people attach to lived experiences (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:79). Likewise, a qualitative research approach best suited this study, as it allowed the educators to express how they understand and experience the management of learner discipline at the primary schools (Makendano, 2016:9). Interpretivism allows the researcher to accept multiple meanings that people perceive to be reality and ways of knowing (Tuffour, 2017:1). Likewise, this paradigm enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of the views, as well as the perceptions of the educators regarding learner discipline.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher briefly discusses the philosophical underpinnings below:

3.2.2 Philosophical underpinnings of the interpretivist paradigm

Firstly, the interpretivist paradigm uses phenomenological research to explore, describe and interpret the participants meaning making of their experiences (Tuffour, 2017:3). Furthermore, the focus of this approach is to understand the essence of experiences through first person perspective. For this study, the researcher wanted to know how the educators at the Botshabelo primary schools perceive or experience a lack of discipline in their classrooms and describe what measures can be put in place to remedy the problem. Based on this phenomenological approach, the researcher assumes the role of a social actor and should be able to appreciate individual perceptible differences between people (Dudovskiy, n.d).

The second noteworthy underpinning of interpretivism is hermeneutics. This refers to the skills of interpretation and understandings (Dudovskiy, n.d). According to Tuffour (2017:4), hermeneutics allow for people to explore the phenomenon at hand and ask questions about it.

This in turn allows the researcher to make sense of the participant's responses and gain insight into experience (Tuffour, 2017:4).

Lastly, interpretivism involves the aspect of symbolic interactionism (Dudovskiy, n.d). That is symbols provide shared meaning between participants. For example, poor learner discipline is a huge problem, especially in Botshabelo. As previously mentioned, the educators, stakeholders and the Free State Department of Education expound on the reality that discipline is still a major problem and that necessary action is needed to implement practical solutions for this problem (*cf.* 1.2.3). In this case, symbolic interactionism is the collective efforts of all role players to solve the issue of poor discipline in Botshabelo primary schools. The negative experience of the phenomenon holds a shared meaning that something needs to be done in order to deal with the problem (Dudovskiy, n.d).

3.2.3 Assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm

The following section provides a summary of the related assumptions on ontology, epistemology, axiology and the kind of methodologies used in an interpretivist paradigm:

3.2.4 Ontology

Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:56) point out that interpretivists share a collective view that there are many tangible realities that are socially constructed by people. They further explain that reality is subjective and that it is influenced by the context of situations and the experiences of the individual, as well as the interaction between the individual and the researcher. More importantly, the authors ascertain that reality cannot be generalized into one common reality, as reality depends on the individual mind (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:56). As a qualitative researcher, this assumption was in line with the research questions, as the researcher wanted to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon by exploring the reality of poor discipline in the three primary schools through the lens of the insiders (which are essentially the educators at the respective schools).

3.2.5 Epistemology

Interpretivists assert that knowledge is subjective and that it lies within the human experience (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:56). What is believed as true or false, is culturally bound and specific to the cultural group. The truth lies in human experience. Furthermore, interpretivists try to understand the diverse ways people see and experience the world around them through different contexts (Pham, 2018:3). This allows the interpretivist to not only describe human experiences, but to also deeply understand them within their social context. Within this social context, communities' belief systems or narratives find space as legitimate knowledge. For instance, the researcher asked a question: "what does the concept 'discipline' mean for a primary classroom?" This question can provide the researcher with answers from the viewpoint of the educators within the interpretivist paradigm. Therefore, this approach enabled the researcher to understand and document the different meanings and the perspectives of the phenomenon from those who have experienced it (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:56).

3.2.6 Axiology

Interpretivists believe that scientific inquiry is value-bound and value-laden and that the researcher reports personal values and biases related to the topic and that may interfere with neutrality, thus the objectivity in the study (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012:56). Since the researcher used an interpretivist paradigm, the use of a qualitative approach emphasized the existence of multiple realities when it comes to the phenomenon. That was the experience of poor discipline in primary schools in the Motheo District, which is unique to educators and is established in a socio-cultural context.

3.2.7 The qualitative approach

A qualitative research approach was used, as it best suited this study. Qualitative research concerned with understanding participant's views, meanings and experiences (Nieuwenhuis & Smith, 2012:126). It strives to understand and represent people's life experiences as they encounter, engage with and live through those experiences (Burton, *et al.*, 2014:58).

Furthermore, Lichtman (2013:325) emphasizes that it leads to understanding human behaviour in its natural settings. As such, the purpose of qualitative research is to study the world in its natural state, rather than in a controlled, laboratory-type setting and where the researcher subjectively explores reality from the perspective of the insider, as opposed to that of an outsider, which is characteristic of quantitative research (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:79).

In the view that the researcher employed a qualitative approach in this study, Wagner *et al.* (2012), outline the following characteristics of qualitative research:

- Qualitative research follows a holistic and naturalistic approach in the type of data collected.
- The researcher talks to participants and spends time with them in a natural setting.
- The researcher is considered the research instrument and immerses him / herself in the life-worlds of participants.
- The focus of qualitative research is to understand the meaning that lived experiences hold for participants.
- Methods, such as structured or un-structured interviews are utilized to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena and to guide further study.

In addition, the advantages of qualitative research methodology, as suggested by Wagner *et al.* (2012:129) informed the researcher's choice to use this approach. These advantages include:

- The ability to interact with people on a face-to-face level in a place where they make their living.
- Multiple methods and sources of data can be utilized to fulfil the needs of the study.
- The perspectives of participants are accurately reflected and documented.
- Qualitative research helps researchers understand the meaning of experiences within a culture.
- There is flexibility in responsiveness to events or phenomena.

3.2.8 Research design

A research design is an architectural blueprint that informs the researcher on how to conduct their research. It relates directly to the research question(s) and ensures that the methodology (be it

quantitative or qualitative), the method of data collection (e.g. surveys, questionnaires or interviews) and the techniques for data analysis (e.g. content analysis or statistics), all fall within the same research framework (Wagner *et al.*, 2014:12-27).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define the research design as a laid-out plan that describes the conditions and processes for gathering and analyzing data, and the research methods or steps used to collect and analyse the data. They further argue that the research design serves a purpose of generating empirical evidence that is used to answer the research question(s).

3.2.8.1 Phenomenology: The research design

The theoretical lens through which this study was viewed, involved the researcher using a phenomenological research design, in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon (Mothibeli, 2017:55). Phenomenological studies focus on the meanings that lived experiences hold for participants. The aim is not an attempt at explaining, but rather describing the participant's lived experiences (Nieuwenhuis & Smit, Nieuwenhuis 2012:132). With this in mind, the researcher focused on what the educators experienced and how they experienced it.

In line with the suggestion of Mothibeli (2017:56), the researcher also needed to disregard all pre-conceived notions of the phenomenon. Therefore, the notion of bracketing or reduction, as explained by Husserl's work (1859-1938), is important in phenomenological analysis, as it allows the researcher to remove all prior understanding of the phenomenon and to take a neutral stance in understanding the phenomenon through the educators' viewpoints. Objectivity and unbiased attitude were maintained during the interview process (Mothibeli, 2017:56).

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Wagner *et al.* (2012:52), assert that certain methodologies are linked to particular paradigms. As previously mentioned, the interpretivist paradigm guided this research study and utilized a qualitative methodology approach. Methodology is where assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge, values, theory and practice on a given topic, merge.

3.3.1 Participant selection and sampling

Creswell (2012:381) defines a population as a group of individuals who possess a similar characteristic, which distinguishes them from other groups of people (Johnson & Christensen, 2014:669). On the other hand, a sample refers to a group of people that are obtained from a larger population for measurement. It is important that the sample share the same characteristics as the whole population, so that findings can be generalized (NHS Foundation Trust, 2019). Samples are mostly used in research, because they are convenient and cost-effective. It is also impossible, due to various factors, like time-constraints or financial pressure, to study the whole population.

However, it is important to note that generalization of results was not regarded as a significant outcome for this study.

3.3.2 Target population and sample size

Six educators (two from each school) and three no-fee primary schools in Botshabelo were sampled for this study. The target population was as follows:

- 1 Grade 4 Intermediate Phase educator
- 1 Grade 5 Intermediate Phase educator
- 1 Grade 1 Foundation Phase educator
- 1 Grade 3 Foundation Phase educator
- 1 Grade 7 Senior Phase educator
- 1 Grade 4 Intermediate Phase educator

The participants were drawn from the following three schools, based in the township:

- Primary School 1 - this school has a total of 950 learners and 34 educators. Two clerks and four non-teaching staff members are part of the school, as well as one principal.
- Primary School 2 - this school comprises of a total of 343 learners, 25 educators, and one principal.
- Primary School 3 - this school has a total of 419 learners and 15 educators. There is also one clerk and one principal. Two non-teaching staff members form part of the school.

A purposive sampling approach was employed for this study (Masekoameng, 2016:9). Purposive sampling refers to a type of sampling where data is gathered from participants who are able to supply relevant information from the representative population about the topic at hand: “Exploring the Enhancement of Disciplinary Processes in Botshabelo Primary Schools”. According to Makendano (2010:10), this form of sampling allowed the educators to provide rich information, regarding poor discipline in their respective schools. Participants in this study were chosen irrespective of their defining characteristics (e.g. race, gender, socio-economic background, or sexual orientation).

3.3.3 Data collection

Data collection refers to a series of systematic techniques that the researcher employs to obtain data from participants. This process is sequential and follows a systematic approach in the research study (Dibete, 2015:58). Before the commencement of data collection, the researcher sought permission to conduct research from various “gatekeepers.” These gatekeepers included the Free State Department Education (FSDE), the Research Ethics Office (Research Information Management System/RIMS) at the University of the Free State and the principals of the three primary schools in Botshabelo area (Free State Province). The researcher was able to build relationships with these entities and negotiate access and agreements to conduct research.

First, the three letters (Appendix A) were submitted by the researcher to the three schools and permission was applied for and granted by the schools respectively. The FSDE’s application form to conduct research at the primary schools were obtained from the RIMS platform and submitted to the provincial department via RIMS for processing. Permission by FSDE and the letter is attached for reference (Appendix B). Lastly, the ethical clearance letter obtained from the Research Ethics Office was obtained and is also attached for reference (Appendix C). This letter served the purpose of certifying that the researcher complied with the ethical standards and procedures, as outlined by the General Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) of the University of the Free State.

The researcher then decided to address the ethical issues beforehand so that the study met the highest ethical standards, as stipulated by the General Human Research Ethics Committee (GHREC) of the University of the Free State.

The ethical aspects of research should always be taken into consideration for a proper scientific research to take place. As such, this study aimed to uphold the ethical principles of autonomy, confidentiality, voluntary participation, privacy and informed consent (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; McMillan *et al.*, 2014:487; Lichtman, 2013:53; Creswell, 2012). These ethical principles are discussed herein.

3.3.4 The ethical principles

The participants were required to provide informed consent and to read the information sheet provided by the researcher. This allowed them to make an informed decision on whether to participate in the study or not. The researcher then communicated to the participants that confidentiality would be assured in a way of anonymity (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:65-67). It was also stressed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any point in the study should they wish to (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:65-67). In addition, the principle of non-maleficence was regarded with utmost importance, as to ensure that there was no harm inflicted to participants (De Vos *et al.*, 2002:65). Notably, no risk was foreseen to the researchers themselves.

Notably, the participants were required to sign a participant information leaflet (Appendix D) and a consent form that were obtained on the RIMS system. In line with the suggestion of Chillisa and Kawulich (2012:56), it was important for the researcher to establish trust, rapport, and genuine communication patterns with the participants, as to obtain subtle nuances of meaning from their responses. It was also of paramount importance that the researcher addressed the issue of ethics whenever a need arose.

3.3.4.1 COVID-19 Protocols

Although the recent COVID-19 era is not the first pandemic the world has experienced, it's high transferability coupled with vague symptoms has required a global response to mitigate the spread

of COVID virus (World Health Organisation), 2021). As such, data collection methods require thoughtful and intentional planning as to support global efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19. While recent studies (Lobe, Morgan & Hoffman, 2020; Marhefka, Lockhart & Turner, 2020), have adopted virtual modes of research and data collection, ethical conduct for research involving human participants requires new risks to be evaluated as a results of the pandemic (Newan, Guta & Black, 2021).

In response to broad restrictions on social and behavioral health research during the lockdown in South Africa, myself as the researcher made sure that the researcher complied with basic preventative measures to protect myself and the participants. For instance, during the interviews, masks were worn at all times, physical distance of at least two meters were maintained and hygiene requirements (e.g. sanitisation of hands and furniture) were also strictly met. It is also important to note that the three schools did abide to national rules and regulations regarding COVID-19 by encouraging protective behaviour guidelines and ensuring that all who part-took in the study adhered to a strict risk-reduction protocols (University of the Free State, 2021). In the event that participants tested positive for COVID-19, it was in the discretion of the researcher to halt the interview process, follow quarantine instructions and refer participants to the correct medical centers in Botshabelo with the assistance of the three schools under study.

3.3.5 The process of collecting data

Data was collected through the method of scheduled interviews. Thus, the researcher commenced with the data collection by planning, acting and reflecting on what was assessed in the interviews (McTaggart, 1991:175). Creswell (2012:217) points out that a qualitative approach allows interview questions to be elaborated on when the researcher asks participants open-ended questions and voice-records their answers. These types of questions are flexible, adaptable and very interactive, in a sense that they allow the researcher to probe and pursue relevant themes that may emerge from the respondents (McMillan *et al.*, 2012:205). The methods of data collection are further discussed below.

3.3.5.1 Interviews as a method of data collection

According to Wagner *et al.* (2012:133-136), interviews are a valuable source of information in which rich, descriptive data can be obtained and used to view and understand the world through the eyes of the participants. Maree (2007:87) refer to an interview as a two-way conversation between the interviewer and the participant. It is a purposive interaction in which the interviewer asks questions to collect data about the interviewee's beliefs, views, values and opinions.

Dibete (2015:60) and Rossman, and Rallis (2012:179) point out the following to be the strengths of qualitative interviews:

- The researcher is in control and is able to control the line of questioning.
- The researcher is able to obtain a massive amount of data in one setting.
- New perspectives can be explored easily.
- The researcher is able to probe and explore deeper, thus gaining a better understanding of participants' feelings and opinions.
- Interviews are flexible, diverse and adaptive.

Generally, there are four types of interviews, namely structured, semi-structured, group interviews and un-structured interviews (Dibete, 2015:60-61). This research study drew on a semi-structured interview with open- ended questions that allowed the researcher to obtain the views and opinions of the participants on poor discipline in primary schools.

Six interviews were conducted, and enough information gathered. The interviews were tape-recorded on an extra cellphone that the researcher purchased for recording purposes. This allowed the researcher to make use of verbatim quotes that captured the language and meaning expressed by participants. The interviews were flexible and allowed the researcher for probing in order to obtain rich, in-depth information on the beliefs, views and opinions of the participants. The researcher then transferred the audio files onto her computer as a backup. The interviews took place at the three primary schools, usually after working hours. Appendix E provided is the interview schedule.

Kakilla (2021:1-2) indicates that semi-structured interviews can present weakness of their own, which in turn make the process of analyzing the data difficult. Such weaknesses include:

- Limited probing especially when interviewing participants with language barriers.
- Poor or limited responses can impact the conversation.
- The honesty of participants cannot be guaranteed.
- It is difficult to compare and analyze answers to open-ended questions.
- Interviews can be time-consuming.

To deal with the issues associated with the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher conducted interviews with the language all participants understood which was English. Secondly, avoiding limited responses from participants meant that the researcher needed to change the order of the questioning now and again in so that flexibility can be maintained and that participants can do not get bored (Toolsdev.org, 2014:4; Kakilla, 2021:2). Thirdly, the researcher need to accept what the participants said explicitly as the truth, because semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for collecting information peoples' experiences, ideas and opinions (Toolsdev.org, 2014:3). Lastly, as t is difficult to analyse open-ended questions, this process proved to be less stressful; for the researcher as the sample of this study only consisted of six participants. This also links to the last point of time in that no major time constraints were experienced in analyzing the data as the sample size was too small.

3.3.6 Period of the research

The approval letter from the Free State Department of Education (Appendix C) was received on 20 May 2020. As indicated in the letter, the period of data collection should run from the date of the signature until September 30, 2020. It is important to note that the department did not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term of the academic year.

The approval to conduct research rested on a few conditions, such as data had to be collected without any interference with normal tuition time or the teaching process. Secondly, the copy of the research study had to be submitted to the department, along with the ethics document. Lastly, the researcher was aware that there was an expectation to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the department upon completion of the research study.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Gray (2004:680) refers to the analysis of data as the usage of either qualitative or quantitative methods to systematically identify special categories, classes or characteristics. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used a thematic analysis of data to come to conclusions. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a qualitative method that involves the identification, organization, description and the reporting of relative themes found within the data set. King (2004, as cited in Cassel & Symon, 2004:2) argues that thematic analysis can be useful to researchers who want to examine the different perspectives of different research participants by highlighting the differences and similarities in the data, while generating unexpected insights.

Notably, the data collection and analysis for this research study happened concurrently (Cohen, Manion & Morison, 2011:537). This made it easy to maximize on the discussions, as there were only one set of findings to deal with at a time. The process of thematic analysis commenced with coding and theme generation, a process, which provided meaning to the units of data (Stringer, 2004:113).

Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:2), highlights the advantages of thematic analysis as:

- An approach that can easily be grasped and learned as there are few procedures and prescriptions to be followed.
- A flexible approach that can be modified to meet the needs of various studies.
- A useful tool for summarizing data in large data sets.
- A research method that guides the researcher in developing a step-by-step approach for developing a clear and organized final report.

3.4.1 Phases of Thematic Analysis to ensure trustworthiness:

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), the process of thematic analysis involves a six-phased method in which researchers may can address Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017:4). For the purpose of this study, the table below attempts to outline how the researcher conducted thematic analysis to meet the trustworthiness criteria:

Table 3.1: The Phases of Thematic Analysis to ensure trustworthiness

| <i>Phases of Thematic Analysis</i> | <i>Means of establishing trustworthiness</i> |
|--|--|
| <i>Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with the data</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage with the data ➤ Document thoughts about potential codes and themes |
| <i>Phase 2: Developing initial codes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use a coding guideline ➤ Document meeting sessions between supervisor and researcher |
| <i>Phase 3: Searching for themes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep detailed development of concepts and themes |
| <i>Phase 4: Reviewing themes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Document emerging themes and sub-themes ➤ Discuss themes and sub-themes with supervisor |
| <i>Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Document theme and sub-theme naming ➤ Researcher and supervisor agree on established themes |
| <i>Phase 6: Reporting on the findings</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss the process of data analysis in good detail ➤ Conduct member checking |

Source: Adapted from Nowell *et al.*, (2017:4)

The phases of thematic analysis, as depicted in the table above, are briefly discussed below:

Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with the data

Several researchers describe the process of data analysis as one that requires that those conducting research to immerse themselves with the data that they have in order to better understand the depth and breadth of the content (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:4). This involves repeated reading of the data and actively searching for meaning and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Researchers are encouraged to read through the entire data set at least once, before the process of identifying codes and themes can begin. Resultingly, this will give rise to ideas and the identification of possible patterns of which researchers can become familiar with. However, Starks and Trinidad (2007), assert that researchers should be aware of their own biases, perspectives and beliefs while developing the themes. Myself as the researcher made notes about possible codes and themes that might develop, while being cognizant of the researcher's own pre-existing thoughts, and also made sure that the researcher kept the recordings of the interviews in a safe place for later data analysis and interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Phase 2: Developing initial codes

Savage (2000) defines qualitative coding as a process of reflection and a way of interacting and thinking about your data. Coding allows for focus to be put on specific characteristics of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006), suggest that researchers need to to systematically work through the data and look for themes in the participants' responses that represent the phenomenon of interest. During this phase, meetings between myself and the supervisor took place where the supervisor advised on the correct way for developing codes and approaching the data in a correct way. Codes were developed manually without the use of any software programmes like NVIVO to sort and organize the data as this proved to be an extra financial expense and the researcher deemed it unnecessary to use software programmes as the study did not include large amounts of data to be analyzed. (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:7). The codes are presented in Table 4.1, Chapter 4.

Phase 3: Searching for themes

The third phase commences with the sorting of coded data into themes. DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) define “A theme as an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent experience and its variant manifestations”. Themes are useful in bringing ideas and experiences together. Once they are identified, they are important in linking substantial portions of data together (DeSantis & Ugarriza (2000). During this process, the relevant themes were identified by the researcher and questions were vague answers were provided by the participants, were documented as miscellaneous themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Phase 4: Reviewing themes

The fourth phase begins when themes have been generated and refined (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, researchers determine the validity of the themes by examining if they reflect the meaning evident in the data set. Data is then reduced into more manageable set of sub-themes which adequately summarize the responses from the participant (Attride-Stirling, 2001). At the end of this phase, the supervisor and the researcher were able to review the themes, sub-themes that emerged from the data and they are presented in table form (*cf.* 4.1) and discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes

During the fifth phase, researchers make a determination regarding which themes capture and tell a story of the phenomenon under study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Myself and the supervisor agreed on the themes and discussed personal insights into the research findings to ensure that all aspects of the data were thoroughly analyzed. An agreement was reached and all the themes were defined and presented in a meaningful and useful manner in Chapters 4 and 5.

Phase 6: Reporting on findings

The final phase of thematic analysis involves communicating on the research findings in a logical way that is understandable by the critical reader. King (2004) asserts that researchers need to offer a descriptive account of the phenomenon under study by accurately documenting the meanings and implications (often in relation to existing literature), the research findings hold for participants. For this study, credibility was achieved through the discussion of the results in chapter 5 (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:5). In addition, member checking with the participants was also established in order to establish a fit between participants' views and the researcher's representation of those views (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

However, it is important to note that thematic analysis is not without flaws. Braun and Clarke (2006) argues that there is a lack of existing literature on thematic analysis, thus making researchers uncertain on how to carry out a rigorous thematic analysis. Secondly, the flexibility of thematic analysis is limited in a sense that inconsistencies and a lack of coherence may occur during the creation of themes from the data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017:2).

In order to mitigate the disadvantages, the researcher used a rigorous thematic analysis process, in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the study and to produce insightful findings. The practical process in which the researcher used to meet the trustworthiness criteria is discussed below:

3.4.1 Ensuring trustworthiness

Gunawan (2015:4) indicates that qualitative researchers often neglect to provide adequate descriptions of the assumptions and methods employed in the research report, especially with reference to data analysis. Consequently, this has led to criticisms of bias from fellow researchers and therefore, qualitative researchers need to recognize their own subjectivity and biases and consider how they can overcome them as much as possible.

For qualitative research, the concept of trustworthiness refers to how sound the value of the research report is to the reader (Dibete, 2015:64; Gunawan, 2015:4). Trustworthiness in qualitative research aims to support the argument that findings of the study are worth paying attention to (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As aspects of validity and reliability are important in quantitative

research, qualitative researchers refer to validity and reliability as part of the research process to ensure trustworthiness and credibility (Dibete, 2015:64).

Qualitative validity refers to the effort that the researcher makes to ensure the accuracy of the findings, by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability points to the fact that the researcher's approach is consistent across different projects and novice researchers (Creswell, 2014:201 as cited in Dibete, 2015:64). Thus, it is crucial in a qualitative research study for trustworthiness to be assessed, because it is a vital component of the data analysis process (Maree, 2007:113).

As described by Kortstjens and Moser (2018:121), there are several definitions and criteria of trustworthiness that exist in academic research. In order to address the purpose and the aim of this study, the criteria of credibility, dependability and confirmability, as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), were used. In addition, participants' language and verbatim accounts were also taken into consideration. Achieving trustworthiness reduces threats of reliability and ensuring that the proper criteria is met, makes the study conceptually sound and on which the value of the qualitative research can be evaluated (Dibete, 2015:64). To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the qualifying criteria is discussed below:

3.4.1.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define credibility as the confidence that is placed in the truthfulness of the research findings and how well the data address the intended focus. Credibility is associated with the concept of "truth-value" and establishes whether the findings from the research study are plausible and are a correct interpretation of the participant's original point of view (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher employed a member-checking strategy with the participants. This meant that the researcher returned to the participants to check the accuracy and the completeness of the data collected. This ensured that there was no distortion in the data interpretation process (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, feeding back data strengthens the data, especially when both the participant and the researcher look at the data with different eyes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All transcripts of the interviews were sent to participants for feedback, thus enabling them to challenge and correct any misinterpretation. Finally, the

findings were then presented in a follow-up meeting to confirm that they were correct (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:123).

In order to promote more confidence that the researcher accurately recorded the phenomenon under scrutiny, Shenton (2004:64) suggests some provisions in order to ensure trustworthiness. Firstly, there were frequent debriefing sessions between the supervisor and the researcher. This collaborative session allowed for new perceptions to be developed, alternative approaches to be considered and the identification of any flaws in the research (Shenton, 2004:67). Secondly, peer scrutiny of the research study from other academics in the Faculty of Education allowed the researcher to challenge any assumptions made, to refine the methods, the research design and the discussions. Lastly, the researcher employed tactics to help ensure honesty of the participants when contributing data. For instance, participants who genuinely wanted to take part in the interview sessions were given the opportunity to refuse to take part in the study or withdraw at any time without consequences. This links directly to the ethical considerations that the researcher considered as highlighted in Chapter 1 (*cf.* 1.9).

3.4.1.2 Dependability

In its definition, dependability refers to the degree to which the results of the study are stable over time and under different conditions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Elo, Kääriäinen, Kaste, Polkki, Utriainen & Kyngas, 2014:4). For dependability to be achieved, participants need to be involved in the evaluation and interpretation of the findings and to be able to make recommendations. For this study, dependability was then achieved using a data collection technique, namely, in-depth interviews and by also allowing the research study to be examined by external experts (approved by the Faculty of Education, UFS) to determine whether the researcher was able to draw logical conclusions from the study, make sound recommendations for future research and if the thesis was eligible for publication.. To further ensure trustworthiness, the researcher did not seek to triangulate, but chose to ‘crystallize’. Nieuwenhuis and Smit (2012:138) argue that the phenomenon under study is not a measurable thing, but rather an emerging reality that needs to be described and analysed. Thus, crystallization or crystallized reality is credible in so far as those who read our data and analysis will be able to see the same emerging themes or patterns, which adds to the trustworthiness of the research.

In addressing the issue of reliability, positivists employ techniques to indicate that if the same work is were to be repeated, in the same context, and using the same methods, similar results would be yielded (Shenton, 2004:71). However, Guba (1981), argues that, because interpretivists deal with human behaviour and experiences, which is continuously variable by context and subject to multiple interpretations of reality, it highly unlikely that interpretivists can produce the same results. At best, an interpretivist can skilfully make sure his/her inferences do not influence the interpretation of the data gathered and analysed for the research study. Notably, for the findings of this study to be valid, the researcher sent back the interview results to the participants for feedback (Shenton, 2004: 71-72).

3.4.1.3 Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), confirmability refers to the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed by other researchers. That is, confirmability of the findings corresponds with the aspect of neutrality in which the data accurately represents the information that was gathered from the participants and that there was no misinterpretation from the researcher (Elo *et al.*, 2014:5). In order to achieve confirmability, the researcher did not attempt to form any personal relationships with the participants. This ensured that the data and interpretations of the findings were free from bias of the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher detached herself as far as possible from the participants by keeping her feelings, thoughts and any experience of the phenomenon to herself. In line with the suggestion of Korstjens and Moser (2018:123), qualitative researchers should maintain neutrality and not interpret the research findings based on their preferences and viewpoints

3.4.1.4 Transferability

Based on Lincoln ad Cuba (1985), transferability refers to the extent to which findings of one study ca be applied to other contexts or situations. For this to be achieved, a thick description of the phenomenon under study needs to be provided to the reader so that a proper understanding can be attained and judgement be made as to whether the findings are transferable to the reader's own situation or context (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). In other words, the reader and not the

researcher makes transferability judgement as circumstances unique to the reader are not known to the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). For the purpose of this study, the researcher holds the opinion that transferability would be limited if not impossible due to the findings not being generalizable to a wider population. Therefore, the researcher was not able to prove that the study's findings were applicable to other contexts, populations or situations (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985).

3.4.2 Participant language and verbatim accounts

The researcher ensured that participants' verbatim statements and quotations were accurately transcribed during the interview sessions. This was achieved through recording the exact responses of the participants and by using direct quotes to ensure trustworthiness of the research study. This allowed the researcher to analyse what the participants communicated.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter gave discussions on the research design, research methodology, the sampling process and the data collection techniques employed. The chapter also highlighted the type of qualitative methods that were used, namely the semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection.

Owing to the qualitative nature of this study, this chapter also elaborated on the necessary steps taken to ensure trustworthiness. The proper criteria were discussed to gain a better understanding of the processes of how to conduct a trustworthy thematic analysis in qualitative research. The necessary steps to ensure trustworthiness were highlighted and descriptions provided. The next chapter focuses on the presentation of data that was collected, as well as the interpretation thereof.

CHAPTER 4 :

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aimed to present the data that were collected by the researcher by means of audio-recorded interviews. The semi-structured interviews were held at the three primary schools in Botshabelo, Motheo District, Free State. The participants were then presented with 10 open-ended questions, which the researcher purposefully selected, as they were aimed at answering the following research questions.

4.2 PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

The primary research question is:

“Which strategies can be used to enhance learner discipline in the Botshabelo primary schools?”

To refine the main research question, the following subsidiary research questions were developed:

1. What does the concept ‘discipline’ mean for a primary classroom?
2. What are the challenges faced by educators in enhancing discipline in their classrooms?
3. What strategies are currently used by educators to enhance discipline in their classrooms?
4. What suggestions can be made in terms of how discipline can be promoted in the primary schools?

The study was motivated by the view of the researcher that classroom discipline is collapsing, due to a lack of discipline and uncontrollable behaviour affecting academic results (Mohapi, 2014:73-76). The data from the interviews, which was analysed thematically, resulted in the themes and sub-themes that are presented in Table 4.1 below.

The following table presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data collected from the interviews.

Table 4.1: The themes and sub-themes

| Guiding question | Themes | Sub-themes | Codes | Participants' collective views |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| What is the concept of discipline according to the context of your school? | Conceptualization of Discipline | 1. Keeping order 2. Behaviour modification 3. Obedience | KO, B, O | Positive behaviour can only be enforced through punishment |
| How would you differentiate between Student classroom behaviour that are considered contrary to classroom rules? | Transgressions | Contrary behaviour to classroom rules. Disturbing others | CONT.BE.CL DO | Learners doing anything outside classroom rules |
| Which classroom disciplinary challenges are currently faced by educators in your school? | Disciplinary challenges | 1. Negative classroom environment 2. Neglect schoolwork 3. Vandalism | NCE, NSCH | Violation of school rules includes negative learning environment created, neglect schoolwork, vandalism, and violent behaviour |
| Do you think discipline is important in your school? | Yes, No effective learning without it | Makes children more motivated and intelligent Builds learners skills | CHLD MORE MOTV BLS | General sentiment shared that discipline is of paramount importance |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|------------|---|
| What are the guidelines and legal framework for managing discipline in the classroom of your school? | 1. SASA official document very important and 2. Alternatives to Corporal punishment | Guidelines from SASA (South African Schools Act) /Alternatives to Corporal punishment implementing discipline | SASSA DOC | SASA and Alternatives to Corporal - Two documents used as a guiding tool to draw up classroom rules |
| What is the extent to which educators are conversant with the legal framework for managing classroom discipline? | Vague responses | 1. Not clear answers 2. Responses point to update oneself with SASA document and always uphold code of conduct | VAGUE RESP | Participants referred to teachers needing workshops and training on how to implement disciplinary measures at their schools |
| Which disciplinary strategies are currently employed by the educators to establish discipline in the classroom? | 1. Democratic classroom 2. Parental involvement is important | Parental involvement Conversing with the child to understand the situation better and policy consultation | PI PC | One-on-one conversation with the learner is best. General consensus: Parental involvement is a must |
| Are the disciplinary strategies employed in your school classrooms in line with the demands of the Department of Education? | SASA official document very important | All in agreement Reference to the SASA document as guideline on how to implement discipline in classrooms | SASA | SASA is used as a guiding tool to draw up classroom rules |

| | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <p>Are the current disciplinary management strategies applied in your school classroom successful?</p> | <p>Vague responses</p> | <p>Vague answers Responses point to reprimand learners. One to one discussion (Classroom talk) Need improvement</p> | <p>VAGUE RESP</p> | <p>Challenges are still present and school improvement is needed</p> |
| <p>What other successful classroom strategies could you suggest to be implemented in the classroom of your school?</p> | <p>Promotion of Discipline</p> | <p>Immediate action Respect Punctuality Role models Praise good work</p> | <p>IA RESP PUNCT ROLMODL PRAISE GOODWRK</p> | <p>Teachers need to make sure that they take a holistic approach in dealing with poor discipline. Show respect to learners, be on time for work, reward good work, serve as a good role model</p> |

4.3 EMERGING THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

This section discusses the themes and sub-themes that emerged as the results of the study. The interviews were analysed carefully as to compare them to what previous studies have presented in the literature review in Chapter 2. The following findings are discussed below:

4.3.1 Conceptualizing Discipline

This theme came up when the participants were requested to provide an understanding of what discipline is. It responds to the secondary research question “What is the concept of discipline according to the context of your school?” The following sub-themes are discussed in the section below.

4.3.1.1 Keeping order

As can be seen from the table above (*cf.* Table 4.1), there is evidence that the participants believe that keeping order is one of the tenets of discipline in the classroom. In response to this question: “*What is the concept of discipline according to the context of your school?*” Some of the participants had the following to say:

Educator A: “*Managing classroom and align yourself with the code of school, code of conduct.*”

Educator B: “*Discipline according to me means the practice of obeying rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience.*”

The two responses above point to the importance of appropriate documents that educators often refer to in their understanding of what the concept of discipline is. According to the Department of Education (2008), the code of conduct is there to regulate the behaviour of learners in schools and it describes how a disciplinary system should be implemented in case of learner transgressions. This code of conduct is applicable to all learners and the administration of it is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Committee of the school (Masitsa, 2008:238). According to the researcher’s knowledge, the code of conduct is a policy document that educators refer to when they want to

establish a disciplined learning environment that is essential for effective teaching and learning. As a educator, it is important to uphold this policy so that behaviour in the classroom is controlled and discipline problems kept to a minimum (Nthebe, 2006:128).

4.3.1.2 Behaviour Modification

Other educators equate discipline to behaviour modification, as the following quotations will show:

Educator D: *“First, discipline according to the context of our school is to rectify a skewed behaviour that a child sometimes displays or practices that are of ill-discipline. The other thing also...to rectify behaviour.”*

Educator F: *“According to the context of our school, discipline are a set of rules and strategies that are used to enforce good behaviours and helps to instil the school’s values in acceptable way.”*

It was evident that obedience to rules and enforcing punishment to the maintain order in the classroom were the key factors in making sure effective learning and teaching can take place in the classroom. The educator’s responses are supported by Bechuke and Debeila (2012:242) in Chapter 2 (*cf.* 2.2) who assert that discipline can be used to coordinate and regulate learner behaviour in the classroom so that conducive teaching and learning can take place. The use of discipline to modify behaviour leads to a better learning environment and it also encourages a condition of order in the classroom so that educational objectives can be attained (*cf.* 2.2).

According to the researcher’s understanding, the aim of discipline is to promote obedience to classroom rules and to teach learners self-control from engaging in ill-behaviour (Bechuke & Debeila, 242-243). As such, behaviour modification will be more about reducing the number of different transgressions on the side of the learners using discipline.

4.3.1.3 Obedience

The data indicate to the reality that some educators associate discipline with obedience, based on the following quotations:

Educator C expressed: *“Discipline in the context of my school is the practice of obeying classroom rules that both the teacher and the learner were involved in drafting and also using punishment to correct non-adherence to the rules.”*

This is further supported by Salifu and Agbenyega (2012:55), who suggest that learners are supposed to be taught about obedience to rules at home so that they are able to adhere to the general norms of society at large, which are also adhered to in the context of a school classroom. It is of paramount importance that schools have rules and boundaries in place to regulate the behaviour of learners. More importantly, these rules should fit the school’s situation, because the disciplinary measures that may work for one school, may not work for the other (Ndamani, 2008:182). What the researcher garnered from participants’ ideas of what discipline is, indicates that most of them attribute positive behaviour to punishment that can only be achieved through obedience to rules and punishment.

4.4 DISCIPLINARY CHALLENGES

The educators were asked about their views regarding the disciplinary challenges experienced at their schools. This was aimed at exploring the reality that poor discipline is in fact a reality in Free State schools, thereby answering research question two. The following sub-themes are discussed in this section.

4.4.1 Negative Classroom environment

The quotations below highlight disturbance in class as a major problem:

Educator A: *“From my experience, being a teacher for four years now. Disruption in the classroom caused by learners busy making noise, others are fighting, not making homework or projects and others are also vandalizing the school property are the*

challenges that we are facing.”

Educator B: *“Things like default in homework and class given activities. Noisy and rowdy classes. Sometimes other learners will move around while others are still in class. Lack of respect to school property. Sometimes they would bunk classes...”*

According to the excerpts above, most participants reported that they experience challenges, such as total non-compliance for classroom rules and disruptive behaviour, which in turn hinders effective teaching and learning for other learners. The overarching picture is that learners are in violation of the school’s code of conduct. This view is supported by Maree (2000:4), who asserts that there is a widespread discipline problem in schools where learners engage in defiance of authority, class disruption, insubordination, and the intolerance of school rules. The issues mentioned here serve to highlight the magnitude of the problem in township schools. This is also supported by earlier findings by Masitsa (2008:235), who indicates that there are several factors in play that cause learner misbehaviour in the classroom, such as poor motivation, a poor teaching and learning culture, and lack of role models in the community. The implications of these issues on education is that learning does not occur smoothly, educators experience higher stress levels, and there is a higher rate of educator absenteeism (*cf.* 2.4.4.1, Masekoameng, 2010:32).

4.4.2 Neglect of schoolwork

Learners in township schools are often portrayed by the media as being arrogant, abusive, rude and destructive (Masitsa, 2008:236). The primary schools under this research study are based in the township and this portrayal of the media holds the stereotype as expressed by Educator D’s remarks on the challenges that they are faced with at their school:

“The learners are noisy and rowdy in class. They default in homework and given activities. There is a lack of respect to school property. Sometimes they would bunk classes.”

Within the same quotation mentioned above, highlight the reality that learners do not do their homework. The quotation above also suggests bunking of classes as a problem amongst others. The implication of these problems means that the academic performance of the schools is

compromised educational goals are not met and that learner's study skills are not honed (Treadwell, 2007:104). Furthermore, educators are not able to move through their curriculum quickly due to the inability to grade schoolwork. This leads to poor student learning (Treadwell, 2007:104).

4.4.3 Vandalism

In the statement above, Educator D also points out that learners vandalize school property. According to De Wet (2004:207), Free State Department of Education considered vandalism the third common offence by learners after alcohol use. Research findings show that vandalism creates a feeling of fear and powerlessness among both educators and learners themselves. In addition, vandalism has a devastating effect on school programmes as teaching and learning is interrupted while repairing damaged structures (De Wet, 2004:207). Furthermore, the economical impact is significant as too much money is spent rebuilding the damaged property or infrastructure. This negatively affects teaching and learning as valuable time that could be in the classroom is directed elsewhere (Esau, 2007:25).

4.4.4 Violent behaviour

The last part of the following statement presents evidence that educators struggle with violent behaviour amongst other problems exhibited by the learners:

Educator E: *“There are a variety of disruptive behaviour, such as vandalism, non-compliance, as for homework is concerned, vulgar language and a variety of violence of classroom rules in all respects.”*

Existing research indicates that the implications of such situations have a negative impact on both educators and the learner (Bray, 2005:136). Disruptive or violent behaviour infringe on the rights of other learners. As such, learners who commit these offences should be subjected to a disciplinary hearing as they are violating the rights of other learners who need to receive their education in a safe and uninterrupted environment (Bray, 2005:135-136).

In his research, Varnham (2005:87-104) discovered that learners tend to behave badly at school if they feel that schooling is something that is forced upon them, rather than it being a process

where they are valued as significant participants. Thus, it is important for educators to exercise measures that do not induce anger, resentment and violent behaviour (*cf.* 2.7.1).

4.5 STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE DISCIPLINE IN CLASSROOM

The Department of Education (2012:5), suggests that a positive discipline approach should be used by educators to promote safe schools and a conducive teaching environment (*cf.* 2.7.1, Chapter 2). The Department further cautions that should not be punitive, but rather focused on promoting constructive learning. The following section presents the strategies that are used to enhance discipline and therefore answering secondary research question number three: “*What strategies are currently used by teachers in enhancing discipline in their classrooms?*” The following themes emerged from the educator’s responses.

4.5.1 Democratic Classrooms

Based on the analysed data, it is clear that some educators believe in the value of democracy in the classroom. The educators had the following to say:

Educator F added: “*We do normalise the situation by nomination of class leaders. Nominated by learners themselves. And those who will be responsible for reporting incidences done in classes or school premises.*”

From the responses above, we see that it is important to give the learners a voice in terms of who should lead them. A study by Neumann, Dempster and Skinner (2009:122) shows that the election of a school captain inspires respect and admiration to the elected by other students. This view is supported by the researcher as she believes that choosing a class captain inspires other learners to look up to the class captain, especially if they have positive attributes, such as ethical decision-making, sensitivity to other’s feelings, leadership skills and an over-all good code of conduct.

4.5.2 Parental Involvement

It emerged from the interviews that participants held the same view that parental involvement was integral in making sure discipline is maintained in the classroom. Participants believed that one-on-one conversations with the learner at fault was the best solution to remedy the problem. If this confrontational approach did not work, participants felt it best to involve the learner's parents. They expressed the following:

Educator B: *"...Firstly, involve parents. You find that the parent must be called to come to school, talk about the problem and discipline the child..."*

The view expressed above highlights that parental involvement is important in dealing with the issue of poor discipline. According to Bowman (2004:26), a lack of parental involvement is one of the main reasons for poor learner discipline at school (*cf.* 2.4.4, Chapter 2). If learners are left alone to navigate their education, they are more likely to go astray as they would not possess a moral compass (Bowman, 2004:25).

4.5.3 Documentation

The quotation below raises the importance of documentation:

Educator C: *"I would say in my school, we have a disciplinary form that we always fill in. We take that form and submit to the disciplinary committee for minor offences. For serious offences, we call the parents immediately."*

The suspension and expulsion from a school is warranted when the behaviour of a learner constitutes serious misconduct. A due process is followed to safeguard the interests of the learner and disciplinary proceedings are adhered to if the learner is found guilty of a serious offence (GCIS, 2015). According to the researcher's knowledge, this process is only handled by the disciplinary committee if a learner commits serious offences that are considered crime. Unfortunately, no elaborate information was given by the respondents in this present study.

4.5.4 Classroom talk

One of the educators suggested an important strategy in dealing with poor learner behaviour. She remarked:

Educator D: *“Pep talk, where we will be talking to either the class or group of learners for the best performance of our school. Utterances like ‘be the best that you can wherever you are’, works wonders for us. Parents are also called to discuss and give verbal warning and they sign whatever one-to-one conversation around discipline.”*

The researcher holds the opinion that an open discussion regarding what are the expectations from learners should be discussed with them. The educator should indicate what is appropriate behaviour and why classroom rules are important to follow (Masekoameng, 2010:38). This is important as a mutual understanding can be achieved, and order established in the classroom.

The consensus was that parents should be alerted of their child’s problematic behaviour and parent-child discussions should follow next, so that misbehaviour can be corrected. Ndamani (2008:183) refers to this approach of parental involvement as a partnership that is vital to the child’s formal education and that it will provide effective changes in behaviour when all parties deal with the problem together, as opposed to dealing with the issue alone. That is, success at school is dependent on a triangular interaction between the educator, parent(s) and the learner (Ndamani, 2008:183).

4.5.5 Policy consultation: SASA document and Alternatives to Corporal Punishment document

On the question of the disciplinary strategies employed at the educators’ school and their adherence to the demands of the Department of Education, the general consensus seemed to be a form of agreement (*cf.* Table 4.1). All of the participants referred to the SASA document as a guideline on how to implement discipline in classrooms. According to the Government Communication and Information System website, SASA refers to the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) whose sole purpose is to ensure that learners in the country have access to quality education without discrimination (GCIS, 2015).

The Act also specifies that suspension and expulsion from public schools is warranted when the behaviour of a learner constitutes serious misconduct. A due process is followed to safeguard the interests of the learner and disciplinary proceedings are adhered to if the learner is found guilty of a serious offence (GCIS, 2015).

On the other hand, a comprehensive document by the Department of Education (2000) called *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* aims at assisting educators come up with other useful measures to combat poor discipline. Disciplinary measures to be employed by South African schools differ at every level (DoE, 2000). These measures are non-punitive, and they assist educators in using creative, non-violent ways in dealing with discipline in the classroom. Both the SASA document and the *Alternatives to Corporal Punishment* have parallel policies as their aim is to protect children's rights while establishing a disciplined and productive school environment (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). Unfortunately, despite the introduction of these two documents in South Africa, a lack of discipline is still on the rise and educators express disappointment in the documents as they have proved to be ineffective and inadequate (Maphosa & Shumba 2010).

In order to find out what is the extent to which educators are conversant with the legal framework for managing classroom discipline, the following responses highlight the reality that some primary school educators do rely on the SASA document:

Educator B: *"...There are varieties of disciplinary measures that are found in SASA itself. As it said that, we are not supposed to use corporal punishment. There are other means of punishment that are in line with SASA."*

Educator D also expressed the following: *"...We rely mostly on SASA (The South African Schools Act). From it, we will derive class rules, block rules or any other of the ground rules. Any other aspect of the school, we derive from SASA."*

It is clear that the schools know about the SASA prescripts on discipline. This is re-enforced by the statement by Educator E on corporal punishment:

"So, to cover the point of legal framework, it's where we talk about punishment...corporal punishment that is abolished. The teacher must seek the disciplinary measures that he is going to apply, in order to deal with the problem. In other words, instead of using

corporal punishment, the teacher can use detention as one of the effective measures that could help in dealing with the disciplinary problems.”

Educator E demonstrates the appreciation of the fact that that corporal punishment is outlawed, and that educators should consider alternative measures of punishment. This is a good practice, because it allows them to set the rules and standards required for effective teaching and learning to take place at schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

4.6 SUGGESTIONS ON THE PROMOTION OF DISCIPLINE

In order to answer secondary research question number four, which is about recommended strategies for improvement, the participants responded by saying that the current disciplinary management strategies that are employed at their schools are somewhat successful, while others provided vague answers (*cf.* Table 4.1).The following section discusses themes that emerged from the educator’s responses:

4.6.1 Immediate action

The participants’ views indicate that there are still challenges present at schools and improvement is possible. One of the practices emphasised is immediate action. Educator A expressed the following when asked if the strategies currently employed are successful:

“Partially so. There are still challenges that we face, and we also remind our learners what is expected of them. How they should behave at school and also in the classroom. Sometimes you should reprimand them on set. You shouldn’t take long.”

Concurring with the view above, Masitsa (2008:244), asserts that in order for disciplinary measures to be effective, they must be applied in a timely manner and be of appropriate intensity. The aim is to reform transgressors so that out of their own volition poor behaviour can be changed (Masitsa, 2008:259-260).

However, it is also worth noting that other educators felt that the positive strategies that they employ at their schools were effective thus far. The following quotations highlight the need to engage in a sensible/positive manner:

Educator E: *“There is nothing as important and memorable like engaging a perpetrator to resolving the matter. Our kids are self-disciplined, since they are being engaged in building the school's repertoire.”*

Educator D: *“Yes, pep talk and child-teacher discussions around the issues of discipline are important. Also, peer and self-reprimand are of great help.”*

This is not far from what SASA suggest in terms of what processes to follow when implementing discipline strategies in the school. Educators are encouraged to adopt alternatives to corporal punishment, such as collaborative decision-making with the learners on the drawing-up of classroom rules, using less punitive measures that fit the crime, exercising empathy for learners, and resorting to disciplinary hearings if misconduct is serious (Masekoameng, 2010:23-33).

4.6.2 Respectfulness

Similarly, Educator A also proposed the following suggestions in promoting discipline in the classrooms:

“Treating learners with the same respect as you would expect from them, letting learners know that you care, being fair, positive and consistent when dealing with discipline, etc.”

The response above points to the quality of being respectful, empathetic and understanding to the individual needs of your learners (*cf.* 2.7.1, Chapter 2). The Department of Education (2000:9) encourages educators to promote positive behaviour and prevent the use of unfair punishment so that conducive teaching and learning can take place.

Educator F also pointed out that all learners must be fully engaged in teaching and learning, and he provided a few suggestions on what strategies could be implemented in the classroom. They are as follows:

“Always being punctual for work, leading by example, and praising the good work of learners.”

From the response above, the following sub-themes emerged and are discussed below:

4.6.3 Punctuality

Work behaviour manifestations such as a lack of punctuality by the educator is a contributing factor to poor discipline in schools (Mubarak, 2011). Therefore, the virtue of punctuality on the part of the educator is vital for learner’s academic success. Punctuality enables the educator to maintain order and discipline in the classroom. For example, if the educator reports early to class, he or she can stop disruptive behaviour from troublesome learners before it ensues and commence with the lesson (Mubarak, 2011). Punctuality is also good for time-management as being organised prevents valuable time from being wasted.

4.6.4 Excellent role model

The role of the educator in a classroom should be executed with excellence. According to Mubarak (2011), the character trait of being punctual and organised sets a good example to learners. It sends out positive indications of what is expected of them and how to complete work right on time. This view is supported by Masitsa (2008:245) who echoes that educators serve as role models for learners and that they should always strive to set a good example to follow by.

4.6.5 Praising good work

The last part of Educator F’s statement refers to the praising of learners when they have done good work. Masekoameng (2010:45) emphasises that educators need to create an interesting and stimulating classroom for the learners. The author further points out that the lessons should be encouraging in nature and should allow the learner to gain self-esteem and aspire to be successful by praising their good work. It is important that educators value learner’s

contributions and respect individual differences in order to attain academic and behavioural success (Masekoameng, 2010:46).

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the use of semi-structured interviews, which were analysed using a process of thematic analysis. The interview methods were selected, because they contain a rich amount of detail, which are in turn aligned with a phenomenological analysis of data. The responses give descriptions of the experiences of the educators regarding discipline in their respective schools. To protect the participants' identities, the educators were only referred to, using letters like Educator A, B, C and so forth. The researcher holds the view that there are better alternatives to implement discipline in class, such as teaching self-control and encouraging an environment of peer respect amongst the learners (DoE, 2000:9, *cf.* 2.1.2, Chapter 2)

As explained in Chapter 2 of this study, it is important to expose learners to a more corrective approach to discipline, as opposed to harsh punishment (DoE, 2000:9).

Better alternatives include participatory decision-making, the setting-up of classroom rules collaboratively, rewarding learners for good behaviour, etc. Contrary to what participants had expressed in using punishment, the researcher holds the view that there are better alternatives to implement discipline in class, such as teaching self-control and encouraging an environment of peer respect amongst the learners.

The next chapter discusses the themes that emerged from the data analysis in detail and also how the findings relate to the literature that was consulted and the complexity theory as a whole.

CHAPTER 5 :

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented and analysed the data that were gathered during the interviews with the six participants. In this chapter focus will be on the summary of the conclusions, the implications on profession, and recommendations. Furthermore, the discussions will focus on the participant's conceptualization of discipline, the disciplinary problems experienced at the respective primary schools in Botshabelo, the strategies employed in dealing with poor discipline and lastly, the participant's suggestions on the promotion of discipline in the primary schools. Notably, the limitations of the study were also provided.

5.1.1 Retracing the research process

The aim of this study was to explore the possible strategies that could be used to address problems of poor discipline in three Botshabelo primary schools. The main issue that the study investigated was the phenomenon of poor discipline in Free State primary schools as this problem continues to affect the education system. Zulu & Wolhuter, (2013:2) explain that optimal teaching and learning cannot be achieved in chaotic classrooms (*cf.* 2.3, Chapter 2). This statement is supported by Mohapi (2014:126) who point out that poor learner discipline causes a decrease in academic performance (*cf.* 2.3, Chapter 2). To address the issue highlighted by this paper, the following primary research question needed to be answered: "*Which strategies are being used to enhance learner discipline in the Botshabelo primary schools?*" Within the theoretical framework of the complexity theory, this study enabled the researcher to put the theory into practice by exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in the three primary schools.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.2.1 Conclusions regarding educator's understanding of the concept of discipline

As mentioned in the previous chapter (*cf.* 4.31.1), the educator's understanding of the concept discipline involves learners' obedience to classroom rules and the use of corrective punishment to restore order in the classroom. The study revealed that participants share a common view that managing classroom conduct requires learners to align themselves with the school's code of conduct and in instances where this is not adhered to, punishment is then used to enforce good behaviour (Masekoameng, 2010:34). A school's code of conduct is there to establish a disciplined school environment and to inform learners of the way in which they are supposed to carry themselves and what type of disciplinary measures are in place if deviation occurs (Masitsa, 2008:236).

Rules are there to prevent chaos from ensuing and to ensure that learners become better versions of themselves through respect for authority and the social values of life. Schools should enforce a code of conduct, because it encourages good behaviour among learners. From the researcher's point of view, classroom rules are the first steps in regulating and maintaining already established standards of behaviour in the classroom. As such, and through the application of the complexity theory, classrooms and schools in general are considered social systems that are capable of transformation. The establishment of classroom rules inspires obedience, which in turn contributes towards effectively dealing with poor discipline and challenges found in social systems (Hasan, 2014). Furthermore, learners who behave are aware that rules are there to be adhered to and that they cannot do as they please, as the world we live in does not operate like that. The establishment of classroom rules inspires obedience, which in turn contributes towards effectively dealing with poor discipline and challenges found in social systems (Hasan, 2014). Thus, it is recommended by the researcher that educators avoid imposing their authority on learners, but rather to encourage them to abide by the rules that they have set as a collective. Rules prepare learners for the workings of the world and most importantly, they ensure that learners succeed in their studies.

Lastly, the findings revealed educators equate discipline to behaviour modification (*cf.* 4.3.2.2, Chapter 4). They expressed that schools enforce rules of behaviour, and educators should also set an example by obeying the same rules they expect learners to abide by (Masitsa, 2008:264).

Rules are there to prevent chaos from ensuing and to ensure that learners become better versions of themselves through respect for authority and the social values of life. Overall, the researcher sees that it is a good thing that educators share the same view that the development of classroom rules is essential in making sure that everything runs smooth in the classroom (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:395-397).

5.2.2 Conclusions regarding educator's views on the disciplinary challenges they experience at their primary schools

Based on the findings in Chapter 4 (*cf.* 4.1.1), it was deduced from the educators' responses that disciplinary problems are a reality at the respective primary schools. Most of the participants indicate that they experience challenges such as total non-compliance to classroom rules, the neglecting of schoolwork, vandalism and behaviour that is violent and disruptive. These issues are elaborated on below:

5.2.1.1 Negative class environment

Sekhwama (2019:18) notes that learners who fail to conduct themselves accordingly in the classroom and those who fail to follow simple instructions like classroom rules exhibit behaviour that is unacceptable and should warrant punishment. As indicated by the educators, no-compliance to classroom rules and disruptive behaviour impact negatively on educator morale. (*cf.* 4.4.1). Varma (1993, in Masekoameng, 2010:21), reckons that educators nowadays have an undesirable attitude towards their profession and they neglect all aspects of disciplining learners, as this is perceived to be the problem that must be dealt with by the education system. This implies that educators are not as committed as they were before in their profession. The researcher agrees with this view, as she believes that the teaching passion in South Africa has progressively decreased over the years (Varma, 1993:3).

5.2.1.2 Neglect of schoolwork

In his research, Treadwell (207:106), found that students generally express despair when they have to complete their schoolwork. He found that students often complete their assignments in haste and this result in poor quality work provided. As indicated by the educators' responses in this study, learners neglect their schoolwork, including homework, (*cf.* 4.4.2). Treadwell (2007:107), suggests that students don't complete their homework as a means to protect their self-esteem by displaying a 'don't care' attitude. This is tied to the belief that trying and failing would paint them to be incompetent to their peers and educators. The researcher suggests that educators at the primary schools should give learners an opportunity to begin homework in class (Treadwell, 2007:108). Parental involvement to assist in homework completion is of paramount importance if the schools want to attain higher academic achievement.

5.2.1.3 Vandalism

Acts of vandalism, exacerbated by the lack of discipline in schools is a common problem in South African schools (Esau, 2007:23). Participants in this study expressed that learners at their schools indeed vandalize school property (*cf.* 4.4.3). This has negative implications on the learning environment as vandalistic behaviour results in huge financial losses to the schools affected and the DoE. It has been documented that unscheduled funds are used to repair damages caused by acts of vandalism and this cuts into the school's budget (Esau, 2007:25). Furthermore, a lack of discipline and poor facilities negatively affects learners' self-esteem, leaving them with feelings of uselessness. Consequently, this puts the learners at a higher risk of becoming vandals as they do not value the school property and the education they receive (Esau, 2007:24).

5.2.1.4 Violent behaviour

As highlighted by Mohapi (2014:266), school violence is a major impediment to learning. This is supported by research dings by Masitsa (2008:236), which indicate that learners that, especially in township schools engage in violent behaviours such as fighting, the use of profanity and defiance of school authority. Moreover, media reports indicate that these learners are arrogant,

rude, unruly, destructive, smoke, and intimidate others (Masitsa, 2008:236; Mohapi, 204:268). The impact of violent behaviour on teaching and learning is unfavourable to operations in class as the educator abandons the whole lesson when learners fight or when one learner becomes a bully (Mohapi, 204:268). Similarly, teaching time is wasted on violent behaviour, because the educator must stop the lesson to address the situation.

According to the researcher's point of view, this kind of behaviour not only impedes the learner's education, but it also disrupts the learning of others in the classroom. Consequently, this behaviour becomes detriment to the educator's self-esteem. Lewis (1991:3) confirms that problematic learners who ruin the whole experience for everyone can obliterate the excitement of educators to present teaching lessons that are well thought-out, relevant and time consuming. It is important to mention that educators themselves may hinder the teaching process negatively, whether they are self-aware or not. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:37) believe that educators, who do not have their lesson plans thoroughly prepared instil a sense of low self-esteem in learners, as they are less motivated to participate in class. This can in turn lead to the development of poor discipline among the learners. Thus, it is important for educators to approach the problematic learners in a way that does not evoke negative feelings like anger or resentment, so that the classroom can reach its educational goals and objectives (*cf.* 4.4.4).

5.2.3 Conclusions regarding strategies to be employed by educators to enhance discipline in the classrooms

5.2.3.1 Democratic classrooms

The results from Chapter 4, section 4.5.1 indicate that participants shared a collective view that the appointment of a class captain can positively contribute towards effective learning and teaching, while lessening the intensity of disciplinary problems experienced at schools. A school captain is a student representative who is responsible for passing on information and general concern from the students to the school management (O' Keeffe, 2018). He or she needs to be able to have good communication skills by listening to the concerns and desires of students and must be able to relay this information to the school in a clear and reasonable manner (O' Keeffe, 2018). Moreover, a school captain is responsible for setting a good example of what leadership entails in a school

environment. A class captain will be there to give advice and to make sure that both sides are heard and understood.

Anish (2015:3) further explains that the two major principles of the Complexity Theory, namely self-organization and emergence, can be applied in the context of the schools, where there is a coming together of individuals as a unit, in order to execute a task (*cf.* 2.9.1.3, Chapter 2). More specifically, this means that educators in the classroom work together with the learners in drafting of the classroom rules or the election of a peer class captain, so that order can be established and maintained. This implies a democratic classroom. If the change in behaviour of the learner is not observed, parents are then called in to intervene and to teach their children proper conduct (O' Keeffe, 2018). Based on the researcher's understanding, the emergence principle may help explain the change in behaviour or attitude in one learner that may inspire a change in the behaviour of other learners in the classroom, even though this change may be in different ways and to varying degrees (Anish, 2015:3-4).

5.2.3.2 Parental involvement

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, participants in the study shared a consensus that parental involvement is integral in the process of correcting misconduct or poor discipline (*cf.* Table 4.1). According to Ndamani (2008:183), parents' relationship with their children can influence their behaviour and interaction at school. For example, children who grow up in a loving, trusting and warm environment, develop a positive self-concept and they are more obedient and responsible learners in the classroom. The opposite is true for children who grew up in troubled homes. It has been suggested that a working relation between the parents, child and educator is vital to ensure that the child learns and develops good behaviour and discipline within themselves (Ndamani, 2008:182). In the researcher's opinion, parents' failure to teach their children discipline at home, is one of the biggest contributors of disciplinary problems in schools. Both moral and cognitive aspects are learned through parental models (*cf.* 2.4.4, Chapter 2). Therefore, it is important for parents to model positive attitudes and to assume responsibility for the implementation of discipline in the everyday life of their children.

Applying the complexity theory to this view, the researcher understands that the child's parents (who represent the central social system) contribute towards creating change in their child's behaviour through the use of positive re-enforcements and only then, can this change in behaviour be maintained (Anish, 2015:3). This lends itself to the idea that the system is dynamic - parents working with the school - rather than static.

5.2.3.3 Documentation

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4 (*cf.* 4.5.3), no elaborate information was provided as to which document exactly is used for learner misbehaviour. The Disciplinary Committee of the school is responsible for enforcing compliance to the school's code of conduct.

According to the researcher's knowledge, the code of conduct is a policy document that educators refer to when they want to establish a disciplined learning environment that is essential for effective teaching and learning. As an educator, it is important to uphold this policy so that behaviour in the classroom is controlled and discipline problems kept to a minimum (DoE, 2008). Unfortunately, no elaborate information was provided by the educators on documentation.

5.2.3.4 Classroom talk

From the results in Chapter 4, section 4.5.1, it was concluded that the educators regarded classroom talk as one of the helpful strategies in dealing with poor discipline in the respective primary schools. The consensus was that discussions around what behaviour is accepted was vital to the learners' education (Ndamani, 2008:183-184). Maintaining classroom order is important for ensuring that rules and regulations are not breached, and effective school functioning is not compromised (*cf.* 4.5.4, Chapter 4). Educators should not be harsh and forceful in the approach of giving instructions to learners, instead they should be mindful of how their behaviour affects learners.

Educators who fail to deal with disciplinary issues or who are not committed face the risk of their classes, experience misconduct and deviant behaviour (Curwin & Mendler, 1988:2). Therefore, it is of paramount importance that educators are aware of their own behavioural patterns and how these can influence others and their methods of teaching (Mtsweni, 2008).

5.2.3.5 Policy consultation: SASA document and Alternatives to Corporal Punishment document

The study indicated that the participants agreed on the referral to the above-mentioned documents in dealing with the issue of discipline effectively (*cf.* 4.5.3). Alternatives to corporal punishment are suggested strategies by the Department of Education (2012:6) to assist educators in resorting to disciplinary measures that are not punitive in nature, but rather those that promote constructive learning (*cf.* 2.7.1). While reviewing existing literature, the researcher also came to an awareness that this document adopts a restorative approach to school discipline. Reyneke and Pretorius (2017:124), who acknowledge that a restorative approach focuses on the best interests of the child, support this view. According to Hansberry (2001:19), a restorative approach is defined as follows:

“An approach to addressing wrongdoing (or conflict) that focuses on repairing harm. Unlike traditional (retributive) processes, justice is not achieved by penalizing or punishing wrongdoers, but through asking wrongdoers to take responsibility for the harm they’ve caused. Those harmed are asked to identify their needs. It then becomes the obligation of the wrongdoer(s) to make [an] attempt to put things right (restore) by responding to the needs of those harmed through symbolic or tangible actions.”

In the context of school discipline, this approach focuses on the best interests and the needs of those involved in the disciplinary situation (Hansberry, 2009:21). It ensures that the transgressor’s and the victim’s dignity are protected and respected. The focus of the restorative approach is thus on building, maintaining and mending relationships, which align perfectly with a human rights culture (Reyneke & Pretorius, 2017:125). The data (*cf.* Table 4.1) show us that all participants agree that the disciplinary strategies that are employed at their schools are in line with the demands of the Department of Education.

Participants in the study also indicated that they refer to the SASA document for guidelines on when and how to implement discipline in the classroom. In South Africa, the use of corporal punishment is banned, as the constitution protects the rights of learners from being treated or punished in a cruel and inhumane manner (the SASA Act 84 of 1996 subsection 8(1)). The participants contended that they do not practice harsh punishment to correct ill behaviour at their schools. Furthermore, the participants asserted that the use of corporal punishment can

lead to anti- social behaviour and hostility, as revealed in the interviews. Masitsa (2008:242) concurs that children who are subjected to corporal punishment become disobedient over time and they harbour feelings of resentment and revenge towards the educators. It is the opinion of the researcher that educators should avoid using corporal punishment as a means to establish discipline in the classroom, but rather to employ positive disciplinary measures to maintain social order and to reduce the problem of poor learner discipline (Masekoameng, 2010:98-100). These positive disciplinary measures are discussed after the conclusions in the following section below.

5.2.4 Conclusions regarding educator's views on the promotion of discipline in their schools

Overall, the study revealed that participants tend to agree on the use of positive disciplinary measures to correct misconduct (Chapter 4, Section 4.5). The DoE (2000:9) suggests that educators use discipline to govern the school, rather than harsh punishment proactively (Masekoameng, 2010:32). Likewise, a more corrective and educative approach should be followed by educators so that learners are able to exercise self-control, respect their peers and authority and be responsible. In line with, the DoE guidelines (2000:10), the participants advised the following alternatives to corporal punishment:

- Immediate action- this involves reprimanding learners at first once when they engage in misconduct. Masitsa (2008:244) suggests that punishment should fit the crime and corrective punishment should be applied in a timely manner.
- Showing respect for learners' individual differences (*cf.* 4.6.2).
- Punctuality- refers to the educator's aspect of their own discipline. Being punctual and ready to teach a class indicates proper time-management, respect for learner's time and it can lead to academic achievement (*cf.* 4.6.3).
- Educators should serve as learner's role models. A good example should be set for learners to be inspired and what to learn more (*cf.* 4.6.4).
- Focus on rewarding learners for the effort made, as well as recognizing good behaviour (Masekoameng, 2010:46).

The results in Section 4.5 of Chapter 4 indicate that participants share a common view that disciplinary problems are part of the schooling process. Through informal conversations and observations, the researcher learned that primary schools do not experience intense disciplinary issues, as opposed to secondary schools, although it is worth noting that some primary schools may vary more in intensity than the others in the types of disciplinary problems experience.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on exploring the positive strategies that could be used to address problem of ill-discipline in three primary schools around the Motheo District, specifically Botshabelo. The overarching aim was to gain a better understanding of the educators' perceptions on how they experienced the problem of discipline in their schools and what alternative disciplinary strategies could be employed as opposed to corporal punishment.

This study was limited in its scope, given the relatively small sample size of only six participants (See Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1). For this reason, the results of the study could not be generalized to all educators in all primary schools in the Motheo District. The study is further limited by the researcher's omission to take into account other issues. For example, the researcher did not explore the causes of disciplinary problems in the three primary schools and information from school principals, even the learners themselves could have yielded valuable information, which makes it easier to identify problem areas and propose alternative ways to deal with those problems. Lastly, the researcher is of the opinion that the use of triangulation (using both qualitative and quantitative approaches) may have yielded better results. Moreover, even though a quantitative approach allows for generalization of results, it does not afford much depth of insight and this is where the researcher would utilize a qualitative approach to counteract that drawback (Masekoameng, 2010:102).

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The researcher notes the following recommendations for future research:

One, the use of a larger sample study as to ensure representativeness and generalization to a wider

population (Stangor, 2015). Two, future studies on the topic could employ both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection (triangulation) to test the validity of the data through obtaining information from multiple sources (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014). It is proposed that a triangulation method will provide a statistical data analysis to ensure validity and reliability of the findings. Three, further study should focus on other factors that may lead to disciplinary problems at school. For example, educators' level of morale, parenting styles, and the school system as a whole (Masekoameng, 2010; Masitsa, 2008). This may provide a clear picture of how these related factors impact the level of severity in terms of disciplinary problems in a school. And lastly, since the study was only conducted in the three primary schools in Motheo District, it is suggested that further research be conducted in secondary schools and among other districts, as well such as Lejweleputswa, Fezile Dabi, Thabo Mofutsanyane and Xhariep (Mothibeli, 2017:18).

5.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY ON PROFESSION

In the context of emerging findings behind this study, the following implications on the teaching profession are highlighted as follows:

First and foremost, there is a need to engage the Department of Education in providing training to educators so that they keep up to date with the SASA policy, regarding the employment of positive disciplinary measures. Secondly, as one of the objectives of the study was to identify if the disciplinary processes utilized by the primary school educators resonates with the “alternatives to corporal punishment” as proposed by the DoE, the key implication of this research is the importance of the educators using positive disciplinary measures to promote discipline in their classrooms. Educators should be assisted by the department in designing and implementing preventative measures against acts of bad behaviour. Thirdly, in order to improve discipline, the development and the implementation of a school code of conduct should be investigated further. The researcher notes that it is imperative that both the learner and their parent(s) are involved in this process as to create a sense of ownership and togetherness. And lastly, one methodological lesson learned in this study is that educators reflected on how they were educating their learners and the change aspects of their approach to discipline. Through informal conversations with the educators, it was revealed that others were stern in their use

of corrective punishment, such as detention, while others indicated that they prefer to involve parents when situations get out of control.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In summary, this study was aimed at exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo Primary schools. In order to achieve this aim, a detailed and in-depth review of relevant literature was consulted to gain a better understanding of what has already been published on poor learner discipline in schools. The study also achieved its objectives by documenting positive disciplinary strategies that educators can use without resorting to corporal punishment. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that the educators at the three primary schools did not experience intense disciplinary problems, as cited in the responses in Chapter 4. It is the opinion of the researcher that indeed more training by the Free State Department of Education is needed to address disciplinary problems at school and to empower educators and improve their morale.

With the complexity theory as a theoretical framework of this study, the researcher has learned that it is important for every individual (from the parents, to the educators, the principals and the education system) to be involved in the development and implementation of a school's code of conduct. All stakeholders should ensure that a climate conducive to teaching and learning is prevalent in all schools. Contrary to what participants had expressed in using punishment, the researcher holds the view that there are better alternatives to implement discipline in class, such as teaching self-control and encouraging an environment of peer respect amongst the learners.

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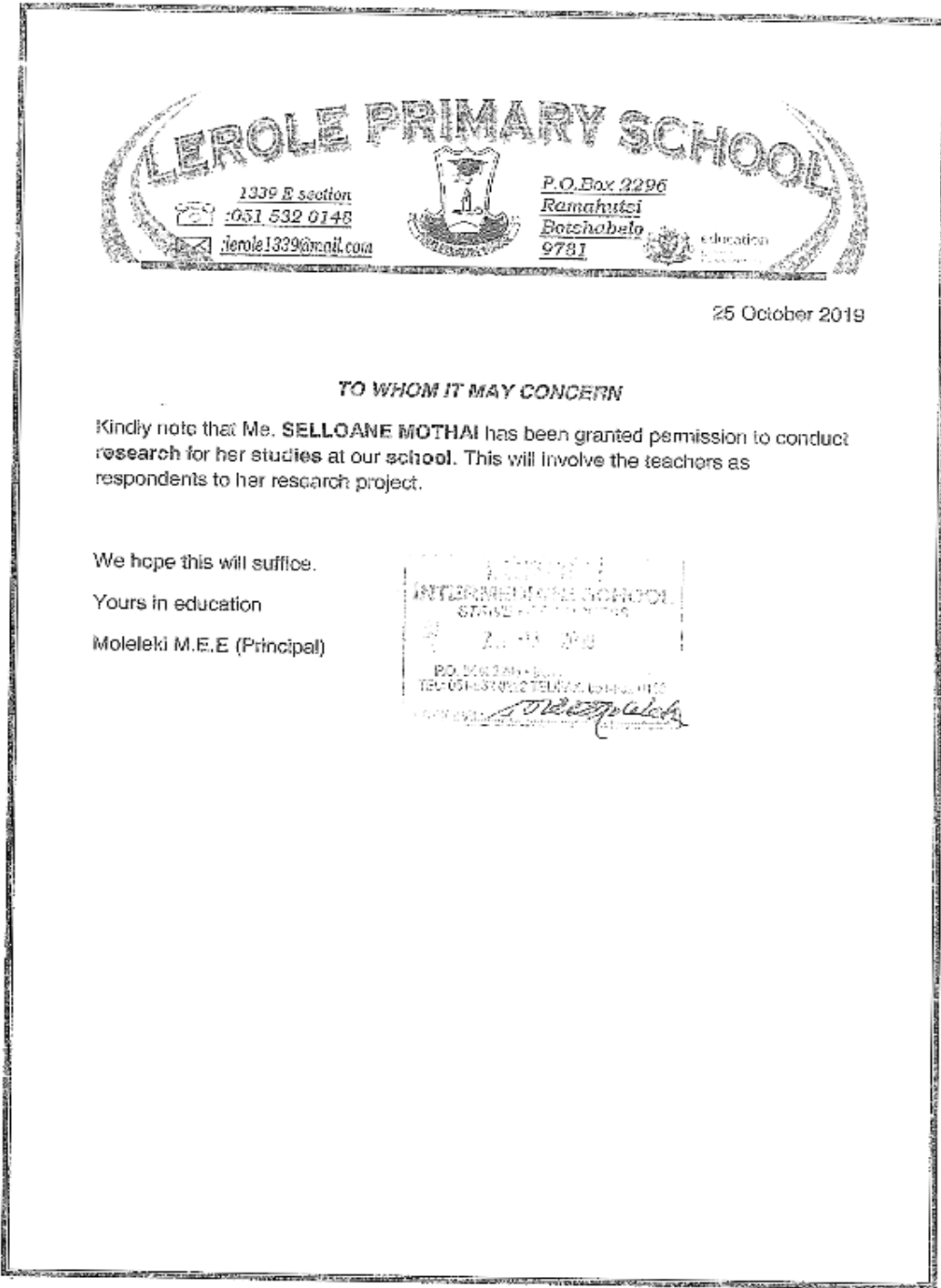
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: THREE SCHOOLS(APPROVAL LETTERS)



1104 E Section

Botshabelo

9781

3 October 2019

The Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sellwane Mothai I am a curriculum student at the University of Free State. The research I wish to conduct for my Masters dissertation involves the teachers. My title is *Exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo primary schools*. The project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Ntsala from the University of Free State.

I am hereby seeking your permission to conduct a research together with the teachers. Upon my completion of the study, I undertake to provide the Department with a full copy of the research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on Sellwanemothai@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely


Sellwane Mothai


P.O. BOX 5369
BOTSHABELO
TEL. 051 535 3299
PRINCIPAL: J.R. RANTHIMO

DATE: 24/10/2020

SIGNATURE: 



Permission granted for the student to do her research at Batjha School


Principal
082 9233 166
051 535 3299

1104 E Section
Botshabelo
9781

3 October 2019

The Principal

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sellwane Mothai I am a curriculum student at the University of Free State. The research I wish to conduct for my Masters dissertation involves the teachers. My title is *Exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo primary schools*. The project will be conducted under the supervision of Dr Ntsala from the University of Free State.

I am hereby seeking your permission to conduct a research together with the teachers. Upon my completion of the study, I undertake to provide the Department with a full copy of the research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on Sellwane.mothai6@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Sellwane Mothai



Permission Granted. Your follow up on how you're going to conduct your research will be expected.



APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: FS DoE

Inquiries: Kk Motsheni
Ref: Notification of research, Mofhat SA
Tel: 051 400 9207 / 079 505 7343
Email: K. Motsheni@education.gov.za



Section E
Botshabelo
8781

Dear Ms Motshai

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This letter serves as an acknowledgement and receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.

- Topic:** Exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo Primary Schools.
List of schools involved: Batsha, Lerofa and Mahfophonolo primary schools in Botshabelo
- Target Population:** 1 grade 4 Mathematics teacher, 1 grade 5 English teacher, 1 grade 7 Foundation phase teacher, 1 grade 3 foundation phase teacher and 1 grade 7 Mathematics teacher.
- Period of research:** From date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2020. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
- The approval is subject to the following conditions:
 - The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
 - You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
- Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely,

DR JEM SEKOLARYANE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 20/05/2020

RESEARCH APPLICATION BY SA MEMBER SUBMITTED LETTER 5 MAY 2020, NOTIFIED DEPT
Strategy: Planning, Research & Policy Development, Information Management, Quality Improvement, Education, Skills & Training, Higher Education, Technical Education & Vocational Training
Tel: (011) 400 9207 / 079 505 7343 Fax: (011) 500 620

www.fsdoe.fs.gov.za

Enquiries: KK Nolehumi
Ref: Research Permission: SA Muthai
Tel: 051 404 9283 / 9221 / 079 303 4413
Email: K.Nolehumi@education.gov.za



Section E
Botshabelo
9/81

Dear Ms Muthai

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This letter serves as an acknowledgement of receipt of your request to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education.

1. **Topic:** Exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo Primary Schools.
List of schools involved: Batsha, Lerole and Mahlohonolu primary schools in Botshabelo
2. **Target Population:** 1 grade 4 Mathematics teacher, 1 grade 5 English teacher, 1 grade 1 Foundation phase teacher, 1 grade 3 foundation phase teacher and 1 grade 7 Mathematics teacher.
3. **Period of research:** From date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2020. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
 - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
 - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely 
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 20/05/2020

RESEARCH APPLICATION BY SA MUTHAI, NOTIFICATION LETTER 08 MAY 2020, PPT/HSO/1157/201
50-Heck Street, Research & Policy Dept., 10th Floor, 221005, Bloemfontein, 9702 - Old CNA Building, Room 319, 3rd Floor, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein
Tel: (051) 431 5077/3021 Fax: (051) 563 676

APPENDIX C: ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER FROM UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

05-Jun-2020

Dear Miss Sellwane Mothai

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Exploring the enhancement of disciplinary processes in Botshabelo primary schools.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2019/1147/0506

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Prof Derek Litthauer

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

205 Nelson Mandela
Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: 051 401 9398 /
7619 / 3682
RIMS@UFS.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za



APPENDIX D: INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM



The involvement of teachers in the study is to empower and to assist each other to improve disciplinary processes in the education system. Quality teaching and learning will take place and thus the improvement in academic performance.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Working on the study after working hours could result in inconvenience as the time answering questionnaires could be used for family time. With this study there will be no physical training. No harm or unforeseen risks are expected to occur during the study as it does not involve any training. There will be no use of dangerous materials in the study that could result in injuries.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Yes. Personal information and their contact details will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonym will be used on the given answers on the study or questionnaires. Identify who will have access to the data (transcriber/external coder) and how these individuals will maintain confidentiality (e.g. by signing a confidentiality agreement).

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. Create a sentence to inform participants that their anonymous data may be used for other purposes, e.g. research report, journal articles, conference presentation, etc. Also, the report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report). [Please keep in mind that it is sometimes impossible to make an absolute guarantee of confidentiality/anonymity, e.g. when focus groups are used as a data collection method. Include a description of what a focus group is. Add; while every effort will be made by the researcher to ensure that you will not be connected to the information that you share during the focus group, I cannot guarantee that other participants in the focus group will treat information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personally sensitive information in the focus group.

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher in a locked cabinet for a period of five years. It will be kept electronically for future academic use. Future use of the data will be subject to further research ethics. Data will be reviewed and approved if necessary. All information of participants will be kept confidential.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no form of incentives with regard to participation in the study. All costs incurred will be covered by the researcher. Names of participants will be kept confidential.

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?



RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM

DATE

12 June 2019

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT: *EXPLORING STRATEGIES FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS*

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR / RESEARCHER(S) NAME(S) AND CONTACT NUMBER(S):

Mothai Sellwane Anna 2006084 731 071 063 6222

Email: sellwanemothai6@gmail.com

FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT:

Faculty of Education
School of Education

STUDYLEADER(S) NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER:

Mr. Sekanse SA Ntsala (UFS staff member)

051 401 3124

WHAT IS THE AIM / PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The aim of this study is to investigate strategies that can be used to address problems of poor learner discipline in the classroom and at school. Bechuke and Debeila (2012:242) define school discipline as strategies that are used to coordinate and regulate individuals as well as their activities in the school. In the same breadth, Thornberg (2013) further adds that discipline also involves putting in place the provisions and procedures that are deemed necessary to create, establish and maintain an environment which is conducive for teaching and learning.

As noted by Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013:1), South African schools are faced with the challenge of poor learner discipline, with most the serious aspect being finding solutions to poor discipline problems. This finding is also endorsed by Mohani (2014:133) argues that discipline is

AS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

No, the study has not yet received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee.

Approval number: Ethical Clearance number: UFS-HSD2019/1147/0506

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT?

You are invited to partake in this study because as a member of the school committee, the challenge we experience is directly have negative impact on the teaching and learning. There is a need to empower and train the teachers since they are the ones who work with the learners who lack discipline and they are the ones faced with the problem hence the invitation.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The participant's actual role in the study is to promote discipline in learners; ultimately, the project will develop participants to be in better position to help learners. The study involves interviews, questionnaires which will be distributed to participants to answer in writing form. The expected duration of participation will be two months. Four contact sessions will be conducted, taking up to 45 minutes. Children will not be involved in the research.

CAN THE PARTICIPANT WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY?

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to the participation. If you do partake, you will be given information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. Participation is voluntary and there is no loss of benefit or penalty for non-participation. At any point in the study, you feel uncomfortable; one is free to withdraw from the study.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

HOW WILL THE PARTICIPANT BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS / RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Sellwane Annah Mathai on 0710636222 or email mathaisellwane@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a month after. Please do not use home telephone numbers. Departmental and/or mobile phone numbers are acceptable. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dr. Sekanse Ntsala (UFS staff member) 0514013124. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr. Sekanse Ntsala (UFS staff member) 0514013124. There will be no potential level of inconvenience and/or discomfort to the participant. There are no possible or reasonably foreseeable risks of harm or side-effects to the potential participants (outlining likely incidence and severity). Include any risk that may come from others identifying the person's participation in the research. No information regarding participants will be disclosed to any other parties.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Researcher: Me. SA MOTHAI

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

TOPIC: EXPLORING THE ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

NOTE: the questions below are based on the topic of research articulated above. Kindly give your honest response to the questions.

1. What is the concept of discipline according to the context your school?

2. How would you differentiate between student classroom behaviour that are considered contrary to classroom rules?

3. Which classroom disciplinary challenges are currently faced by educators in your school?

4. Do you think discipline is important in your school? Please elaborate

5. What are the guidelines and legal framework for managing discipline in the classroom of your school?

6. What is the extent to which educators are conversant with the legal framework for managing classroom discipline?

.....
.....

7. Which disciplinary strategies are currently employed by the educators to establish discipline in the classroom?

.....
.....

8. Are the disciplinary strategies employed in your school classrooms in line with the demands of the Department of Education? Please elaborate

.....
.....

9. Are the current disciplinary management strategies applied in your school classroom successful? Please give an explanation

.....
.....

10. What other successful classroom strategies could you suggest to be implemented in the classroom of your school?

.....
.....

Thank you for your time

APPENDIX F: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Michelle Woolley

WRITER EDITOR PROOFREADER TRANSLATOR

Bachelor of Library and Information Science: B.Bibl.
Reference & Research Librarian

Associate Member of Professional EDITORS' Guild (PEG)

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This letter certifies that I have edited the Thesis detailed below.

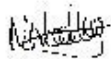
Title:

EXPLORING THE ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN
BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Author:

SELLWANE ANNAH MOTHAI
2006084731

Regards
Michelle Woolley



Date: 9/4/2021

michellewoolley12@gmail.com
083 298 2077

Professional
EDITORS
Guild

APPENDIX G: TURN IT IN RECEIPT AND REPORT

EXPLORING THE ENHANCEMENT OF DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES IN BOTSHABELO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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