DYNAMICS OF MANAGING LEARNERS' CLASSROOM DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR: EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STAFF, SOUTH AFRICA

By

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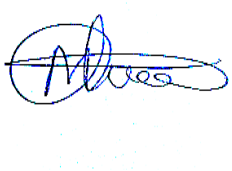
Declaration

I declare that the thesis titled "*Dynamics of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour*: Experiences of Secondary Staff, South Africa" is my authentic and independent piece of research that has not been previously submitted to any academic institution. I hereby affirm that all sources utilised or cited in my work have been appropriately acknowledged and referenced.



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Abstract

The efficacy of the classroom environment in facilitating learning is contingent upon the teacher's successful management of Classroom Disruptive Behaviour (CDB) and the degree to which learners adhere to the strategies the teachers use. The function of schools in influencing learners' good behaviour is paramount due to the intricate nature of the behavioural challenges learners encounter, which stem from the different factors.

The study explored secondary school staff's experiences in the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The following subsidiary questions guided the study: What are the views of secondary school staff on the factors that cause learners' CDB in school? How do secondary school staff manage the dynamics of learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom? What challenges do secondary school staff experience when managing learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom? What strategies can be used to address the challenges and strengthen the management of learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom?

The study adopted a qualitative approach and employed interpretive paradigm as the lens and descriptive phenomenology as the design to explore staff's lived experiences of CDB management. The study was grounded in Assertive Discipline Theory. Seven teachers and six School Management Team members were selected purposively from four quintile three secondary schools. Seven teachers formed a focus group discussion, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with six School Management Team (SMT) members. Three data-collecting instruments, namely focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews and document analysis, were used during data collection. To extract significant concepts pertinent to the generated data accurately, inductive content analysis was used to analyse data.

This study found that a mix of external, school and learner factors contribute to CDB. This research offered evidence that the schools are likely to endure academic underperformance since CDB significantly affects teaching and learning.The research threw light on how schools were making concerted efforts to address CDB through various initiatives related to policy. The study also revealed that the staff members

adopted non-policy-related approaches when managing CDB and that when the staff members confronted CDB, they experienced both internal and external difficulties.

To address the schools' contextual factors contributing to CDB, the study recommends that staff, especially the School Management Team (SMT), be capacitated with skills in areas like monitoring, setting up functional school committees (Disciplinary and School-Based Support Team), putting in place effective textbook retrieval systems, starting functional induction programmes for new teachers and outsourcing professional development.

The study further recommends that the district set up a District Support Team to show the staff how to create effective classroom rules, implement policies related to the suspension of learners, understand the difference between discipline and punishment, and put the National School Safety Framework into place.

The study also suggests that the district monitors the admission of learners in schools. The research provided evidence that there was overcrowding in schools and that such a situation propelled CDB. In addition, the study recommends that the district assist the school in establishing various athletics opportunities for learners to showcase their talents.

Implementing the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support policy should be mandatory across every school. Presently, schools are just being encouraged to screen learners. The research found that secondary schools admit learners without Screening Assessment Needs forms. Thus, such practice makes it tough to establish proactive measures to manage disruptive behaviour among learners efficiently, particularly those with severe learning impairments.

The study further recommends that the admissions policy should outline the age limits for learners to be enrolled in each grade level. The policy should also expressly state that parents should enrol their children in Adult Basic Education and Training if they surpass the stipulated age restriction. The study offers evidence that older learners cause behavioural problems for teachers and their peers in the same classroom. In the context of secondary schools, the policy should specifically restrict the admission of learners who exceed the designated age limit. Presently schools can only go as far as encouraging parents to enrol their older children in Adult Basic Education and

Training. There is a loophole in that parents may refuse to follow the schools' suggestions. To add to existing strategies and strengthen the management of CDB, the study proposed the Alternatives to the Establishment of the Conducive Learning Environment model.

Keywords: Behaviour, Disruptive, Classroom, Learner, Teacher, School, Staff

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List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ADT	Assertive Discipline Theory
AECLE	Alternatives to Establishing Conducive Learning Environment
ATCP	Alternatives To Corporal Punishment
CD	Conduct Disorder
CDB	Classroom Disruptive Behaviour
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CM	Circuit Manager
CP	Corporal Punishment
CRT	Culturally Relevant Teaching
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Head
DST	District Support Team
EDOREN	Education Data Research and Evaluation Nigeria
FET	Further education and training
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSDoE	Free State Department of Education
FTE	Fixed Term Period
GET	General Education and Training

HOD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resource
ICA	Inductive Content Analysis
LRA	Labour Relations Act
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
NSSF	National School Safety Framework
OAGWA	Office of the Auditor General, Western Australia
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PAM	Personal Administrative Measures
PD	Professional Development
PE	Permanent Exclusion
PRR	Praise-to-Reprimand Ratio
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADAG	South African Depression and Anxiety Group
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANCA	South African National Council of Alcoholism
SAPS	South African Police Service

SASA	South African Schools Act
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SGB	School governing body
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT	School Management Team
SNA	Support Needs Assessment
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview
UK	United Kingdom
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
VBSP	Verbal and Behaviour Specific Praise
WM	Working Memory

Chapter One: Overview of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Classroom order is essential for effective teaching and learning because it enables teachers and learners to devote the required time to learning activities (Thiel, Böhnke, Barth & Ophardt, 2023). Order in the classroom is, however, frequently jeopardised by learners' classroom disruptive behaviour (CDB) (Lunga, Koen & Mthiyane, 2021) in the sense that some learners could be abrasive, uninterested, or bored, while others exhibit behaviours that put the safety of teachers and learners in danger. As a result, one of the primary responsibilities of teachers is to prevent and manage CDB in schools (McLean, Sparapani, Connor & Day, 2020; Sibiya, Gamede & Uleanya, 2019). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers receive training in behaviour management strategies that comply with school legal frameworks, such as those that uphold human rights and are responsive to the new global societal context (Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2019).

Wangdi and Namgyel (2022) define CDB as classroom behaviour that interferes with both learning and teachers' instructional directions in the classroom. Alibec and Sirbu (2020) and Lunga, (2020) add that the interruptions caused by the behaviour trigger a pause in instructional activities and, therefore, lessens the time spent on teaching and learning. Granero-Gallegos, Gómez-López, Baena-Extremera and Martínez-Molina (2020) further add that CDB threatens effective teaching and learning. Classroom disruptive behaviour (CDB) refers to a learner's behaviour that necessitates a teacher's intervention and that, if ignored, prevents teachers and other learners from engaging in appropriate classroom activities. The CDB includes but is not limited to aggression, name-calling, mocking, teasing, physical violence, intimidation, and humiliating others (Majani, 2020; Patnaik, Sharma & Subban, 2022).

CDB continues to be a challenge worldwide. For instance, studies in Australia highlight that teachers frequently deal with disruptive behaviour like chatting and inattention and struggle to get learners interested in studying (Crawshaw, 2015; Sullivan Johnson, Owens & Conway, 2014). Similarly, the Office of the Auditor General, Western Australia, (OAGWA) released its analysis of the behaviour control strategies used in

the state's public schools. Among other findings, it was discovered that 39% of principals and teachers spent 20% of their time, which is equivalent to one day per week, on learners' behaviour-related issues (OAGWA, 2014). Again, the findings reveal that CDB undermines the quality of teaching and learning.

After surveying teachers and parents in more than 3000 schools, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) in the United Kingdom (UK), concluded that disruptive behaviour in schools was a significant problem (OFSTED, 2014). It further highlighted that one in 12 secondary teachers reported that more than ten minutes of instruction per hour were lost because of behavioural issues. That has also been found to be the key cause of teachers quitting the profession (Morgan, 2015).

Stanforth and Rose (2020) assert that schools in the UK have implemented measures to address CDB, which frequently results in exclusions where learners are either permanently barred from attending school (permanent exclusion) or excluded from school for a Fixed Term Period (FTE). Persistent CDB was the most often cited cause for FTEs in 2015–16 years, accounting for 34.6% of the 339 360 learners excluded in primary, secondary, and special schools. According to Stanforth and Rose (2020), 6685 learners in those schools also received PE from the classroom.

The United State of America (USA) Department of Education and Civil Rights (2016) affirms that in USA, millions of teenagers engage in behaviour that forces the establishment of disciplinary measures in schools. For the 2011–2012 academic year for grades K–12, the most recent statistics on a constrained range of disciplinary actions in the USA are as follows: 49 million children and adolescents were enrolled in public schools in the USA; 3 385 868 learners were suspended in school at least once; 3 172 403 learners were suspended out-of-school at least once; 1 419 690 learners were suspended more than once; approximately 19 000 learners were suspended (out-of-school) each school day; 130,000 learners were expelled; 249 752 referrals were made to law enforcement and 64 218 school-related arrests were made; and 166 607 learners were corporally punished (Cameron & Voonasis, 2018).

In Croatia, Vidić, Đuranović and Klasnić (2021) sought to determine the degree to which primary and secondary school teachers face learners' CDB, their level of self-efficiency, their satisfaction with the environment's support and the job itself, as well as the degree to which they experience burnout. The findings confirm that the mildest forms of learners' disruptive behaviour are the most prevalent, and the severest forms of misbehaviour have the lowest values. Classroom disruptive behaviour (CDB) was shown to have a strong positive correlation with teacher burnout.

In Africa, CDB is a concern in countries such as Tanzania, Mauritius, Cameroon, Nigeria and South Africa, among others. For instance, in Tanzania (Majani, 2020) posits that seven out of 10 teachers encounter CDB in their classrooms. According to (Madakara, 2020) the Tanzanian government introduced numerous initiatives to address learners' behaviour in schools by strengthening guidance and counselling and hiring experts to handle school disciplinary issues. Despite these efforts, learners' disruptive behaviour instances remain a challenge. In addition, Belle (2018) shares that the lack of collaboration between stakeholders in education exacerbates CDB in Mauritius. Ngwokabuenui (2015) asserts that in Cameroon, learners at secondary schools are extremely disrespectful of everyone, including their parents, teachers, school administration, and even themselves.

According to Odebode (2020), it has become the norm for learners in Nigeria to indulge in every kind of disruptive behaviour, including stealing, fighting, and disrupting the peace at school and in the community. Similarly, extant data from Education Data, Research and Evaluation in Nigeria (EDOREN) posit that teachers reported a sharp increase in learners' disruptive behaviour in Nigeria and that schools were becoming hard to manage (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2021).

In the context of South Africa, CDB is recognised as a multifaceted and intricate problem, hypothesised to be influenced by a range of interconnected factors including the school, the teachers, and broader societal variables (Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2020). Despite the implementation of several measures following the prohibition of corporal punishment in 1997, including the adoption of Alternative to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) strategies (Marumo & Zulu, 2019; Moyo, Khewu & Bayaga, 2014), the prevalence CDB remains widespread in schools. Instances of disruptions (Govender, 2021) and altercations (Ngqakamba, 2021) persistently circulate on

diverse media platforms, corroborating the research conclusions that CDB is prevalent within schools nationwide (Kitching, Rooyen & McDonald, 2019: van der Walt & Wolhuter, 2019). It has been argued by scholars that teachers continue to resort to the use of corporal punishment as a means of addressing challenging disciplinary behaviour (Motseke, 2020; Nunan & Ntombela, 2019). According to the South African Council for Educators (SACE, 2020), the figures for the year 2019/2020 indicate a prevalence of 38% in reported occurrences of assault and physical punishment in schools.

Learners' classroom disruptive behaviour can have a variety of negative effects on the teaching and learning environment. Dealing with CDB is considered a complicated task because it is influenced by different variables (Belle, 2018; Juta & Van Wyk, 2020; Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2020; Wangdi & Namgyel, 2022). According to empirical studies, CDB poses severe challenges for teachers, learners, and the teaching and learning process (Khan et al., 2019; Kanmani & Sujathamalini, 2022; Majani, 2020). According to Kanmani and Sujathamalini (2022) and Vidić, Đuranović and Klasnić (2021), teachers who teach learners who display disruptive behaviours face greater pressure, annoyance, weariness, emotional difficulties, and burnout. Additionally, the behaviour has a negative effect on teachers' attitudes towards teaching. It causes them to gradually lose interest in their jobs (Cameron & Lovett, 2015; Khan et al., 2019; Majani, 2020) also claim that some aspiring teachers are hesitant to enter the teaching profession because they are worried about dealing with CDB, while some who are recently in the field quit owing to the behaviour (Moore et al., 2019; Stanforth & Rose, 2020).

School environments significantly impact how children behave (Belle, 2018). Therefore, to ensure that a school is a safe place for learning, the teachers have to instil in learners the values of respect and discipline and oversee a disciplinary procedure that upholds these principles. According to Mulaudzi (2016), effective CDB management ensures order throughout the teaching and learning process and contributes significantly to upholding a favourable teaching and learning environment ensuring the seamless operation of schools (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). The proposition posits that schools are unable to provide an environment that facilitates

appropriate instruction and acquisition of knowledge without the use of efficient strategies for managing CDB.

1.2 The Rationale for the Study

The inspiration for this study came from my interests, upbringing, and observation of the location where I was teaching. When I grew up, corporal punishment was used extensively in schools, homes and communities. If a community member deemed one's behaviour out of order, such a person was free to administer CP on the spot without the consent of one's parents, who would not complain. Instead, should they find out about the incident, there was a likelihood of the same punishment from them for making it look like they did not teach their children how to conduct themselves in the community. For these reasons, I value respect and programmes geared towards teaching young people how to conduct themselves.

In my experience, owing to the complexity of modern life, the adage that education is a three-legged process requiring the effective participation of teachers, parents, and learners is losing popularity. For instance, currently, only 34% of South African children live with both parents, 23% do not, and about 148 000 households are headed by a child who is 17 years old or younger (de Wet et al., 2019). Other than that, the invasion of teen pregnancy adds more. Statistics South Africa (2021) reports that 33 899 births in 2020 were to women 17 years old or younger. Of these, mothers aged 10 to 13 gave birth to over 600 children. In her written response to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, the minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, confirmed that 90 037 schoolgirls aged 10–19 gave birth between March 2021 and April 2022 in South Africa (Mkize, 2022). This suggests that the primary teachers who should instil values and skills in children right from birth are limited in society. As a result, children grow with limited skills in how to conduct themselves. The concurrence of these factors has resulted in blame games between parents and teachers. Teachers criticise parents for not disciplining their children correctly at home, while parents blame teachers for not carrying out their duties effectively (Kitching, van Rooyen & McDonald, 2019).

I was teaching in a township secondary school. Schools in this kind of location are characterised by poor learner discipline (Motseke, 2020; Naidoo, 2021). Owing to several factors, including a lack of resources and infrastructure as well as their poor location, township schools are particularly vulnerable to unsafe situations and violent threats (Ngqela & Lewis, 2012 cited in Naidoo, 2021). Violence and blatant contempt for the law are two forms of learner discipline issues that are becoming increasingly common in schools in township schools (Arends, 2017). Unruly learners and disciplinary problems are day-to-day aspects of teaching; however, it seems that even though most schools have adopted a code of conduct to regulate learners' behaviour, it is not always effective (Naidoo, 2021). As a result, schools in townships are a place where teachers' and learners' safety and happiness are not guaranteed due to the pervasiveness of disruptive behaviour such as violence (Lekalakala, 2019; Sipho & Percival, 2021) and bullying (Kitching, Van Rooyen & McDonald, 2019).

According to Meyer (2005 cited in Nadoo, 2021), unemployment and poverty, frequently associated with townships and informal settlements, are the main drivers of crime. The author contends that many learners in township schools resort to unlawful ways of living including selling drugs, participating in illicit gambling, or robbing their fellow learners because of unemployment and poverty. The problem of crime is aggravated by drug and alcohol addiction, two social ills associated with unemployment and poverty. These issues typically result from antisocial or other general delinquent behaviour in the township (Naidoo, 2021). Therefore, the argument is made that teachers in township schools deal with these sorts of problematic behaviours regularly since schools are extensions of homes and bigger societies.

1.3 Problem Statement

Literature provides substantial evidence that CDB is prevalent in many countries worldwide (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Smith, 2021; Stremel et al., 2021) and that it disrupts and diverts teachers' focus from teaching (Muna, 2020). The problem is not exclusive to South Africa. Previously, in South Africa, corporal punishment was used as a strategy to address CDB in schools (Naong, 2007). In 1997, corporal punishment was abolished because it was alleged that it violated human rights (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1997). The Department of Education had to find different ways to replace corporal punishment. Hence, the ATCP measures were introduced in 2000 (Moyo,

Khewu & Bayaga, 2014). However, it has been observed that teachers continue to use corporal punishment, swearing and expelling learners from the classrooms (Motseke, 2020; Mahlangu et al., 2021) These measures are illegal (RSA, 1996). For instance, the SACE comparison analysis of cases from the 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 years demonstrates that assault and corporal punishment cases in schools have consistently been at the top of all kinds of cases (SACE, 2022). Therefore, this study aimed to investigate, from secondary school staff, their points of view regarding experiences of managing CDB in the Free State, Motheo District.

1.4 Main Research Question

What are the experiences of secondary school staff in managing learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom in South Africa?

1.5 Subsidiary Questions

1. What are the views of secondary school staff on the factors that cause learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in school?
2. How do secondary school staff manage the dynamics of learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms?
3. What challenges do secondary school staff experience in the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms?
4. Which strategies can be used to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of disruptive behaviour in classrooms?

1.6 Research Aim

To explore secondary school staff's experiences of the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms in South Africa.

1.7 Research Objectives

1. To gain perspective on the views of secondary school staff on the factors that cause learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms.
2. To establish how secondary school staff manage the dynamics of learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms.

3. To gain perspective on the challenges that secondary school staff experience in the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms.
4. To identify strategies that can be used to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

1.8 Potential Value of the Study

The study is of value to the Department of Education, school management, teachers, and policymakers. Comprehending the underlying reasons for disruptions like admission policy and progression policy helps policymakers amend policies to tackle issues in schools. The Department of Education can create interventions specifically designed to tackle challenges including overcrowding, textbooks issue, and inadequate sports facilities by allocating more resources. The study findings are valuable as they guide the development of professional programmes for teachers and administrators, which might be a focus for the education department at the national and provincial levels. The study also provides teachers with the knowledge on efficient methods for handling disruptive behaviour, cultivating positive relationships with learners, and establishing a supportive school environment. The study further proposed an additional model, the Alternative to Establishing a Conducive Learning Environment (AECLE) that can be used to enhance the management of CDB.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

Delimitations are characteristics that restrict a study's latitude and define the parameters which the researcher chooses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Delimitations in this study were the boundaries I set to limit the study's scope. The study's target group, secondary school staff in public schools, was one of the delimiting variables. Delimitations, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2020) also encompass the theoretical stances one takes when conducting research. The study was grounded on a single theory, assertive discipline, which helped to explain how secondary school staff could be empowered to express themselves and create a supportive learning environment by developing a discipline plan that allows them to communicate their needs openly without violating learners' rights. Furthermore, this study was limited to 13 participants, including six SMT and seven teachers in township secondary schools. These

participants helped to create distinctive and sufficient data to accomplish the study's goals and provide answers to the research questions.

1.10 Definition of Operational Concepts

This part provides the definitions of the following terms: dynamics, staff, learner, disruptive, teacher, classroom, school, staff, and SMT and also provides the author's position on the usage of these terms.

1.10.1 Dynamics

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines dynamics in terms of behaviour, social interaction, group and subject discipline in the following ways: (a) the way different parts of a person's personality interact with each other; (b) how they actively change, whether they are aware of it or not; (c) the forces that cause social change; (d) how people from different groups or, more often, in the same group interact with each other; and e) the part of physics that studies how forces work; in the past, it only meant how forces generate or change motion.

In this study, the concept of "dynamics" refers to the condition of various forces that have an impact on certain behaviours. This refers to the variables motivating staff to use diverse strategies to address disruptive conduct inside the classroom. A variety of factors, including policy, personal views, attitudes, training, and the overall work environment may influence staff members' adoption of different strategies for managing disruptive conduct.

1.10.2 Staff

Staff is defined under the *South African Schools Act* (SASA) as anyone employed at the school (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines staff as a group of people recruited to perform the duties of a specific organisation or institution. In the context of South Africa, the school is staffed by a diverse range of individuals who are responsible for executing specific duties and responsibilities. Considering this rationale, I used the term 'staff' in this study to refer only to those who are engaged in teaching responsibilities, namely teachers and the SMT members.

1.10.3 Teacher

According to Rajagopalan (2019), a teacher is a person who shares their experiences, information and skills with others. Under laws such as the *Employment of Educator Act 76 of 1998*, which regulates schools' affairs in South Africa, a teacher is defined as anybody who instructs and educates others. The *National Policy Act 27 of 1996* stipulates that instructing others should take place at the educational institution for this individual to be regarded as a teacher (RSA, 1996). Thus, the people who have the authority to teach learners at school are called teachers.

1.10.4 School Management Team

The School Management Team (SMT) is described by Etonge (2014) as a group established in the school to address its growing concern for excellent management practices. The SMT is a formal team whose members are chosen to supervise policy and its execution. The team comprises the principal, deputy principal and department heads (DHs). According to the *Personal Administration Measures* (PAM), one of the SMT's responsibilities is teaching learners like regular teachers (RSA, 1999).

1.10.5 Classroom

According to Van der Walt and Wolhuter (2019), a classroom is a structured and planned space for the formal instruction of learners, typically under 18 years old. The authors further highlight that the determining factor between the structured space at school and higher learning institutions is age, as those in school are still young and governed by classroom rules for discipline.

1.10.6 Meaning of disruptive

Disruptive is an adjective derived from the verb 'disrupt', which means disturbing, upsetting, disorderly, unsettling, unpleasant, rowdy, obstreperous, or troublemaking (Etonge, 2014). According to Mafa et al. (2013 cited in Lunga, 2020), disruptive behaviour is any act or series of acts a person engages in that irrationally affects, impedes, blocks, or prevents another person from engaging in a particular activity, programme, or service. Wangdi and Namgyel (2022) assert that disruptive behaviour includes behaviour that may hinder an educational institution and its workers in their

performance of their core duties properly. Thus, disruptive behaviour in a classroom refers to any learner or teacher's behaviours that interfere with teaching and learning.

1.10.7 School

Habibi (2017) refers to the school as a place of study. The *National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996* (RSA, 1996) defines a school as an educational setting that offers instruction to students in pre-primary, primary, or secondary school. The *Oxford English Dictionary* adds that a school is an institution that provides formal education to children. It is implied that a school is a venue in which planned and organised spaces are available to assist teachers in providing learners with formal instruction.

1.10.8 Learner

A learner is defined under the SASA as a person receiving or required to pursue education (RSA, 1996). The *National Policy Act 27 of 1996* defines a learner as a person who is enrolled in an educational institution (RSA, 1996) to learn the way of receiving instructions (Oxford English Dictionary). The *Britannica Dictionary* defines a learner as a person who is attempting to acquire information or skills in anything through study, practice, or getting instruction.

1.11 Chapter Layout

Chapter One: This chapter serves as an introduction, offering a comprehensive overview of the study's history, problem statement, key research questions, justification, and the importance of the study. In this chapter, I also defined key concepts that underpin the study. Towards the end of the chapter, I provided an outline delineating the structure and arrangement of the study.

Chapter Two: This chapter provides an overview of the Assertive Discipline Theory (ADT) theoretical framework, which serves as the foundation for this research. The chapter discusses the theory's inception, its underlying assumptions, and its significance to the legal system of South African schools. I discussed the theory's assumptions about the classroom environment, teachers, and learners. As per the model, strategies for managing learners, especially those who pose significant challenges, were extensively presented. In this chapter's concluding section, I critique

the theory and discuss how it contributes to the study's ability to formulate conclusions and suggestions and provide an alternative model.

Chapter Three: This chapter provides a comprehensive literature review of disruptive behaviour in the classroom, including research conducted at the local, continental, and international levels. The review explores several relevant issues, including factors that cause disruptive behaviour, its effects on the classroom environment, and strategies for managing and addressing it effectively.

Chapter Four: This chapter provides a discussion of research design and methodology. It sheds light on the interpretive paradigm employed in this study. The study employs a qualitative approach, specifically using a phenomenology design. The chapter thoroughly discusses several aspects of research, including the process of data generation, the methods of data analysis, the importance of trustworthiness, and the ethical concerns involved.

*Chapter Five***:** Findings and analysis of data are presented in this chapter. The analysis is grounded on the four subsidiary questions that served as guiding principles for the research, which have been organised into major subthemes.

Chapter Six: In this chapter, I discuss the results, draw conclusions, and provide recommendations. This chapter presents a synthesis of the results in relation to the existing literature, as well as the suggested model that aims to address the identified gaps regarding management of disruptive behaviour in classrooms.

Chapter Seven: This chapter describes the research journey and the contributions made. The chapter commences with elucidating the insights derived from the investigation, culminating in the contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the realm of my research area.

1.12 Chapter Summary

Chapter One introduced this study on secondary staff's experiences of the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The study's context, central questions, rationale, problem statement, goals, and essential research questions were all presented. The delimits and implications of the study were

examined. The chapter ended with a summary of the study and elucidated the key concepts used throughout.

The theoretical and conceptual framework that underpinned this study is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the introduction and background information to this study. This chapter focuses on the ADT which underpinned this study. The following topics and their subtopics are covered in this chapter: theoretical framework; the origin of the assertive discipline model; philosophical approaches to learners' behaviour management; understanding assertive discipline; situating assertive discipline in South African schools' legal context; global application of the assertive discipline model; assertive discipline and the teacher; assertive teachers' perception of learners; difficult learners; a behaviour management plan; criticism of assertive discipline and the benefits of the assertive discipline model.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework represents the perspective that the researcher uses to examine, interpret, or explain the occurrence of the behaviour of the subjects or events under investigation (Hughes, Davis & Imenda, 2019). It serves as the cornerstone for determining the study's credibility and applicability (Vithal, 2019) by helping the researcher to organise procedures to follow in carrying out the research and assess how closely it relates to the body of knowledge already in existence (Adom et al., 2018). It further assists the researcher to identify and outline the concepts that will be used, thereby facilitating the structure of the study by minimising the use of irrelevant data (Chukwuere, 2021) and makes the research problem, the terms used, and their definitions more explicit (Vithal, 2019). Thus, the theoretical framework generally establishes links between the research problem, specific research questions, data collecting, analytic procedures, and how the findings would be interpreted (du Plessis & van der Westhuizen, 2018; Kyngäs, Mikkonen & Kääriäinen, 2020). In this study Assertive Discipline Theory (ADT) has been adopted. ADT is used as a parameter guiding the study to its unique conclusions.

2.3 The Origin of Assertive Discipline Theory

The ADT was developed to address significant classroom management issues that impede learners learning and success (Onyango, Aloka & Raburu, 2018). It was designed to equip teachers with the knowledge and confidence to exercise authority and address school discipline issues effectively. Lee and Marlene Canter developed the theory in the 1970s after observing teachers' struggles to address learners' disruptive behaviour in school (Veronica, 2021). Canter's involvement in the theoretical and practical components of assertiveness training for numerous categories of human conflict led to the development of this method. The training was aimed at helping individuals develop more effective ways of communicating their needs and aspirations (Eichmann, 1994). Based on this idea, teachers who use the ADT express their need and desires to learners in the classroom.

2.4 Understanding the Assertive Discipline Theory

Assertive discipline is a classroom behaviour management strategy that emphasises clear guidelines for learners' conduct, positive reinforcement for compliance, and penalties for non-compliance (Feldman, 1994). Munawar and Nisfah (2020) add that assertive discipline is a non-coercive method of classroom management in which the teacher develops a set of fair, strict, and consistent classroom rules relevant to the setting and age of learners. They also contend that in addition to classroom rules, teachers who use ADT set predetermined motivations for learners who abide by the rules, a list of unfavourable consequences for those who break the rules, and a method for carrying out the plan with the learners, such as how to educate them about what is anticipated (Malmgren, Krezek & Paul, 2005). That is, the theory stresses that it is critical for teachers to teach learners how to behave.

ADT is founded on the principle that teachers have the right to teach without disturbance. Likewise, the learners have the right to learn in an environment without disturbance (Charles & Senter, 2005). This suggests that if a learner's behaviour does not follow the guidelines, the teacher must assume responsibility for that learner's behaviour (Praveen & Alex, 2017). The key to ADT is recognising and rewarding learners when they behave well and letting them know daily that the teachers appreciate them (Charles & Senter, 2005).

Assertive discipline approach suggests that teachers are the external locus of control and need to ensure that learners act in their best interests (Lewis, 1991 cited in Eichmann, 1994). It is a teacher-oriented approach since its premise is that teachers are the ideal people to deal with learners' disruptive behaviour because they have more life experience than learners. The theory stresses that teachers have seen and experienced the effects of particular behaviours and are ideal people to guide learners in school (Eichmann, 1994). Thus, the assumption is that learners are naturally cooperative and capable of changing their behaviour depending on the situation. For this reason, Canter (1989) argues that, in school, one learner who is disruptive in a certain classroom might not necessarily be in another.

According to Canter (2010) if learners have substantial knowledge on what is expected of them by the teacher, what will happen if they choose to meet those expectations, and what will happen if they choose to break the established classroom norms, they will make an informed decision regarding the choice of their behaviour. Thus, the primary target of the assertive discipline approach is to prevent disruptive behaviour from happening rather than punish it (Malmgren et al., 2005). The theory, therefore, advocates for teachers' proactive rather than reactive measures when managing learners' disruptive classroom behaviour.

The ADT asserts that learners' disruptive behaviour should not be tolerated in a classroom since it interferes with a conducive learning climate. Canter (1989) contends that when a conducive environment is established, learners spend more time concentrating on their tasks, and teachers spend most of the lesson teaching rather than dealing with disruptive behaviour.

2.5 Philosophical Approaches to the Management of Learners' Behaviour

Several significant philosophical and educational approaches exist to learners' behaviour management practices. I find it important to discuss their underlying presuppositions, objectives and approaches to classroom management to highlight how ADT relates to or does not relate to them.

Lewis (1991 cited in Eichmann, 1994) proposed three major categories for conceptualising the different educational theories regarding classroom management practices: the non-interventionist, interactionist, and interventionist theoretical stances. The three categories differ in this way:

- The non-interventionist teachers prioritise a learner-focused approach to learners' behaviour management.
- Interactionist teachers use a group-oriented strategy for learners' behaviour management.
- The interventionist teacher uses a teacher-focused approach to learners' behaviour management.

According to Wolfgang and Glickman (1986 cited in Soheili et al., 2015) non-interventionist teachers think that learners have intrinsic motivation to achieve and express themselves and as a result they allow learners to be self-directive. Interventionists, on the other hand, believe that the environment, which includes people and objects, impacts learners' behaviour and as a result, teachers should take control of learning environment proceedings (Yaşar, 2008). An interactionist method, which falls between non-interventionist and interventionist techniques, emphasises the teachers' and learners' mutual influence; teachers and learners share responsibility for classroom activities (Djigic & Stojiljkovic, 2011).

Canter's theory of assertive discipline posits that the actions implemented in response to behaviour have the potential to either reinforce or diminish that pattern of behaviour. The theory draws on the work of interventionalists such as of Thorndike and Skinner. *The law of effect*, proposed by Thorndike in 1905, pertains to animal behaviour and conditioning. It posits that the likelihood of a specific learned response being consistently elicited by a particular stimulus is contingent upon the perceived consequences of the response (Rafferty, 2023). This means that individuals are inclined to exhibit similar behaviours when confronted with conditions that resemble a prior favourable experience (Eichmann, 1994). Conversely, if they have an uncomfortable experience, they will do their best to avoid an unpleasant situation. Skinner's *operant conditioning* also emphasises that all behaviour is learned and that the outside environment influences people's behaviour (Iversen, 1992). Consequently,

a stimulus that comes before the behaviour (antecedents) or that comes after it (consequences) can impact it (Harlacher, 2015). Similarly, ADT advocates that teachers should reinforce learners' behaviour by using positive praise and negative consequences (Canter, 2010). This implies that positive reinforcement, derived from these philosophical principles, incentivises learners to sustain the behaviour that elicits praise.

2.6 Global Application of Assertive Discipline Theory

Since its establishment, ADT has gained popularity and has been used in numerous countries worldwide at different levels of schools. For instance, Swinson and Cording's (2002) findings revealed a positive impact in a school in the UK on children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The teachers received training on how to apply the model and the results show that after the training, learners' behaviour improved. They saw three beneficial results from using assertive discipline strategies in their schools. The first benefit was that the number of learners with good behaviour increased. Thus, a larger percentage of learners followed instructions and participated fully in the session. This improvement was shown in all classrooms regardless of the learners' ages. The second is that disruptive incidents decreased. This drop was seen across all classrooms, which might be explained by the fact that more learners were putting more time into their work. Lastly, the teachers used positive comments far more frequently than before. Teachers of younger and older learners were far more positive than they had previously been.

Şahin-Sak, Sak and Tezel-Şahin (2018) sought preschool instructors' opinions on the efficacy of various classroom management strategies in Turkey. According to the study, teachers found elements of assertive discipline models like rules, consequences, rewards, and punishment helpful in combating disruptive behaviour. In the USA, Etheridge (2010) examined the impact of an assertive discipline strategy on disruptive behaviour in schools. Data analysis showed a decrease in the number of discipline referrals received by administrators, resulting in a decline in school suspensions compared to the pre-intervention period. The findings showed fewer referrals from Fall 2008 to Fall 2009 between October 2008 and October 2009. The findings demonstrated a virtually 50% drop in the number of referrals. The inference

that may be made from the data is that the assertive discipline model is a successful strategy for disruptive classroom behaviour.

In Malaysia, Thilagaratnam and Yamat (2021) conducted a study to examine teachers' perceptions regarding learners' misbehaviour and the implementation of an assertive discipline approach in English classrooms in private independent schools. The researchers discovered that teachers perceived the model as a valuable tool for addressing disruptions in the English classroom.

The theory has also found success in Africa. One such research project was performed by Lambert (2017) in Rwanda. The study aimed to examine the impact of an assertive discipline strategy in the management on learners' achievement in secondary schools offering the Nine-Year Basic Education curriculum in the Nyanza District from 2012 to 2016. There were three main goals of the research. The primary aim of this study was to examine the correlation between implementing classroom rules and learners' academic performance using the assertive discipline approach. The study also sought to evaluate the impact of teachers administering punishments and rewards on students' academic performance using the assertive discipline approach. Lastly, the study aimed to investigate the influence of communication between school staff and parents on learners' academic performance following the assertive discipline approach. The findings indicated a significant correlation between the implementation of classroom rules and the academic achievement of students. Similarly, a correlation was observed between teachers' use of penalties and incentives and learners' academic achievement. Ultimately, a correlation was established between the level of communication maintained between school staff and parents and its impact on students' academic performance. This implies that the implementation of the assertive discipline model, which includes the establishment of classroom rules and the use of positive and negative behaviour reinforcements, contributes to the fulfilment of schools' intended objectives.

In South Africa, existing literature similarly indicates the efficacy of the assertive discipline approach in schools. For example, Gcelu, Padayachee and Onyemaechi Ede (2021) conducted a study to explore the collaborative strategies stakeholders employ in secondary schools to manage discipline in the iLembe district, KwaZulu-Natal. Three of the four case studies examined demonstrated the efficacy of the

assertive discipline strategy when implemented in secondary schools. According to the study, learners refrained from engaging in disruptive behaviour when teachers assertively guided their classes because they were able to identify assertive teachers and maintain discipline in their classrooms as they were aware of the consequences of misbehaviour.

2.7 Discipline in the Context of Assertive Discipline

According to Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (1990 cited in Grobbelaar & Jones, 2020), discipline is a process of instruction rather than compulsion. In their view, the goal of discipline is to teach societal responsibility and self-control to young people.

To dispel the misconception that discipline and punishment are interchangeable, Grobbelaar and Jones (2020) argue that discipline is education through which knowledge and skills are taught, and children are assisted in acquiring self-control and self-discipline. In contrast, punishment creates an adult's control and authority over a child. Reyneke (2012) further clarifies the distinction between discipline and punishment by arguing that discipline is intrinsic, and educative, focusing on exercising self-control for self-actualisation, whereas punishment is external and punitive focusing on exerting control over others to compel compliance. Arnall (2001) holds a similar perspective and emphasises that discipline is proactive and preserves mutual respect and dignity because children are taught self-control mechanisms and given explanations, in contrast to punishment, which is reactive, disregards a child's feelings and dignity and teaches outside control without providing any justification. Nieman and Shea (2004 cited in Omoyemiju, Ojo & Olatomide, 2015) contend that discipline serves as the framework for a child's successful and happy integration into the outside world and the groundwork for the growth of the child's self-discipline. Even though some parents and teachers use the terms interchangeably, discipline and punishment are not conceptually the same (Omoyemiju et al., 2015).

Drawing on the various definitions that have been discussed and the theoretical point of view, discipline in the context of a school is the process whereby teachers advise learners on the proper manner of conduct, lovingly and caringly reprimand improper behaviour, and provide them with necessary warnings and assistance. Therefore, discipline is not a remedial action, but rather a proactive method teachers adopt to

develop learners' abilities to govern their conduct. Thus, the responsibility of teachers in the context of school discipline is to develop constructive relationships with each learner, teach learners appropriate behaviour, observe and reflect on the teaching they receive, and reteach in order to cultivate an environment that will improve teaching and learning conditions so that learners can realise their fullest possible potential.

2.8 Situating Assertive Discipline in the South African School Legal Context

South African schools are governed by legislation and regulations. Therefore, any behaviour management strategy should adhere to such regulations. Adopting the principles of assertive discipline should, then, be in line with the South African legal system for schools, which is based on the constitution of the country. This discussion will show the significance and relationship of the theory to the legislations such as the Children's Act 38 of 2005 (RSA), 2006), the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996), the SACE (Act 31 of 2000) Code of Professional Ethics, the ATCP Strategies (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2010) and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC, 2015).

Both section 7(1)(h) of the Children's Act of 2005 and section 10 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) prohibit the use of corporal punishment and advocate the elimination of any form of behaviour that may cause physical or emotional harm to a child. Similarly, The SACE governs the South African teachers' profession. The council was established in accordance with Act No. 27 of the National Education Policy (RSA, 1996).

The SACE Code of Professional Ethics (2000) provides standards for teachers' conduct and duties in the school. The code mandates teachers to guide and encourage each learner to realise their potential; strive to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa; exercise authority with compassion; avoid any form of humiliation and refrain from any form psychological or physical abuse; protect gender equality; and take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of learners (SACE, 2000).

In 2000 the ATCP measures were implemented in schools as a result of the prohibition of corporal punishment through legislation, specifically, the SASA 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b) and the Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act 33 of 1997. Disciplinary measures that serve as alternatives to corporal punishment are available to uphold discipline in schools without causing physical harm to learners. These alternatives encompass various approaches, including verbal warnings, demerits, written warnings, disciplinary discussions, and temporary suspension from school (DBE, 2010).

The Constitution of the RSA (1996a) (Act 108 of 1996) explicitly recognises and upholds the entitlement of everyone to be treated with respect and dignity. This is articulated in sections 10 and 12 1(e). The SAHRC endorses the constitutional right mentioned, as it refers to Clause 139 (2) of the Children's Act Amendment Bill, which states that no child should be subjected to corporal punishment or any form of punishment that is deemed cruel, inhuman, or degrading (SAHRC, 2015). Under section 28 1(d) of the Bill of Rights, children are safeguarded through legal measures against violence and exploitation. The provision, as stated in the RSA (1996a), affirms the entitlement of every child to protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation.

The significance of the ADT and its relevance to the legislation lies in its disapproval of methods involving humiliation and physical punishment to manage behaviour among learners. The theory stresses the importance of creating a favourable environment in which the rights of all individuals involved in learning are respected and safeguarded (Praveen & Alex, 2017). Therefore, adopting methods in line with the ADT would encourage teachers to instil in their learners a set of values that align with the rights recognised by the South African Constitution by gently discouraging learners from disrupting their peers' learning process.

2.9 The Classroom Situation in the Context of Assertive Discipline

The classroom serves as an educational environment where teachers and students convene to learn. The motivation for developing this theory stemmed from Canter's observation of three distinct teacher responses to disruptive behaviour in the classroom: non-assertive, hostile, and assertive. The discussion centres on the

distinctions in tactics employed by each of these types of teachers concerning classroom management. Next, the focus shifts towards a discussion of the reasons for Canter's endorsement of the adoption of the ADT.

2.9.1 Non-assertive teacher

A non-assertive teacher tends to respond to disruptive behaviour from learners in an excessively passive manner. Praveen and Alex (2017) argue that there is a demonstration of inconsistency in their behaviour as they allow certain actions on one day and disapprove of them on the following day. According to Canter, the presence of such unpredictability causes uncertainty among learners about the expectations set out by their teacher, thereby inducing feelings of insecurity and frustration. Given that behaviour can be considered a mode of communication, it can be contended that learners who experience frustration may express their frustrations through disruptive behaviour in the classroom when confronted with a non-assertive teacher.

2.9.2 Hostile teacher

A hostile teacher can be characterised as a teacher who employs stringent strategies to address disruptive behaviour, thereby impeding the development of solid rapport between learners and teachers (Charles & Senter, 2005). These teachers perceive their students as rivals and hold the belief that they should exert authority by applying strict rules, giving commands, and displaying stern facial expressions in the classroom. According to Charles and Senter (2005), learners exhibit a negative disposition towards this approach due to the emotions of fear and perceived unfairness that it elicits. Drawing upon an understanding of the distinction between punishment and discipline, it can be argued that teachers exhibiting hostile characteristics are more inclined to address disruptive behaviour in students by implementing punitive measures.

2.9.3 Assertive teacher

According to Huda (2020) assertive teachers possess a set of competencies that allow them to effectively communicate their genuine emotions to learners and exert influence over their actions in alignment with the teachers' objectives and desires. This implies effectively expressing one's thoughts, emotions, convictions, attitudes,

stances, and similar aspects in a lucid, self-assured, sincere, and straightforward fashion. In essence, an assertive teacher is characterised by the ability to stand up for oneself while simultaneously considering the needs and rights of learners in the classroom (Praveen & Alex, 2017).

According to Mandlebaum et al. (1983) teachers are assertive if they exhibit the following skills:

- Knowledge of the behaviour they expect from learners.
- Ability to communicate the behaviour they expect verbally and in writing.
- Ability to respond consistently to appropriate behaviour to reinforce it and apply consequences to inappropriate behaviour to discourage it.
- Ability to ask for help from others to systematise discipline.

The prevailing notion is that a teacher who adopts an assertive approach effectively conveys their expectations and desires by teaching learners appropriate behaviour and informing them of the potential repercussions for deviating from such behaviour. Once more, it can be inferred that an assertive teacher has a behaviour plan that clearly defines expected behaviour and consequences that may follow. The plan is effectively communicated to both learners and other individuals with a vested interest, such as parents. As a result of the plan, teachers can maintain consistency, transparency, and fairness when addressing learners' behaviour (Praveen & Alex, 2017). Therefore, teachers demonstrate assertiveness in their interactions with learners by establishing and maintaining standards that enable them to carry out their instructional plans without disruption.

2.10 Assertive Teachers' Perception of Learners' Behaviour and Approaches

Bashant (2020) posits that individuals' reactions to circumstances depend on their cognitive processes. Hence teachers' viewpoints regarding disruptive behaviour in the classroom significantly impact their approaches to managing and mitigating such behaviour. As previously discussed, there exists a distinct difference in the perspectives of assertive teachers towards learners compared to non-assertive and hostile teachers. This perception significantly impacts their learning approach and

disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Thus, assertive teachers believe that learners' behaviour manifests from various interactions with the environment and that they can be taught how to behave acceptably despite such interaction. However, such teaching is coupled with the perception that the classroom also consists of difficult learners who may need extraordinary support (Charles & Senter, 2005).

Assertive teachers believe learners' behaviour results from their environment (Felver, 2020). This means that where learners live significantly impacts their personality, habits, knowledge and behaviour. This suggests that such teachers believe that courteous, tolerant, and diligent learners learn these behavioural tendencies from their parents, past educational environments, relatives, friends, and immediate cultures. In the same way, the same environment cultivated the traits of being impatient, demanding, argumentative, prone to laziness and disruptive of other learners (Bennett, 2021).

Based on the preceding discussion about the differentiation among theories regarding classroom management practices, namely non-interventionist, interactionist, and interventionist, it can be posited that ADT falls in the interventionist category. This theory advocates a teacher-centred approach to managing learner behaviour. Hence, one can contend that this approach towards behaviour suggests that assertive teachers believe that behaviour is learned and can be taught and modified. Thus, to support learners' growth, teachers should teach them the behaviours they lack (Canter, 2010). In this way, assertive teachers believe behaviour is comparable to a curriculum. And like any curriculum, they cannot just instruct learners to behave and then reward or penalise them based on their performance (Bennett, 2021). But like any practical skill in a curriculum, they first patiently teach the learners acceptable behaviour in the classroom, then check for misunderstandings and continue reteaching. This means assertive teachers are patient because they know learners do not understand all at once. They acknowledge there might be some difficult learners in schools, and that they should exercise patience because it is their responsibility to teach those learners how to conduct themselves.

Assertive teachers also assume they should set behaviour expectations, routines and structure for learners so that they do not fend for themselves and end up making decisions that do not promote a secure and an orderly atmosphere (Charles & Senter,

2005). They believe that a teacher should run the classroom with the attitude that learners do well and that something is getting in the way if they cannot. As a result, it is their responsibility to determine the problem so that they can assist (Bashant, 2020). When they assist learners in terms of proper conduct, assertive teachers understand that the classroom is made of different learners, some of which are very difficult hence the need for preplanned strategies on classroom management (Charles & Senter, 2005).

2.11 Difficult Learners

According to Canter (2010), the assertive discipline method is beneficial for nearly all learners, except for difficult learners who may need additional attention. Canters asserts that difficult learners present challenges in the school because they exhibit persistent disruptive behaviours, defiance, a lack of motivation or demand constant attention, leading to heightened levels of stress, irritation, and anger from teachers (Charles & Senter, 2005). The implication is that difficult learners exhibit consistent and intense disruptive behaviour, resulting in teachers experiencing a loss of calmness. Canter asserts that many difficult learners suffer from behavioural or emotional disorders. Just as individuals who experience psychological abuse or are born predisposed to alcoholism and those addicted to substances such as cocaine or other drugs may face significant difficulties. According to the theory, teachers should acknowledge that many difficult learners come from households with limited parental authority and influence over their behaviour (Canter, 2010). Thus, they are learners teachers may not desire to have in their classrooms, but who nevertheless require adult guidance and care.

According to Charles and Senter (2005), Canter proposes three key processes of assertive discipline that teachers should employ to engage difficult learners effectively. These processes include reaching out to these learners, establishing effective communication to foster trust, and addressing their unique needs.

2.11.1 Reaching out to difficult learners

Canter (1993 cited in Charles & Santer, 2005) suggests that teachers should try to put themselves in the shoes of difficult learners to comprehend the world from their viewpoint. In this way, teachers may be able to adapt their teaching approaches

in response to the conditions at hand. Canter proposes a second approach for schools which involves teachers strategically devising their responses to hostile or rebellious learners. Thus, teachers should become proactive rather than reactive towards them. Being proactive may help teachers reply to such learners politely without becoming frustrated or sending them to the principal's office. According to Canter, sending difficult learners to the principal's office is ineffective in managing learners because it gives teachers negative stress and persistent feelings of failure. In the end, difficult learners become less trustworthy and less ready to comply with the teacher's request, which causes anxiety across the entire classroom. It is inferred that assertive discipline advocates that teachers build trust with difficult learners by planning proactive responses (Canter, 1989). The following are the suggested guidelines that teachers may adopt to respond proactively to difficult learners:

- Anticipate what the difficult learners will do and say.
- Consider their options for responding.
- Keep in mind that they have a choice regarding how they will react, thus, they can choose not to let their feelings get hurt.

Canter (1989) argues that establishing a connection with difficult learners is crucial to gaining their trust as opposed to simply reacting to their behaviour. Teachers who develop positive relationships with their learners via open dialogue, trust, and responsiveness allow learners to thrive academically and socially while giving them a sense of community in the classroom (Bosman et al., 2018; Hughes & Cao, 2018). Since difficult learners do not view their teachers as role models, distrust them, hate school, and do not see the value in acting responsibly, teachers working with difficult learners should prioritise building trust with such learners (Watson Daly, Smith & Rabin, 2019).

2.11.2 Building trust with difficult learners

Numerous studies have provided evidence of a substantial correlation between aggressive and disruptive behaviours in children who display conduct issues and externalising problems, and their diminished trust and detrimental relationships with their teachers (McGrath & Van Bergen, 2015; Mejia & Hoglund, 2016; Nurmi, 2012; Watson, Daly, Smith & Rabin, 2019). While it is often observed that a significant

number of learners enter school with a predisposition to trust teachers, research has indicated that around 60% of students hailing from poor communities exhibit a lack of trust towards their teachers. Hence, it is crucial to create trust between students and teachers to facilitate successful learning (Watson et al., 2019).

The social-emotional and academic outcomes of children are greatly influenced by the quality of their interpersonal interactions with teachers (Ettekal & Shi, 2020; Hughes & Cao, 2018). Furthermore, prior studies have suggested that learners who are at risk of facing academic challenges because of behavioural concerns may experience substantial benefits from fostering strong teacher-student connections (Bosman et al., 2018; Ettekal & Shi, 2020). According to Ettekal and Shi (2020), the establishment of a good and supportive connection plays a critical role in treating and perhaps overcoming academic obstacles and behavioural issues experienced by teenagers in schools. Canter argues that teachers have a crucial responsibility to view each learner as a distinct individual and offer them equivalent care and attention as they would seek for their children. To accomplish this objective, Canter suggests that teachers should consider employing these techniques towards difficult learners:

- Compile an inventory encompassing a learner's interests, including inquiries related to the learner's families, social connections, recreational pursuits, favourite books, television shows, future ambitions, and what the learner may want the teacher to do.
- Initiate individualised greetings and deliver personalised messages to difficult learners.
- Allocate dedicated time to engage in one-on-one interactions with individuals, if feasible, while actively focusing on their needs and interests.
- Contact individuals privately to demonstrate empathy or express remorse, if deemed necessary.
- Express concern for their health by sending a get-well card or making a phone call to offer well wishes during their illness.

2.11.3 Meeting the needs of difficult learners

According to Canter (1983 cited in Charlese & Santer, 2005) learners who are hard to teach feel like their needs are not met at school. Teachers need to be aware of these needs and try to meet them. The author further postulates that these learners have three main needs: more attention, tighter rules and encouragement. Teachers must pay attention to these needs to help students who are hard to teach. Canter says that teachers should look at the learners' behaviour, how they react to it, and how the learner reacts to how teachers react to the learners' behaviour (Charlese & Santer, 2005). This will help them to see which need is most important at any given time.

2.12 Assertive Teachers' Behaviour Management Plan

According to the ADT, every teacher has a right to teach in an environment free from distractions, and learners have a right to learn in a well-organised classroom that does not tolerate disruptive behaviour (Malmgren et al., 2005). Hence the theory emphasises that teachers should uphold their rights and those of their learners by establishing an inviting environment for optimal teaching and learning. Considering these vital rights, it may be inferred that the theory supports a proactive approach to managing learners' behaviour. As a result, teachers commence their instructional efforts by formulating a comprehensive behaviour management strategy, which they employ to regulate the conduct of their learners while imparting knowledge successfully. The plan includes classroom expectations, rules and consequences to enforce good behaviour (Şahin-Sak et al., 2018).

2.12.1 Identifying and expressing expectations

Expectations serve as standards that dictate the appropriate behaviour and behaviour that learners are expected to adhere to (Harlacher, 2015). They apply to all learners and encompass many classroom or school activities. To establish expectations that align with the distinct behavioural issues present in each school, Harlacher (2015) proposes that teachers consider the subsequent strategies:

- Analyse the school's mission statement and establish corresponding expectations.

- Think about the essential attributes that learners must possess to thrive at school and establish classroom expectations based on these qualities.
- Examine data related to learners' classroom behaviours, identify prevalent problematic behaviours, and formulate a distinct set of expectations to mitigate such behaviours. That can be done using direct classroom observation or pre-existing data, such as records of office discipline referrals.

Furthermore, teachers are urged to include three to five expectations because fewer may not cover learners' classroom behaviour, and more than five may be difficult for learners to recall. Apart from that, teachers should be precise about expectations, for example, telling learners what should be done rather than what should not be done (be considerate rather than be selfish) (Malone & Tietjens, 2000). This implies that expectations should reflect desired behaviour rather than vice versa. Promoting responsibility in the classroom might be exemplified by the expectation "Be responsible". This expectation encompasses a wide range of routines, settings, and activities, including but not limited to engaging in and making meaningful contributions to group activities in the classroom.

2.12.2 Creating classroom rules

According to Malone and Tietjens (2000), the primary objective of implementing classroom rules is to safeguard the individual rights of learners, ensuring that one learner's freedom does not encroach on the freedom of another learner. Vijayan, Chakravarthi and Philips (2016) assert that an effective classroom atmosphere depends on well-crafted classroom rules. Mitchell, Hirn and Lewis (2017) argue that teachers establish classroom rules based on expectation, which forms the foundation for values and social skills. According to ADT, classroom rules are essential to teachers' behavioural management plans because they are more specific since they relate to certain activities or established patterns. It has been established that classroom rules set learners' behaviour expectations in different places in the school (Zoromski et al., 2021). For example, the rule "focus on your assigned tasks" may be derived from the underlying expectation of "be responsible". This rule is applicable in the context of a classroom setting. It may not, nonetheless, be relevant to learners during lunch breaks (Harlacher, 2015). The implication is that to teach learners the

desired behaviour, assertive teachers establish clear expectations and establish rules tailored to specific settings.

The optimal number of rules is often cited as a pivotal element of effective rule implementation (Alter & Haydon, 2017). Although an exact number is not specified, there is a general agreement that the number of classroom rules should not exceed seven (Malone & Tietjens, 2000). In addition, language that expresses desired behaviours instead of negative behaviours is often recommended when formulating classroom rules (Alter & Haydon, 2017). That means classroom rules should be stated positively. Table 2.1 below shows the difference between positive, negative and vague classroom rules.

Table 2.1: Examples of positive, negative, and vague classroom rules

Positive	Negative	Vague
Raise your hand when you want to talk	Don't interrupt others	Respect others
Keep your eyes on the teacher	Don't look around the room	Listen to the teacher
Before you leave make sure your desk is clean	Do not leave your desk dirty	Keep the classroom neat

Source: Adapted from Bicard (2000)

2.12.3 Actively teaching expectations and rules

Jones and Jones (2004 cited in Vijayan et al., 2016) contend that classroom rules should not just be a way of detecting learners' misbehaviour; instead, they should assist them in making good decisions on how to behave. This implies that teachers should start the process of teaching and clarifying the rules and anticipated behaviour to learners after they have been established. Hence displaying a compilation of classroom rules on the walls in the class should not be regarded as an adequate form of teaching. According to Bennett (2021) and Halarcher (2015), it is recommended that teachers impart knowledge of classroom rules to learners in a manner akin to teaching academic content. This entails explicitly expressing the rule, offering a rationale for its importance (Malone & Tietjens, 2000), presenting illustrative examples and counter-examples, and allowing learners to apply the rule in practical settings (Bennett, 2021). Kerr and Nelson (2010 cited in Alter & Haydon, 2017) propose

comparable suggestions, advocating the provision of explanations for each rule and using role-playing activities to enable students to apply these rules.

Based on the findings of a survey conducted in Queensland, Australia, Hepburn and Beamish (2020) concluded that when secondary schoolteachers establish classroom rules and expectations without providing explicit guidance to learners and merely display them on classroom walls, the primary focus of classroom management shifts from fostering positive behaviour to reducing or eliminating disruptive behaviour. Given the constraints of a prescribed curriculum and limited time, one may contend that there is a potential debate surrounding allocating time for teachers to instruct learners on expectations and rules. However, implementing assertive discipline emphasises the importance of teachers dedicating their time to teaching learners desired behaviours. This approach aims to facilitate positive discipline and enhance the achievement of classroom objectives for learners to flourish academically.

2.12.4 Paste rules publicly

The practice of publicly displaying rules in written form is valuable as it functions as a visual stimulus that aids teaching and reinforces expectations for learners (Alter & Haydon, 2017). According to Scott et al. (2011 cited in Alter & Haydon, 2017), it is advised in classroom management textbooks that rules should be visibly displayed to encourage pro-social behaviour. The writers additionally propose the use of visual aids, such as pictures, to symbolise words for students who possess limited reading abilities. Furthermore, it is suggested that teachers consider distributing printed versions of the rules to learners, as well as displaying them publicly. Other studies (see Bicard, 2000; Malone & Tietjens, 2000) offer similar recommendations for freely and frequently posting them in numerous places.

2.12.5 Consequences

According to Malone and Tietjens (2000), when the learners understand the purpose of classroom rules, any behaviour that violates the rule should be considered intentional and addressed promptly after the occurrence. Effective classroom rules usually include the application of consequences that both reward rule compliance and penalise non-compliance (Zoromski et al., 2021). According to Bicard (2000), it has been noticed that when teachers neglected to actively promote positive behaviour and

discourage negative behaviour in the classroom by implementing established consequences, there was no significant change in the behaviour of the learners. Hence, the presence of both negative and positive consequences is essential in effectively managing disruptive behaviour among learners in the classroom.

According to Kerr and Nelson (2010 cited in Alter & Haydon, 2017), it is argued that the consequences should encompass consistent implementation and extend beyond mere warnings or instructional talks. The logical alignment between consequences and rules is important. For example, when a child regularly screams out instead of raising their hand, they can be given a five-minute pause to practise the behaviour of raising their hand (Alter & Haydon, 2017). Bicard (2000) also suggested that collectively discussing the rules and their implications during teaching or reteaching sessions would be beneficial.

In essence, assertive discipline argues that classroom rules should be linked to positive and negative consequences. However, it stresses that it is essential that the consequences do not lead to any form of physical or psychological harm (Canter, 2010). Hence, the theory opposes the use of corporal punishment or the act of humiliating learners by methods such as public mockery or degradation. Positive motivation is a pivotal component in this theory, as it stimulates and strengthens desired behaviours in schools. Considering that behaviour may be regarded as a kind of communication that requires a response, it is crucial for teachers to continuously foster appropriate behaviour in their classrooms by using behaviour management plans. Such a plan helps maintain consistency across all learners.

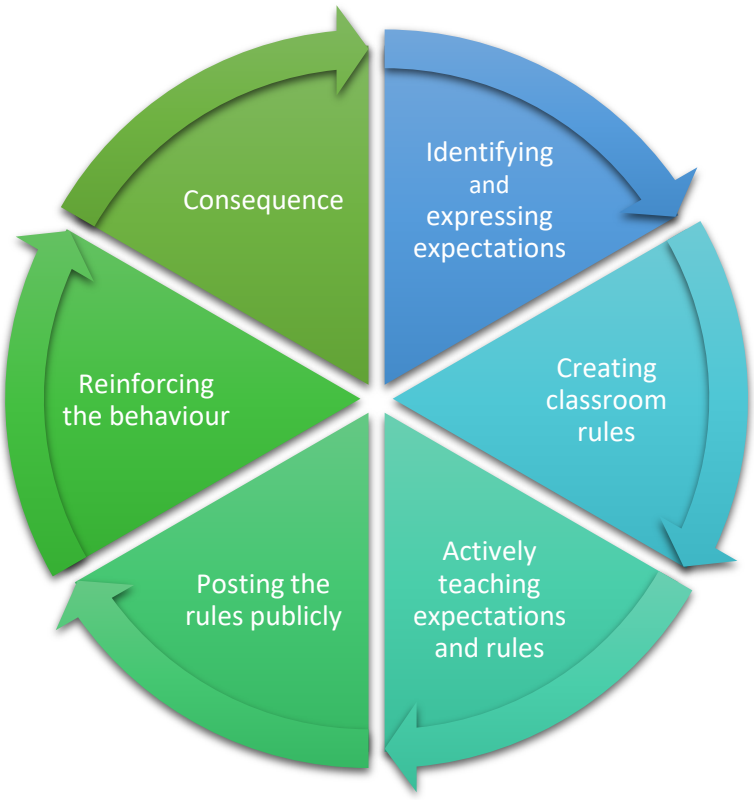


Figure 2.1: Author' s conceptual map of the summary of assertive teachers' classroom behavioural management plan

The above figure illustrates the conceptual map of progressive proactive measures advocated by ADT for planning and consistently assisting learners in self-regulating their behaviour that I have created based on the assumption of ADT.

2.13 Influence of Assertive Discipline Theory on the Study

Using the ADT framework has facilitated the study in delineating the fundamental principles and responsibilities that each stakeholder should observe to effectively implement instructional practices in the classroom setting. Employing ADT shows that the seemingly smooth and uninterrupted exchange of connections between the teacher, learners, and material is, in reality, the result of several deliberate choices that shape the unfolding events and contribute to the overall climate of the classroom.

Because of ADT, research examined the role of individuals involved in managing behaviour among learners, specifically focusing on stakeholders' influence on classroom activities. Through this lens, the study shows that activities in schools are

meticulously coordinated at an expert level to facilitate the acquisition of valuable knowledge and that most decisions on the operational dynamics of a classroom are established either implicitly or explicitly before the arrival of learners. Thus, the choices and decisions made in schools significantly influence the development and establishment of a classroom culture conducive to learning.

The ADT framework shows that school management activities convey information about the valued norms, expectations and routines. For this, ADT helps to draw the conclusion that encourages the staff to be proactive in their approaches to their classroom such that learning materialises as intended. Employing ADT emphasises learners' active development of knowledge, such as how to govern their behaviour and engage socially with others over the management characterised by behavioural control, compliance and obedience.

The ADT emphasises the need for consistency in teacher actions. However, this level of consistency does not arise spontaneously but is achieved by collaborative efforts among stakeholders to identify the requirements for teachers and learners to produce an optimal learning environment. In this context, the ADT advocates the strategic planning involved in assisting learners in regulating their behaviour, how to establish a plan, its components, the measures to be taken to reinforce expected behaviour and the means of supporting learners who exhibit particularly challenging behaviour. In general, the theory has supported the study in constructing arguments and drawing conclusions on the characteristics of a classroom environment free of disruptions, the necessary measures for its establishment, and the various parties involved in its attainment.

2.14 Criticism of Assertive Discipline

Alfie Kohn, a researcher in classroom management, has criticised the core principles of the assertive disciplinary system. Kohn (1997) contends that learners' self-determination should be emphasised more than self-control and that encouraging involvement in decision-making regarding all aspects of classroom management is better than enforcing pre-established rules. Nelson (2002) also adds that learners who are confident and enthusiastic about learning can only be found in classes where teachers are less controlling and more likely to promote children's autonomy. Kohn

contends further that in a classroom where teachers employ assertive discipline, things like learners' creativity and inventiveness are surrendered to the need to abide by the rules. Similarly, different research discovered that people tend to lose interest in whatever they have to do the more they are rewarded for it and focus mainly on a reward (Kohn, 2001). Another issue with assertive discipline is the use of excessive praise. Kohn (1997) argues that when praise is being overdone, it can be manipulative or pointless because children will become more reliant on parental approval of the behaviour and less motivated to put up the effort necessary to win that approval. This suggests that the more teachers compliment learners, the more they will rely on teachers' opinions. In other words, Kohn (2001) argues that the positive reinforcement used in assertive discipline strategy may successfully change learners' behaviour momentarily but is unlikely to make them stick to it forever.

Like Kohn, Palardy (1996) asserts that assertive discipline is ineffective for various learners, contexts, and circumstances. He draws attention to four important and frequently disregarded limitations of assertive discipline. The first drawback of assertive discipline is that it addresses symptoms rather than causes. There is minimal emphasis on identifying reasons in assertive discipline because the goal is to change behaviour. According to Palardy (1996), it is very difficult to alter behaviour without understanding the reasons behind inappropriate behaviour. The second drawback is that assertive discipline only has a short-term positive impact. More precisely, the benefits of behaviour modification on maladaptive behaviour do not last. The third drawback is that assertive discipline has little practical application. It is naive to expect that conditioned behaviour will be maintained since conditioning a learner to behave in one situation does not guarantee that the learner will comply in all situations. The last drawback is that assertive discipline downplays the importance of self-control. It discourages learners from developing their capacity to decide independently and hold themselves accountable for the results of their behaviour by prioritising behaviour control over self-discipline.

2.15 Benefits of Assertive Discipline

Being assertive promotes equality in interpersonal interactions, enables teachers to pursue their objectives without encountering nervousness, express their emotions sincerely and promptly and exercise their entitlements without infringing upon the

rights of learners (Munawar & Nisfah, 2020). Using an assertive discipline approach in classroom management is deemed helpful as it assists teachers in consistently and equitably controlling learner conduct, guaranteeing that comparable actions are addressed with equivalent consequences (Praveen & Alex, 2017). Therefore, the use of ADT serves to foster equity in schools and proactive measures for learners' behaviour management.

According to Swinson and Cording (2002), the plan enables teachers to communicate the rules and expectations that the class should adhere to effectively, while also reducing any potential ambiguity. As learners acquire knowledge of the appropriate actions to undertake, the specific locations to navigate, and the sequential procedures to follow, they gradually cultivate the capacity to regulate their conduct autonomously (Canter, 2010).

The plan may also be distributed to learners' homes, ensuring that parents are well-informed about the expectations and repercussions set forth by teachers. This proactive approach aims to prevent potential surprises or confusion when teachers initiate communication with parents. It is reasonable to argue that ADT may promote and advocate increased parental involvement practices in schools.

Although rules may not inherently guarantee effectiveness, they do establish structure, facilitate teacher expectations, lay the groundwork for learning and promote the maintenance of a well-managed and orderly classroom environment. The establishment of positive rules, along with the constant implementation of these rules by a teacher, creates an environment conducive to acknowledging and commending learners' accomplishments. This practice not only benefits the learner but also serves to enhance the teacher's professional growth (Bicard, 2000).

2.16 Summary

The study's theoretical foundations have been laid forth in detail. Its philosophical stance regarding the disciplining of learners has also been examined. The next chapter delves more deeply into the research done on CDB on a global and regional scale.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter covered the conceptual and theoretical framework that served as the lens of this study. This chapter provides a review of literature that is pertinent to CDB. The main themes in this chapter include a literature review, the reasons for classroom disruption, categories of disruptive classroom behaviour, the impact of CDB, learners' legal behaviour management systems, causes of disruptive classroom behaviour, managing CDB and a summary.

3.2 Literature Review

According to Harris (2019), a literature review elucidates the topic of inquiry by examining pertinent prior research. It covers books, scholarly articles, and other materials specifically pertinent to the field of study, as well as the theories used in those studies and a summary, description, and critical evaluation of the literature (Creswell, 2020; Lim, Kumar & Ali, 2022; Snyder, 2019). According to Creswell (2020), a literature review is a concise presentation of information derived from pre-existing secondary sources pertaining to a certain topic. Snyder (2019) and Lim et al. (2022) emphasise that a literature review also serves to identify areas of knowledge deficiency in the field. By filling in these gaps, the researcher advances knowledge and concepts (Vithal, 2019). A literature review serves as the foundational structure for a researcher's work and facilitates the contextualisation of one's study in the broader academic discourse of the respective area (Creswell, 2020; Lim et al., 2022). A literature review also helps a researcher to choose the best techniques for a given study (Snyder, 2019).

3.3 Reasons Behind Disruptive Behaviour in the Classroom

Behaviour is a form of communication that is influenced by a range of individual motives. Therefore, interpreting the motive for behaviour is complex (Muna, 2020; Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2020). Schools have collectively set standards regarding learners' acceptable level of conduct.

Certain learners may exhibit disruptive behaviour because of their age, as they may be driven by their personal beliefs, a desire for attention, or curiosity (Etonge, 2014). Amongst these various dimensions, teachers are responsible for evaluating the magnitude of the behaviour to determine whether it is mild, moderate, or poses a severe threat to others in the classroom setting. Therefore, the individuals' experiences of teachers in managing the behaviour may differ, thus necessitating an exploration of their experiences regarding managing disruptive classroom behaviour.

According to Sprinson and Berrick (2010), learners' behaviour in the classroom reflects their internal working models of who they are. Hence if learners perceive themselves as not fitting into the classroom environment, they may resort to disruptive behaviour to prompt teachers to remove them from the classroom. Likewise, some may exhibit such behaviour if they seek to evade classroom stimuli or specific activities (Sciaraffa, Zeanah & Zeanah, 2018). According to Paulson et al. (2022), teachers are responsible for modifying learners' internal working model by challenging their self-perceptions while fostering an environment that promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance in the classroom.

Moreover, Forsberg, Chiriac and Thornberg (2021) assert that learners engage in disruptive behaviour to get attention. They may seek attention from others to intervene in their circumstances, but because they are immature, some may not know how to request assistance correctly and do it disruptively. Furthermore, Paulson et al. (2022) stress that learners seek attention by behaving disruptively to gain control of the situation that surrounds them.

According to Rayment (2006, cited in Marais and Meier, 2010), learners often engage in disruptive behaviour in the classroom as they mature and develop since developing an interest in attempting new things is a normal aspect of their development. The author confirms that some disruptive learners are typically interested learners who transgress to satisfy their curiosity. Thus, the teachers' skill in effectively interpreting learners' behaviour is critical because such interpretation forms the basis of the response (Bashant, 2020).

3.4 Categories of Classroom Disruptive Behaviour

Several studies have investigated the various forms of learner disruptions observed in schools (Ghazi et al., 2013; Jacob, 2022; Vongvilay, Fauziati & Ratih, 2021). These studies have listed a range of behaviours exhibited by learners in classroom environments. In contrast to the approach, Levin and Nolan (1996 as cited in Etonge, 2014) and Popp (2010) researched and categorised different forms of disruptive behaviours observed in schools. There are similarities in the categories they created, though they use different terminology to express them. In this section, I include those who listed them and classified such behaviours, focusing on categorising them as mild, deep, or extreme.

3.4.1 Mild disruptive behaviour

Some learners' disruptive behaviour is typical of children during their schooling journey. This behaviour includes "goofing off" (Vongvilay et al., 2021), verbal interruptions, body movements (Turi, 2019), and being adamant about respecting instructions (Jacob, 2022). In this category, learners exhibiting disruptive behaviour include those who are easily distracted by external stimuli such as police or fire drill sirens or those who come to school still exuberant from the previous weekend's social activities and have trouble waiting for an appropriate time (such as break) to express their excitement with their peers (Ghazi et al., 2013; Popp, 2010).

3.4.2 Deep disreuptive behaviour

This behaviour is seen when learners disregard authority. For example, instead of performing the assigned task, such learners act differently, are disobedient, and even become violent towards others and the teacher (Turi, 2019; Vongvilay et al., 2021). Such learners may continually call out, mimic or echo the teacher's voice and engage in excessive talking while the teacher tries to teach (Jacob, 2022). Sometimes this behaviour erupts from conflict between learners from their homes or in school (Popp, 2010). Unlike mild disruptions, this behaviour causes emotional discomfort for teachers and learners.

3.4.3 Extreme disruptive behaviour

Some learners' disruptive behaviour goes beyond deep to an extreme level, making both the learning environment and the school environment unsafe. According to Popp (2010), the disruption is chronic at this level. Such behaviour includes punching, slapping, bullying, fighting, damaging school property (Turi, 2019), brandishing dangerous weapons, and even injuring teachers and learners. Identifying learners who exhibit chronic behaviour is a straightforward task (Popp, 2010). The author suggests that teachers' emotions while marking learners' daily attendance registers can indicate whether a learner is a chronic disrupter. Thus, when a teacher derives a feeling of contentment perusing the attendance register and observing the non-attendance of a certain learner, it signifies a learner who exhibits exceedingly disruptive behaviour inside the classroom. This implies that individuals who persistently disrupt the learning environment create disruptions that result in emotional exhaustion for both teachers and other learners in the classroom.

The inference may be drawn that in the classroom setting, there exist three distinct kinds of disruptive behaviours, hence making it an unavoidable occurrence for teachers to encounter such behaviour. Hence, irrespective of the extent of disruptive behaviour observed in the classroom, it is imperative for teachers to use effective techniques to effectively manage such behaviour. It could be argued that there may be an overlap in reasons behind a behaviour and the three categories. For example, one learner whose disruptive behaviour stems from curiosity to explore things might exhibit behaviour that qualifies as deep, while another may exhibit mild behaviour. Similarly, one learner may seek attention mildly, but another may go to an extreme level to demonstrate the importance and urgency of the aid requested. The implication is that before devising strategies to intervene proactively, teachers should first understand the reasons and categories of learners' behaviour. These overlaps between reasons and categories of disruptive behaviour further add value to my aim of exploring the dynamic experiences of secondary school teachers in managing CDB. The levels of disruptive behaviour are shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The conceptual of classroom disruptive behaviour steps that the author created.

Figure 3.1 represents my view of disruptive behaviour levels derived from the preceding section on behaviour categories. The diagram illustrates the progression of behaviour, ranging from a moderate manifestation to an intense and persistent degree.

3.5 Impact of Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour

The presence of learners' CDB can have a diverse array of effects on the school climate and learning. Several studies concur that it is complex to manage behaviour because it stems from the multifaceted nature of the factors (Juta & van Wyk, 2020; Wangdi & Namgyel, 2022; Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2020). Dwarika (2019) posits that social systems directly influence learners' behaviour at school, which is intricately interconnected with their conduct. The statement aligns with Bandura's triadic reciprocal determinism theory, which posits that an individual's surroundings, behaviour and self-reflection are interrelated (Lunga, 2020). Scholarly literature indicates that disruptive behaviour in the classroom poses considerable challenges for teachers, learners and the overall teaching and learning experience (Kanmani & Sujathamalini, 2022; Khan et al., 2019; Majani, 2020).

Teachers who encounter learners who display disruptive behaviours face heightened levels of stress, frustration, fatigue, and emotional difficulties (Kanmani & Sujathamalini, 2022) which can lead to burnout (Vidić, Đuranović & Klasnić, 2021). Khan et al. (2019), reporting on research conducted in Pakistan, write that both principals and teachers acknowledge that disruptive behaviour in the classroom

negatively affects teachers. Some effects include constant stress, despair, voice loss, loss of confidence, illness from teaching that necessitates time off work and a detrimental effect on home and family life (Khan et al., 2019). The behaviour also has a detrimental effect on teachers' attitudes toward teaching, resulting in their progressively losing enthusiasm for their work (Cameron & Lovett, 2015). Khan et al. (2019) and Majani (2020) further assert that some aspiring teachers hesitate to enter the field of teaching because they are concerned about dealing with learners' disruptive behaviours, whereas those already in, leave the job because of the behaviour (Moore et al., 2019; Stanford & Rose, 2020).

According to Granero-Gallegos et al. (2020) disruptive behaviours negatively impact learners' learning and decrease academic performance (Maulidina, Maisa & Rozak, 2022) concur and further add that dealing with learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom consumes a significant percentage of teaching time for many teachers, which impacts on how well the learners learn. The findings are consistent with Bäckström (2021) whose study sought to investigate whether there may be a connection between disruptive classroom behaviour, school demographics, and learners' achievement in Sweden. The findings indicate that certain school compositional variables indirectly affect outcomes, as they are influenced by disruptive behaviour.

In contrast to the notion that poor academic performance among learners is solely attributed to their behaviour, Ferman and Fontes (2022) have revealed the existence of grading bias and prejudice in assessments. Specifically, teachers tend to penalise learners who display behavioural issues in school to enforce good conduct. The findings further assert that using behavioural grades to incentivise positive conduct through grading would prove more efficacious than distorting learners' assessment outcomes. It can be deduced that teachers experience significant frustration in response to disruptive classroom behaviour leading them to employ any available methods to manage such behaviour. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate their experiences.

3.6 Learners' Legal Behaviour Management System in South Africa

Constitutional changes following the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 necessitated the restructuring of the educational system, which resulted in the development of a new democratic education system (Bray, 2005) that adheres to and practices the values and principles outlined in the RSA's Constitution of 1996. This is why the SASA was adopted to enforce a democratic educational system in schools.

According to Section 8 of the SASA 84 of 1996, the public school governing body (SGB) must develop a code of conduct for learners. A code of conduct is a type of subordinate law that upholds the concepts of human dignity, equality, and freedom while reflecting the democratic principles of the Constitution (RSA, 1996b). It outlines expectations for learners' behaviour and the disciplinary procedure to be used when they fail to meet those expectations. Mestry and Khumalo (2012) affirm that enforcing the school's code of conduct is essential because it ensures a disciplined schooling and learning environment. Thus, the school code of conduct calls for school governance founded on a strong legal foundation (Zondo & Mncube, 2022).

The three-dimensional strategy for managing learners' discipline serves as the foundation for creating and enforcing the learners' code of conduct in school (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). First, the preventative component requires SGBs to implement measures actively to prevent behavioural issues and manage the stress caused by classroom behaviour challenges. Second, the action dimension deals with what SGBs may do if disciplinary issues persist despite all the precautions taken to prevent them. This entails maintaining records and developing plans to prevent minor issues from becoming severe. Third, the resolution dimension indicates that SGBs create strategies for issues involving the persistent rule-breaker and the more extreme out-of-control learner. Regarding this, the SGB is given *Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners* (RSA, 1998), which addresses serious offences like conduct that endangers and violates the safety of others, possession or use of unauthorised drugs or alcohol, fighting, assault, immoral behaviour or profanity, theft or possession of stolen property, and criminal behaviour.

It should be considered that a school's discipline procedure is evaluated not only by a well-written code of conduct but also, more importantly, in relation to how well it is

implemented. Since the SGB members, especially the parent component, cannot all be present at the school-level daily, implementing the code of conduct is a delegated job. Thus, the SMT, the teachers, and the disciplinary committee are mostly responsible for implementing the code of conduct's preventative, action and resolution procedures (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

Another point to consider is that before democracy, corporal punishment was used to curb learners' disruptive behaviour in school (Gcelu, Padayachee & Onyemaechi Ede, 2021). However, as part of a restructuring, it was abolished in 1997 (South Africa, 1997). In 2000 ATCP Strategies were introduced to help teachers manage learners' behaviour (Grobbelaar & Jones, 2020; Moyo et al., 2014). Despite all these policies and efforts, studies show that learners' disruptive classroom behaviour is rife in schools and that some teachers revert to corporal punishment strategies (Grobbelaar & Jone, 2020; Mahlangu, 2021; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Against this background, this study seeks to explore secondary school teachers' experiences in managing learners' disruptive classroom behaviour.

3.7 Causes of Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour

The classroom environment encompasses both the physical and psychological aspects (Soheili et al., 2015). According to Bennett (2021) the psychological environment, which encompasses the classroom and community climate, substantially influences children's learning outcomes and achievements. This implies that there is a reciprocal relationship between internal and external systems, which collectively shape the formation of habits, attitudes, and behaviours exhibited by learners in the classroom. The discussion in this section revolves around multiple variables that contribute to CDB in schools. These factors encompass learners' individual characteristics and unique attributes, external influences, and causes rooted in the school environment.

3.7.1 Causes related to learners' characteristics and unique traits

This section presents an in-depth review, delving into the various factors contributing to CDB. These factors are derived from the learners themselves, either because of their character traits or external influences on the learners. Those include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), adolescence and peer pressure.

3.7.1.1 Learning disorder

The elements identified as the origin of a learner's disruptive behaviour in the classroom are connected to the learner's unique personal learning disorders such as ADHD. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neuro-developmental condition characterised by significant inattention, disorder, and hyperactivity-impulsivity (Celis et al., 2023). According to Arora Lawrence and Klein (2020), ADHD significantly impacts a diverse population of children with an estimated formal diagnosis rate ranging from 8% to 12%, typically occurring in the early stages of childhood. The implication is that owing to the high incidence rate of ADHD, teachers are likely to encounter learners with ADHD in their classrooms.

According to Kos et al. (2006), school is an environment that can pose significant challenges for children diagnosed with ADHD because of the inherent demand for behaviours that contradict the core symptoms of ADHD. Celis et al. (2023) assert that children with ADHD encounter challenges in learning owing to their underdeveloped Working Memory (WM). The challenge is attributed to the crucial role of WM in the retention and manipulation of information, facilitating the execution of diverse cognitive processes. Therefore, children with ADHD exhibit limited development in their ability to recall specific activities or tasks assigned to them because of deficits in their memory function (Bul et al., 2018).

ADHD manifests in various manners, particularly in a classroom setting. The American Psychiatric Association (2000, cited in Bolinger, Mucherah & Markelz, 2020) has identified a set of characteristic behaviours exhibited by children diagnosed with ADHD. These behaviours include inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. The aforementioned fundamental attributes threaten how a child behaves in the classroom. For example, a child exhibiting impulsivity may engage in behaviours such as speaking out in class without seeking permission or engaging in conversations with peers at inappropriate moments. Hyperactive children may experience difficulties in maintaining a seated position, leading to behaviours such as manipulating items, swaying in chairs, or engaging in repeated tapping of their hands or feet (DuPaul & Stoner, 2003 cited in Bolinger, Mucherah & Markelz 2020). The level of teachers' knowledge of ADHD in schools is not clear. Contrary to the assertions made by Bolinger, Mucherah and Markelz (2020) and Latouche and Gascoigne (2019)

regarding teachers' lack of knowledge about ADHD, Mohr-Jensen et al. (2019) have discovered that they possess a substantial level of knowledge.

Bolinger, Mucherah, and Markelz (2020) examined how much teachers knew about learners with ADHD and whether there was a link between their knowledge and how they ran their classrooms. The study sampled 17 teachers from two rural grade schools in Midwest India. The results showed that teachers did not know much about ADHD, which could make it harder for them to help learners with ADHD in the classroom. The other findings revealed that there might not be a clear link between teachers learning more about ADHD and being better able to handle learners with ADHD in the classroom. This study suggests that teachers' knowledge regarding ADHD can influence their behaviour, perceptions, and support for behaviour-based treatments for ADHD in the classroom. Another implication of this study is the necessity for teachers responsible for teaching learners with ADHD to undergo comprehensive training programmes. These programmes should not only provide teachers with a deep understanding of ADHD but also equip them with effective strategies to run classrooms that cater for the unique needs of learners with ADHD.

On the other hand, some studies found that teachers do have knowledge of ADHD. For example, Mohr-Jesen et al. (2019) carried out research in primary and secondary schools in Denmark to determine what primary and secondary school teachers knew about ADHD in children and which variables predicted their knowledge. The 29-item ADHD questionnaire was delivered randomly across the country. The data were analysed descriptively as well as via hierarchical regression analysis. According to the findings, a total of 528 teachers were included. Most teachers (79%-96%) recognised ADHD symptoms and effective classroom intervention measures (75%-98%). However, understanding regarding other features, aetiology, prognosis, and therapy was uneven, with just 56% and 17% correctly rejecting food as a cause and effective treatment for ADHD, respectively. Postgraduate education regarding ADHD was one of the biggest indicators of proper knowledge.

While teachers may possess knowledge of ADHD, certain limitations underscore the need for additional training. In addition, it is worth noting that knowledge acquisition may be derived from the experience gained through postgraduate studies, which may not be a prevalent practice in numerous schools, given that a diploma certificate is a

minimum qualification required for teachers in South Africa. Due to these considerations, it can be inferred that teachers must possess a comprehensive understanding of ADHD in order to integrate and manage CDB from learners with ADHD effectively while also fostering a conducive educational environment for all.

3.7.1.2 Adolescent stage

Most secondary school learners are going through adolescence (Schlebusch, Makola & Ndlovu, 2022). According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), adolescents are young children between the ages of 10 and 19 (UNICEF, 2022) Adolescence is one of the key stages in the development of a person, during which young people experience significant physiological and psychological changes as they prepare to transition into adulthood (Caldarella et al., 2021; Orben, Tomova & Blakemore, 2020). Along with other changes, adolescence is characterised by a rise in risk-taking and novelty-seeking, as well as a propensity to stray from one's family and hang out with others (Bates & Trujillo, 2021; Muna, 2020). During this period, they evaluate their social and personal worth based on what their friends think about them (Knoll et al., 2017). At this stage, learners are hypersensitive to peer rejection, and for this reason they engage in risky behaviour with their peers (Cherewick et al., 2021; Orben et al., 2020) which may violate the law, regulations, and societal conventions (Rachel, Roman & Donga, 2022).

Consequently, while seeking greater autonomy, adolescents often experience a significant inclination to conform to the behaviours and attitudes exhibited by their peers, some of which may violate the established code of conduct in the classroom. Herington and van de Fliert (2018) assert that during the adolescent stage, peer pressure is powerful, and some teenagers begin to engage in behaviours that are seen to be against societal standards and values or that are not necessarily believed to be average or standard for the culture.

3.7.1.3 Peer pressure

According to Reitz et al. (2014), peers are people who are part of the same society, based mainly on age, grade, or rank. Peers are one of adolescents' most important social environments since they establish behaviour standards and typically create a

culture that shows up in things like languages, clothing, hairstyles, sports, and drinking patterns (Adeniyi & Jinadu, 2021). According to Laursen and Veenstra (2021), adolescents create their own group culture because they are conscious of sustaining positive peer connections. Veenstra, Dijkstra and Kreager (2018) posit that they choose friends with similar behaviours, characteristics, and attitudes in creating the group or culture. This preference is attributed to the notion that individuals who share such similarities are more likely to comprehend one another effectively, engage in effortless communication, and perceive each other as more reliable and predictable. Consequently, these friendships are perceived as more gratifying, enduring, and conflict resistant.

When the social group is established it comes with norms and compliance. Veenstra, Dijkstra and Kreager (2018) argue that norms express collective agreement regarding the appropriateness and acceptability of behaviour in a specific context. However, they subsequently impact individuals' attitudes, choices, and actions by setting boundaries, limiting, and guiding them. The suggestion is that norms possess unique attributes compared to individual attitudes and behaviours, typically shared and practised in a particular group or context. In this context, learners may exhibit disruptive behaviour to adhere to the social norms their respective social groups established. Thus, peer pressure impacts what adolescents value, are aware of, wear, eat, and learn (Lunga, 2020).

The social dynamics in adolescent peer groups often involve the presence of popular individuals who typically exert influence over the group's norms and behaviours. Laursen and Veenstra (2021) conducted a study to investigate and understand the roles of peer influence and employed an empirical literature review methodology. Their findings revealed that adolescents attribute significant importance to popularity owing to the enhanced power, privileges, and influence of popular peers compared to their average counterparts. These powers and benefits encompass adulation, acceptance into exclusive social events, and advantageous resource distribution. The study also demonstrates that popular adolescents use various strategies to attract and convince their peers. Certain strategies involve selecting individuals who can be subjected to bullying to draw more attention and maintain their social standing, whereas others opt

for a constructive approach, aiming to be perceived as exciting and entertaining individuals.

In their study, Adeniyi and Jinadu (2021) employed a descriptive survey methodology to examine gang behaviour's prevalence and various manifestations among a sample of 895 learners enrolled in public schools in Nigeria. The researchers also sought to explore peer pressure's impact on gang behaviour. It was discovered that peer pressure could potentially influence individuals towards gang-related activities.

However, some learners may not readily succumb to the sway and intimidation of popular peers in schools. Instead, they may assert themselves and employ diverse strategies to protect themselves against negative influences. Nunan (2018) observed that learners in South Africa were exposed to various forms of harassment and name-calling by their peers at school and that to protect themselves from emotional pain and loss of self-image, victims acted defensively and disruptively, which may be against the classroom rules and the school's conduct policy.

There appears to be an underlying implication that learners are more susceptible to displaying disruptive behaviour in the classroom when they are exposed to influential peers who also engage in such behaviours, potentially because of a desire to imitate or protect themselves. Conversely, this also implies that when popular peers exhibit socially acceptable conduct, other learners tend to emulate such behaviour. Hence, teachers should analyse prominent group leaders and strategically incorporate their influence into instructional planning, to cultivate an optimal learning environment that facilitates the emulation of desirable behaviours by fellow learners.

3.7.2 Causes related to external factors

There are particular factors influencing how learners behave when they arrive at school since learners learn behaviour through observation at home and in their communities. The factors that will be discussed in this section are socioeconomic factors, environmental influences, substance abuse, parental style, lack of parental involvement, dysfunctional homes, and social media.

3.7.2.1 Socioeconomic status

According to the literature, socioeconomic status (SES) is linked to learners' disruptive behaviour (Lazaratou et al., 2017; Murray & Farrington, 2010; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). For example, Lazaratou et al. (2017) investigated the correlation between economic variables and the occurrence of aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Greece. The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 2 159 adolescent learners residing in the Greater Athens Metropolitan Area. The results indicated that individuals who had encountered household food insecurity, characterised by concerns or uncertainty regarding food, inadequate food quality or quantity, or a reduction in pocket money, exhibited notably higher scores on the aggression questionnaire compared to their counterparts who had not experienced such circumstances. The researchers concluded that there existed a correlation between the scarcity of essential items during the actual Greek economic crisis and the occurrence of violent adolescent behaviours.

A study conducted by Murray and Farrington (2010) examined the various risk factors associated with Conduct Disorder (CD) and delinquency. The findings from their longitudinal studies indicated that children who displayed CD tended to originate from families with low SES, characterised by unemployed parents, residing in subsidised housing, and relying on welfare benefits. The authors further asserted that family socialisation techniques played a significant role in the association between households with low SES and antisocial behaviour. They claimed this was because low SES was a predictor of delinquency, primarily attributed to inadequate childrearing practices in low-SES families.

To flourish in school, learners should have fundamental self-control and emotional management abilities, be able to engage with peers in a good way and have faith in the educational experts who work with them at school (Walton-Fisette, 2020). However, based on the literature, it could be argued that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds could lack these abilities.

In South Africa, the apartheid system inexorably affected the educational system since it contributed significantly to the distribution of wealth and educational inequality that the post-apartheid government inherited in 1994 (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019; van Dyk

& White, 2019). Some schools are embedded in impoverished areas where a lack of social services and unemployment is high and cause people's basic needs to go unmet. As a result, people resort to drug and criminal activity, which learners copy and practise in schools (Lunga, 2020).

Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) conducted a study in South Africa and discovered a correlation between ill-discipline in schools and poverty. The researchers observed that learners who came from impoverished backgrounds relied on state grants and the national school nutrition programme. The primary focus for these children lay in fulfilling their basic needs rather than prioritising educational pursuits. Consequently, schools that enrolled learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds frequently experienced instances of disruptive behaviour such as theft.

Poorer communities experience more acute and pervasive stresses than children from better socioeconomic backgrounds. For this reason, learners in such areas are less likely to develop healthy relationships with their teachers and peers because of a lack of emotional regulation skills emanating from stress and their primary focus on survival over learning in schools (Paulson et al., 2022). The critical lesson from the literature is that managing teaching and learning is challenging in most schools in impoverished communities because circumstances force most learners to engage in criminal activities that place the learning environment in grave danger.

3.7.2.2 Environment

According to Muna (2020), learners' behaviour can arguably be linked to society's way of life. The implication is that the prevalence of violence in schools (Lekalakala, 2019; Mncube & Harber, 2014; Sipho & Percival, 2021) and substance abuse (Mamabolo, 2020; Nzama & Ajani, 2021) can be linked to societal habits.

Resorting to violence to resolve disputes and solve problems characterises South African culture (Lekalakala, 2019). Since learners copy what they observe in the community (Schlebusch et al., 2022), social acceptance of violence has become a model for problem-solving even in schools (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Sipho and Percival (2021) discovered that disruptive learners who originated from violent households interrupted teaching and learning in South African schools as early as primary schools. Rachel et al. (2022) investigated the factors that caused adolescents'

deviant behaviour in rural communities in South Africa; the findings attested to the relationship between societal habits and children's behaviour. For example, the study revealed that teenagers' deviant behaviours resulted from the kind of role models they had at home and were exposed to as those role models were their primary teachers whom they emulated. The results were consistent with Schlebusch et al.'s (2022) research that identified factors contributing to learners' indiscipline in public secondary schools in the South African province of Mpumalanga. It is conceivable that societal norms such as substance abuse also play a vital role in learners' behaviour.

3.7.2.3 Substance abuse

Substance abuse is pervasive in South African communities and directly impacts school learners (Mamabolo, 2020; Rachel et al., 2022). According to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), the average age of drug dependency in South Africa is 12, and 50% of adolescents drink alcohol (SADAG, 2022). The South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (SANCA), affirms that there is an alarming incidence of substance abuse among learners in South African schools, especially among adolescents (SANCA, 2015). SADAG (2022) corroborates this by revealing that since the launch of its WhatsApp platform in collaboration with the National Department of Social Development, between April 2021 and March 2022, they had 89 992 youth who contacted them, which was an increase of 107% from 2020. Similarly, Mamabolo (2020) asserts that one in three learners between the ages of 13 and 18 engage in drug misuse on school premises. Mokwena and Setshego (2021) aver that controlling substance misuse among learners has remained of significant concern in South Africa since it stems from societal habits which learners copy and, in this way, contaminate the school's daily activities.

The intricacy of the problem can also be associated with the fact that learners in some schools are allowed to purchase sweets, drinks and other food from community members outside the school fences during breaks. Some of the participants in the Nzama and Njani (2021) study revealed that food products like marijuana-laced muffins, dubbed "space muffins," sold by community members was one example of how narcotics are consumed in schools. Schlebusch et al. (2022) also discovered that the community was the source of the drugs that learners trafficked and used in schools. They say that school environments mimicked the community's drug misuse

issue in that the same drugs smuggled into schools were also readily accessible in the community. This suggests that the community exacerbates substance abuse in learners.

According to Nemati and Matlabi (2017), learners who use drugs or alcohol typically exhibit disobedience or poor conduct, including loss of concentration, contempt for school officials, vandalism, physical aggressiveness, rejection, theft, graffiti spraying, and verbal abuse both inside and outside classrooms. Nzama and Njani (2021) assert that substance abuse may be connected to learners' rebelliousness and depressed attitudes. Similar claims have been made by Maserumule, Skaal and Sithole (2019) and Hlomani-Nyawasha, Meyer-Weitz and Egbe (2020), namely that drug-using secondary school learners participate in criminal activities and display bad habits. (Hunter & Morrell, 2021) found that when under the influence of drugs, learners in South Africa exhibit various disruptive behaviours, including threatening classmates and teachers with dangerous weapons or committing crimes like vandalism and theft.

3.7.2.4 Parenting styles

Family and school are social structures where children learn social norms and acceptable behaviour (Erol & Turhan, 2018). Wolhuter and van der Walt, (2020) and Schlebusch et al. (2022) assert that parents are primary teachers who play a significant role in ensuring that their children develop strong morals, values, respect for authority, and discipline. For example, Lumadi (2019) states that parents who live exemplary lives may conceivably serve as good examples to which the learners can aspire. However, parenting styles differ widely from parent to parent (Muna, 2020). While most parents are competent and reliable in their parenting, others are inconsistent (Rachel et al., 2022).

Other scholars, such as Wolhuter and van der Walt (2020), Glory and Darolia (2021) and Belle (2018) highlight similar parental styles and their influence on learners' behaviour. The first is authoritarian. The parents who adopt this style attempt to shape, control and check whether the child's behaviour is in accordance with the standards set and inherited from religious beliefs. The second style is permissive. Permissive parents try to be non-manipulative by accommodating the child's impulses, desires, and actions. The third one is an authoritative parent. This parent tries to be rational

when controlling and directing the child's activities. The last style mentioned is the neglectful or uninvolved parenting style. Of these parenting styles, the research findings confirm that authoritarian and uninvolved parenting styles contribute more to learners' disruptive behaviour in schools compared to the other approaches as they promote rebellious and problematic behaviour in children (Adubale, 2017; Sarwar, 2016).

3.7.2.5 Lack of parental Involvement

The importance of parental participation in children's intellectual and social growth has long been acknowledged (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020; Segoe & Bischoff, 2019). The significance of parents participating in their children's education is supported by research showing that learners children in class when there is instructional, familial, and school-family support of learning (Berkowitz et al., 2021; Segoe & Bisschoff, 2019; Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020). It is therefore grounded in an ecological framework, acknowledging the importance of the family, school, and community environments for children's development.

According to Phares and Rojas (2018) three main components make up parental involvement: direct engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. When the parent is totally engaged with the child that is considered direct engagement. Examples include reading to a young child, playing games with a preschooler, playing a board game with a grade-schooler, or discussing activities with a teenager (Phares & Rojas, 2018). In this type of involvement, both pay close attention to each other and actively interact.

Accessibility is another type of engagement whereby parents are always available to their children but not actively participating in child-to-child contact (Phares & Rojas 2018). Examples include parents working at home on the internet, mopping the floors, or cooking supper while their child is in the playpen, watching a video with their toddler, drawing with their preschooler, reading with their grade-schooler, or listening to music with their teenager. With this kind of parental involvement, parents are available to the child and present in the same physical location as the child (such as the home or the car), but they are not engaging with the child.

Another form of parental participation called responsibility involves all the supervision required by children. For instance, it entails taking children of all ages to regular doctor and dental appointments, seeing to it that their daily requirements (like eating, bathing, and educational enrichment) are met, establishing age-appropriate rules and consequences, and making sure that theychildren have fun activities to engage in (Phares & Rojas, 2018).

Parental involvement is still a challenge in South Africa, especially in township schools (Sibanda, 2021; Rachel et al., 2022). For instance, Rachel et al. (2022) discovered that some parents pay little attention to information regarding their children's behaviour, particularly in the school environment. Similar findings are revealed by Segalo and Rambuda (2018), who discovered that even when teachers have made an effort to call a parent in regard to their learner's disruptive behaviour, some openly support their children's behaviour, inform teachers at school and leave teachers with little choice but to give up. Sibanda (2021) claims that socioeconomic status is the main factor influencing low parental participation in South African township schools. The underprivileged live largely in townships and rural regions, whereas the small number of exceedingly wealthy and middle class live in suburbs and upper-class districts. Most people who live in townships make a modest income and mostly rely on governmental social subsidies. According to Luxomo and Motala (2012 cited in Sibanda, 2021) in places of extreme poverty heavy reliance on social assistance leads to parental indifference because the money parents get is hardly enough to meet essential needs. As a result, people must prioritise earning money above participating in school-related activities for their children. Berkowitz et al. (2021) also observe that parents with low incomes are more likely to be distracted by taking care of their family's essential financial requirements before they can become active in their children's schools. These parents may encounter many additional obstacles to their children's engagement in school, such as rigid work schedules, a lack of money, issues with transportation, and stress related to living in underprivileged areas.

The school's rules and initiatives might not be sufficient to alter children's behaviour if parents do not support teachers or act in a way that opposes what the teachers are doing. Schools should thus develop plans for encouraging parental cooperation and support to create a favourable learning environment.

3.7.2.6 Dysfunctional homes

According to Wolhuter and van der Walt (2020) many parental homes of South Africans are not intact owing to various factors including death, divorce, and parents abandoning children. Learners from this society are more likely to experience numerous difficulties as they grow up, including exposure to drugs and rape, harassment, and trauma (Rachel et al., 2022). Learners who have gone through trauma may think that adults cannot be trusted and that their peers dislike them; as a result, they may misbehave in the classroom (Ellison, Walton-Fisette & Eckert, 2019). Unaware of the causes of learners' behaviour, Paulson et al. (2022) assert that teachers may confront the learners inappropriately and make matters worse, which might result in learners being expelled from the class, subsequently making them feel rejected. Kegan et al. (2019 cited in Paulson et al., 2022) further add that learners' behaviour may explain why this happens. They emphasise that although traumatised students may still require and seek attention from peers and teachers, they may not know how to do it and engage in disruptive behaviour to obtain it.

In their study investigating parental influences on teenage misbehaviour in rural South Africa, Rachel et al. (2022) found that dysfunctional homes significantly impacted learners' behaviour. For example, the findings revealed that lack of supervision or monitoring of teenage children led to deviant behaviour in adolescents such as participating in crime and other antisocial behaviour, including alcohol and drug misuse.

3.7.2.7 Social media

Rapid technological development may also be a factor in disruptive behaviour among learners. According to Tayo, Adebola and Yahya (2019), social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and the internet significantly influence students' lives worldwide. As Muna (2020) noted, teenagers depend on their technological devices and spend much time on social media. As a result, they are inundated with copious amounts of information via various social media platforms and web applications, making them more vulnerable to numerous online risks. While there is no denying that the internet provides many opportunities for social networking and learning, it also

gives the perfect setting for taking risks and some learners may find themselves drawn to dangerous behaviour.

According to research by Gentile, Lynch, Linder, and Walsh (2004), teenagers who play violent video games are more aggressive and frequently argue with teachers. The study also revealed that these teenagers had worse academic performance and were more prone to engage in violent altercations. Moreover, Buelga and Pons (2012) examined the prevalence of adolescent aggressors (cyberbullies) through contemporary information and communication technologies (the internet and cell phones) and found that almost one third of adolescents have attacked their peers using new technologies. It was further discovered that most cases of cyberbullying last less than a month, are somewhat intense, and only happen once a week or less.

Based on the literature, it may be argued that there are implications for schools and teachers in relation to factors that could be beyond their control. However, the school and teachers should take action and support learners affected by other factors that promote disruptive behaviour to reduce their frequency in classrooms.

3.7.3 School-contextual factors

This section focuses on the discussion of school-related processes that can potentially influence the disruptive behaviour of learners in the classroom. Both the structural conditions and stakeholders in the school yard have distinct ways in which they make contributions.

3.7.3.1 Teachers as the cause of classroom disruptive behaviour

Belle (2018) asserts that educators tend to overlook the potential influence of their behavioural beliefs and attitudes in the classroom on students' school affiliation and subsequent conduct. According to Broeckelman-Post et al. (2016) the classroom environment is influenced by three categories of teachers whose beliefs, behaviour, and attitudes can either directly or indirectly impact the disruptive behaviour of learners. Those categories include incompetence, offensiveness, and indolence.

- **The incompetent teacher**

According to Schlebusch et al. (2022), a teacher's proficiency can be determined by analysing their lesson planning and delivery. Lumadi (2019) posits that the pedagogical techniques employed by these teachers often fail to captivate and involve their learners effectively. As posited by Obaratile (2021), acquiring knowledge may become tedious, leading to a drop in interest among learners, resulting in disruptive conduct in the classroom. The research conducted by Abeygunawardena and Vithanapathirana (2019) and Forsberg et al. (2021) supports the notion that a significant proportion of disruptive behaviour in classrooms can be attributed to the inadequate utilisation of effective instructional techniques by teachers, which may be a result of insufficient preparation.

- **The offensive teacher**

Offensive conduct on the part of teachers includes making fun of students' appearances, taunting them about what they do or have experienced in life, and using profanity (Schlebusch et al., 2022). In order to avoid social humiliation, some learners may turn to disruptive activity which may worsen their relationship with the teacher (Nuna & Ntombela, 2019). It could be argued that when a learner's disruptive behaviour in class has damaged their connection with the teacher, the offensive teacher may resort to measures such as expelling learners from the classroom or even physical punishment.

- **The indolent teacher**

The actions of an indolent teacher reveal a lack of concern for the learners' ability to pay attention and accomplish assignments (Broekelman-Post et al., 2016). They are also known as dull teachers because they let learners behave the way they like in their presence (Folsberg et al., 2021). Examples of such teachers are those who use their smart phones or cosmetics in the classroom (Belle, 2018).

3.7.3.2 Teachers' attitudes

According to Yoder and Williford's (2019) findings, teachers' attitudes play a role in disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The findings further highlight that teachers tend to develop negative attitudes towards disruptive learners, as they perceive their

misconduct to be intentional and indicative of a dislike of school. Consequently, these teachers ignore such learners and focus more on those with more subdued behaviour. Nash et al. (2016) assert that ignoring learners who exhibit disruptive and challenging behaviour in the classroom is not advisable. This is because such learners may have experienced tumultuous and distressing circumstances in their personal lives, which may result in their arriving at school with concerns and anxieties.

3.7.3.3 Teachers' beliefs

Research on teacher beliefs presents compelling evidence for the interconnectedness of beliefs and instructional practices (Haim & Tannenbaum, 2022; Hanna, 2023). Such evidence implies that teachers' attitudes towards learners from certain backgrounds, ethnic groups, or countries influenced their approach to these types of learners. A study by Hanna (2023) offers a comprehensive qualitative analysis of 26 journal articles written in English from various nations. These articles specifically examine the research and practices of pre-service teachers as well as their beliefs and experiences related to teaching migrant learners. The results indicate that student teachers tend to possess negative beliefs and have concerns when teaching migrant learners.

Furthermore, empirical data suggests that teachers' beliefs may hinder the use of research-based classroom management techniques (Hepburn & Beamish, 2020). The research conducted in New Zealand and Australia reveals that teachers who perceive problem behaviour as being linked to the home environment or individual learners' traits tend to manage such behaviour by imposing reprimands and sanctions rather than taking proactive measures such as modifying the classroom setting or implementing positive support strategies (Johansen, Little & Akin-Little, 2011; Sullivan et al., 2014). According to these studies, most teachers blame learners' challenging behaviour for reasons beyond their control, such as personal histories or peer pressure. Because of the underlying belief that teachers are helpless to counteract what happens to learners at home, Hepburn and Beamish (2020) argue that attributing learners' misbehaviour to external or internal factors may discourage the use of proactive classroom management practices, such as teaching and reinforcing expected behaviour.

The implication is that teachers should refrain from attributing learners' behaviour to external factors, but rather assume responsibility for developing strategies to address disruptive behaviour. By adopting an approach that recognises disruptive learners as individuals whose needs are unmet by external factors, teachers can provide the necessary support in the school environment.

3.7.3.4 Novice teachers

Forsberg, Chiriac and Thornberg (2021) conducted a qualitative study to examine learners' perceptions of school climate, teachers, and interpersonal connections in the school context. A sample of learners ranging from grades 1 to 9 with ages ranging from seven to 15 years old was selected from a school in Sweden. They discovered that learners reported a higher incidence of disruptive behaviour in the classroom when new or substitute teachers supervised them. Based on the feedback provided by the participants, new teachers exhibited inadequate abilities in effectively managing their classrooms because disruptive learners exhibited positive conduct in the presence of their regular teacher.

Majani (2020) conducted a study to investigate the strategies employed by novice instructors in Tanzania for managing learners' behaviours. Research findings revealed that certain learners engaged in activities such as listening to music on their mobile devices which were found to be disruptive in the presence of novice teachers.

It can be argued that three potential factors contribute to novice teachers' inadequate classroom management skills. One possible reason could be that the learners perceive themselves as being of a similar age. In addition, a deficiency in induction programmes may contribute to the insufficient preparation of young teachers in acquiring the essential skills required upon their entry into teaching. O'Neill and Stephenson (2012) and OAGWA (2014) reported that many teachers were not adequately equipped to address learners' disruptive behaviour in Australia. The final reason might be a potential resistance to adapting their behaviour, developing professionally, and taking on parental responsibilities during their initial years of teaching. Thus, the school's management should have a working plan that assists new teachers in preparing for effective teaching and learning in their classrooms.

3.7.3.5 School leadership

Evidence suggests that disruptive behaviour among learners can be attributed to the inadequate execution of duties by school leadership (Belle, 2018; Naidoo, 2021). This failure originates from the principal and extends to the HDs.

- **The principal as the cause**

The following are the primary responsibilities of principals in schools, according to the Policy on South African Standards for Principals (DBE, 2016:9–19).

- Leading teaching and learning.
- Shaping the direction and development of the school.
- Managing the school as an organisation.
- Managing the quality of teaching and learning and ensuring accountability.
- Managing human resources.
- Managing and advocating extramural activities.
- Developing and empowering self and others.
- Working with and for the community.

The South African Standard for Principal Policy document provides a general overview of the responsibilities of principals. However, the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document, published in Government Gazette number 39684 (2016), offers a more comprehensive and explicit description of the principal's duties. According to the PAM document, the principal is responsible for all aspects of school functionality, including instructional leadership and associated school performance. However, although the principal assumes ultimate accountability for all facets of school operations, the duty of providing instructional leadership is distributed among all hierarchical levels. The document delineates the fundamental obligations and accountabilities of the SMT in relation to their instructional leadership responsibilities.

Naidoo (2021) has identified shortcomings that suggest the SMT has not fulfilled their mandate as instructional leaders as described in the PAM document (DBE, 2016). For instance, the process of monitoring accountability commences with the principal who assumes the role of the instructional leaders' coordinator. The principal is responsible

for ensuring that the deputies are accountable for their subordinates, while the deputies are responsible for ensuring that the DHs are accountable for the educators in their departments. The DBE (2016) supports these assertions on pages 10–14 and 27–35. It is argued that in the event of offensive, indolent, and incompetent teachers in a school, the administration of the school has failed to fulfil its responsibilities effectively.

- **Departmental heads as the cause**

The term departmental refers to teachers employed in schools under the Educator Employment Act 76 of 1998. These teachers are appointed at post-level two and are entrusted with managing the curriculum and their teaching duties. Departmental Heads (DHs) in South Africa are integral to SMTs and play a crucial role in ensuring quality education through diligent monitoring and support. Their role as subject specialists involves the technical task of monitoring and acting as catalysts for their respective subjects, consistently promoting their growth and development. The DHs have expertise in their particular subjects and in addition to their technical responsibilities of monitoring, they serve as catalysts for their respective subjects by consistently advocating and enhancing the skills of teachers in their departments (DBE, 2016; Mpisane, 2015). Therefore, it could be argued that incompetent DHs result in teachers under their supervision not engaging in thorough planning, which has been identified as the primary contributor to CDB in schools and vice versa.

Seobi and Wood (2016) suggest four steps DHs may take to influence teachers' actions, which might result in establishing a conducive learning environment and a teaching environment free of disruptive behaviour:

1. Facilitate the process of educators' establishing and attaining personal and professional objectives associated with enhancing school instruction and overseeing the successful accomplishment of these goals.
2. Conduct routine formal and informal classroom observations.
3. Conduct post-observation conferences with educators to enhance instruction.
4. Offer constructive critical assessments and suggest personal and professional growth objectives based on individual requirements.

3.7.3.6 Discipline system

As a social setting, schools significantly influence how learners behave (Belle, 2018). Therefore, it is part of the school's responsibility to inculcate in learners the principles of respect and discipline and to oversee a disciplinary system that adheres to these standards to make the school a safe environment for learning.

Part of the blame for encouraging learners' disruptive classroom behaviour in some schools in South Africa has been placed on the schools' discipline systems (Marais & Meier, 2010). Schools have come under scrutiny for merely handing out rules and regulations to their learners and parents to sign without taking the initiative to routinely and effectively teach them to understand these printed documents (Rayment, 2006 cited in Marais & Meier, 2010). Failure of the disciplinary system to address issues brought on by disruptive learner behaviour is evident in South Africa. For instance, several studies found that learners' disruptive behaviour is on the rise in schools in South Africa despite the presence of a code of conduct (Sipho & Pecival, 2021; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Mahlangu et al., 2021; Kitching, van Rooyen & McDonald, 2019; Marumo & Zulu, 2019; Nunan, 2018; Nunan & Ntombela, 2019). In light of this rise, Zondo and Mncube (2022) recently examined the teachers' and learners' experiences in implementing a school's code of conduct. Their study revealed a discrepancy in the implementation of the code of conduct in school, and that which caused its failure to instil positive discipline across the board. The findings are consistent with the research done at a secondary school in the Kwazulu-Natal Province by Gcelu, Padayachee and Onyemaechi Ede (2021), which confirms that parts of the school code of conduct – like learners' misconduct – are minimally implemented. Hence, this study explores secondary school teachers' experiences of managing learners' disruptive classroom behaviour.

- **Corporal punishment**

Mahlangu et al. (2021) and Sipho and Percival (2021) assert that learners still encounter corporal punishment in public schools in South Africa. For instance, Mahlangu et al. (2021) found that over half (52%) of the students reported having had CP in the previous six months, indicating a significant frequency of CP among school-age learners despite it having been illegal for more than 20 years. The findings of CP

prevalence in schools are consistent with Heekes et al. (2022), that despite laws banning its usage, learners encounter CP in most sub-Saharan African nations. For example, CP is still used in schools even though it is legally banned in Kenya (Mwenda, 2016), and Sudan (Elbla, 2012 cited in Marumo & Zulu, 2019). In Zimbabwe, teachers need to get permission from the principal to discipline learners, but they employ it without the principal's consent (Shumba, Ndofirepi & Musengi, 2012 cited in Marumo & Zulu, 2019).

Corporal punishment is used in schools worldwide, not just in sub-Saharan countries. For examples, Marumo and Zulu (2019) affirm that there is considerable discussion over corporal punishment in the USA since some states continue to employ it while others adopt alternative methods of learner discipline. Similarly, Cameron and Voonasis, 2018) add that CP is still used in 19 states in the USA. Even though the law prohibits it, CP is used in schools in India (Tiwari, 2019) and Israel (Khoury-Kassabri & Ben-Harush, 2012). In Jamaica, CP is considered a proper, culturally, and biblically appropriate method of disciplining learners (Burke & Sutherland, 2014).

Some studies argue that CP persistence stems from teachers' arguments that some parents use it at home (Patnaik et al., 2022), and if schools are seen as extensions of homes and larger societies, the case is made that it makes sense for schools to do the same (Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016). Sipho and Percival (2021) conclude that learners' disruptive behaviour, such as violent contact, should not only be blamed on them, but also on disciplinary measures such as CP which teachers use in schools. The implication is that the use of CP makes it acceptable behaviour in schools.

By integrating multiple educational theories, including social learning, attachment, and classical theory, along with literature on CP, one could construct a compelling argument that suggests that CP has an adverse impact on learners' conduct by inciting disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

- **Social learning theory on corporal punishment**

According to the social learning theory, children learn by watching others. So, they inherit these traits when they observe role models like teachers comforting and assisting other learners who need assistance. The same applies when an adult pushes, insults, or resorts to violence to resolve conflicts. Children are more inclined

to mimic the actions of role models they view as influential and prominent. Parents and teachers would fall into this group, especially for young children, so they set strong examples for children when they use physical punishment to get their way. Hence, social learning theory adds another justification for why employing CP on learners is regularly linked to increased hostility (Durrant, 2020). According to Naker and Sekitoleko (2009 cited in Thebenyane & Zulu, 2019), learners who receive physical punishment frequently engage in bullying behaviour toward others and, as adults, commit domestic violence (Gershoff, 2008 cited in Thebenyane & Zulu, 2019) because they regard violence as a legitimate manner of forcing their beliefs on someone less powerful than they. Thus, children learn that they should use violence to resolve disputes and control undesired behaviour (Banda, 2006 cited in Thebenyane & Zulu, 2019). Etheridge (2010) asserts that CP can make people less willing to follow school rules and norms and promote an unfavourable attitude toward learning.

- **Attachment theory on corporal punishment**

The attachment theory posits that the cornerstone of human development is children's emotional ties with their parents or other primary caregivers (Durrant, 2020). Children feel comfortable exploring their physical and social settings when these ties are strong and when they have confidence in their caregivers to be attentive, reliable, and protective. Youngsters with strong bonds tend to interact with their caretakers more, increasing their learning possibilities. In addition, attachment is crucial for the formation of conscience and the internalisation of moral principles. These processes are aided by caregiver interactions that allow children to express their emotions, receive comfort when they are upset, and make the connection between their own feelings and those of others. However, when caregivers purposefully cause pain to children this will reduce their sense of security and cause them to lose faith in the caregiver as a safe foundation from which to explore their surroundings. Therefore, CP would be anticipated to cause avoidance and resistance, not to build a connection. Literature corroborates that CP exacerbates the dropout rate (Mthanti & Mncube, 2014), perpetuating learners' absenteeism (Tlhapi, 2015) and subsequently affecting the economy (Pinheiro, 2006). Learners' absenteeism and dropout lower educational success, which impacts tax revenues and essential services that tax may do (Pinheiro, 2006).

- **Classical theory on corporal punishment**

The classical theory of learning describes how associational learning works. Fear-related physiological and emotional reactions are innately triggered by pain. This is a natural, unlearned (unconditioned), instinctive reaction. When another stimulus, such the sight of a caregiver's face or the sound of their voice, arrives right before pain, the other stimulus gets connected with the pain and begins to arouse anxiety even when the pain itself is not there. Owing to the caregiver's conditioning, that dread develops into a conditioned reaction. Withdrawal, avoidance, defensiveness, or retribution are all possible reactions to the fear of pain. As a result, children who associate their caregivers' sight and sound with their fear of pain may withdrawal, internalising their fear instead of expressing it, avoiding them in favour of other sources of guidance and care, reacting defensively by retaliating physically or verbally, or retaliating directly (against the caregiver) or indirectly (against others) to regain their sense of power and control. According to Thobenyane and Zulu (2019) and Sipho and Percival (2021), often physically disciplined learners tend to act aggressively toward their classmates or even against teachers, which suggests that one adverse consequence of CP is that it promotes enmity, anger, and hostility between learners and teachers. Corporal punishment accelerates aggression in learners and influences them to attack those who punish them (Nunan & Ntombela, 2019).

3.7.3.7 Lack of extracurricular activities

Lack of extracurricular activities reduces learners' opportunities to demonstrate their potential, and those who struggle academically lose confidence because their abilities go unappreciated. They might become angry and channel their energy into disruptive behaviour (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Because of their lack of exposure to various ideas, interests, and career alternatives that pique their curiosity, hyperactive learners may be encouraged to misbehave when the schools do not offer extracurricular activities (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Learners who participate in extracurricular activities have the opportunity to interact with and investigate new avenues, allowing them to develop well-focused potential. According to Stead and Nevill (2010 cited in Naidoo, 2021), extracurricular activities enhance learners' overall intellectual development. The claim is that participation in extracurricular activities has been shown to improve a variety of facets of one's well-being, such as self-esteem,

emotional health, spirituality, and optimism. Additionally, it has been said that such participation might enhance academic achievement since it encourages the growth of focus and attention abilities. Shaffer (2019) asserts that extracurricular activities have been observed to yield various advantages for pupils, including the augmentation of their social and life proficiencies, the fostering of a forward-thinking mentality, and the nurturing of their leadership aptitudes. Naidoo (2021) found that of the five township schools sampled, the SMT believed that extracurricular activities, such sports and music, could help greatly boost learners' engagement and discipline in township schools.

3.7.3.8 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowding is determined by the number of learners per teacher in the classroom (Mehmood, Shereen & Murad, 2020). Even if an optimum Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) is proposed, there may still be a huge difference because populations and financial capacities vary widely between nations. Each nation sets its own PTR to accommodate and provide education for its population. However, there is consensus regarding the effects of overcrowded classrooms. According to Osai et al. (2021) ideal class sizes should be between 15 and 20 students. However, many classrooms today have more than 30, and some schools even have classes with more than 40 learners making classroom difficult for teachers to maintain order (Franklin & Harrington, 2019; Shireen, Mehmood & Habib, 2020).

Education officials in China consider classrooms with up to 45 learners normal. Classes with over 55 students are referred to as big and those over 65 are referred to as super-large. However, the average junior high school enrolment in 15 Chinese provinces exceeds 45 learners and 55 in two provinces (Leiyang, 2018). Around 17 400 schools in the USA are overcrowded owing to population expansion, a shortage of teachers, and a decrease in funding or assistance (Hachem & Mayor, 2019). The national PTR in Ghana is 55:1 for kindergarten, 38:1 for primary school, and 35:1 for junior high school. However, certain schools have higher enrolments (Osai et al., 2021).

Compared to private schools, South African public schools are distinguished by severely overcrowded classrooms (Mahlangu et al., 2021). For instance, Letshwene and du Plessis (2020) point out that Curro Holdings, South Africa's largest private school operator, has a 15:1 PTR across its network of 110 schools. By contrast, the number of government schools (public schools) exceeds 40:1 (Zenda, 2020). Naidoo (2021) found that one teacher had 71 learners in the classroom in a public township school in South Africa. Osai et al. (2021) posit that most nations with a PTR above 40:1 are found in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Wangdi and Namgyel (2022) note that a larger classroom makes it difficult for the teacher to control the learners completely since it restricts movement and attracts various disruptive behaviours. According to a study by West and Meier (2020) teachers become less motivated and dedicated to giving high-quality instruction because they can only attend to a few learners' needs in an overcrowded classroom. Consequently, they stop enjoying work or only do it for the money. One understands that when teachers lose their enthusiasm for teaching owing to factors outside of their control, such as class size, learners grow bored and choose other ways to vent their dissatisfaction, leading to classroom chaos. Zenda (2020) further adds that overcrowded classrooms restrict teachers' teaching methods. The teachers who participated in that study confessed that they relied solely on lecturing methods and lost control of learners because of larger numbers.

Köhler (2022) concurs that classroom size is a problem in South African secondary public schools that serve poorer communities (quintile 1–3 schools). However, the study concludes that as much as reducing the class size should be a priority, the reduction may not be enough. The study reveals that variables such as the quality of teaching and the availability of resources appear to be symptomatic of other crucial characteristics in South African schools. The argument makes the case that because disruptive behaviour in the classroom is a complex issue, a comprehensive approach that takes into account teacher recruitment, training, and school environments is necessary.

3.7.3.9 Racial bias and stereotype

Emerging evidence suggests that implicit racial bias – unconsciously held negative connections associated with racial stereotypes – may impact teachers' disciplinary decisions (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). An experimental investigation in a multiracial school setting in the United State of America discovered a relationship between race and teachers' evaluations of learners' conduct. Teachers were provided with an office discipline referral for a learner with two misbehaviour incidents; the name of the penalised learners varied between those stereotypically black – 'Darnell or Deshawn' – and White – Greg or Jake' (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Teachers reacted more harshly to children with stereotypically black names than to those with stereotypically white ones. Okonofua and Eberhardt (2015) also discovered that, in a multiracial school, the more teachers believed a learner was black, the more likely they were to designate that the learner was a troublemaker.

In South Africa, Makoelle (2014) found that black learners felt treated unfairly at a mixed school when the management was mostly white teachers. According to one of the study's respondents, when a confrontation arose between a white and a black learner, the white learner usually got away with it. If the black learner was found guilty, they may be suspended or expelled from school. Similarly, the treatment of students of colour in the USA is significantly influenced by racism and negative stereotypes since black learners still get harsher sanctions than white students for comparable acts of bullying in schools (Skiba et al., 2014).

Adolescents are extremely susceptible to unfair treatment and make up the majority of secondary school learners. According to Yeager et al. (2014), adolescents have a special talent for identifying unjust treatment based on unconscious prejudice and unfavourable stereotypes. Their view may influence their disengagement or aggressive opposition to authority in school. Thus, the effort to raise awareness of how unconscious bias and stereotypes affect learners should intensify in secondary schools. Teachers must make sure they are intentionally tuned in to the social and emotional experiences of children of colour when the teaching team is predominantly white. Mounting data shows that black learners are less likely than white to report feeling cared for by teachers in predominantly white staffed schools (Bottiani,

Bradshaw & Mendelson, 2014; Fan, Williams & Corkin, 2011; Voight, Hanson, O'Malley & Adekanye, 2015).

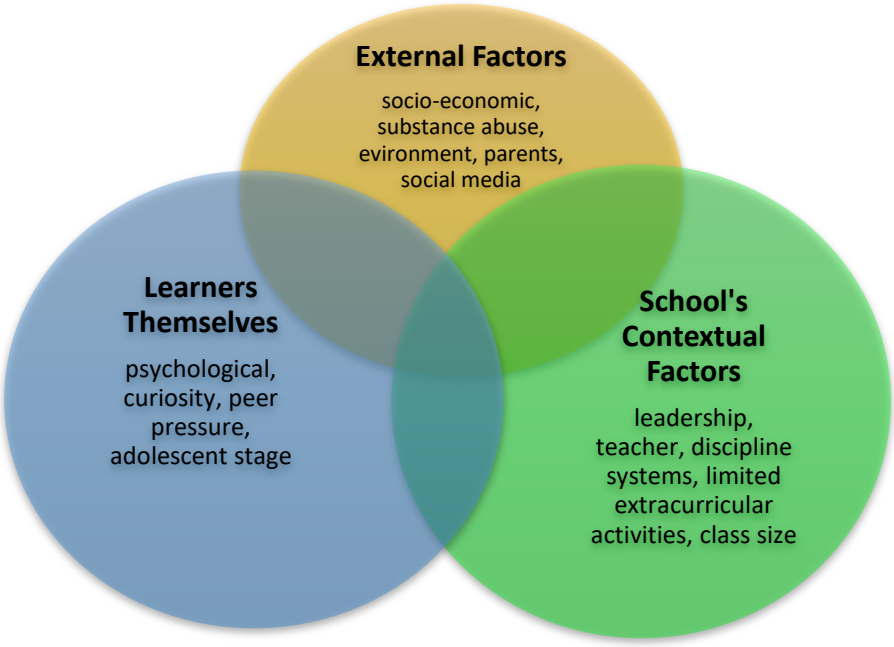


Figure 3.2: Internal and external system relationships and influence on CDB that the author created.

Figure 3.2 above presents a literature-based overview of the interconnected elements contributing to the occurrence of CDB, including external influences, school-related factors, and learners.

3.8 Managing Learners' Disruptive Behaviour

Learners' disruptive behaviour disrupts the class flow, disrupts learners' learning and can challenge teachers' authority. Therefore, managing behaviour remains an important aspect of schools' existence (Kessels & Heyder, 2020; O'Handley et al., 2022).

According to Paramita, Sharma and Anderson (2020) behaviour management strategies can be classified into proactive and reactive. Reactive strategies refer to disciplinary approaches employed by teachers in response to learners' inappropriate behaviours, with the aim of remediation. On the other hand, proactive strategies are preventative measures implemented to decrease the probability of learners engaging

in inappropriate behaviour. Preventative classroom management practices prioritise teaching and reinforcement of desired behaviours, thereby reducing the likelihood of unproductive behaviours (Hepburn & Beamish, 2020).

The body of literature concurs that proactive classroom management techniques are the most effective in improving learners' results and teacher' welfare (Hepburn, Beamish & Alston-Knox, 2021; Gregory et al., 2017). Researchers believe that schools that effectively resolve learners' behavioural issues invest in strategies that prevent the behaviour from occurring thereby building a positive school climate. From a social-ecological perspective, positive relationships between learners themselves, teachers and learners, and among teachers, and factors outside the school, impact social processes within, leading to the establishment of school climate (Forsberg et al., 2021). This means several elements, both in the school and outside, interact to shape a school's environment.

In the following section, I outline the strategies teachers may use better to manage learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom and enhance a positive school climate. While each of these will be looked at separately, it is crucial to remember that none of these practices can be divided into different parts and allocated to certain locations or times of the day, nor are they distinct parts of teachers' daily job. Effective schools and teachers take care of them all at once to establish a positive learning environment if and when it is essential during the day.

3.8.1 Effective leadership

The DHs play a crucial role as primary supervisors of teachers, serving as integral components of school leadership and exerting a significant impact on the quality of education in schools (Naidoo, 2021). The DHs carry out the actions as mentioned above through the effective management of curriculum, consistent monitoring, development of knowledge and pedagogic skills among their teachers, implementation of specialised programmes and interventions to enhance learner achievement, and efficient allocation of resources to maximise benefits (DBE, 2016). Mpisane (2015) posits that the primary responsibility of the DHs is to facilitate improved educational opportunities for learners by influencing teachers' conduct. The implication is that

successful management of classroom disruptions that emanate from the school-contextual factors rests on the shoulders of DHs.

According to Mpisane (2015), DHs play a crucial role in instructional leadership. Agih (2015) supports this assertion by stating that scholars have long recognised the importance of teachers' competence in effective planning, management, and evaluation. Agih (2015) provided an in-depth analysis of the instructional supervision concept, indicating that it pertains to overseeing teachers' lesson planning and evaluation activities. According to Agih (2015), instructional leadership is essential for ensuring that every educator in the school system fulfils their assigned duties and enhances their effectiveness to contribute to the school's objectives.

3.8.2 Establish social cohesion in schools

Naidoo (2021) asserts that the instructional supervision duties of the DHs are primarily technical and bureaucratic. Failure to execute these duties diplomatically may result in tension and discontent between the DHs and the teachers. Therefore, it is of utmost significance for the DHs to foster social cohesion amongst their teachers, as its value should not be undermined.

Establishing social cohesion entails the convergence of the team, and Mpisane (2015) asserts the necessity of regular team meetings, suggesting that the DH should conduct no fewer than two departmental meetings each month. This forum provides teachers with a definitive framework outlining their responsibilities, facilitating periodic assessments of the status of different subjects in their respective departments, devising strategies for enhancement, engaging in collaborative ideation, and participating in professional development initiatives led by experienced educators. In light of these circumstances, one can argue that even inexperienced teachers who encounter difficulties in managing their classroom may benefit from seeking professional advice from other teachers. The inference can be drawn that DHs are not fulfilling their obligations in schools where there is a high incidence of classroom disruptions.

Seobi and Wood (2016) have noted that DHs often neglect their responsibilities and instead assume a task-oriented management approach that involves solely monitoring

and documenting completed work, rather than engaging in ongoing collaboration with teachers to enhance instructional practices.

3.8.3 Stakeholder collaboration

Managing learners' disruptive behaviour in the classroom has been shown to necessitate collaboration across stakeholders (Lunga, 2020). Working together toward a similar objective has several advantages, including improving relationships between parents, learners, and teachers and boosting collegial support inside the school.

3.8.3.1 Teachers' and learners' collaboration

Juta and Van Wyk (2020) conducted a study to examine the experiences of teachers and DHs regarding their response to challenges in classroom management in the context of mathematics. The researchers discovered that establishing positive human relationships was key to effective classroom management. The results also demonstrated that using effective communication was of the utmost importance in the management practices of teachers, as it plays a significant role in fostering positive learner-teacher relationships in educational institutions. The author asserts that human interactions encompass the collaborative engagement of individuals with vested interests, aiming to establish a conducive atmosphere that facilitates the democratic participation of learners in schools. Finally, it was discovered that learners generally engage in proactive efforts to sustain positive relationships that have already been established by refraining from engaging in inappropriate conduct that could potentially endanger those relationships.

A compelling body of research has indicated that learners who feel related and supported by their teachers are more engaged in academic work and have fewer behavioural issues at school than others who get less support (Bosman et al., 2018; Ettekal & Shi, 2020; Gregory et al., 2017; Hughes & Cao, 2018).

In their study Walker and Graham (2021) investigated the connections between learners' characteristics, attitudes towards school, teacher-student relationships, and classroom interactions as children begin their educational journey in Australia. A sample of 240 children, 101 boys and 139 girls, was obtained from primary schools

catering for disadvantaged communities with high suspension rates. The results of this study provide evidence that aligns with the conceptualisation of teacher-student relationships as dynamic systems. These systems involve a reciprocal relationship between the characteristics of learners and teachers, contributing to the formation of high-quality teacher-student relationships. The study's results also emphasise the significance of positive emotional support in the school context as a factor contributing to positive relationships between learners and their teachers. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of teacher-student interactions in facilitating students' adaptation to the classroom environment.

Botha and Zwane (2021) examined the occurrence of learner-on-educator violence in South African schools and the coping mechanisms teachers employed to address and mitigate acts of violence directed towards them. It has been observed that teachers typically engage in collaborative practices using innovative methods that they deem appropriate for their specific circumstances. This approach is believed to minimise direct conflicts with learners significantly, emphasising the significance of unity and collective efforts among teachers in fostering school synergy. Given that violence can be considered a form of CDB, it becomes imperative to establish a sense of synergy and unity among teachers to address and combat it effectively.

3.8.3.2 School and parent collaboration

Regarding school-parental collaboration, the SASA, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996), section 8, gives parents official authority. It establishes a standard that parents should participate actively in school governance. According to several studies, parental involvement and good ties to the school are crucial for children's learning, healthy growth, and academic performance (Berkowitz et al. 2021; Lunga, 2020; Sibanda, 2021). It has been established that parents model the value of education and academic performance for their children through their engagement and that this role modelling may have an impact on their child's level of participation in class and school activities as well as academic success (Segoe & Bisschoff, 2019). The environment of a school is said to be greatly influenced by parental engagement. Based on the collective experiences of the school community, school climate reflects norms, objectives, values, interpersonal interactions, instructional strategies, and administrative frameworks (Berkowitz et al., 2021). Le Mottee and Kelly (2017) assert

that learners' chances of engaging in disruptive behaviour are reduced when teachers and parents establish tighter bonds with each other. Joint activities between parents and teachers facilitate learners' self-discipline and lighten the strain on teachers by reducing their time dealing with learners' disruptive behaviour (Lekalakala, 2019). In their findings, Gcelu et al. (2021) concluded that if stakeholders did not work together, the numerous strategies that may be used to assist schools in managing learners' disruptive behaviour may lose their efficacy.

3.8.4 Culturally relevant teaching

According to Warren (2018), Culturally Relevant Teaching (CRT) is an extensive collection of established professional wisdom that prioritises essential components to enhance, value, and maintain the diversity of learners' cultures in the context of teaching. The concept of CRT has been acknowledged as a beneficial indicator of reduced problematic behaviour among learners in the classroom (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). This is because of its emphasis on the teacher's responsibility to establish suitable and acceptable content that caters for the diverse needs of learners in the classroom (Warren, 2018).

Research in CRT argues that, although teachers cannot always influence their learners' behaviour, they can exert some influence on their own (both in terms of professional and personal development) in response to learners' arrival at school (Gay, 2013; Gregory et al., 2017; Warren, 2018). According to Gay (2018), teachers who use CRT research their learners' backgrounds and communicate an appreciation for their experiences to win their trust. The initiative allows teachers to understand learners' behaviour better and design lessons that help them process their experiences of inequity and marginalisation (Morrison et al., 2019). Hence, proponents of CRT have claimed that in a supportive and collaborative atmosphere, academic knowledge and abilities should be linked to learners' individual experiences and frames of reference (Abacioglu, Volman & Fischer, 2020; Gay, 2013).

Different studies (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Gay, 2018) have shown that CRT increases student engagement and cooperation. However, Warren (2018) asserts that teacher training institutions cannot fully prescribe a set of uniform personal qualities or bodily behaviours that all teachers must exhibit to demonstrate their cultural sensitivity

because CRT praxis will differ depending on a variety of human factors in different schools and contexts.

To employ a CRT approach to prevent CDB, Gregory et al. (2017) suggest incorporating the five components of Weinstein's model of culturally responsive classroom management. Those components are: (a) teacher recognition of their ethnocentrism, (b) the development of caring classroom communities, (c) the incorporation of students' cultural backgrounds in classroom learning experiences, (d) classroom management strategies that are compatible with those backgrounds, and (e) teacher understanding of the social, economic, and political issues confronting their students.

These five components imply that teachers should consider the viewpoints of their learner when preparing their learning environment and/or implementing the curriculum and creating the instructional materials. Thus, CRT entails shifting teachers' frame of reference to consider the perspective of the other and understanding where their learners are coming from and where they stand. Moreover, to adapt their instruction, the implication is that teachers need also be familiar with the cultures represented in their classrooms. According to Abacioglu et al. (2020), teachers must become knowledgeable about the various aspects of learners' cultures through their own research and meaningful interactions with learners, ranging from tangible cultures, such as family experiences, artefacts, and events, to intangible cultures, such as values, traditions, language, and identity. Morrison et al. (2019) regard CRT as the catalyst for fostering relationships of trust, respect, and care among learners and teachers, learners and their peers, and teachers and the families and communities of learners. This kind of relationship and collaboration are pivotal to lessen disruptive classroom behaviour in school (Gregory et al., 2017; Lunga, 2020; Vijayan, Chakravarthi & Philips, 2016).

3.8.5 Teachers' emotional intelligence

According to Hofman (2022) the classroom teaching and learning process can elicit various emotions that may affect the behaviour of teachers and their decisions regarding classroom management. A study conducted by Valente, Monteiro and Lourenço (2019) revealed that teachers' emotional intelligence was a factor that

influenced classroom behaviour management. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997 cited in Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2022), emotional intelligence refers to an individual's capacity to perceive emotions, assess and generate emotions to facilitate cognitive processes, comprehend emotions and emotional knowledge, and introspectively regulate emotions to promote both emotional and intellectual growth.

Hamidi and Khatib (2016) assert that emotional intelligence is a variety of non-cognitive talents, capacities, and competencies that impact a person's capacity to cope with environmental demands and stresses. Emotional intelligence is, therefore, seen as a combination of emotion and intellect connected (Hamidi & Khatib, 2016). Salovey and Mayer's theoretical model of emotional capacity emphasises the series of activities intelligence engages in to analyse and benefit emotions, including abstract thought and problem-solving (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2004). It is made up of four capabilities that work together: (a) perception, evaluation, and emotional expression refer to how effectively people can recognise their emotions and physiological and cognitive states and feelings (Mohoric, Taksic & Duran, 2010); (b) emotional facilitation of thought, capacity to produce feelings that boost thinkingtakes into account our thoughts and how information is processed are affected by emotions, as well as how we may utilise emotion to enhance our cognitive process; (c) emotional competence, which is the capacity to identify emotions and connect them to their meaning; and (d) emotional regulation, the capacity to control one's own and other people's emotions, reducing negative emotions and boosting the positive ones.

Valente et al. (2020) conducted a study involving 559 secondary teachers and found a significant positive correlation between the teachers' emotional regulation skills and their self-reported ability to manage classroom discipline. The research findings suggested that teachers who could effectively regulate their adverse emotions were more proficient in meeting the needs of their learners and implementing proactive strategies for managing the classroom environment. According to Siddique, Bibi and Taseer (2020), regulating a teacher's emotions can significantly impact the emotional experiences of both the teacher and their learners. This can involve implementing coping strategies that prioritise the management of emotions and problem-solving in the classroom setting.

Valente et al.'s (2019) study noted two aspects of emotionally intelligent teachers in the classroom. Such teachers prioritise the following:

- They can quickly identify their learners' emotional states and adapt their behaviour when learners become disengaged in the classroom.
- They also have the compassion to criticise some vulnerable learners, organise the classroom's seating according to the class, and separate the learners who are likely to clash.

According to Baczyńska and Thornton's (2017) research, teachers who exhibit elevated levels of emotional intelligence are more likely actively to pursue productive resolutions to difficult classroom behaviours. The study conducted by Siddique, Bibi and Taseer (2020) determined that using emotional intelligence skills is a tactic aimed at attaining optimal teaching efficacy. Consequently, the significance of enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence to establish a productive and satisfying workforce is increasingly evident. However, it could be argued that the enhancement of teachers' emotional intelligence is impeded if their mindset remains unchanged.

3.8.6 Changing mindsets

According to Borrero (2018) mindsets refer to beliefs and attitudes that influence teachers' conduct towards learners and their families and how they see, perceive, and react to such interactions. The implication is that cultural beliefs have an impact on teachers' mindsets, points of view, values, and presumptions (Haim & Tannenbaum, 2022). Sociocultural and historical narratives affect perceptions and judgements of what is acceptable behaviour (Gregory, Skiba & Mediratta, 2017). It means that some learners may receive unfair treatment because their behaviour is interpreted differently by their teachers. For instance, depending on the cultural beliefs of someone's attire, speech, vocal tone, and body language, a teacher can interpret a specific behaviour as rebellious or disruptive (Neal et al., 2003 cited in Gregory et al., 2017).

Moreover, Gregory et al. (2017) observe that individuals' mindsets may continue to encourage certain attitudes and behaviours in schools, some of which may violate the law and rules. For example, teachers may believe that punishing learners who disobey the rules is the right course of action. Thus, teachers' decisions are influenced by

mindsets. Borrero (2018) posits that teachers' mindsets may strengthen or weaken relationships with their learners. But, by being aware of and reflecting on their own mindset, teachers may change them to improve learners' success and foster healthier relationships (Dweck, 2007).

Scholars concur that most teachers inadvertently have disempowering beliefs about their learners' capacities and cultural experiences, especially those who work with traditionally marginalised groups or diverse communities (Hudson, 2012; Siwatu, 2011). As teachers run their classrooms and create environments that support academic success, they introduce cultural norms that could or might not coincide with those of learners (Aloe, Amo & Shanahan, 2014). Thus, mindset impacts classroom management more than any other part of schooling. While this may not have been done on purpose, Borrero (2018) claims its harm to children is immense and worsens when teachers do not have time to consider how their attitudes could influence their behaviour when addressing disruptive classroom behaviour.

Miscommunications and misinterpretations about classroom expectations are likely in multicultural learning environments where students and teachers come from different backgrounds (Borrero, 2018). For these reasons, the author further recommends that teachers' capacity to assist, connect with, and educate their learners may be greatly enhanced by changing their mindset to be open to understanding cultural and socioeconomic similarities and differences they have with learners. Thus, teachers are more likely to develop sound relationships with their students when they can overcome their disempowering perspective (Borrero, 2018).

3.8.7 Positive discipline

Discipline is commonly perceived as a form of punishment from the custodial standpoint (Jinot & Johannes, 2021). The concept refers to the level of organisation and arrangement that facilitates the learner's ability to exhibit behaviour that is deemed socially acceptable. Subsequent to the inadequacy of the punitive or reactive methodology in managing learner discipline, a redefinition of the approach has emerged (Jinot & Johannes, 2021). The authors further state that discipline is approached through humanistic, restorative, positive, preventative, or proactive

lenses. In these perspectives, discipline is not enforced but rather offered through education.

According to Mabuza, Makondo and Bhebhe (2018) positive discipline involves applying elements that attempt to produce a commitment, sense of responsibility, and eagerness to help others achieve the desired behaviour without using violence or force. According to Mugabe and Maposa (2013), positive discipline involves deliberate training that results in learners having a particular character or pattern of behaviour desired in school. Mabuza et al. (2018) further add that the primary objective of positive discipline in the classroom should be to ensure that learners are taught appropriate behaviour and how to learn from their mistakes to thrive academically. Thus, the teachers' work in a positive discipline-driven context is to correct learners' misbehaviour by establishing an environment where they may learn from their mistakes rather than attempting to control them through physical violence or loud noises. Positive discipline, as I understand it, focuses on long-term investments in a learner's development rather than attempts to coerce immediate compliance. It rejects the use of physical punishment to maintain order in schools. The foundation of the positive disciplinary method is seven ideas that make the classroom the best learning environment. The guiding principles are to respect the learners' dignity, foster pro-social behaviour, self-discipline, and character, maximise the learners' active participation, respect their developmental needs and quality of life, respect their beliefs and view of life, ensure fairness and justice, and encourage solidarity (Mabuza et al., 2018).

3.8.8 Praise-to-reprimand ratio feedback

Praise-to-reprimand Ratio (PRR) has been described as a classroom behaviour management strategy through which a teacher tries to improve the proportion of positive feedback given to learners compared to negative feedback (Caldarella et al., 2023).

Caldarella et al. (2020) define praise as a verbal expression of appreciation after learners' behaviour to encourage acceptable behaviour. Jenkins, Floress and Reinke (2015) further add that praise can be done through nonverbal gestures. On the other hand, a reprimand is defined as verbal disapproval (Downs et al., 2019) or gesture

(Markelz et al., 2022) in reaction to unacceptable behaviour or a directive that the behaviour must stop. That being the case, PPR refers to total teacher praise divided by the sum of total teacher praise statements and total teacher reprimands (Caldarella et al., 2021).

Although praise can be given orally, in gestures, in writing, publicly, or privately, a few qualities are consistently stressed across the literature and are linked to successful learners' behaviour outcomes (O'Handley et al., 2022). For example, Floress et al. (2017) conducted a systematic analysis to investigate the features of praise reported across 29 experimental research studies carried out in educational settings. Verbal and Behaviour Specific Praise (VBSP) were the most often mentioned praise qualities. Other praise reviews' findings, recommendations, and empirically supported practice guidelines emphasise VBSP rather than general praise (Cooper, Heron & Heward, 2020; Ennis et al., 2020).

O'Handley et al. (2022) and Markelz et al. (2022) assert that VBSP comprises a complement and a precise explanation of the required action. An example of a teacher's specific behaviour praising verbal expressions is "Great work for sitting quietly". In this case, the teacher specifies and reinforces how learners should sit. Another example can be "I admire how you organised your belongings before getting to work on your job right away; well done". General praise, on the other hand, would be a verbal expression like "great job", which conveys appreciation but does not specifically define the conduct.

Research on PRRs in elementary schools has shown that PRRs tend to get worse as grade levels rise from kindergarten through fifth grade (Reddy et al., 2013). This may be because classrooms become more complex as grade levels rise, and teachers' interaction with learners decreases as they grow older. Research on teachers' PRRs on learners' on-task behaviour was undertaken by Caldarella et al. (2020) in nine elementary schools and 151 classrooms spread across three states in the United State of America. Data from direct observation were examined using a multilevel linear regression. A positive linear association revealed that the greater the teachers' PRRs, the higher the percentage of learners who exhibited acceptable behaviour geared to classroom activities. A similar study was conducted at the secondary school level. The findings of this study suggested that PRRs were a potentially effective tactic for

secondary school teachers to control disruptive classroom behaviour and focus on teaching and learners during learners' challenging periods of adolescence (Caldarella et al., 2023).

The frequent use of VBSP is viewed as a preventative approach to disruptive behaviour and encourages good classroom behaviour (Rafi, Ansar & Sami, 2020). O'Handley et al. (2022) suggest that teachers use VBSP publicly in the classroom so that other learners may learn which behaviour is commendable. A teacher's praise is viewed as a social reinforcement method and a positive behavioural intervention to inspire students and motivate struggling pupils to increase their self-efficacy (Rafi et al., 2020). According to research on teenage development, brain reactions to rewards, especially social rewards, drive adolescent social behaviours and emotional processing of social events (Cherewick et al., 2021). This suggests that when educators purposefully increase their attention to praise to motivate positive learners' behaviour, they may shift away from reprimands and punitive mindsets (Markelz et al., 2022).

Critiques of VBSP, Flannery et al. (2013) note that teachers at the secondary school level may be reluctant to use VBSP because they expect learners to know how to manage their behaviour. Furthermore, it has been suggested that older students dislike the attention that comes with public VBSP (Bear, 2013). This implies that secondary teachers should use private VBSP rather than public VBSP because the latter is more likely to act as a deterrent and reduce the appropriate behaviour for which it is offered.

From the standpoint of assertive disciplinary theory, I contend that it is incorrect for secondary teachers to presume that learners know how to behave. That presumption may be fuelling learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms. Canter's theory does not support the notion that secondary school learners are mature and have a good sense of how they should behave. The main argument is that learners are exposed to various locations throughout the day (school, street, and home), where their expectations of their behaviour fluctuate dramatically. That being the case, teachers should teach them how they expect them to behave in school and reinforce good classroom behaviour. Other findings from the three secondary school studies further dispute the assertion that secondary school learners prefer private over public VBSP. The findings

show that private, and public VBSP equally improve learners' behaviour in the classroom (Floress et al., 2022; O'Handley et al., 2022).

I acknowledge the value that the PRRs strategy may have in the classroom. However, secondary teachers should be mindful that learners' behaviour varies from class to class. For example, the grade 9B class might not necessarily behave similarly to 9F. Thus, instead of focusing on a specific ratio, teachers should tailor PRRs to the needs of the learners or class depending on their behaviour (Sabey, Charlton & Charlton, 2019).

3.8.9 Professional development

Kupchick (2010 cited in Tlhapi, 2015) contends that teachers' ability to manage learners' classroom behaviour may be improved through workshops, seminars, benchmarking, and networking. Similarly, Wills et al. (2019) posit that teachers who lack sufficient training in classroom management are more inclined to rely on reactive strategies in schools. Nhlumayo (2022) asserts that if teachers continuously improve their abilities through school-based teacher professional development (PD), they will probably stay up to date with the most recent developments and insights in their respective fields and raise the standard of teaching and learning in classrooms. Having high-quality teachers is one of the essential, mandatory components for improving the quality of education, necessitating the requirement for teachers' ongoing PD (Zide & Mokhele, 2019).

Borko, Jacobs and Koellner (2009) outline three distinguishing qualities of high-quality PD. The first one is referred to as content characteristics and it deals with the concept of grounding the content of PD in practice and concentrating on the learners' acquisition of knowledge. It also involves getting teachers involved in inquiry about the specific duties of teaching, such as assessment, observation, and reflection, and it allows teachers to create connections between their own learning and the instruction they deliver in the classroom. Second, the process characteristics include instructors modelling desired instructional procedures, engaging teachers in active learning and developing a professional learning community. These are all aspects of the process characteristics. The last feature is known as the structural characteristics and it refers

to designing the activities of the PD to be ongoing and sustainable, as well as providing opportunities for teachers to participate in cycles of experimentation and reflection.

Expanding on Borko, Jacobs and Koellner's (2010) qualities of a quality PD, Mokhele (2014) proposes an alternative professional development model encompassing five key components of effective PD initiatives. First, the structure of PD demonstrates the significance of structuring the programmes. The second is teacher collaboration, which explains the significance of educators from different institutions undertaking group activities together. Third is the emphasis on content and context. This demonstrates the significance of the subject matter in a PD programme in accommodating diversity in schools, as schools are rooted in their respective communities, some in rural areas and others in urban, and as a result, the focus should be tailored to the specific requirements of the schools involved. The fourth characteristic is engagement duration. Consideration should be given to the amount of time spent on PD activities because, by definition, PD should occur while educators are engaged in their work and advancing the objectives of their profession. Finally, teachers' transformation and growth are imperative when engaging in PD programmes.

In summary, it is implied that the principal, as the school leader, has a fundamental responsibility to facilitate or initiate PD that can effectively empower teachers to address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour in the classroom and improve practices that align with the school's mission and objectives. To be effective, these programmes may be customised to address the specific behavioural issues present in each school. Alternatively, a collaborative effort may be undertaken, wherein teachers from different schools with similar characteristics can exchange classroom strategies for managing disruptive behaviour.

3.9 Summary

The prevalence of disruptive classroom behaviour significantly challenges the education sector's objectives and requires prompt and efficient intervention in schools. Disruptive classroom behaviour in schools is a multifaceted issue that cannot be attributed solely to a single cause or factor. The SMT should exercise its authority to establish a structured environment to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Various methods can be employed to maintain order in a school, all of which must adhere to

constitutional principles and relevant laws in the school environment. Chapter Four focuses on the research design, methodology, and data collection process, using SMT members and teachers from the selected school.

Chapter Four: Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the existing literature on learners regarding classroom disruptive behaviour. This chapter discusses the research methodology and design used to conduct this study. The chapter focuses on the research paradigm, qualitative research methodology, and phenomenology design. The sampling techniques used to choose the research participants and the instruments used for data collection and analysis are also discussed in depth. The chapter concludes by discussing trustworthiness concerns and the ethical factors considered in this study.

4.2 Research Paradigm

Jeffrey and Miller (2016) state that the term paradigm was initially introduced by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 and pertains to a cohesive set of fundamental concepts, variables, and concerns associated with specific methodological techniques and instruments. According to Kyngäs, Mikkonen and Kääriäinen (2020) a research paradigm is an approach or research model acknowledged by the academic community as a legitimate and suitable strategy to help construct a research approach. Patel (2015) explains that a paradigm is a system or set of fundamental beliefs that serve as a basis for actions which various research studies adopt. Kamal (2019) adds that a paradigm represents the researcher's beliefs and values about the world, the way they define it and work in it. Creswell and Poth (2018) further concur that the researchers' view of the world is a distinctive mode of thought that reflects their methodological techniques. Thus, a paradigm denotes a theoretical framework or a collection of underlying beliefs, principles, and methodologies that establish a distinct approach to comprehending and interpreting the world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The conceptual underpinnings of the research paradigm include ontology, epistemology and methodology which are discussed in detail in the following sections (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Kyngäs et al., 2020).

4.2.1 Ontology

Ontology is a person's understanding of the nature of existence (Kamal, 2019). According to Simui (2018) and Kelly, Dowling and Millar (2018), ontology is the knowledge and beliefs regarding the fundamental nature of reality. Likewise, Kumatongo and Muzata (2021) emphasise that ontology is the scientific study of being. This implies that the existence of reality can be either independent of individuals or a product of an individual's consciousness. Consequently, a specific phenomenon encompasses various realities that can be investigated by deriving significance from the interactions between the researcher and the subject matter (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, in this study, teachers' hold similar and different beliefs about what causes disruptive behaviour in the classroom and how to address it. Thus, interviewing and interacting actively with teachers in schools helped me to better understand their views and approaches.

According to Saunders et al. (2012 cited in Mohoebi, 2023), an understanding of ontology may be facilitated by examining the diverse perspectives of individuals about social events and their corresponding experiences in their respective social contexts. The ontological approach considers the influence of cultural elements and personal experiences on people, while acknowledging the potential existence of many realities (Olson, 2006 cited in Mohoebi 2023). This research investigated the viewpoints of teachers on disruptive behaviour in the classroom, which is thought to be impacted by multiple realities as demonstrated by the responses given by participants during interviews. Therefore, teachers' beliefs, values, attitudes, learners' differences, classroom contextual factors, and the larger social and cultural context in which schools are embedded all contribute to the ontological perspective, reflected in the dynamics of teachers' management of CDB in schools.

4.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to the knowledge generation, comprehension, and application method that is thought legitimate and acceptable (Babbie, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Similarly, Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) view it as an internal factor of a researcher that has the potential to influence their ability to differentiate between what is correct and incorrect. They added that epistemology also concerns how a

researcher seeks to discover knowledge to attain reality. According to Creswell (2007), epistemology encompasses creating and acquiring knowledge of our surroundings. Thus, selecting appropriate methods for investigating research questions and elucidating meaning are crucial aspects to consider.

The epistemological view stresses that a researcher may get insight into their data by interacting with participants and their thought processes (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Thus, constructing knowledge in a natural setting is a social process involving the researcher drawing from participants' real-life experiences. To understand teachers' experiences regarding CDB, I constructed knowledge using various research instruments across different sampled school settings by actively engaging with the participants and relevant documents.

4.2.3 Methodology

The concept of methodological position or assumption refers to the fundamental factors that shape the selection and application of research methods, procedures, or techniques for data collection and analysis (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) further state that methodology encompasses various components such as data generation tools, participants, methods, and data analysis. This implies that interpretive researchers who adopt this perspective can select from multiple research methods, enabling them to determine the most suitable type of data and instrument to address the research problem and fulfil the research purpose effectively. To accomplish the objective of this study, I positioned this study in the interpretivist paradigm to access a range of methods that effectively addressed the research problem.

4.2.4 Interpretive paradigm

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm. Interpretive is a paradigm that focuses on the in-depth interpretation of interrelated variables in each context, since it takes into consideration that human beings should not be viewed like physical objects as humans create in-depth meaning due to their various experiences of life. (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Interpretivists believe that individuals constantly and contextually produce reality (Patel, 2015). The interpretive paradigm befits this study because it sought to investigate teachers' experiences and knowledge creation on the dynamics

of managing learners' CDB and the meaning attached to those viewpoints (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Literature on the interpretivist paradigm states that knowledge is derived from the individual's interpretation of their experiences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). As a result, it was suitable to conduct this study using the interpretivist paradigm since I wanted to comprehend how teachers experience the management of CDB (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Adopting an interpretive paradigm in this research facilitated me in posing open-ended questions during interactions with the participants, allowing them to share their experiences regarding their encounters with managing CDB. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm enabled me to interact with participants during the research process to investigate how they constructed meaning out of their lived context.

4.3 Research Approach

The research approach refers to methods based on broad assumptions that lead to specific techniques for gathering, analysing, and interpreting data (Creswell, 2020; Jeffrey & Miller, 2016). Possible research methodologies include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Creswell, 2020).

The use of numbers (quantitative) against the use of words (qualitative) distinguishes qualitative and quantitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Creswell, 2020; Kyngäs et al., 2020). On the other hand, the mixed technique is the research method in the middle since it combines elements of qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Creswell, 2020).

In this study, data was gathered by asking participants (teachers and SMT) to share their experiences from their practical and natural contexts through interviews. As a result, the study adopted a qualitative approach to answer the main question: 'What are the experiences of secondary school teachers on the dynamics of managing learners' CDB in four selected township schools, Free State, Motheo district?'

4.3.1 Qualitative research approach

Leedy and Ormrod (2020) define qualitative research as a type of scientific inquiry that aims to comprehend a specific issue from the perspectives of those being examined. According to Creswell (2020), qualitative research is a methodology in which researchers investigate and comprehend the meaning of people or groups assigned to a social situation. Merriam and Grenier (2019) further add that qualitative research aims to gather in-depth descriptive data on a particular phenomenon for a specific setting to gain knowledge related to what the study seeks to achieve.

The qualitative research approach is based on the naturalistic philosophy (Kyngäs et al., 2020), which rejects the notion that humans can be comprehended as a single, objective reality and holds that people are best studied in their natural environments (Azungah, 2018; Jeffrey & Miller, 2016). Thus, qualitative research is founded on the assumption that the greatest way to comprehend reality is to learn how individuals interpret the environment and circumstances they live in (Creswell, 2020; Kyngäs et al., 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2020).

Qualitative methods are distinct from other methods in many ways. The following are some of the characteristics which qualitative researchers share:

- They often concentrate on events that are happening now or have happened in the past in a natural setting (Babbie, 2016; Kyngäs et al., 2020). Thus, researchers focus on the problem in its natural setting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020), where they verbally and physically interact with people affected by the problem under investigation (Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020).
- They focus on how people interpret and make sense of their lived experiences to understand their social reality (Mohajan, 2018) for a deeper understanding of the real world (Korstjens & Moser, 2017).
- They do not try to quantify or simplify what they see. Instead, they acknowledge the complexity of the problem they are researching and attempt to portray it in all its multifaceted forms (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020) in a descriptive manner (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Kyngäs et al., 2020).
- They are the primary tools for data gathering and analysis (Billups, 2022; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Adopting a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for this study as its objective was to explore the experiences of secondary school staff in managing CDB in the natural settings of schools. Hence, the use of a qualitative methodology facilitated my ability to actively engage with staff members in their natural environments through interviews. This approach enabled the participants to openly share and interpret their personal experiences and perceptions regarding their social reality concerning CDB.

4.3.1.1 Advantages of the qualitative approach

The following five advantages led me to choose a qualitative study methodology over other approaches:

- The study's objective was to gain insight into teachers' experiences in managing learners' CDB. Consequently, adopting a qualitative methodology was deemed necessary to enable me to investigate participants' experiences in their natural educational settings (schools) instead of quantitative research, which typically employs contrived settings such as laboratories to analyse human behaviour (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020).
- The qualitative approach allowed me to use flexible interviews as a data-gathering technique (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). In contrast to a quantitative approach, which employs strictly organised data-collecting techniques like surveys, using a qualitative technique enabled me to interview, probe and seek clarifications from staff during the verbal interview so as to get in-depth information on their experiences in managing CDB (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
- My primary goal in undertaking this study was not to generalise but to get a deep and nuanced knowledge of secondary school staff's experiences in dealing with CDB (Kyngäs et al., 2020). That was made feasible by adopting a qualitative research approach instead of a quantitative one because the latter encourages the generalisation of findings to broader populations (Creswell, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018).
- Instead of employing instruments created by other people as is typical in quantitative research, the qualitative approach enabled me to be a primary instrument of gathering data, using a procedure for interviews that I had designed (Creswell, 2020).

- Qualitative researchers prioritise the exploration of participants' interpretations of phenomena over relying solely on published literature (Creswell, 2020; Kyngäs et al., 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Adopting a qualitative methodology facilitated the participants to articulate their interpretations of CDB (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

4.3.1.2 Disadvantages of the qualitative approach

This section addresses my awareness of and attempts to mitigate the disadvantages of qualitative research.

- Data is gathered from a limited sample size of individuals or occurrences, for this reason, the generalisation of findings and results to larger populations is not feasible (Cresswell, 2020). To counteract this, I sampled the relevant sites and participants for the study and furnished an elaborate account of the research facets and participants to facilitate the applicability of the study in similar contexts (Rubin, 2021).
- The voluminous nature of data can lead to prolonged interpretation and analysis, while the researcher's disposition may potentially influence the data (Rubin, 2021). The data collected from the participants was analysed through content analysis to categorise the data into manageable themes that were derived from what the participants shared.
- The presence of a researcher during data collection and confidentiality concerns are inherent issues that may impact study participants' responses (Cresswell, 2020). I adhered to the guidelines set forth by the ethics review board of the university (Rubin, 2021).
- Data is collected through open-ended questions which allows for greater participant autonomy in determining the content of the data as the approach does not impose a predetermined or limited set of issues for investigation (Cresswell, 2020). To alleviate this disadvantage, the study was guided by set objectives; therefore, only the responses relevant to the research objectives were considered and presented.

4.4 Research Design

According to Creswell and Poth (2018) and Merriam and Grenier (2019), a research design is the strategy for assembling and arranging data. A research design sets a plan of action on how the research questions will be answered by guiding how to collect and analyse the required data (methods to be employed) (Nicholls, 2019). In other words, a researcher designs their strategy that outlines how the research will be carried out. Creswell (2020) states that while choosing a research design, the researcher should consider the aim of the study and research questions since they help determine which design is more appropriate. The phenomenological design was chosen by me in this study.

4.4.1 Phenomenology research design

Wilson (2015) defines phenomenology as the design that helps researchers explore people's daily inner experiences. According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), the phenomenological research design is based on the notion that shared experience has an essence. Dibley et al. (2022) further add that phenomenology can be conceptualised from the understanding that social experience, things (inanimate objects) and events do not have meaning by themselves but have meaning because human beings give them. A phenomenological design is a thorough exploration of what experiences mean to people by focusing on learning people's way of life and the meaning they attach to that (Bliss, 2016). Thus, it describes how people perceive things (Gill, 2020).

The phenomenological research design seeks to comprehend the phenomena as conscious human beings experience them (Jeffrey & Miller, 2016). The studies that employ phenomenological designs are interested in demonstrating how complex meanings are constructed from basic direct experience components (Merriam & Grenier, 2019; Nicholls, 2019). In a phenomenological design, the researcher groups, examines and contrasts various people's experiences to determine the phenomena's essence (Dibley et al., 2022). Another characteristic is that the researcher momentarily sets aside personal opinions or beliefs about the phenomena to comprehend participants' experiences (Rodriguez & Smith, 2018). When a belief is momentarily suspended, awareness is enhanced, allowing the researcher to sense or perceive the

core of the phenomenon (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Although description and interpretation are both essential components of phenomenological thinking, description is where it all starts. The phenomenological method is predominantly descriptive, attempting to shed light on topics in a radical, impartial manner while paying particular attention to the data that manifests itself to our grasp or intuition (Dibley et al., 2022).

The descriptive phenomenological design suggests a difference between what people think and their actual experiences, therefore, addressing these gaps results in a better interpretation of the phenomenon and promotes a better world (Dibley et al., 2022). The staff react to instances of CDB differently depending on the interpretations and meanings they give to their experiences of these incidents in varied circumstances (Dibley et al., 2022). As a result, they create their own realities that may resemble or differ from those of other staff in other schools (Gill, 2020) when dealing with CDB. For this reason, I determined that the descriptive phenomenological design was an appropriate way to understand the meaning the staff assigned to their experiences. The descriptive phenomenological method broadened my exploration of CDB in schools by allowing him to examine the world through the staff's eyes (Qutoshi, 2018). The approach also broadened the study lens, assisting me in pushing aside the assumptions about CDB and seeing the world from the participants' perspectives (Delve & Limpaecher, 2022).

4.5 Data Generation Process

4.5.1 Sampling

A sample is a group of people the researcher selects from a wider population (Babbie, 2016; Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020; Creswell, 2020) since it is impossible to collect data from every group member (McCombes, 2019). Qualitative research aims to understand key phenomena more deeply than generalising to a community (Babbie, 2016). Therefore, the qualitative researcher chooses participants and study locations to comprehend the chosen phenomenon properly (Creswell, 2020). A qualitative researcher also considers factors like the availability of prospective participants and then makes a judgement to determine if they thoroughly understand the phenomena to be examined (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). The only goal of qualitative research is to

learn about a specific phenomenon assuming that the chosen participants will provide the necessary insight (Creswell, 2020; Jeffrey & Miller, 2016; Leedy & Ormrod, 2020).

There are several types of sampling, including random, snowball, convenient, and purposeful sampling (Babbie, 2016; Bhardwaj, 2019; Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020; Creswell, 2020). While random sampling is employed in quantitative research, all four are frequently used in qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). The study was conducted in four secondary schools in the Motheo District in the Free State province in South Africa. All the sampled schools are situated in township areas.

A township refers to a geographical region that experienced racial segregation under the apartheid regime resulting in restricted development (Tshatshu, 2016). Consequently, schools in these areas are commonly called township schools (Naidoo, 2021). All the sampled schools are categorised as quintile three secondary schools. The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) was enacted to enhance fairness in allocating educational resources by categorising schools into five quintiles (van Dyk & White, 2019). The classification is predicated upon the socioeconomic standing of a school and is ascertained through assessments of mean income, rates of unemployment, and overall literacy proficiency in the school's geographical area (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). Table 4.1 presents information regarding the school quintiles and the corresponding communities they cater to, along with the fee requirements and stationary logistics, as outlined by Ogbonnaya and Awuah (2019) and van Dyk and White (2019).

Table 4.1: School quintile description

Quintile	Community	School Fee	Stationary
1	Poor	Non-fee	Supply learners
2			
3			
4	Affluent	Charges fee	Learners buy
5			

Table 4.1 above demonstrates that quintiles 1–3 schools serve the impoverished communities. They provide learners with all necessary school supplies to assist these communities and do not charge school fees. In contrast, quintiles 4–5 schools serve affluent communities, and the parents purchase school supplies and pay school fees for their children.

My goal was to learn more about staff's experiences in managing CDB. Therefore, the non-probability (purposive) sampling technique was the most relevant method for choosing research sites and participants in this study (Creswell, 2020).

4.5.1.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling, is an approach in which a researcher selects a sub-group of participants and sites purposefully (Babbie, 2016; Creswell, 2020; Leedy & Ormond, 2020). Also, non-probability sampling means only some participants will be chosen (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Leedy and Ormrod (2020) further highlight that purposive sampling is based on the researcher's judgement since it aims to obtain a group most likely to generate copious and meaningful data for the study.

I sampled four secondary schools, selecting them based on their level of accessibility regarding where he lives. These schools are classified as quintile 3 secondary schools. A total of three members from the School Management Team (SMT) representing two different schools, namely School A and School B, took part in the semi-structured interviews (SSIs). Seven teachers, four from School C and three from School D, participated in focus group discussions (FGDs). The original proposal aimed at sampling four teachers from the two schools. However, the other school D teacher was absent on the selected interview date. Thus, the study comprised a total of 13 participants. Table 4.2 presents a comprehensive overview of the sampling procedure in this study.

Table 4.2: Sampling procedure

School sample	Sampling number
Four Secondary Schools	Semi-structured interviews: School A and B: Three SMT members from each school. Focus group discussions: School C: Four teachers, School B: Three teachers.

4.5.1.2 Data collection strategies

According to Creswell (2020), when the researcher decides to gather qualitative data, the first thing they should consider is what kind of tools and interview methods would best enable them to comprehend the main phenomena and provide answers to the study's objectives. The accessibility of potential participants, the expense, and the available time ultimately determine which data-gathering strategy to employ (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Among all the qualitative data-gathering tools, I selected SSIs, FGDs and document analysis as data-gathering instruments for this study. The next section discusses in detail each instrument selected.

4.5.1.3 Interview

Qualitative interviews are called deep interviews because they are characterised by a close engagement between the interviewer and participants, leading to a discourse with a specific aim (Billups, 2022). Gawlik (2018) adds that an interview is a particular kind of discourse in which information is created through dialogue between an interviewer and an interviewee.

There are three most common formats of interviews: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Billups, 2022). Structured interviews are characterised by the use of pre-established questions that are posed in a predetermined sequence. A more open and flexible format characterises unstructured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are situated between structured and unstructured interview formats (Billups, 2022; Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021).

In qualitative research, the unstructured and semi-structured interview designs are more frequently used. These sorts of questions are based on open-ended questions in both cases. Open-ended questions allow participants to select their own words, context, descriptions, and meanings in relation to their experiences and the question asked (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2021). In this study, I employed SSIs, a FGD and document analysis to generate data.

4.5.1.4 Semi-structured interview

An SSI is an interview in which the researcher uses a mixture of open-ended and closed questions to encourage various and thorough responses (Kallio et al., 2016). Mahat-Shamir, Neimeyer and Pitcho-Prelorentzos (2021) define it as a type of interview that evokes meaningful narratives capable of turning the questions about a topic into storytelling. Naz, Gulab and Aslam (2022) add that standard questions in the SSI are preplanned, but the order and follow-up questions such as why and how are determined by how the conversation unfolds. According to Billups (2022), Boyle and Schemierbach (2020), the SSI differs from the unstructured interview in that the researcher creates an outline of the topics or issues that will be covered during the interview. The author further state that in SSIs, the researcher is also free to alter the wording and order of the questions to guide and tailor the interaction. With this method, the questions and time allotted for each primarily rely on the responses (Creswell, 2020).

During SSIs, the researcher frequently gives the participants room to elaborate on their responses while working to gently transition them to the next specific question to be asked (Adams, 2018; Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020). They also ask each participant one question at a time and record their responses (Creswell, 2020). Qualitative interviews such as SSIs may take various forms, but a typical strategy is the funnel format. Researchers begin with general inquiries before concentrating on the questions that get to the core of what they are attempting to comprehend (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020).

I chose SSIs because they enabled me to connect with the participants and develop relationships with them. The study aimed at exploring the experiences of staff concerning CDB, and as such, SSIs made it possible for me to follow up with questions

for clarification to get in-depth data during the interview sessions. Another main factor influencing my choice is that SSIs elicit important narratives (Naz et al., 2022). As Mahat-Shamir et al. (2021) noted, this kind of interview turns research questions into opportunities for participants to tell stories about the subject under investigation. Participants were allowed to share their experiences on managing learners' CDB during interviews, allowing me to be adaptable and interpret the data on the participants' terms (Naz et al., 2022). According to Creswell (2020), doing many one-on-one interviews is acceptable while conducting qualitative research. As a result, I conducted six individual interviews. As a reminder of the interview process and questions to ask, I created a calendar before beginning the fieldwork. A documented plan or method for the researcher to use during interviews is what Creswell (2020) refers to as an interview procedure. All interviewees were asked the same questions during the process. However, depending on how the participants answered the questions, the questions used to probe for in-depth answers were slightly different to encourage each participant to address the main questions thoroughly. The interviews took place in accordance with the SMT members' scheduled times.

4.5.1.5 Focus group discussion

An FGD is an interview in which a carefully chosen group of participants gather to discuss the topic and come to a consensus based on a list of main themes compiled by the researcher (Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020; Creswell, 2020; Gawlik, 2018). The FGD typically consists of six to 12 people, however, the number may change depending on the researchers' objectives and the participants' nature (Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020). An FGD is employed to get in-depth information on a particular issue from a group of individuals (Creswell, 2020). Boyle and Schemierbach (2020) add that the group dynamic and the notion that a group of individuals may generate a wider variety of ideas and viewpoints on a topic than a single interview are two of the most valuable aspects of the FGD. Because an FGD is a qualitative data generation method, information obtained through it cannot be measured since it encompasses people's behaviour, feelings, and attitudes (Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020). Gawlik (2018) argues that FGDs provide a full understanding of a particular phenomenon via the provision of detailed descriptions of processes, views, and attitudes of those involved.

I successfully addressed the issue of unequal participation among participants (Cresswell, 2020) by emphasising the importance of equal contributions and actively moderating the discussion to encourage those less vocal to share their perspectives. A day before the interview, I met all the participants to establish rapport and familiarise himself with their names and voices to be able to distinguish them during the interview. I reiterated the significance of equitable participation at the beginning of the interview. Furthermore, I initiated a social interaction to stimulate engagement (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020) with a general question about their understanding of CDB.

4.5.1.6 Document analysis

Morgan (2022) posits that document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves scrutinising and assessing relevant documents related to the research topic. It involves the process of categorising information into themes, like analysing data from other sources (Dalglish, Khalid & McMahon, 2020). According to Jeffrey and Miller (2016), qualitative document analysis involves examining and assessing written materials that individuals have produced without any direct involvement or request from researchers. Dalglish et al. (2020) further add that document analysis is a complementary research tool to other methodologies.

I critically analysed that data from the selected documents to determine its pertinence to the research questions as was the similar case with the FGDs and SSI. Consequently, I deduced sound conclusions and provided recommendations concerning the experiences of staff in managing learner's CDB.

Despite its ready availability as a source of data, Morgan (2022) noted that document analysis is associated with several limitations such as:

- research objectives are not considered while documents are being created and
- the researcher does not have the opportunity to probe further when performing document analysis.

To address the challenges mentioned above, I used document analysis in conjunction with the FGDs and SSIs. I employed documents as supplementary sources to augment the data obtained from FGDs and SSIs to enhance the credibility of the findings. In addition to serving as a supplementary resource for the FGDs and SSIs,

the document analysed in this study unveiled some noteworthy findings supplementing and contradicting those brought to light by the FGDs and SSIs.

The FGD and SSI procedures significantly impacted the decision about which documents to analyse in each school. I compiled the document list based on the staff members' interview responses. Notably, I stipulated a minimum requirement of two years' worth of documentation, dated explicitly from 2022–2023. However, this proved unfeasible in certain schools due to inadequate record-keeping practices and the frequent rotation of teachers responsible for various committees. Consequently, I opted to use the 2023 documents available in each school.

The documents analysed in this study included:

1. Minutes of School Disciplinary Committee meetings and hearings. The number of learner's indiscipline occurrences, the names of individuals involved, the type of offence, how it was handled, and whether parents participated in the procedure were all documented.
2. The Learners' Code of Conduct and school rules that outline acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
3. The School-based Support Team (SBST) files and records were carefully analysed to determine the type of assistance provided to learners with behavioural challenges at school.
4. The classroom rules from five different classes in schools that use this as their strategies were analysed to determine the wording, number and whether they include consequences.

4.5.1.7 Data collection steps

After receiving approval from the University of the Free State ethics review committee, I visited the research location and negotiated with the participants. I sent a letter requesting permission from the principals of the selected schools to use the schools as study sites before any meetings or negotiations with the participants. I attached the copy of permission from the University of the Free State's ethical review committee and the Free State Department of Education's approval letter.

I met with the principals of the sampled schools on different days. In school A, however, I met the deputy principal because the principal was absent that day. The deputy promised to inform the principal the next day. All the reactions of the principals were quite positive in all the schools. I was given enough time to outline the study's rationale, potential benefits and risks, and the kinds of participants needed to take part. It was made clear to the principals that, if possible, equal involvement of genders would be preferred.

All the principals offered to disseminate the information about the study among their respective staff members during the briefing session scheduled for the following day. I left the principals with the leaflets containing comprehensive information about the study and the consent forms intended for distribution among prospective participants. Before I left, I established a means of contact by exchanging phone numbers with the principals, facilitating effective communication.

After telephonic communication with the principals, I visited the schools to meet with the volunteer participants and coordinate the interview schedule. The SSIs were conducted at the designated research sites after school hours over three separate days, specifically in the offices of the DHs at school A. However, on the final day of the final interview, the last participant (DH) displayed a lack of willingness to continue participating, and I duly respected his decision. I informed the deputy principal of the situation because the principal was heavily engaged in the afternoon study session. The deputy principal exhibited a high level of readiness to participate, as he was the first person I met on the first day at that school and outlined the details of the study. The interview continued with the deputy principal.

In School B, the interviews were conducted during the Easter school holidays. In a manner akin to that of school A, interviews were conducted over three separate days, per the predetermined schedule established with the participants.

The FGD was contacted at school D. Before the interview, I met the participants at their different schools to get to know them well. The schools are approximately 500m apart, so it was easy for me to move from one school to another. During the meeting, we agreed on the venue and time. Then I informed the principals of the concerned schools. The school deference of time was 15 minutes, so the principal of school C

diligently suggested assigning the four teachers assistance in the classroom so they could leave 15 minutes early for the FGD at school D.

Although the plan was to have four teachers from each school, there were only three teachers from school D on that day because the fourth participant was absent from work. For this reason, the FGD went on with seven participants. Fortunately, the participants already knew each other as the schools were neighbours, perhaps due to engagements in various school activities. As a result, everyone seemed to be at home. I informed the participants at the beginning of the interview that equal participation was important. To break the ice, he asked about their views of CDB.

4.6 Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis happen concurrently in a qualitative study to allow researchers to make an informed decision on how to test the emerging conclusions during the interviews (Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020). Data analysis is an iterative and inductive process (Jeffrey & Miller, 2016) through which a researcher interprets the data gathered by breaking it down into smaller topics (Creswell, 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). When performing qualitative data analysis, researchers search for recurring patterns among the observations made through in-depth interviews, field notes, focus groups, or other methods (Boyle & Schemierbach, 2020). These patterns, also known as themes, are what make qualitative research unique since they give an essential understanding of what the results mean and a helpful approach to describing the connections between variables (Creswell, 2020). Thus, data analysis is the process of evaluating and analysing the data to form conclusions (Babbie, 2016).

Six processes are frequently used in interpreting qualitative data (Creswell, 2020; Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Those six steps are as follows:

- Preparing and organising the data for analysis.
- Exploring the data initially through the process of coding.
- Using the codes to develop a more general picture of the data (descriptions and themes).
- Representing the findings through narratives and visuals.

- Interpreting the meaning of the results by personally reflecting on the impact of the findings and on the literature that may inform the findings.
- Interpreting the results.

Researchers seldom follow these procedures in order but instead iteratively go through the stages of qualitative analysis (Creswell, 2020). Therefore, in this study, my analysis process was continual and compatible with the six steps as mentioned above. Data in this study were analysed as they were being gathered to make sense of them, allowing me to follow up where it appeared essential. Despite the time-consuming procedure, I hand-coded the data for this study even though he was aware of a well-known qualitative computer data analysis application (Creswell, 2020).

4.6.1 Qualitative content analysis

According to Roller (2019), qualitative content analysis is an organised procedure in which the researcher analyses information by extracting significant concepts pertinent to the data produced, paying attention to the particular environment in which it was formed. Drisko and Maschi (2016) and Hays and McKibben (2021) contend that qualitative content analysis is a method where the researcher systematically concludes texts and other kinds of communication, making it possible for others to repeat the procedure easily. The researchers who employ qualitative content analysis assume that texts are a rich data source that can provide important details about phenomena under investigation (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). In qualitative content analysis, the transcribed data are reduced into ideas describing the phenomenon being studied by creating categories, concepts, and conceptual maps following either deductive or inductive content analysis (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022).

4.6.1.1 Deductive content analysis

Deductive content analysis is a data analysis process that entails using pre-established codes or themes derived from literature or a conceptual framework and exclusively examining data relevant to those codes (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022; Gillam, 2022; Hays & McKibben, 2021). The codes employed in the deductive content analysis are predetermined fixed and remain unchanged throughout the analysis (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022; Gillam, 2022). In this study, I wanted data from SSIs, the FGD and document analysis to determine the codes to provide a clear picture of

the staff's experiences regarding CDB; for this reason, I employed inductive content analysis.

4.6.1.2 Inductive content analysis

Inductive Content Analysis (ICA) is a qualitative research method that is used for analysing text-based data, including written transcripts or documents that were either pre-existing or created specifically for the research project (Kyngäs et al., 2020; Vears & Gillam, 2022) state that the ICA process involves a meticulous reading of the data, an assessment of similarities and differences between the coded data, and the organisation, integration, and development of categories, concepts, and themes. Vears and Gillam (2022) posit that researchers using ICA remain closely attuned to the phenomena under investigation and develop interpretations that provide comprehensive answers to the research questions while still maintaining the realistic context in which it was generated. The relationship between the choice of an analysis tool and the study is that ICA was suitable to explain staff experiences. This approach enabled me to derive insights directly from the data, without relying on pre-established codes.

When employing ICA, the analysis is constructed inductively from a careful reading of the texts, known as iterative coding (Vears & Gillam, 2022). The codes used to classify the data are created during the coding process using the transcribed data (Bingham & Witkowsky, 2022; Hays & McKibben 2021). Because of this, using ICA signifies that I gave the data the reins throughout the analysis to give a realistic picture of staff experiences in managing CDB. Using iterative coding contributes to the ICA's data richness and precise interpretation, evident in this study in the sense that the coding procedure was not a one-time occurrence for each document or transcript but repeated and refined by drawing comparisons and similarities between documents/transcripts. This suggests that each document or transcript is coded in more precise iterations several times (Vears & Gillam, 2022).

4.6.1.3 Inductive content analysis steps

To fully understand the transcribed material, I read it many times. Before beginning to code, reading, and becoming familiar with the data is essential to understand the transcripts and prevent subjective interpretation (Kyngäs et al., 2020; Vears & Gillam,

2022). I used colours to help separate data based on the research questions. Relevant information addressing research question one was highlighted in red, then the second in yellow, and so forth. During the data reduction step, I used first-round coding. I used the big-picture coding from the overall meaning of the raw data and considered the research question when choosing where specific coding fit. I then read the data, focusing on how it related to the study questions. Therefore, there was a clear link between the study questions and the bigger-picture coding. Afterwards, I started the second coding phase by creating subcategories and precise codes.

Before putting a subcategory code on a transcript, I looked at the big-picture coding and read each piece of text to determine its meaning. I made subcategories from the big-picture coding by using words from the text and sometimes words with related meanings. He then moved on to the stage of grouping, where he changed the groups. At this stage, the subcategories from the codes of the bigger picture were compared. I put those similar together but left those different alone (Kyngäs et al., 2020). At this step, I reviewed the information from the first coding round to ensure consistency and changed the codes as needed. That was to ensure that the data's richness was not lost during regrouping and merging. After code refinement, I moved on to the last step, synthesis, and interpretation.

I put together the big-picture coding and the subcategories to develop a general meaning that showed how the categories fit together and tell a story. According to Vears and Gillam (2022), the synthesis of data analysed inductively uses theory and interpretations of related phenomena to frame and strengthen the interpretation. When using ICA, synthesising the results means combining the categories into a story that completely explains the phenomenon. After coding and grouping, I applied a theoretical framework to describe the overall findings comprehensively.

By following the mentioned steps, I stayed more in touch with the data that described the experiences of staff concerning CDB. This enabled him to generate an interpretation that provided a comprehensive answer to the research questions and facilitated an interpretation that could be applied to similar educational environments to the schools that were selected for sampling.

4.7 Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to how accurately qualitative research captures participant viewpoints and the research context in both its design and report (Hays & McKibben, 2021). Connell (2016) adds that trustworthiness refers to the extent of the belief that one may have in the methods used to ensure the quality of the study. Kyngäs et al. (2020) further assert that it consists of the truthfulness of the findings, which involves appropriate and effective methodological coherences. According to Billups (2022), the fundamental issues of trustworthiness involve the researcher persuading the audience, including oneself, that the study results are important and should be considered. Striving for trustworthy research, therefore, means the researchers should consider the following questions: What arguments might be made; what standards could be used; and what inquiries could be made that would be convincing on this issue? (Billups, 2022). According to Solomon and Amankwaa (2016), Norman and King (2020) and Kyngäs et al. (2020), the following four factors are used to assess the trustworthiness of a qualitative study: credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

4.7.1 Credibility

In quantitative research, credibility refers to the researcher's skill in accurately expressing participants' viewpoints (Merriam & Gremier, 2019). Credibility involves following a compelling data generation method that enables comparability between the raw data and researchers' interpretations of findings and conclusions made (Norman & King, 2020). Credibility was ensured by using triangulation in this study.

4.7.1.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is the procedure through which researchers combine several techniques to strengthen the veracity of the results (Billups, 2022; Jeffrey & Miller, 2016; Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Merriam and Gremier (2019) add that researchers triangulate by employing many sources to gather evidence on the same topic to deepen their understanding and provide a compelling justification for their research. According to Jeffrey and Miller (2016), the type of triangulation a researcher uses depends on the study's objectives. Methodological triangulation was used in this study, which, according to Solomon and Amankwaa (2016) means using either the same

procedures on multiple occasions or different methods on the same subject of a study. Document analysis, a FGD and SSIs were used in this study to accomplish methodological triangulation.

4.7.2 Dependability

Dependability is a qualitative concept that describes how well discrepancies may be monitored or explained (Kyngäs et al., 2020). Dependability is also defined as data consistency through time and in many contexts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020; Norman & King, 2020). It concerns whether the same findings would be produced if the identical item was seen twice (Billups, 2022). The author furthers states that an audit trail can help establish trustworthiness.

4.7.2.1 Audit trail

According to Creswell (2020), an audit trail is the process whereby the researchers record every step of the study which ultimately enhances dependability. Merriam and Grenier (2019) add that independent readers can verify a study's conclusions by following the researcher's steps, much as an auditor verifies a company's financial statements. Thus, an audit trail in qualitative research outlines how data were gathered, categories were created, and choices were made throughout the investigation (Billups, 2022). The audit trail involves the researcher keeping a research journal and thoroughly explaining how the study was carried out and how the data were evaluated (Meriam & Grenier, 2019).

To guarantee an audit trail, I securely kept all project paperwork, including transcripts and audiotaped data, on his laptop to ensure its accessibility in the event of a necessity. To help readers make impartial conclusions, I evenly represented all participants' points of view (Creswell, 2020). Lastly, to avoid power dynamics, I regarded participants as partners by listening more than he spoke (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020) during the interview.

4.7.3 Conformability

Conformability is the process in which participants assess the generated data and its interpretation (Cresswell, 2012). According to Boyle and Schemierbach (2020), when participants are allowed to evaluate and audit the transcribed data through a member

check process, the conformability of the results is increased. Conformability indicates that the researcher's analysis and findings are accurate and founded on verifiable, real-world facts (Norman & King, 2020). According to Solomon and Amankwaa (2016) and Kyngäs et al. (2020), when truth, value, consistency, and application are considered, conformability is obtained. To maintain a deeper degree of transparency, this study employed member checking.

4.7.3.1 Member checking

Member checking is when the researcher compiles participant information into a summary and interrogates them to ensure accuracy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2020). Alternatively, the researcher might deliver the final report to participants and ask them to validate the interpretation (Creswell, 2020; Jeffrey & Miller, 2016; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Each participant was given a follow-up interview to provide feedback on the summaries of the findings for validation. I sent the participants the summary of the findings together with their own transcribed responses. During transcription, each participant's responses were attached to their pseudonym. Therefore, extracting each participant's responses and compiling them when doing member checking was easy. During this validation, other points, such as how the staff addresses CDB through pinching and expelling learners from the classroom were raised.

4.7.4 Transferability

Transferability applies when the study's findings can be applied to several different contexts and circumstances (Hays & McKibben, 2021; Kyngäs et al., 2020; Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Creswell (2020) adds that only when readers can apply the study's conclusions to situations comparable to those researched can it be said to have transferability. According to Merriam and Grenier (2019), to ensure transferability, the researcher should offer a sufficient description of the study's background to form comparisons. This will help the reader – not the researcher – translate findings from a study to their current circumstances (Norman & King, 2020). Thus, detailed and dense description is a crucial strategy to enhance transferability. I offered a comprehensive description of the research sites and biographical details of the participants. The rationale behind this tactic is that if there is some diversity in the types of sites chosen (an urban and a rural school for example), participants interviewed, or the times and

locations of field visits, then readers or consumers of the research can apply findings to a wider range of situations (Merriam & Gremier, 2019). Furthermore, to enhance the transferability of the findings, I furnished a comprehensive description of the methodologies employed to conduct this study, thereby enabling replication by other researchers (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

4.8 Ethical Considerations

Babbie (2016) states that ethics is the principles of right and wrong that govern those performing research to safeguard the participants, the researcher, and the professions of researchers. Ethics is a fundamental part of the research process that should be adhered to throughout the study process not only in certain sections (Kyngäs et al., 2020). The ethical rule of social research is that it must not harm participants (Ngenye & Kreps, 2020). According to Billups (2022), when conducting a qualitative study, researchers must anticipate any ethical dilemmas and devise a strategy for handling them. The notion that these problems manifest only during data gathering is widespread (Billups, 2022).

Nevertheless, as researchers get more attuned to the requirements of participants, locations, stakeholders, and publishers of research, they appear at various stages of the study process and continue to broaden in scope (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Creswell (2020), similar to quantitative research, acquiring permission from many parties, including the organisation, the site, the participants and the university institutional review boards (Billups, 2022), is necessary for qualitative inquiry to access the location or participants. Negotiating agreements with campus review boards and identifying people at a location who can help collect qualitative data are particularly important (Creswell, 2020). I inferred that failing to weigh ethical considerations in research adequately constitutes societal negligence. The following factors were considered as part of this study's ethical considerations: requesting permission, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity.

4.8.1 Permission to conduct the study

I submitted a request for authorisation to the Free State Department of Education to get permission to conduct research in schools. The request was successful and I received authorisation to proceed with the research. Before commencing the study, I

sought and received authorisation from the Ethics Committee at the University of the Free State. This was necessary to comply with ethical standards and guarantee that I complied with and respected the ethical code of conduct established by the university (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014 cited in Ramatea, 2023). After obtaining ethical approval to carry out this study, I contacted selected schools to ask permission to use them as research sites.

4.8.2 Informed consent

The issuance of informed consent to participants serves as evidence of adherence to ethical protocols, as noted by Creswell (2020). According to Babbie (2016), informed consent refers to the voluntary agreement of participants to participate in research. To ensure adherence to ethical standards, I gave each participant written information detailing the study's nature, purpose, and potential risks. The concept of informed consent was established to ensure that study participants possess a comprehensive understanding of the study's particulars and provide their signatures prior to the commencement of the study. In addition, informed consent was implemented to guarantee that the individuals involved in the study are fully cognisant of their entitlement to either participate or abstain from participation at any point during the research process (Creswell, 2020). Obtaining a signed informed consent ensured that the study participants possessed a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, significance, and potential risks as well as the measures in place to mitigate such risks.

4.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Babbie (2016) states that confidentiality and anonymity are ethical practices that preserve human subjects' privacy throughout data production, analysis, and reporting. Confidentiality involves keeping raw data and releasing conclusions that cannot be linked back to individuals' identities. In contrast, anonymity means avoiding gathering data that may identify or track a person (Badampudi et al., 2022). According to Coffelt (2017 cited in Ramatea, 2023), researchers must keep participants' personal information separate from their data to guarantee confidentiality. The University of the Free State's research ethical clearance standards (2014) state that focus group

conversations to generate data do not ensure confidentiality. Thus, focus group participants' privacy is in danger.

In this context, I implemented measures to safeguard the confidentiality of participants by using pseudonyms to protect their privacy and identity. The respondents' identities were effectively anonymised through fabricated codes or pseudonyms to dissociate their names from their responses. Numerous measures were implemented to safeguard the anonymity of participants in the focus group. However, I apprised the participants of the impossibility of guaranteeing the confidentiality of information shared by other participants. Nevertheless, I encouraged participants to exercise caution and refrain from disclosing any data that could be linked to any individual participant (Badampudi et al., 2022; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014 cited in Ramatea, 2023). In addition, I kept the hard copies of the participants' answers and the coding keys in a secure, locked location for future research or academic purposes (Lune & Berg, 2017 cited in Ramatea, 2023), and the soft copies were stored on a password-protected computer where the identity keys were kept separately from the data.

4.9 Limitations of the Study

Vithal and Janson (2019) posit that by acknowledging the limitations of a study, readers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the constraints that were imposed on the study and the context in which the researcher's assertions are situated. According to Creswell (2020), the generalisation of findings from qualitative research is not feasible due to the limited sample sizes. Hence, this research shares a similar limitation as it employed a restricted sample size of 14 participants, four secondary schools, four teachers from two schools, and three members of the SMT from two other schools. Consequently, the generalisability of findings is restricted to situations like those represented in the sample. An additional constraint that warrants consideration is that the research was conducted exclusively at township schools in urban and rural regions. Each of the four schools falls under the category of quintile 3 in the South African school quintile rankings.

4.10 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter discussed and justified the qualitative research design and techniques for this study. It covered the philosophical presumptions that guided the research,

techniques for sampling, data gathering and analysis. The chapter also discussed the strategies to ensure trustworthiness and the ethical concerns considered. The final section of the chapter included information about the study's limitations. The presentation of the analysed data findings follows in the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an in-depth discussion of this study's research approach and methodology. This chapter provides an interpretation of the data collected to fulfil the primary objective of the study, which was to explore secondary school teachers' experiences on the dynamics of managing learners' CDB in Free State, Motheo District. To gather information from the staff, individual face-to-face interviews with members of the SMT, a focus group with teachers, and document analysis were the three approaches I used to generate the data. This chapter is divided into five parts: a) profile of the sites and participants; b) data presentation and analysis from the interviews (both SSIs and FGD), with the data analysis categorised into five themes; c) document analysis; and e) conclusions.

To adhere to the study's ethical guidelines outlined in Chapter 4, I used pseudonyms to protect the participant's identity. The information in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 below consecutively outlines the profiling of the sampled research sites and participants for this study.

5.2 Profile of Research Sites and Participants

5.2.1 Profile of research sites

Table 5.1: Details of the schools sampled in this study

Name of school	Number of principals	Number of deputy principal	Number of departmental heads	Number of teachers	Number of learners	Quintile ranking
School A	1	1	4	28	940	3
School B	1	2	9	53	1672	3
School C	1	2	5	35	1258	3
School D	1	2	6	42	1294	3

Table 5.1 shows that data was gathered from four schools. The majority of the schools (75%) had one principal and two deputy principals, except for school A, which had one deputy principal. The schools had between four and nine DHs and learners ranging between 900 and 1700. All the schools are classified as quintile 3. According to the quintile ranking of schools in South Africa, quintile 3 schools serve lower socioeconomic communities. In terms of the teachers, School A had 28 teachers, School B had 53, School C had 35 and School D had 42.

5.2.2 Profile of the participants

Table 5.2: Participants' biographic details

Name	School	Position	Gender	Teaching experience	Highest qualification
Abert	A	DH	M	25	Master's degree
Betty	A	DH	M	22	Med
Corn	A	Deputy	M	10	BSC Hons (PGCE)
Dethny	B	DH	M	10	BEd Honours
Eerth	B	DH	F	27	BEd Honours
Frome	B	DH	F	30	BA
Gyan	C	Teacher	F	10	BEd
Hope	C	Teacher	F	15	BEd Honours
Inter	C	Teacher	M	16	ACE
Joke	C	Teacher	M	1	BEd
Kane	D	Teacher	M	3	BSC (PGCE)
Lamel	D	Teacher	M	3	BEd
Moon	D	Teacher	M	3	BEd

Table 5.2 presented above provides an overview of the biographies of the participants. The table shows that most participants from the SMT component were DHs, except for one deputy principal. The other participants were all teachers. The table further demonstrates gender parity, as both male and female individuals were included in the

study. The participants possessed considerable teaching experience with the SMT, spanning from 10 to 30 years. The teachers, except for one who had only one year of teaching experience, had between three and 10 years of teaching experience. The majority (53%) of the participants possessed qualifications indicating that they had undergone PD through various educational institutions regarding teaching and learning while the other teachers (47%) possessed a teacher training degree.

5.3 Data Analysis

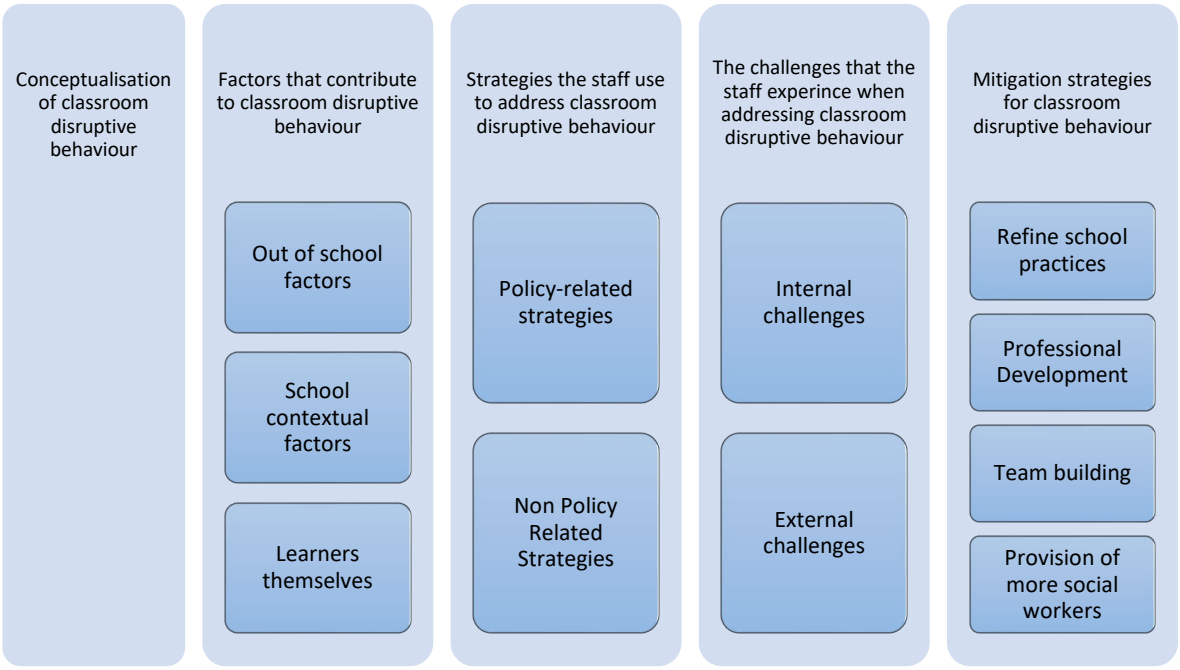


Figure 5.1: Summary of major themes emerging from data created by the author.

Figure 5.1 above provides a comprehensive summary of the primary themes and subthemes that were identified during the analysis. The first major theme is the staff's conceptualisation of CDB. The second theme is the factors contributing to CDB. Under this theme there are subthemes: out-of-school factors, school contextual factors, and the learners themselves. The third theme is the strategies that the staff use to address CDB. Under this theme, there are two subthemes: policy-related strategies and non-policy-related strategies. The fourth theme is the challenges that the staff experience when addressing CDB. As shown in Figure 5.1, there are two subthemes under this theme: internal and external challenges. The final major theme is mitigation strategies

for CDB. Under this theme, there are four subthemes: refine school practices, PD, team building, and provision of social workers.

5.3.1 Conceptualisation of classroom disruptive behaviour

The participants seemed to have conceptualised CDB as a form of intentional conduct from learners that hinders the educational process and necessitates teachers' intervention to reinstate order inside the classroom. **Inter (School C)** shared as follows:

> *It is when a learner intentionally distracts the class, and now all the attention goes to him because maybe he disturbs your thought process, and then you have to reprimand whatever they are doing.*

Lamel (School D) indicated:

> *It disturbs the proceedings, so it would happen that an individual behaves in a manner that is not right, and you have to reprimand that person repeatedly.*

Dethny (School B) also had the following to share:

> *It is a situation whereby teaching and learning do not take place because of the behaviour of learners*.

The preceding discourse demonstrates that learner disruptive behaviour in the classroom poses a significant challenge to establishing an optimal learning environment as it necessitates teacher intervention when such disruptive behaviour arises. The participants' extracts above further indicated the unpleasant atmosphere of learner CDB as it shifts the teachers' focus from their responsibility of facilitating teaching and learning in a conducive environment for all learners.

5.3.2 Factors that contribute to classroom disruptive behaviour

Three subthemes were identified from the participants' data on the factors contributing to CDB. These included out-of-school factors, school-contextual factors, and the learners themselves as outlined below.

5.3.2.1 Out-of-school factors

The participants expressed that disruptive behaviour in the classroom can be attributed to external variables beyond the school setting, including socioeconomic status, parental influence, home environmental conditions, and substance abuse. **Betty (School A)** offered the following viewpoints on the matter:

> *If you sit down with the learner, you will find that the causes are mostly social. When you dig deeper and visit the child at home, you find that the child will never behave well under those circumstances – when you see the nature of the house and many problems. When you start asking, what is your name? Where do you stay? And where are your parents? Then, you start finding out that the child does not know where the mother is. He/she lives with the grandparents and some stay alone. Then, immediately, you discover that he/she is staying alone, it tells you why the child is behaving like that.*

Dethny (**School B)** elaborated as follows:

> *Others will be coming to school with nothing because their parents are not working, wa bona, (you see), so they come here without breakfast, which contributes a lot. We have child-headed families, poverty, and unemployment, significantly contributing to children's behaviour. So, they come with a burden here at school and somehow struggle to concentrate in the classroom, and you find some of them become violent. Also, drugs do contribute a lot, during break time that is when they go to the shops and smoke, so when they come back, Hm Meneer! (Sir) They are in another world.*

Corn (**School A)** alleged the following**:**

> *We find a learner coming to school wearing torn shoes and other learners making fun of that learner. So, this learner for him to stop this thing of other learners from laughing at him he must act big, bully, and fight them back**.***

Frome (School B) elaborated further by stating:

> *The other thing can be child-headed families. Children whose parents are not staying with them may have gone out sick for work or working far away. Our learners seek attention from parents, so when they do not get it, they seek it here at school, and the person they can seek or enforce that attention from will be a teacher. It can be the environment where the learner lives. If they come from an aggressive environment where there are always fights, where vulgar language is being used, and maybe the parents are drinking, a noisy environment where there is shebeen, people are drinking and using dagga, when the child arrives at school, he or she is likely to display the kind of behaviour he or she sees at home and might also grow up imitating and using dagga.*

The excerpts above suggest that CDB might arise due to a range of factors originating from external influences that directly affect the learning environment. It is evident from the analysis that learners residing in homes or environments characterised by high levels of these external factors exhibit an elevated inclination to engage in disruptive behaviours in the classroom setting.

5.3.2.2 School-contextual factors

One of the contextual elements related to schools that were identified in the data is the admission policy. The analysis indicated two potential ways in which the admission policy contributes to CDB, (i) the policy does not specify the age requirements for admission for learners into grade 8 in secondary schools and (ii) the policy does not grant secondary schools the mandatory authority to request past records of learners' learning difficulties from elementary schools to assess the type of support they may need. Consequently, as the participants alleged, the schools admit learners who are not comprehensively knowledgeable, which may lead to admission of learners with severe learning disorders or barriers into the mainstream with limited support.

Lamel (School D) shared:

> *Ke batlile ke e lebala (I almost forgot), I think the other one is learning barriers. In terms of schools, schools are now taking learners with learning barriers. So when this child a fihla mona wa bona hore (arrives here, you see that) this is an extreme learning barrier. I have such a learner in grade 10. You can do anything or give him a tests, he just holds the pen and look at you. Even when you ask him, he does not know in which grade 10 he belongs.*

Dethny (School B) also highlighted:

> *You realise that, here is the learner, he is 18 years and he is just being promoted from grade 7 to grade 8. Now as a secondary school, number four or Batho is our feeder. Irrespective of that age, of that particular learner we must admit that learner without even questioning that age, the fact remains the learner has a report and he passed grade 7 therefore, we must admit him here. Again, learners' previous behaviour is not adequately documented at the primary level and is demanded by admission committees in secondary schools. So, we will always have problems with behaviour and learners who do not know how to study or read at grade 12. Here you will be sitting in a class and you will be having more than one type of learner. Remember we are the mainstream. At the moment we have a learner who is like that, he is clever, but you see that he is learning differently. Sometimes he just stands up, make a noise and go*

outside. We should have picked up these things as early as grade 8, so that contributes a lot.

Corn (School A) shared as follows:

The normal age to be in grade 8, is supposed to be 13 and 14 years, but we have 17 years olds in class with the grade 8s, and then we experience elements of bullying from such learners.

Hope (School C) also emphasised:

Another problem is the admission of learners. At the beginning of the year, our school had few learners in grade 8. Then suddenly, the department brings its list of learners after some time. You do not have to question that, yours is to take those learners. Along the way, you find yourself with learners with an extreme learning barrier in your classroom whose work is just to sit there and do nothing. Worst, that learner will be exhibiting strange behaviours that disturb others who are concentrating.

Another school-contextual factor that emerged from the data is the progression policy. To reduce dropouts, the DBE introduced a progression policy stipulating that learners may not be retained in the same phase more than once. The participants alleged that this policy contributes to CDB because learners know that they will progress to the next grade even if they do not pass. As the participants indicated, when these learners progress to the next grade, they arrive without knowledge and sometimes resort to CDB to hide their academic limitations. **Joke (School C)** shared the following:

Some learners become disruptive because they try to hide their academic limitations. They have never passed since primary school and have been progressed up to where they are, so they cover their limitations by resorting to chaotic behaviour.

Corn (School A) clarified as follows:

Also, for progression, remember if the learner fails grade 7, even a learner in grade 8 with nine level ones cannot fail, which contributes. Those are the issues we are struggling with, so they use this system against us to their advantage because they know it. These were the learners who were not doing their homework and coming late the whole year, but telling themselves that I am going to pass, and others copied that behaviour because they could see that in this school we do as we please, as a result, every year we have 200 grade 8s and 100 of those learners are failing.

The findings also revealed that schools do not have a proper retrieval system of textbooks. For this reason, it is hard for learning to take place effectively due to a shortage of textbooks. This kind of shortage causes learners to become disruptive when teachers fail to improvise or make some copies for their classes. **Frome (School B)** shared:

> *Ok let me say here is the teacher, he is teaching Natural Science or maybe Life Science and there are no textbooks. Perhaps you would like learners to refer to some pages when teaching to get information about in a certain topic but there are no textbooks. It won't be easy because here we rely on photocopy machine to do some copies for learners. But sometimes that machine is broken so you cannot make any copies, so sometimes teachers cannot improvise. This is the challenge that we experience, If there are no textbooks, no copies, teachers will just go to class and not teach, that is when learners will start to make noise and become disruptive. The type of learners we have here, some of them do not return them at the end of the year and that causes a shortage of books the following year.*

Another school-contextual factor identified by the participants was the lack of various extracurricular activities for learners in schools. Data revealed that the schools are limited only to sporting codes such as football and netball. As a result, some learners who may be good in other sport are denied opportunities to shine and take that excellent motivation into the classrooms. **Betty (School A)** stated that:

> *We don't have the facilities for other sports. The only thing we have is soccer and netball. And for a school of 900 learners, do you all want them to play soccer and netball? So that means even those who are energetic use it in the classroom to disrupt. You understand? If you look at schools that are resourceful, how many sporting codes do they have there? Many of them. So, they accommodate all the learners, wa bona, (you see). Even those who are not good in class can at least perform in one sporting activity and take that motivation to class other than using the energy to disrupt classroom proceedings.*

The participants also revealed that the staff influence the school-contextual factors in various ways, such as not preparing for class, lack of class management and the SMT not executing their monitoring core duties.

Frome (**School B)** elaborated by stating:

> *Some teachers do not prepare for their lessons so you will find that instead of teaching, they chat with certain learners, and some will be bored because they want to be taught so vent their frustrations by being disruptive.*

Hope (School C) shared the following:

> *Sometimes classroom disruptive behaviour is caused by teachers, either by not giving learners activities or teaching in the classroom. So, learners take advantage by playing which is another way to draw teachers' attention to teach. But if you teach and give them work, move around to check if the work is being done, they will stop the disruption. But if you do not engage them with work and teaching, they will continue with disruptions.*

Kane (School D) shared the following:

> *Learners analyse teachers and decide how they react. They respond differently to each teacher because we as teachers have different personalities in how we deal with children. Some other teachers are very strict, so you might find that there is no disruptive behaviour in their class.*

Dethny (School B) highlighted the following:

> *You see our problem in our schools, we do have these plans, but you find that some are being done for compliance. I think the problem starts with us as management, we do not do our work, and when that happens, the educators just follow suit.*

Betty (School A) emphasised:

> *I think the managers of the curriculum can also play a role. When the District Support Team Visit visits the school, you find that there are teachers who are behind with the curriculum but the teachers has been at school and never been absent. So I am saying if somebody from outside finds that your teacher in your department is behind with the work it means you are not doing your work as the DH. There are cases where many teachers have been found behind with the curriculum and the DH is there, unfortunately, which means I did not do my work as the DH. Because the teacher cannot be behind in the presence of the Head of Department (HOD). That show that the teacher goes to class but does not teach.*

Lastly, the findings revealed that another major contributing factor to CDB is the overcrowded classrooms in schools.

Kane (School D) shared**:**

> *If there are too many in the class when you are busy with this one, the other ones have a lot of time, so they start disrupting because they have a lot of time while still waiting for you. So, it is challenging to control those kinds of classes.*

The extracts from the data analysed showed that educators confront significant challenges in managing CDBs which are predominantly rooted in various aspects of the school environment and activities. These challenges encompass the opacity of school policies, ambiguities about the progression rules, restricted extracurricular offerings, excessively populated classrooms, inconsistencies among staff and management in classroom management approaches, and purported inadequacies in implementing school plans. These collective factors are posited as contributory elements perpetuating disruptive behaviour in the classroom setting.

5.3.2.3 Learner factor

The participants showed that some problems in the classroom could be directly linked to what students do as they are allegedly influenced by peer pressure, do not adhere to school rules and come late to school. **Moon (School D)** articulated:

> *Another cause is peer pressure. Some of them it is not like ke behaviour ba hae (it is his/ her behaviour). He is trying to imitate other learners' behaviour because he thinks ha a etsa jwalo o tla banahala a le cool (doing so, he may appear cool) or something.*

Corn (School A) highlighted:

> *Another cause of learners' classroom disruption could be the latecoming of learners to school and classrooms.*

The data presented above elucidates the substantial role learners play in aggravating CDB. Their contribution to the factors underpinning classroom disruptions primarily centres on their capacity to influence peers adversely and their consistent failure to adhere to punctuality norms in the school environment which can create a domino effect in the classroom. Such factors disrupt the flow of lessons, impact the learning environment of the class, and affect their own learning and that of their peers.

5.3.3 Strategies that the staff use to address classroom disruptive behaviour

The findings from the data analysed identified two subthemes on the strategies employed by staff members to handle CDB. These strategies involved policy-related strategies and non-policy strategies.

5.3.3.1 Policy-related strategies

The findings from the data analysed indicated policy-related strategies identified by the participants which encompassed several aspects, such as multisectoral collaborations, the SBST, the school code of conduct, the incidence book, classroom rules, over-aged learners' conduct agreement and SMT interventions.

The findings revealed that some schools are collaborating with different departments to address the issue of CDB caused by external factors. Those departments comprise the South African Police Service (SAPS) and entities established by professionals in their respective fields of expertise who are former learners of the concerned schools. **Corn (School A)** highlighted:

> *We have a police officer who has adopted our school, so through the partnership with her, we have tried to do random searching, they will come at least once a month or twice and search the bags of these learners and also search for dangerous weapons. We invite motivational speakers from America as someone who was a drug addict who lost his family, he comes and talk with the learners.*

Dethny (School B) also elaborated on the school's partnership with their ex-learners from different departments to support learners. He shared:

> *In 2020 there are former learners of our school, they made a committee, they have this organisation, so they meet every month. There are different occupations like social workers, police officers and doctors. They have their programmes, and our school greatly benefits from them. I know late last year that they called official services like SAPS, Social Development and Correctional service. They were talking to the learners, and they also had a project of sanity pads and they contributed about 5 000; some are still there in the office, so we are benefiting a lot from them.*

The findings also showed that the schools established a SBST to deal with a range of problems involving learners who have issues connected to drugs and problems in their homes. **Frome (School B)** elaborated:

> *We have a committee called SBST. It is the one that addresses the learners who misbehave, learners who have problems at home. Sometimes, the committee invites the social worker to come and talk with the learners or engaged people from the department to come and talk to the learners.*

The participants further shared that the school code of conduct is also used to mitigate CDB in some schools. **Eerth (School B)** shared:

> *At the beginning of the year, we read the code of conduct to learners in classes. Each class teacher has to read it and then we make copies for learners to go with those code of conduct home and then we invite the parents they will sign those conducts. We start at the beginning of the year and then at the assembly to remind them.*

The data also indicated that teachers use incident books to manage CDB by documenting instances of learner disruptions in the classroom and setting up classroom rules.

Betty (School A) further elaborated:

> *We usually record them in an incident book. Every teacher must have an incidence book where they record what the child has done, so that you do not suspend them right away. We show the parent, this is the first offence, in January, now this is the second offence again in March, on the third offence, the child will be suspended and recorded on SA-SAMS.*

Corn (School A) highlighted as follows on classroom rules:

> *Regarding classroom management of the teachers, we said the registered teacher of that class must have classroom rules. The teacher decides with the learners, also have HODs per grade. They stamp on those rules and put them in the class and the teachers' file.*

Nevertheless, the data also showed that not all schools followed the typical procedure of having teachers record learners' behaviour incidents in incident logs, though they know about it. This suggests that teachers follow their preferences in such schools. **Frome (School B)** shared:

> *The teachers need to have an incident book where they write all the things and date, so that they can have learners' records which they can present to them and their parents. But in our school, we do not use that each use his or her own way to discipline learners.*

In addition, the data analysed revealed that to combat CDB associated with older learners, schools establish contracts with over-age learners through a commitment form. On the document, the participants explained that learners sign and promise to conduct themselves appropriately while at school and complete all required

schoolwork or risk being referred to Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). Regarding the practices of his school, **Corn (School A)** stated the following:

> *With the SGB's support, we introduced commitment forms, where over-age learners and parents sign to commit themselves to abide by the school's rules. Failure to do so, as a school, we will refer the learners to ABET.*

5.3.3.2 Non-policy-related strategies

The data from both the SSIs and FGD indicated that certain practices teachers employ in addressing CDB are strategies that are outside of the policies governing schools in South Africa. The non-policy-related strategies included contravening suspension processes, pinching, and chasing learners from classrooms. **Abert (School A)** explained:

> *Learners are suspended almost every day here. But we know that it is wrong because the SGB must be present. The principal does it or the deputy principal. But if there is a clever parent, they will tell us that their children are not suspended properly because there was no SGB member in there. We are concerned about some learners who have been suspended too many days. Like now, the policy does not say you can suspend a learner 21 days.*

Another non-policy strategy used by the staff revealed is pinching. The participants indicated that pinching learners is a constant practice in township schools. **Lamel (School D)** shared:

> *I think pinching is a constant thing that generally happens with township schools. The thing is, you will yell at them, and in most cases, you find that yelling does not longer work. They laugh at you, so you resort to a little bit of pinching here and there to threaten them. When it becomes to problematic learners, you will actually resort to chasing them out. I think this practice is slowly becoming a constant reality, because if you cannot use corporal punishment and this learner is problematic and does not listen, you expel such a learner from your class. In my school and in the school where I did my teaching practice it was the norm. I am using it too though I know it is not right. That is the only way I can teach.*

The analysed data extracts revealed that schools employ diverse strategies to address CDB. There exist strategies in accordance with various legislative frameworks governing schools and those not endorsed by the policies. The strategies that are in accordance with legislation encompass various actions, such as forming partnerships with stakeholders and sectors, implementing school support mechanisms like the

SBST and a code of conduct, using incident books and behavioural commitment forms. In contrast, schools also employ non-policy-related strategies such as circumventing suspension procedures, pinching, and forcibly removing learners from classrooms.

5.3.4 Challenges experienced by the staff when addressing classroom disruptive behaviour

The data analysis revealed two subthemes that relate to the challenges encountered by staff members in managing learners' CDB. Internal challenges, which are experienced within the school and external challenges, as indicated by the participants, which come from outside the school premises.

5.3.4.1 Internal challenges

The participants indicated that they experience school-level challenges such as lack of unity, phase and grade ownership, dysfunctional disciplinary committees, lack of facilities, mode of parent-school communication, young teachers, and teachers' resistance.

Data analysed indicated a lack of unity and collaborative working relationships in schools, resulting in the principal carrying out most disciplinary tasks independently. The participants alleged that certain stakeholders are not considered during the decision-making processes concerning learners' behaviour in the school. **Abert (School A)** shared as follows:

> *If you have a case in a class, the principal has to call the class teacher so that they can solve the case together. But in our case, it is not like that, the principal will be handling the case by himself. And the teachers will just be told eeh we had a case with a child in your class wara wara wara (so and so). You will be overwhelmed if you are alone and have about four to twelve children and four or eight parents around you. You cannot come out of that meeting victorious. We keep telling him that we must work together, because thus far there is no unity and that unity can bring us success.*

Kane (School D) also emphasised:

> *The other thing which bothers us is the steps that are taken. We bring the issue forward to the management, but then we are not involved in the decision-making process. Now you reprimanded the learner about this, next day the learner is here in the class without*

your knowledge. What are you going to say to that learner? Nothing, because he or she will keep on doing the same thing.

The staff further shared that they experience challenges when it comes to the ownership of grades and phases in the schools. The participants indicated that certain grades and classes belong to certain teachers. They showed that such allocation of classes promotes classifying teachers as FET (further education and training) and GET (general education and training) teachers. **Kane (School D)** stated that:

Other teachers are only teaching GET while others only FET phase. So the challenge is, the GET teachers don't share the information about the learners to FET when the learners progress to FET. We just say that's ok this learner was the problem in my class now she is going to FET they will have to deal with her. Ok let her pass and go to them.

Hope (School C) further elaborated:

Some teachers only teach grades eight and nine even though they still qualify to teach grade 12, while some teach only grades 10-12. These ones in 10-12 tend to undermine those in GET and think they are better. Then the GET teachers know they do not account, so they push even those who do not know anything forward for those FET teachers to experience what they feel.

The participants revealed that they experience challenges with dysfunctional disciplinary committees in their schools. They indicated that their schools have established disciplinary committees to handle serious misconduct of learners regarding classroom behaviours, but those committees are dysfunctional, while in other schools, they do not exist. **Abert (School A)** shared as follows:

Hmmm! (sighs) There is no disciplinary committee here. As I said, the principal handles cases alone.

Hope (School C) stated:

Our schools have committees like disciplinary and SBST, but they are dysfunctional.

Moon (School D) also emphasised**:**

We have a code of conduct that classifies levels of offences and helps which punishment to address. But I think it could work if we do implement it but the implementation is problematic.

The data also indicated that a significant obstacle in addressing CDB is the insufficient facilities to cater to the needs of all learners in the schools. The participants indicated that in some schools, such as school A, chairs and desks are consistently moved between classes each period. **Abert (School A)** elaborated by stating that:

> *The school does not have enough furniture, as you can see, we are sitting in a class without chairs. I had to borrow another teacher the chairs to go and do the debate in another class. Here the furniture is constantly moving around, making it challenging to do inventories as management because you do not know which class has what due to movement facilities each period.*

Furthermore, the participants also indicated that the staff face the challenge of communication letters not reaching the parents when given to learners, suggesting that the mode of communication between the school and parents poses challenges when the school tries to address learners' behaviour. **Gyan (School C)** also alleged the following:

> *When we call parents to address the behaviour of leaners, they do not come. We issue letters to invite them but the problem ke hore (is) parents do not respond by coming.*

A further obstacle encountered when addressing classroom disruptions in the school context pertains to the presence of young and novice teachers. The participants pointed out that the young teachers often experience challenges in their classroom management due to their youth or inexperience – these teachers are often viewed as approachable or relatable, causing learners to view them through the lens of potential romantic interests or even as peers of a similar age. Consequently, the act of disciplining disruptive learners becomes considerably arduous for these early-career teachers. **Kane (School D)** alleged as follows:

> *I think one factor we overlook is the teachers' age. Now, you are being a young teacher, learners tend to look at you somehow. 'Ok here I see a boyfriend or a girlfriend'. So that thing automatically, affects bana (affect learners) psychologically. Even when reprimanded, sometimes it has no effect.*

Corn (School A) elaborated further by stating:

> *We do experience challenges, especially with young teachers. In our school, over three years, we have recruited close to 10 new teachers straight from the university. There was a teacher who came straight from the university during her first two weeks of*

teaching, she was experiencing a lot of problems when it came to classroom management.

Nevertheless, other participants noted that another challenge of having young teachers is their lack of willingness to grow and behave like adults when they assume teaching work. **Betty (School A)** shared:

Some teachers do not grow. You can groom the teacher from being a new teacher but somewhere along the line that teacher must grow. So, we keep saying all these things: the rules, lesson plans, what, and what. But now, if the teacher is not growing and implementing those things, we will always have the problem.

The data also revealed another challenge at the school level: the SMT experience. The participants indicated that teachers sometimes allegedly resist their SMT's initiatives to address CDB, threatening them with teacher unions. **Dethny (School B)** shared the following:

The challenge we face when we try to implement the changes is teachers' resistance. You know, educators are very difficult, especially these unions or labour things. Hhh (deep sign) You know educators will be saying my union said I should not engage in such. They will always say union when they do not want to do something. We once had a plan of period registers as the management, which we intended to give to the class representative to keep and write the time the teacher arrives and leaves the classroom in each class. Haia hai! It was a fight meer (Sir)! No! No! I won't be monitored by the learners here at school, no! union, Union, you can even call union now. They said that is not going to happen. So, they were negative towards that. But a normal person would see it differently because that would assist us. Now we have this one where the principal said the teacher must go with the list of each class but this time, mark the learners who are not in the class. Remember, some are bunking classes, some are sick, and some came and asked for permission. Again they said, no no union.

Eerth (School B) also elaborated:

On the side of teachers, they gang up against management, but I stick to the policy because I am here for teaching and learning. They gang using the union. Whenever you try to do something as the manager, they mention their union.

The above quotations demonstrate that school staff encounter school-related dynamic challenges when addressing CDB. The challenges arise from various factors, including how teachers are assigned classes, the mode of communication employed between schools and parents, the presence of young and novice teachers, the

ineffectiveness of disciplinary committees, and the resistance and lack of cohesion among teachers.

5.3.4.2 External challenges

The findings unveiled that the participants encountered extrinsic impediments when tackling instances of classroom disruption. Such hindrances encompass a dearth of parental involvement and the non-availability of frequent visits from designated social worker assigned to the schools. **Lamel (School D)** shared the following:

> *We do not have support from the parents. Most parents do not support in terms of the learning process. Whatever the parents say with their mouth, children take it seriously. So, if I call a parent and give a child the letter to give the parents, then the parent just say 'your teachers are wasting my time, I do not have time for such nonsense. It means the child already has a behaviour because he knows that if I behave ill, my mother won't go there again. If she goes there, she will defend me because she is already angry at the teacher for repeatedly calling her.*

Abert (School A) also stressed:

> *When parents come for their children's misbehaviour and we tell them what their children are doing, they do not support us. They support their children. You know parents will generally be on your side in a meeting situation. When you tell them the school rules, they all agree, until the rule is applied to their child. They are afraid of these learners, or these learners tell them what to do. Wa bona (you see, now the very same thing that they do at home, they want to do it here at school).*

Betty (School A) alleged the following concerning assigned social workers:

> *Ehlile (Yes) it is a big problem because the social worker we are talking about is subjected to many schools. By the time she comes to our school the damage is already done. some of the cases require somebody who is an expertise in that area so there is nothing we can do.*

However, experiencing the challenge of social worker access during urgent moments is not a problem for all schools. **Frome (School B)** shared:

> *Even when her schedule is packed, our school's social worker always finds a way to accommodate the learners' urgent needs.*

As presented above, the participants collectively highlighted the presence of external challenges when dealing with CDB. While originating outside the immediate classroom setting, these challenges are nonetheless intricately connected to the school environment. Specifically, two prominent issues were identified: a lack of parental support and the inaccessibility of designated social workers meant to assist in addressing some factors that contribute to CDB. These external challenges accentuate the complex and multifaceted nature of addressing disruptions in educational settings as they necessitate collaboration and resources beyond the classroom itself.

5.3.5 Mitigation strategies for classroom disruptive behaviour

This theme comprises four subthemes that emerged from the data regarding the mitigation strategies the staff suggested can be employed towards mitigating CDB in schools. Those included refining school practices, PD, team building, and accessibility of additional social workers.

5.3.5.1 Refine school practices

The participants expressed that certain schools' practices should be enhanced and others introduced. The techniques encompass conducting continuing sessions where learners are taught how to behave, ensuring that firm implementation of policies is in place, profiling learners' behaviour from primary school, introducing a variety of sporting codes, introducing a talent and skills-based approach to education, ensuring teacher accountability, improving strategies for parental involvement and digitalising parent-school communication. **Moon (School D)** had the following to share:

> *I think we just think that these learners are capable of thinking, we are expecting them to know how to behave. We are just reacting here. We are not saying do this we are saying do not do this. If we can just tell them akere (remember) we are teaching them what to do concerning subjects' content, some of them always get it right. So just think if you can tell them how to behave, they will all behave the same way we are telling them. I always say, "Do this, approach this at a certain way." So, I think it will work. It is a solution.*

Abert (School A) elaborating on firmness in policy implementation, shared as follows:

> *If we stand firm on what we know is written down as a code of conduct, then we can never have problems from the learners and parents.*

Gyan (School C) further suggested as follows on improving parental involvement:

> *If the schools and teachers can be serious and pressurise parents, they will see we are serious. For example, if we are firm on the consequences of behaviour and make them know what will happen to their children when they have behaved badly, they will eventually be compelled to be part of teaching and learning.*

The participants further indicated that when learners' profiles are accessible during admissions, the school will know the type of learner they are admitting and will figure out the resources that will be needed to accommodate such a learner. **Kane (School D)** elaborated as follows:

> *If we know that a certain child has a history of certain behaviour from primary, and know the contact of the social worker involved, the information helps the schools make necessary arrangements and plans for such a child.*

The participants further added that implementing various sporting codes in schools to encourage more learners to participate in extracurricular activities would be another way to benefit schools regarding the management of CDB. **Betty (School A)** suggested:

> *A variety of sport codes can influence behaviour in class a lot. For example, I will call his coach for that sport code if a learner misbehaves in class. You know the coach will say the child behaves well in chess. That is because they behave well in things they like. So, you can also use the coach to help you. Tell the child that if he misbehaves in class, you will tell his coach in chess not to include him in a game as punishment.*

Furthermore, it emerged from the data analysis that an approach that identifies skills and talents should be introduced in schools at the early stages of primary school so that learners can be placed in relevant schools where their potential can be nurtured. The participants alleged that most learners resort to defensive mechanisms such as misbehaving in the classroom because they are placed in a school where their potential is not recognised and developed because the school is not structured for such skills or talent development.

Gyan (School C) stated**:**

> *We face many behavioural challenges because learners are forced to do things even when they are not gifted for them. At primary, learners should be identified and categorised in terms of their capability, skills and talents, so that they can be prepared to concentrate and be placed in schools where what they are good at will be nurtured.*

Moreover, the participants indicated that accountability should be expected from teachers in all grades and not only in grade 12. **Hope (School C)** highlighted:

> *When teachers who only teach grade 8 see that the child has problem, they console themselves that its only few months left, the problem will move to the next grade. Even those who only teach grade 10 do the same because they know they do not have to account. The teachers who account are only those who teach grade 12. If all the teachers could account for everything, many problems would be reduced.*

Abert (School A) further suggested:

> *The best thing we must do is that class teachers must profile the behaviour of learners, know their background, and understand when this one is not wearing the proper shoes, why this one is not wearing a tie, why this one has not ironed the shirt and so on. Such accountability from all teachers would assist a lot.*

Regarding improvement in parental involvement, the participants alleged the following. **Lamel (School D)** explained that:

> *I think a gap is created between the school and the parents. I think the only time we call parents is when something is wrong. We never call them when there is a nice activity or something that we call and say parents your children are behaving this way. Now it is the beginning of the year what do you think we should do? so that they can give input. We only call them when the child misbehaves, so it's like we call you when things are bad. I think we need to improve a lot in involving parents, involve them in the school activities etc.*

Hope (School C) elaborated as follows:

> *At our school, when we issue reports, we do not give grade 12 learners reports, but their parents, but with other grade, we give those learners reports. Whether the parents got the report or not, we do not mind, but when the child misbehaves, we call the parent. I think that needs to change so that parents feel they are part of the school.*

Dethny (School B) proposed as follows:

> *We need to have something like, you see this white school, they have this system of bulk SMS, so we need to buy that facility so that when we need parents, we can use it. The school should also improve on capturing guardian information and review that regularly because, in most cases, you will find that the cell phone numbers that are captured are the numbers of these learners.*

The excerpts indicate that specific daily practices in schools should be modified to address and alleviate instances of CDB. It is recommended that the staff shift their perspective from assuming that learners possess inherent knowledge of appropriate behaviour to employing instructional methodologies typically used for teaching curriculum to teach learners how to behave. It further suggests that staff consistently adhere to policies to prevent discrepancies and inconsistencies and that it is imperative for schools to adopt a more inclusive approach by profiling all learners' behaviour and introducing a range of sporting codes to cater to the diverse talents of learners. Moreover, the practice change suggested considers the incorporation of learners' talents and skills in the educational system, rather than solely emphasising the enforcement of following school subjects. This approach would enable schools to determine and provide appropriate learning opportunities based on individual learner's abilities and interests. Other changes suggested by the extract are enforcing the accountability of teachers in overseeing the academic progress and behaviour of their learners as class teachers, promoting parental engagement in all aspects of school activities, and adopting digital parent-school communication strategies – these may help alleviate issues associated with disruptions in the classroom.

5.3.5.2 Team building

The participants indicated that organising various sports tournaments could strengthen bonds, connections, and unity, which are crucial for schools to successfully manage CDB. The participants alleged that these initiatives may help foster bonds between teachers and learners.

Lamel (School D) shared as follows:

> *In some of the schools where I have been, teacher would normally have activities like football where they will play with the under 17 of young boys as a way of team building. So, we now come together as teachers and have fun with the kids. That is the way of making them understand us and for us to understand them. That also creates bonds on the among teachers as well.*

Betty (School A) also proposed:

> *Wa tseba Mener, (You know sir) it's only through things like team building and camping for planning, like having a mini-camp during the holidays where we can sit as teachers*

for two to three days. We plan the work, we do our lessons plans for the whole year and when we come back, we just teach, we just put those plans into practice.

The quotations indicate that schools ought to cultivate a sense of unity among their staff members to effectively tackle CDB. This can be achieved through the implementation of diverse team-building activities, including sports and camps.

5.3.5.3 Professional development

The participants indicated that teachers need PD opportunities on policies and behavioural practice strategies to improve their school operations. They alleged that this kind of development may address the challenges of others being unaware of their core duties and trying to use unions to resist changes in schools. **Dethny (School B)** suggested:

I think educators are like kids. They need to be engaged now and then in terms of professional development. The principal just proposed it. Last term we had an organisation training SMT on the policies and regulations. Out of that workshop, I learned a lot. I thought I knew so many things but realised that I did not know anything after that. So, I can suggest professional development.

Eerth (School B) further emphasised:

I think the solution will be meetings to discuss policies. Maybe the school request a person from Human Resources (HR) and invite the representatives of unions to unpack the policies so that we can speak the same language at school.

The excerpts demonstrate the necessity for schools to engage in PD initiatives to enhance teachers' behaviour management competencies. These areas encompass legislation pertaining to education, the staff's fundamental responsibilities, and the union's role. This implies that the principals should fulfil their roles of equipping their staff with the knowledge required for them to execute their duties diligently.

5.3.5.4 Accessibility of additional social workers

The participants recommended increasing the number of social worker personnel in schools. They alleged that it is difficult to access social workers during urgent crises. **Betty (School A)** shared:

I think the support we need should be for the department to supply more social workers. We don't have enough social workers to attend to these social cases.

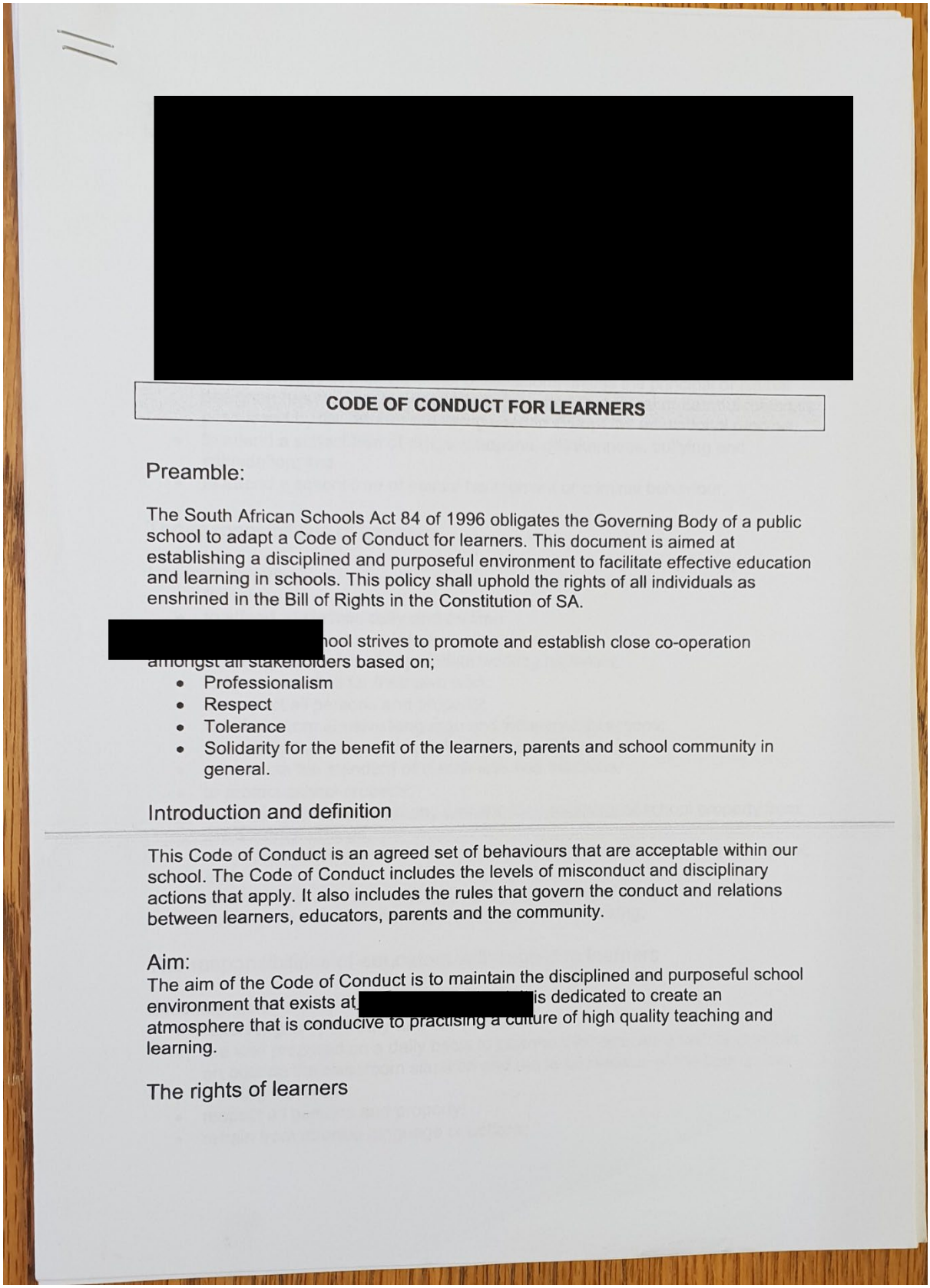
The quotation highlights the necessity for the provincial Department of Education to increase the recruitment of social workers in schools. The current number of social workers is considered insufficient to effectively address the overwhelming workload resulting from the large number of schools and cases they are responsible for. Consequently, this impedes their ability to promptly attend to the needs of other schools.

5.3.6 Document analysis

Table 5.3: Details of documents analysed per school and their availability

Schools	Learner's code of conduct	SBST committee file	Disciplinary committee file	Sample of classroom rules
School: A	Available	Unavailable	Unavailable	Available
School: B	Available	Available	Unavailable	Unavailable
School: C	Available	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
School: D	Available	Available	Unavailable	Available

Learner's code of conduct: The code of conduct was accessible at the four schools. The document clearly delineates the various offences according to their respective categories and outlines the corresponding mitigation methods and measures that schools would employ to handle instances of misconduct (see Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 for examples). The figures only show the sample on the cover page for only two schools. The code of conduct for each school had more than 10 pages.



[redacted]

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

Preamble:

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 obligates the Governing Body of a public school to adapt a Code of Conduct for learners. This document is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning in schools. This policy shall uphold the rights of all individuals as enshrined in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of SA.

[redacted]hool strives to promote and establish close co-operation amongst all stakeholders based on;

- Professionalism
- Respect
- Tolerance
- Solidarity for the benefit of the learners, parents and school community in general.

Introduction and definition

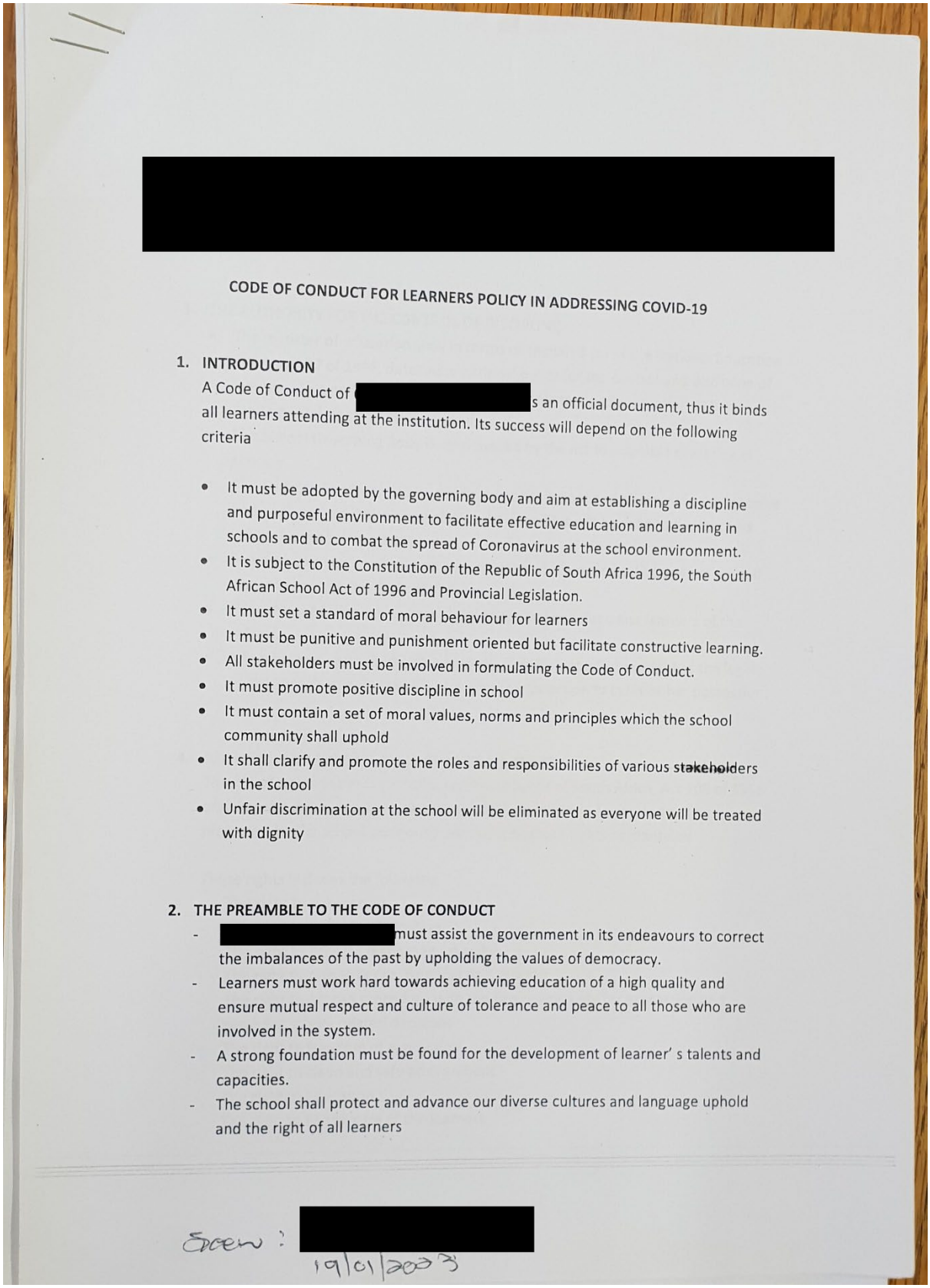
This Code of Conduct is an agreed set of behaviours that are acceptable within our school. The Code of Conduct includes the levels of misconduct and disciplinary actions that apply. It also includes the rules that govern the conduct and relations between learners, educators, parents and the community.

Aim:

The aim of the Code of Conduct is to maintain the disciplined and purposeful school environment that exists at [redacted] is dedicated to create an atmosphere that is conducive to practising a culture of high quality teaching and learning.

The rights of learners

Figure 5.2: Example of code of conduct



[redacted]

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS POLICY IN ADDRESSING COVID-19

1. INTRODUCTION

A Code of Conduct of [redacted]s an official document, thus it binds all learners attending at the institution. Its success will depend on the following criteria

- It must be adopted by the governing body and aim at establishing a discipline and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning in schools and to combat the spread of Coronavirus at the school environment.
- It is subject to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, the South African School Act of 1996 and Provincial Legislation.
- It must set a standard of moral behaviour for learners
- It must be punitive and punishment oriented but facilitate constructive learning.
- All stakeholders must be involved in formulating the Code of Conduct.
- It must promote positive discipline in school
- It must contain a set of moral values, norms and principles which the school community shall uphold
- It shall clarify and promote the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the school
- Unfair discrimination at the school will be eliminated as everyone will be treated with dignity

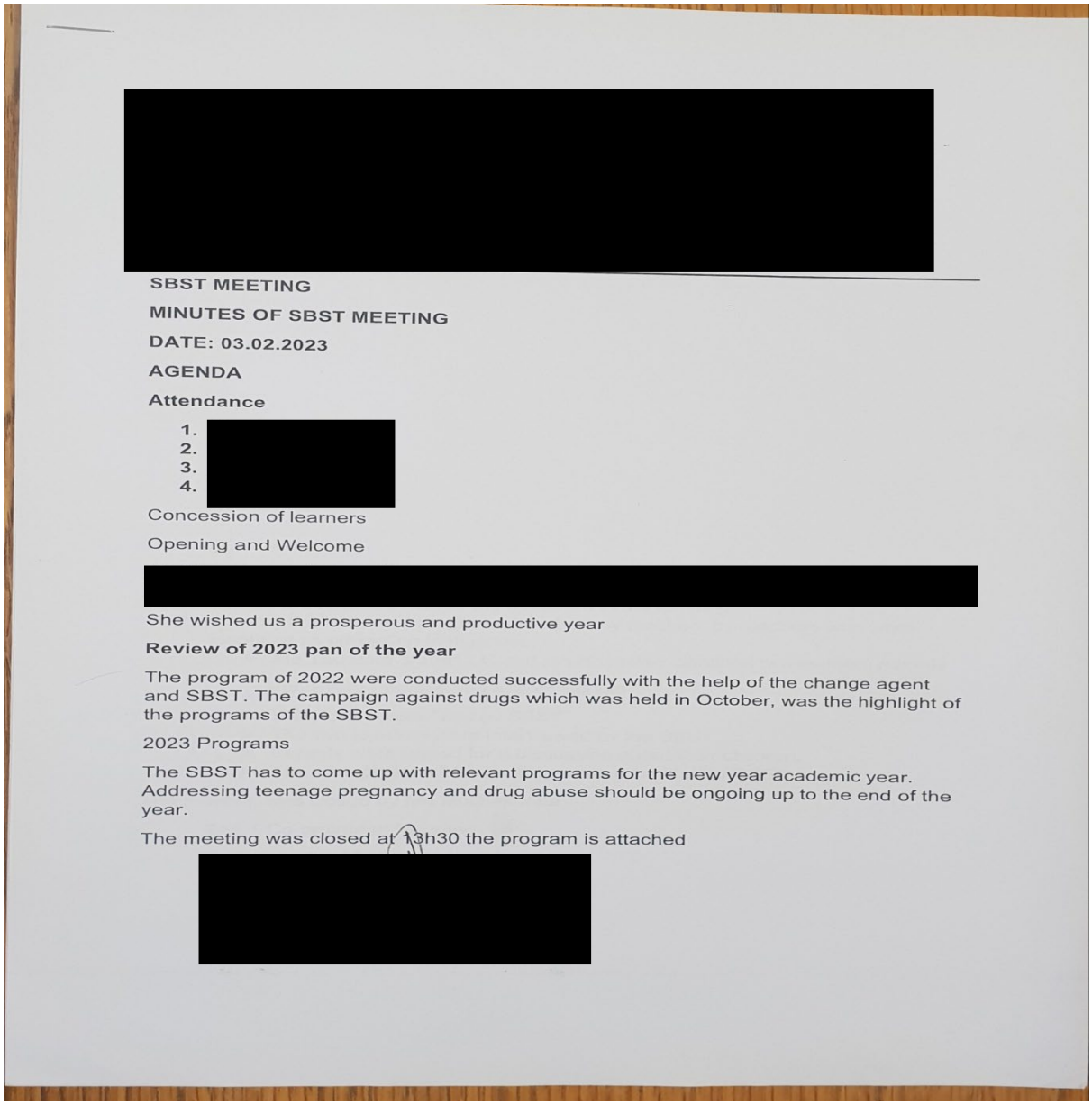
2. THE PREAMBLE TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- [redacted]must assist the government in its endeavours to correct the imbalances of the past by upholding the values of democracy.
- Learners must work hard towards achieving education of a high quality and ensure mutual respect and culture of tolerance and peace to all those who are involved in the system.
- A strong foundation must be found for the development of learner' s talents and capacities.
- The school shall protect and advance our diverse cultures and language uphold and the right of all learners

Seen : [redacted]
19/01/2023

Figure 5.3: Example of code of conduct

The SBST: There was evidence from school B which showed that the SBST is functional. The evidence included minutes of committee meetings in 2023 dated 3 February (see Figure 5.4) and 20 March (see Figure 5.5) and the list of learners referrals for counselling. On the other hand, in School D, the committee was partially active as there was only one evidence of a meeting dated the 17th of April 2023 without evidence of how the committee supports the school (see Figure 5.6). Schools A and C showed no evidence of having a SBST during the data collection when I was doing a document analysis checklist.



[redacted]

SBST MEETING

MINUTES OF SBST MEETING

DATE: 03.02.2023

AGENDA

Attendance

1. [redacted]
2.
3.
4.

Concession of learners

Opening and Welcome

[redacted]

She wished us a prosperous and productive year

Review of 2023 pan of the year

The program of 2022 were conducted successfully with the help of the change agent and SBST. The campaign against drugs which was held in October, was the highlight of the programs of the SBST.

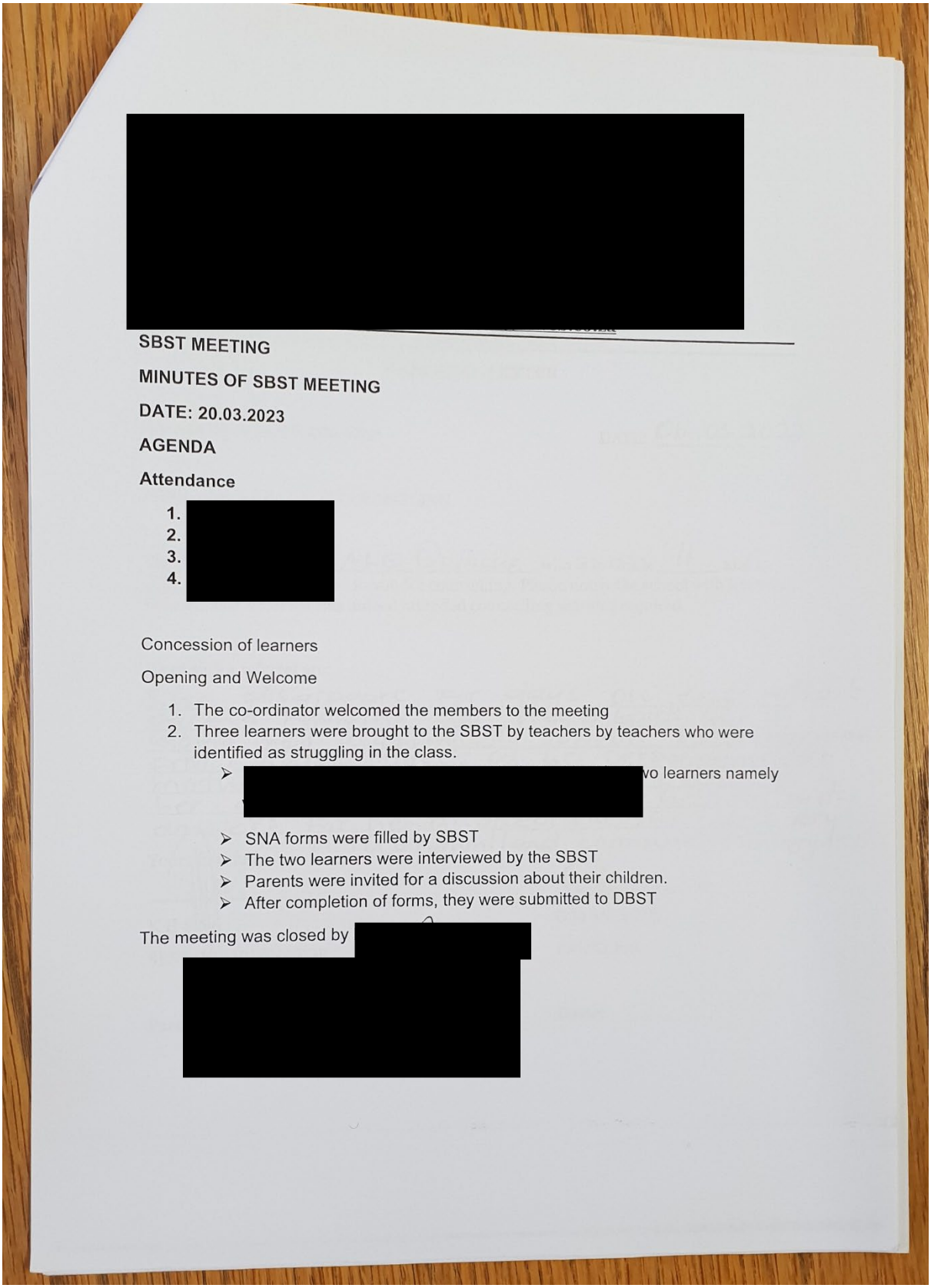
2023 Programs

The SBST has to come up with relevant programs for the new year academic year. Addressing teenage pregnancy and drug abuse should be ongoing up to the end of the year.

The meeting was closed at 13h30 the program is attached

[redacted]

Figure 5.4: School B SBST meeting – 03.02.2023



[redacted]

SBST MEETING

MINUTES OF SBST MEETING

DATE: 20.03.2023

AGENDA

Attendance

1. [redacted]
2.
3.
4.

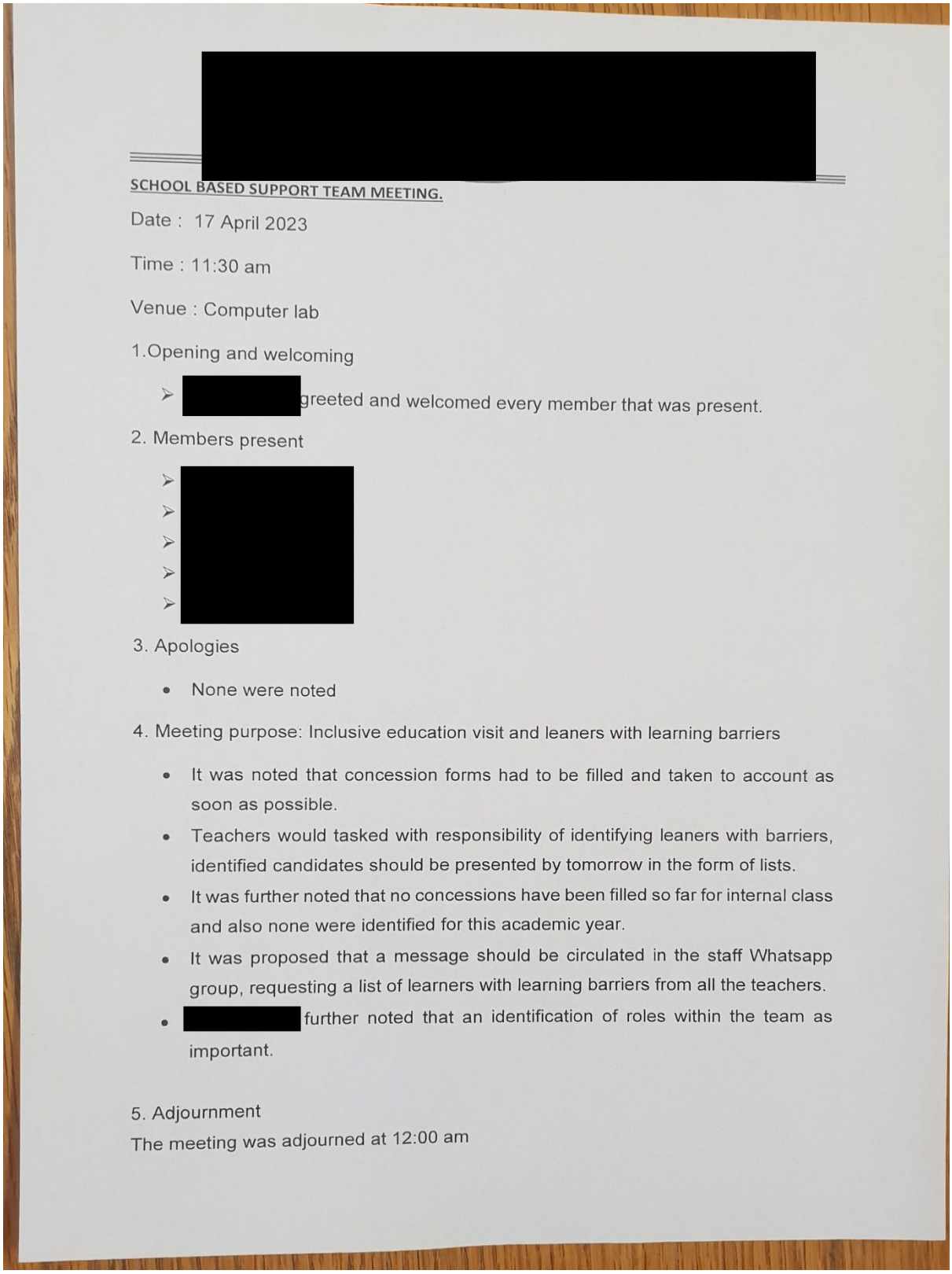
Concession of learners

Opening and Welcome

1. The co-ordinator welcomed the members to the meeting
2. Three learners were brought to the SBST by teachers by teachers who were identified as struggling in the class.
   - [redacted] vo learners namely
   - SNA forms were filled by SBST
   - The two learners were interviewed by the SBST
   - Parents were invited for a discussion about their children.
   - After completion of forms, they were submitted to DBST

The meeting was closed by [redacted]

Figure 5.5: School B SBST meeting – 20.03.2023



[redacted]

SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT TEAM MEETING.

Date : 17 April 2023

Time : 11:30 am

Venue : Computer lab

1.Opening and welcoming

- [redacted] greeted and welcomed every member that was present.

2. Members present

- [redacted]

3. Apologies

- None were noted

4. Meeting purpose: Inclusive education visit and leaners with learning barriers

- It was noted that concession forms had to be filled and taken to account as soon as possible.
- Teachers would tasked with responsibility of identifying leaners with barriers, identified candidates should be presented by tomorrow in the form of lists.
- It was further noted that no concessions have been filled so far for internal class and also none were identified for this academic year.
- It was proposed that a message should be circulated in the staff Whatsapp group, requesting a list of learners with learning barriers from all the teachers.
- [redacted] further noted that an identification of roles within the team as important.

5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 am

Figure 5.6 School D SBST meeting – 17.04.2023

Disciplinary committee: The results obtained through document analysis indicated that no disciplinary committees were established in all four schools. None of the schools were able to provide evidence of the committees' meeting minutes or cases handled.

Classroom rules: Document analysis findings also showed that classroom rules were used only in schools A and D and posted in classrooms (see Figure 5.7 and Figure 5.8). The number of rules per grade ranged between six and 18 and some were stated using negative language. The table below gives a few examples of negatively stated classroom rules from both schools.

Table 5.4: Sample of negative classroom rules in Schools A and D

School A	School D
Do yelling or making noise in the class	Do not go outside without permission
Do not interrupt others	Do not fight over food
No food or drinking in the class	Do not talk while the teacher is talking

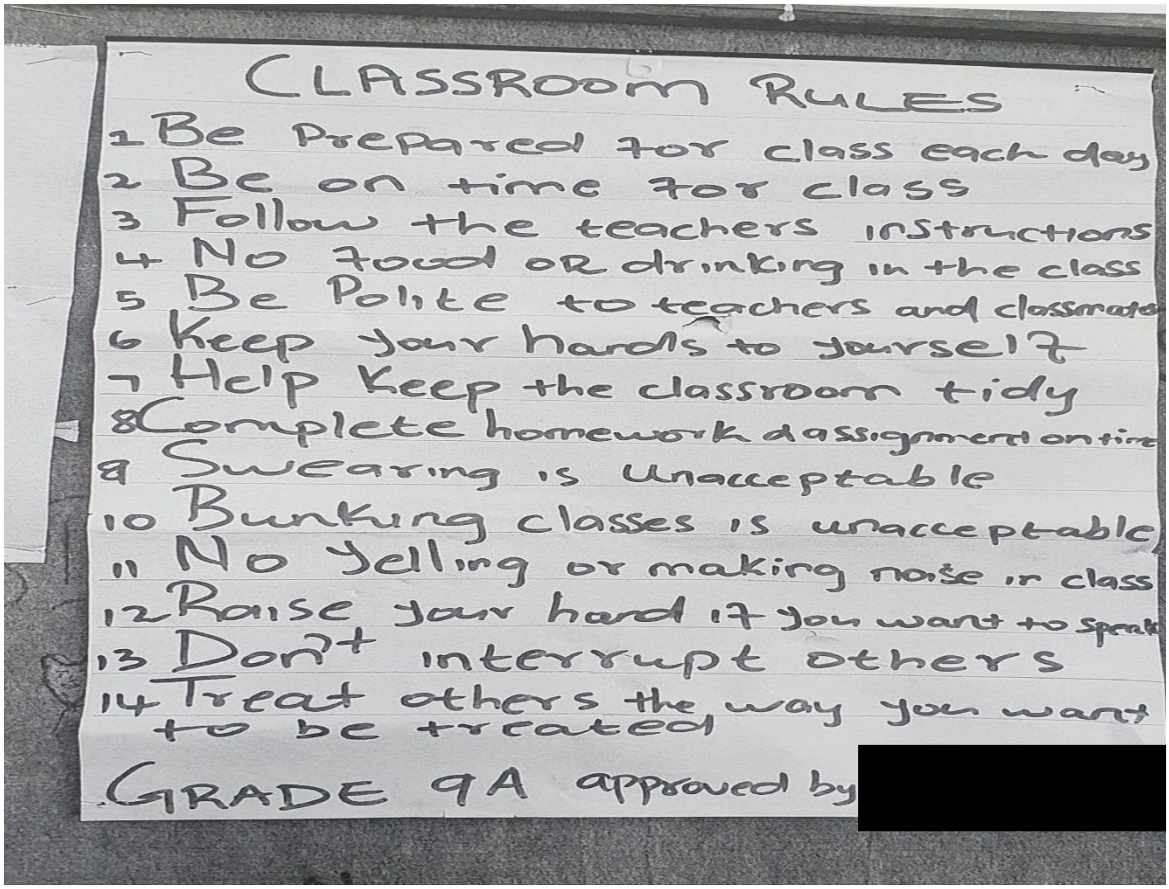


Figure 5.7: School A classroom rules

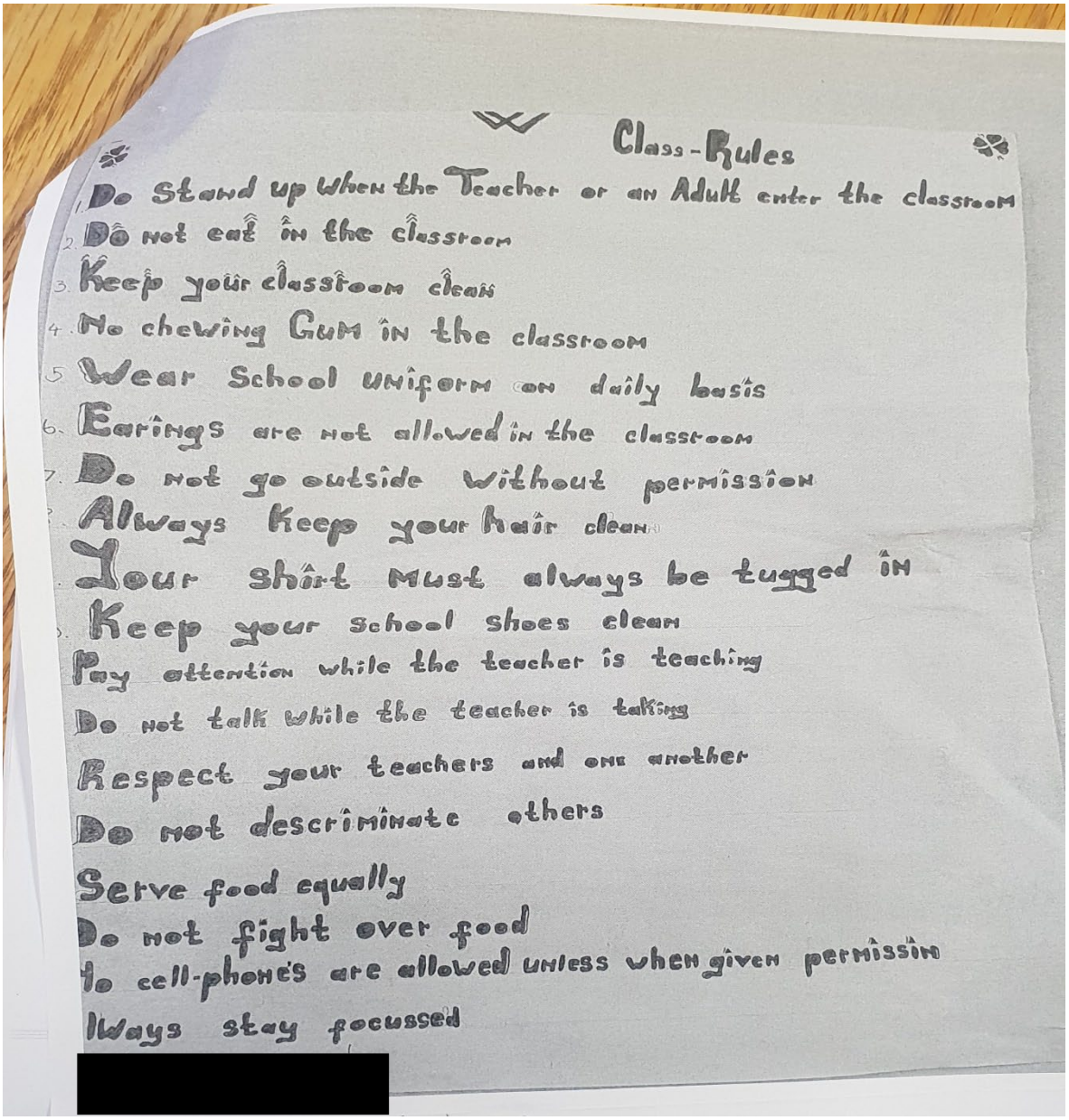


Figure 5.8: School D classroom rules

The examined documents reveal a lack of uniformity among staff members in the same school, particularly regarding classroom rules. The documents demonstrate that individuals use their own judgement and decision-making abilities. The findings also indicate a deficiency in the principals' leadership abilities regarding the establishment and functionality of school committees, which are crucial in enhancing the school's ability to effectively handle and address CDB.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented and analysed the data generated from participants via SSIs, a FGD, and document analysis. The findings from the analysis revealed four important areas in connection to the dynamics of managing learners' CDB. Those areas include a) staff conceptualisation of CDB; b) factors that contribute to CDB; c) the strategies that the staff use to address CDB; d) the challenges experienced by the staff when addressing CDB; e) mitigation strategies for CDB; f) and findings from the document analysis. The subsequent chapter will discuss the study's findings in-depth, draw conclusions, and offer recommendations for future research.

Chapter Six: Findings, Discussions and Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I presented and analysed the data received from the narratives provided by the staff as participants on their experiences of learners' CDB.

In this chapter, I present a detailed discussion of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research. The discussion presented is meant to provide an in-depth understanding of the significance of the study's findings and draw conclusions about how such findings may impact school practices and education policies. It is important to highlight that this chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the data obtained from the FGD, SSIs, and document analysis.

The study was grounded on the following aims and objectives.

6.1.1 Aim of the study

To explore secondary school staff's experiences of the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms in South Africa.

6.1.2 Research objectives

1. To gain perspective on the views of secondary school staff on the factors that cause learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms.
2. To establish how secondary school staff manage the dynamics of learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms.
3. To gain perspective on the challenges that secondary school staff experience in the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms.
4. To identify strategies that can be used to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of disruptive classroom behaviour in schools.

6.2 Major Findings

The data from the participants was categorised into four themes that emerged, namely (1) Conceptualisation of CDB, (2) The factors that contribute to CDB and strategies

that the staff use to address CDB, (3) The challenges experienced by the staff when addressing CDB, (4) and Mitigation strategies for CDB.

6.2.1 Conceptualisation of classroom disruptive behaviour

The participants seemed to have a common understanding of CDB as a type of deliberate behaviour shown by learners that disrupts the educational environment and requires teachers to intervene to restore order inside the classroom. According to Vongvilay, Fauziati and Ratih (2021), CDB refers to learners' actions that impede the progress of classroom activities, endanger the safety of other learners and teachers, or otherwise violate classroom norms for appropriate conduct. Khotimah et al. (2023) agree with this assertion and further stress that such behaviour is influenced by many elements, including learners, other individuals, events, or temporal conditions. The research participants exhibited comparable viewpoints with literature regarding CDB, nonetheless, the interpretation of intentionality remains a subject of contention owing to the multitude of factors that may influence an individual's behaviour, as shown by other studies (Khotimah et al., 2023; Wolhuter & van de Walt, 2020). As the participants indicated in their conceptualisation of CDB, it is reasonable to regard CDB as a behaviour that impedes the learning process and that learners may engage in deliberately or inadvertently, necessitating the implementation of intervention measures by teachers.

6.2.2 Factors that contribute to classroom disruptive behaviour

The data analysis indicated that the factors contributing to CDB can be categorised into three distinct themes: out-of-school, school-contextual, and learner-related factors.

6.2.2.1 Out-of-school factors

The findings revealed that CDB is caused by various external factors such as socioeconomic, parental, environmental, and substance abuse variables.

According to Simpson (2017) there is a correlation between socioeconomic status (SES) and disruptive behaviour among learners. In the same way, the findings of the study showed that the SES conditions prevalent in the households of learners have a discernible influence on their psychological welfare and overall behavioural patterns.

As the participants alleged, learners who experience such circumstances often exhibit disruptive behaviour at school as a means of self-defence against those who mock them due to their situation or when attempting to communicate their needs to their teachers for assistance.

Lazaratou et al. (2017) in Greece, found that learners who had encountered household food insecurity – characterised by anxiety or uncertainty regarding food, inadequate food quality, or insufficient food intake within the past four weeks or had experienced a reduction in their pocket money within the last six months – exhibited significantly higher scores on the aggression questionnaire in comparison to their peers who did not encounter such circumstances. Muna (2020) also found that learners' disruptive behaviour is caused by socioeconomic factors within their families in Brunei Darussalam. Murray and Farrington (2010) argued that the relationship between low socioeconomic status families and antisocial conduct is made easier by the socialisation practices of families, given that low socioeconomic status families follow poor childrearing practices, which makes low socioeconomic status families a predictor of delinquency. In South Africa, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) also found that ill-discipline in schools is influenced by poverty in that learners living in poverty depend on state grants and the national school nutrition programme. The primary focus of such children is meeting their fundamental needs more than learning. As a result, theft is common in schools with poor learners (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

All the schools sampled for this research are classified as quintile 3 secondary schools. These schools serve poor communities where many parents cannot afford to pay school fees or provide their children with supplies (Ogbnanna & Awuah, 2019; van Dyk & White, 2019). Based on the theoretical framework of ADT, which served as the basis for this study, it is observed that schools of this nature often have significant numbers of difficult learners (Canter, 1989). For instance, the participants noted the difficulties they face when dealing with learners who are influenced by socioeconomic variables, which aligns with the ADT perspective on challenging students in schools. Therefore, it is imperative for educators in these educational institutions to implement additional strategies to provide support and assistance to these learners, facilitating their achievement of optimal academic performance (Canter, 1989). According to the ADT, classrooms comprise various learner behaviours, ranging from mild to

challenging, with the latter requiring additional support. Likewise, teachers working within these contexts may require substantial assistance in the realm of behavioural management strategies through specialised training and development opportunities (Naidoo, 2021).

Furthermore, the results obtained from this study revealed that the lack of parental care and attention towards children at home is one of the main factors that contribute to CDB. The lack of parental care is characterised by two distinct indicators of inadequate parental support as alleged in the findings from the participants. One indicator involves physically present parents who fail to fulfil their expected responsibilities, such as imparting values and providing necessary attention to their children. The other indicator occurs when parental figures are absent, leading to children assuming responsibility for managing the household. When the children from these families arrive at school, they attempt to gain attention and express their emotions through disruptive behaviour.

These findings correlate with the findings of Schlebusch et al. (2022) established in a study conducted at a public secondary school and the findings from the study conducted by Sibanda (2021) at a primary school located in a township of the Gauteng province. Sibanda (2021) found that teachers considered that parents were not playing their part in their learners' education, and Schlebusch et al. (2022) found that parents who work far from home delegate all the aspects of raising a child to teachers and that children are left heading the families. Similarly, Rachel et al.'s (2022) study, which examined the parental factors that contribute to deviant behaviour among adolescents in rural communities across three provinces in South Africa: Western Cape, North Cape, and Free State, found that inadequate parental supervision, lack of parental concern and support, absence of parental discipline, and the inability of parents to serve as positive role models are significant factors that contribute to adolescents engaging in antisocial behaviour. The study by Paramita et al. (2019) also ascribed disruptive behaviour among learners in Indonesia to inadequate parental support.

Wolhuter and van der Walts (2020) attest that a significant portion of households in South Africa do not adhere to the conventional definition of intact families, which typically comprise a father, a mother, and their biological and/or legally adopted children. In the scholar's analysis, numerous circumstances have altered the situation,

including parental divorce, parental abscondment, and parental death, resulting in the placement of children, sometimes even a collective group, under the guardianship of a grandparent or an older sibling. The implication is that challenges related to CDB in schools are unavoidable.

Kiwale (2017) asserts that children will remember what they see, how it is done, and when it is done. This implies that social learning affects children's behaviour because they are influenced by the habits they acquire from their environment. The research conducted by Simpson (2017) offers empirical evidence that aligns with Bandura's social learning theory framework which asserts that environmental factors can shape behaviour. In the same way, the findings of this study revealed that a school can be regarded as a microcosm of a larger society in that its learners show the attributes and qualities that are indicative of the broader community group in which it is embedded. The study's findings indicate that the environment in which children are immersed plays a significant role in shaping their behaviour. The sample schools are in a geographical area with high levels of violence and criminal activities. As a result, the learners in this area tend to display disruptive behaviour within the classroom setting. Carrell and Hoekstra (2010) found that simply being in the same classroom as kids who had experienced trauma (domestic violence) affects other kids. The results showed that the children who were exposed to the most violence were also the most likely to be disruptive in the classroom (Carrel & Hoekstra, 2010).

Similar attributes are shared by Rachel et al. (2022), Lekalakala (2019) and Sipho and Percival (2021). According to Sipho and Percival (2021), evidence suggests that instances of school-based violence can arise from learners who originate from households characterised by violence. These learners may subsequently disrupt schools' teaching and learning environments, even as early as the primary school level. Mafumbate and Mkhatjwa (2020) posited that a child's upbringing in a conducive environment leads to positive influences and fosters the expression of appropriate behaviour. In contrast, when a child is brought up in an unfavourable setting, their behaviour may be adversely impacted, leading to the display of inappropriate conduct.

The results from the four schools collectively indicated that CDB can be attributed to learners who indulge in substance abuse, specifically the consumption of illegal substances, while on school premises. Nzama and Njani (2021) and Hunter and

Morrell (2021) have reported comparable observations regarding problematic behaviour among learners because of substance abuse in South Africa. In addition, Mamabolo (2020) discovered that learners in South Africa who are between the ages of 13 and 18 participate in drug abuse on school premises. The association is strengthened even more by the findings of the SADAG (2022), which indicate that the average age of drug dependence among South Africans is 12.

According to Nemati and Matlabi (2017), learners who use drugs or alcohol are more likely to act disruptively or poorly in and out of the classroom. These behaviours include a lack of focus, disrespect for teachers and administrators, vandalism, physical aggression, rejection, theft, graffiti spraying, and verbal abuse. Nzama and Njani (2021) argue that drug usage may contribute to adolescent defiance and melancholy. Hlomani-Nyawasha, Meyer-Weitz and Egbe (2020) and Maserumule et al., 2019) assert similarly that drug-using secondary school students engage in criminal activities and exhibit poor behaviour patterns.

The findings also showed that schools are not adequately addressing the issue of drug usage through their existing policies. In a situation like this, Canter (1989) recommends that schools reflect on their practices to identify the elusive factors hindering the eradication of the causes of bad behaviour, which in this case would be drug usage. By doing so, the ADT posits that teachers will assert their authority and establish measures to maintain their right to teach in an environment free of disruptions while safeguarding other learners' learning rights (Canter, 1989).

6.2.2.2 School-contextual factors

As indicated by the participants, the school-contextual factors contributing to CDB are the outcome of practices carried out by the school and its staff within the schoolyard. The data revealed that the admission policy, progression policy, ineffective textbook retrieval system, lack of extracurricular activities, staff members and overcrowded classrooms contribute to CDB in these schools.

The findings demonstrated two channels through which the admissions policy contributes to CDB. The first channel is that it does not provide any information regarding the specific ages of learners to be admitted in each grade at secondary school. The participants indicated that learners older than their grade level provide

unique behavioural challenges for teachers. The second channel is that no guidelines for locating learners' prior behavioural records are provided in the admissions policy. Participants reported that schools accept learners with learning barriers during the admission process at the school and the district level. The data demonstrated that learners with learning barriers exhibit disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Bolinger et al. (2020) delineated a series of distinctive characteristics demonstrated by children who have been diagnosed with learning difficulties. These behaviours encompass inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. These fundamental characteristics influence a child's behaviour within the classroom, as these children may encounter challenges in sustaining a stationary posture. Consequently, they may exhibit behaviours such as manipulating objects, swaying in chairs, or engaging in repetitive tapping of their hands or feet (Bolinger, Mucherah & Markelz, 2020). These actions can disrupt the teaching and learning process.

The study results further indicated that older learners significantly contribute to CDB within schools. According to the participants' responses, these learners tend to exhibit a resistant attitude towards young teachers, possibly due to their similar age, and display bullying behaviour towards other learners within the same classroom. Section (31) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (27 of 1996) stipulates that: "If a student is beyond the age of 16 and has never been to school before, is applying for admission for the first time, or did not make enough progress relative to their peers, then they should be encouraged to join in an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centre".

The implications derived from the findings indicate there are three potential scenarios that lead to CDB regarding the admissions policy. First scenario is that schools do not actively encourage the enrolment of over-age learners in ABET programmes. The second scenario is that parents or guardians of these learners often reject the schools' recommendations to enrol their children in ABET, as the policy merely emphasises the school's role is to encourage in such cases. The third scenario is there might be no compliance regarding the progression policy at the primary school level.

Van Der Berg et al. (2021) found that grade repetition is highly prevalent within schools in South Africa. The scholars further articulated that many schools fail to adhere to the government's progression policy fully, particularly those at the elementary level. The

progression policy stipulates that no learner should be retained more than once within any educational phase, namely the foundation phase (Grades R–3), intermediate phase (Grades 4-6), senior phase (Grades 7-9), and FET phase (Grades 10–12) (DBE, 2017). This implies the age disparity among grade 8 learners is limited to a maximum of two years, assuming that a learner may have repeated both the foundation and intermediate phases once. In grade 10, it is also suggested that the age difference should be three years if the learners repeat the senior phase in addition to the previous phases. The implication is that secondary schools should refrain from admitting learners who are three years older than the anticipated age for grade 8, to mitigate the potential challenges arising from a significant age disparity resulting in CDB. However, the results of the study show a trajectory of secondary schools admitting learners older than their anticipated age leading to situations where older learners exhibit CDB.

According to Kos, Richdale and Hay (2006), the school setting presents considerable difficulties for children with learning disorders, as it requires behaviours that directly conflict with the core symptoms of learning disorders. The participants expressed that CDB is propelled by the admission processes at both the school and district levels, where the sole criterion for consideration is the learner's successful completion of the previous grade. The research revealed that schools find, through disruptive incidents, that they have enrolled learners who possess significant learning challenges without prior knowledge or adequate preparation to support these individuals effectively. Dery et al.'s (2004) findings demonstrate a correlation between the occurrence of disruptive behaviours and many disorders, including ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and CD. Similarly, prior studies conducted by Paramita et al. (2019), Simpson (2017) and Ghazi et al. (2013) have identified learning difficulties such as ADHD as the main contributing factors for the growth of CDB.

Children who have been diagnosed with ADHD may display a range of disruptive behaviours, including persistent tapping of their hands and feet and an inability to remain sitting in the classroom (Bolinger, Mucherah & Markelz, 2020). A correlation can be observed between findings from studies conducted in primary schools in South Africa and the findings of this study. Jacobs (2022) conducted a study that revealed multiple factors related to bad behaviour in primary schools in South Africa. According

to the findings of that study, the factors that contribute to the problem behaviour of learners at primary school include physiological or psychiatric disorders and learning difficulties. Given that primary school learners transition to secondary school, this implies that without the necessary strategies to identify and address learning disorders at the primary school level, behavioural issues will persist from the primary to secondary school level, hence the need for the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy.

The SIAS framework specifies that the principal should establish a School-Based Support Team (SBST) that focuses on facilitating learner support (DBE, 2014). Such support commences with individual teachers fulfilling their responsibility of identifying learners who exhibit challenging behaviour and completing the Support Needs Assessment (SNA) forms. Thus, the principal is crucial in ensuring teachers fulfil their obligations. However, the study revealed that certain schools (Schools A and C) do not have these committees, while in others, such as school D, they do exist for compliance purposes but are not deemed effective.

Although these disorders are primarily psychological, they can be challenging to identify upon initial interaction with the child. However, once schools have fulfilled their responsibilities by completing SNA forms, it becomes easier for other sectors to intervene and contribute their specialised knowledge and skills. This implies that there is a necessity for collaborative efforts across multiple sectors within schools to tackle behavioural issues effectively. Cooper and Cefai (2013) state that teachers may lack knowledge and expertise in disruptive behaviour disorders. As a result, it is necessary to establish intersectoral collaboration, where psycho-medical professionals such as psychologists and medical practitioners act as consultants to school staff and indirectly intervene with learners (Mathe, 2017).

The findings revealed that the progression policy contributes to CDB in two ways. One significant concern is the potential for fostering a culture of apathy among learners, resulting in a lack of prioritisation of their academic responsibilities and a diminished display of commitment, devotion, and dedication. The participants expressed that this is because learners know they will proceed to the next grade regardless of their failure to complete homework assignments and participate fully in classroom activities, especially in grades 8 and 9. The subsequent contribution is that these learners arrive

in the next grade without grasping the fundamental aspects of different subjects from the previous grade. Consequently, as the participants alleged, they resort to disruptive behaviour to conceal their academic limitations.

In 2013, the DBE implemented a progression policy to mitigate school dropout rates and promote the successful completion of grade 12 (Mogale & Modipane, 2021). The decrease in academic performance among grade 12 learners in schools has been ascribed to implementing the progression policy. Grossen, Grobler and Lacante (2017) found that progressed learners faced difficulties in attaining their grade 12 certificates due to their inability to cope, stemming from their failure to meet the minimum passing criteria in preceding grades. Nkosi and Adebayo (2021) observed that learners who are not excellent at schoolwork often lack confidence and become stuck in a low-status and low self-esteem setting, leading to school dropout.

With a progression policy in place, it is the school's responsibility to devise methods to help learners to transition academically from one grade level to the next (DBE, 2017). This mean, the school has to ensure that such learners are assisted to bridge the gap from the work they did not understand in previous grade while at the same time not falling behind with the work for the grade in which they are. Nevertheless, Nyathi (2021) discovered that these learners do not receive sufficient school support. Similarly, Mogale and Malatji (2022) found that teachers rarely consider progressed learners' views when designing intervention plans. The lack of consideration observed may be ascribed to the findings that plenty of teachers maintain a view that learners facing difficulties should remain in their current grade rather than progressing to the next grade until they are sufficiently prepared (Nkosi & Adebayo, 2021). This is because the amount of diversity in grades increases if learners are promoted before they are ready, making it more difficult for teachers to offer education at the proper depth (Van Der Berg et al., 2021).

The study findings indicated that schools contribute to CDB due to the lack of an effective system for tracking and recovering all textbooks distributed to learners. The participants indicated that the deficiency in book management contributes to a scarcity of resources and, subsequently, CDB. School financial allocation is often done between March and May at the start of the fiscal year. This suggests that CDB is likely to be prevalent in schools from January to May (the whole first term and a portion of

the second term) if learners do not return textbooks. Although the teachers may attempt to make copies, as Frome highlighted during the interview, the copying machine operates under severe pressure and is prone to break down. Therefore, teachers are likely to encounter difficulties in effectively engaging learners in the classroom when faced with a scarcity of resources. As the findings indicated, the outcome of this purportedly leads to CDB.

Tshatshu (2016) found that insufficient resources in township schools impede learners' holistic development. The observation indicates that such schools encounter several obstacles that hinder the provision of high-standard education, mostly due to inadequate resources. Nonetheless, the insufficiency of resources in this study is attributed to the schools' failure to preserve them.

Chapter 6 of the National School Safety Framework (NSSF) outlines the roles and responsibilities regarding school support structures. It is mandated that the school must provide sports activities (DBE, 2015). The policy delineates that engagement in sports offers a beneficial and constructive avenue for individuals to spend their time, engage in physical activity, foster camaraderie within a team, and cultivate a health-conscious atmosphere. Similarly, the section included in Annexure A33 of the PAM gazette No. 46879 states that the principal is responsible for promoting extracurricular and co-curricular activities in the school, planning major school functions, and encouraging learners' voluntary participation in sports, educational, and cultural activities organised by community bodies. However, the findings in this study reveal that schools do not have various extracurricular activities and that the situation contributes to CDB. Certain individuals who possess aptitude in different athletic disciplines may be deprived of opportunities to showcase their talents, hindering their ability to channel their exceptional motivation towards academic pursuits. According to the participants' responses, learners who lack opportunities to channel their energy and showcase their talents tend to exhibit CDB.

Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) found that when schools do not provide extracurricular activities, hyperactive learners may be encouraged to misbehave since they are not able to satisfy their natural curiosity about the world beyond the classroom. Similarly, Naidoo's (2021) findings revealed that three of the five sampled township secondary schools in the Western Cape were severely limited in their capacity to conduct

extracurricular activities due to a lack of facilities. The findings further revealed that, the selected SMTs from all five township schools in that study acknowledged that extracurricular activities, such as sports and music, might have a major impact on student enthusiasm and discipline. Makhasane and Majong (2023) discovered that there are insufficient school sports activities to provide for gifted learners, making it difficult for schools to effectively handle CDB in the form of learner-on-teacher violence in South African secondary schools. Nhambura (2020) also claimed that non-participation in sports, particularly for gifted learners, might lead to dissatisfaction and aggressiveness. Similarly, Zwane (2021) notes that learning without extracurricular activities impairs learners' overall thinking and blamed the DoE for its delay in addressing inadequate school sports facilities.

Different personnel within schools have distinct responsibilities. While there may be a correlation between these responsibilities, the research indicates that teachers who are less committed to fulfilling their core duties such as planning before going to class significantly contribute to CDB.

The PAM, gazette No 46879, clearly outlines that the core duties of a teacher are to develop instructional materials and assess learners' performance (RSA, 2022). It is stipulated in Annexure A17 that one of the teacher's primary responsibilities is to plan, coordinate, administrate, evaluate, and report on learners' academic progress. The findings indicated that teachers contribute to CDB by failing to prepare before they teach. Consequently, their lessons are not engaging and therefore learners become disruptive. Again, the participants indicated that teachers contribute to CDB by neglecting to serve as role models and enforce school discipline.

The findings are similar to research conducted by Thilagaratnam and Yamat (2021) in Malaysia, Abeygunawardena and Vithanapathirana (2019) in Sri Lanka and Forsberg, Chiriac and Thornberg (2021) in Sweden. The scholars provide empirical evidence that suggests a considerable portion of disruptive behaviour observed in schools can be ascribed to teachers' inadequate implementation of effective instructional strategies, potentially stemming from insufficient preparation. Thilagaratnam and Yamat (2021) argued that all these things cause learners to act up, which disrupts classroom management and causes it to fall apart. Similarly, in a study conducted by Schlebusch et al. (2022) in South Africa, it was observed that teachers contribute to

CDB in secondary schools through various means, such as inadequate planning, tardiness, and a lenient attitude towards disciplinary issues.

While the teachers play a significant role in the exacerbation of CDB, the SMT is also included as the findings indicated. According to the DBE (2016), the principal is responsible for ensuring the deputies are held accountable for the actions of their subordinates, while the deputies are tasked with ensuring that the DHs are held accountable for the teachers under their supervision. Nonetheless, the findings of this study showed that the SMT contributes to CDB by not fulfilling school monitoring responsibilities.

The findings correlate with Naidoo's (2021) research conducted in schools located in townships. The study revealed that teachers from all five sampled schools identified deficiencies that indicated the SMTs were not effectively fulfilling their role as instructional leaders, as outlined in the PAM document (RSA, 2022). According to Naidoo (2021), the main job of teachers is to teach, which greatly affects how well learners do in school. Thus, the SMT should ensure everyone is accountable in this area. The idea of supervision encompasses the notion of accountability, which is widely recognised as a crucial component in achieving objectives for diverse educational institutions.

Every sovereign state establishes its own PTR to accommodate and deliver education to its population (Frankling & Harrington, 2019). Nevertheless, a consensus exists with regard to the impact of overcrowded classrooms. Osai et al. (2021) established that optimal class sizes are recommended to range from 15 to 20 students. However, it is worth noting that a considerable number of contemporary classrooms are confronted with an excess of 30 learners, and in certain schools, class sizes can exceed 40 learners, thereby posing challenges for teachers in terms of maintaining discipline and order (Frankling & Harrington, 2019; Shireen et al., 2020). The results of this study indicated that overcrowded classrooms contribute to CDB. This is primarily due to the challenges teachers face in effectively monitoring the progress of all learners within the classroom, as the limited physical space restricts their movements and teaching techniques. Consequently, as the participants alluded, the classroom environment becomes disordered and unruly.

In contrast to private schools, South African public schools are characterised by a notable prevalence of overcrowded classrooms (Mahlangu et al., 2021). Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020) have highlighted that Curro Holdings, the leading private school operator in South Africa, maintains a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 15:1 across its extensive network of 110 schools. On the contrary, the ratio of government schools (commonly called public schools) surpasses 40:1, as Zenda (2020) reported. Naidoo (2021) also observed that a single teacher was responsible for instructing a total of 71 students within the classroom setting of public township schools in South Africa. According to Osai et al. (2021), many countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia have a PTR exceeding 40:1.

Bigger classroom as Wangdi and Namgyel (2022) and Marias (2016) established limits the teacher's mobility and draws a variety of disruptive actions from learners. When instructors have too many learners in their classrooms, they lose interest in teaching and become less committed to their learners' success (West & Meier, 2020).

6.2.2.3 Learner factors

One of the contributing factors to CDB was alleged to be the learners themselves. According to the findings, their contribution manifests in two forms: peer pressure and late coming. The participants expressed their observations that on certain occasions, other learners display behaviours that differ from their personal behaviours by imitating and adopting the disruptive behaviours of others because of peer pressure.

According to Schlebusch et al. (2022), a significant portion of secondary school learners are currently experiencing the stage of adolescence. In addition to various other transformations, the period of adolescence is distinguished by an increase in engagement in risky behaviours and the pursuit of novel experiences as well as a tendency to distance oneself from familial ties and seek companionship with peers (Bates & Trujillo, 2021; Muna, 2020). During this particular timeframe, individuals assess their societal and individual value which is contingent upon the perceptions of people they know (Knoll et al., 2017) During this developmental phase, individuals exhibit heightened sensitivity to peer rejection, leading them to partake in risky behaviours alongside their peers (Cherewick, 2021; Orben et al., 2020). These

behaviours can potentially contravene legal statutes, regulations, and societal norms (Rachel et al., 2022). Consequently, when adolescents endeavour to attain more independence, they often experience an impulse to conform to the behaviours and attitudes exhibited by their peers.

During this adolescent stage, secondary school learners will try to signify themselves to other peers in their social group (Veenstra et al., 2018). Adolescents regard their peers as an important social group, as they play a crucial role in shaping behavioural norms and cultivating a distinct culture that manifests in various aspects such as language, attire, hairstyles, sports, and patterns of alcohol consumption (Adeniyi & Jinadu, 2021). Laursen and Veenstra (2021) posit that adolescents engage in the formation of a distinct group culture as a means of actively cultivating and maintaining favourable peer relationships. Therefore, the influence of peer pressure extends to adolescents' values, awareness, attire, dietary choices, and educational pursuits (Lunga, 2020). The influence of social norms on individuals' behaviour is significant, and learners are compelled to conform to these norms due to their social groupings (Veenstra et al., 2018). Hence, as the findings of the study posited, some learners engaged in CDB to emulate others.

In addition, learners' physical movements can divert the entire class's collective focus. The data analysis in this study has indicated that learners who arrive late to classes significantly promote CDB within schools. Maile and Olowoyo (2017) asserted that the issue of learners arriving late to school is widespread, particularly in township schools, and carries significant repercussions. The research findings from this study indicated that learners commonly attribute their tardiness to factors such as staying up late, excessive academic workload, excessive household responsibilities, or engaging in leisure activities such as watching television or playing computer games. On the other hand, female learners expressed frustration with morning delays, attributing them to their responsibilities to complete household tasks, such as preparing their younger siblings for school and occasionally escorting them to childcare facilities. According to Spaull (2013), one of the primary factors contributing to the dysfunctionality of township schools is the absence of learner discipline, including tardiness. This assertion is substantiated by the research conducted by Naidoo (2021), wherein the

results indicated that most schools interviewed in his study (four out of five) identified learner lateness as a significant challenge that resulted in CDB.

6.2.3 Strategies that the staff use to address classroom disruptive behaviour

Within this theme, it was established that the staff employed two distinct approaches to address the issue of CDB within the schools. There exist both policy-related and non-policy-related strategies.

6.2.3.1 Policy-related strategies

This theme encompasses several subthemes discussed in this section: multisectoral partnerships, SBST, schools' code of conduct, incident book recording, classroom rules, over-age learners' conduct agreement, and SMT interventions.

Mathe (2017) asserts the significance of multisectoral collaboration in addressing learners' disruptive behaviour in that such a collaboration enables various sectors, such as the Department of Social Development, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the Department of Education, to collectively analyse behavioural issues among learners and reach a shared understanding of the underlying factors that contribute to such behaviour. By collaborating, these departments bring various expertise which can address the different challenges associated with learners' behaviour. The study's findings indicate that schools are collaborating with multiple departments to tackle the challenges related to the contributing factors to CDB. The SAPS has adopted two of the four selected schools to address drug-related concerns. In addition, the alumni of school B who have since achieved professional success in diverse fields established an organisation that supports the school. The organisation facilitates learner motivation by arranging for members from the Social Development and Correctional Service Department to engage with learners, providing them with important knowledge, motivation, and support. In addition, the organisation helps in the form of sanitary pads for learners.

According to Pucher (2015), implementing multisectoral collaboration is advantageous as it allows for the integration of diverse skills from different departments, all working towards a shared objective, which in this context is the protection and well-being of

students. Safeguarding children from the unauthorised use of substances is a collective obligation that rests upon all members of society (Mathe, 2017). According to the NSSF, it is recommended that teachers engage in collaboration with social services agencies, law enforcement (specifically SAPS), or private security agencies (DBE, 2015). This collaborative effort aims to establish secure, nurturing, and child-centred educational environments that effectively cater to the diverse needs of every learner (Mathe, 2017). Hence, schools should collaborate with parents, communities, and law enforcement entities to safeguard children against the unlawful consumption of drugs and individuals who attempt to influence them into drug use.

Other schools, such as School B, established the SBST as a strategy to manage CDB which convenes regularly to strategise and address the various needs of learners. The presence of the SBST was validated in the SBST file that was analysed. While other participants mentioned the concept of the SBST from other schools, I found no evidence to support its existence and functionality. This implies that teachers know the role of the SBST even though it is not effectively managed in their schools. As the literature attests, functional SBSTs promote a multisectoral approach to addressing disruptive behaviour in the classroom (Mathe, 2017). As the participants suggested, this approach of the SBST is necessary as teachers may face limitations in their understanding and knowledge of various behavioural patterns.

Section 8 of the SASA 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) stipulates that a public school's SGB must formulate a code of conduct for learners. A code of conduct can be classified as a form of secondary legislation that upholds the principles of human dignity, equality, and freedom while aligning with the democratic ideals enshrined in the constitution (RSA, 1996a). The document delineates the anticipated conduct of learners and the corresponding disciplinary protocol to be implemented in cases of non-compliance with said expectations. The findings of this study showed schools have a code of conduct and use it. However, the way it is used indicated that teachers assume learners already know how to behave and instead use it as a reminder tool; they then have parents sign the code of conduct as a strategy for the schools to cover themselves if asked whether they informed parents about the regulations. The participants indicated they only read the code of conduct to learners to inform them what is expected of them. This finding endorses the criticism schools have faced that

they simply distribute rules and regulations to their learners and parents for signature without proactively and effectively teaching them how to comprehend these written materials (Marais & Meier, 2010).

Mestry and Khumalo (2012) argued that enforcing a school's code of conduct is crucial as it contributes to establishing a disciplined educational environment conducive to learning. Zondo and Mncube (2022) posit that the school code of conduct emphasises establishing school governance based on a robust legal framework. However, none of the sampled schools in this study presented substantiated evidence of actively involving learners in activities specifically designed to cultivate appropriate behavioural conduct other than mere reading of the code of conduct to learners.

As the findings revealed, schools employ a code of conduct to identify and punish instances of learner misbehaviour, which contradicts the essence of positive discipline (Jinot & Johannes, 2021; Mabuza et al., 2018; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013). Grobbelaar and Jones (2020) argued that punishment establishes an adult's control and authority over a child. In contrast, discipline is education through which knowledge and skills are taught, and children are helped to acquire self-control and self-discipline. Mugabe and Maposa (2013) posit that discipline encompasses deliberate teaching to cultivate specific character traits or behavioural patterns deemed desirable within the educational setting. The four schools do not engage in teaching learners how to behave. Based on assertive discipline, behaviour is taught like a curriculum (Canter, 1989). This implies that a code of conduct should be used as a guideline on behaviour to model rather than rules to punish behaviour.

Furthermore, it is stipulated in the NSSF that teachers collectively bear the responsibility for upholding discipline within the school (DBE, 2015). The policy states that the first teachers who become aware of or observe an issue within the school environment are obligated to assume responsibility and promptly address the situation by reporting it or attempting to resolve it. If it becomes necessary, the teachers should escalate disciplinary issues to higher-ranking staff members, and subsequently, to the principal. Therefore, teachers must report any misdemeanours the learners commit under their supervision (DBE, 2015). Implementing this policy necessitates that teachers maintain an incident book to document incidents within their classroom for record-keeping and reporting.

This study revealed that incident books are used by teachers to maintain records of learners' behaviour, enabling the ability to monitor and inform parents about the frequency and nature of their children's transgressions within the school setting. The objective is to ensure that these records are documented within the South African School Administration System (SA-SAMS). However, not all schools employ the methods, for example, school B. Teachers in the school were alleged to exercise their judgement when disciplining learners, as noted by one participant. The response from one of the participants in the FGD emphasised that teachers do not record such occurrences on SA-SAMS. As the participants established, the implication is that teachers may become lazy in documenting incidents in their records over time, despite being aware of the importance of doing so.

Moreover, one of the primary concerns in township schools is the teacher overload associated with large class sizes. Naidoo (2021) established that when there is a larger number of learners in a classroom, there is a need for a proportional addition in administrative duties, specifically in maintaining records. Based on the NSSF stipulations, teachers must keep track of incidents ranging from level 1 to level 5. Level 1 includes small infractions of general classroom rules, such as not coming to class on time, leaving without permission, cheating on a class test, not doing homework or dishonesty with minor consequences. All considered, one may argue that teachers are likely to get weary of keeping a daily incident book of learners' disruptive behaviour to reduce their workload.

Zoromski et al. (2021) lamented that classroom rules are crucial in establishing and communicating learners' behavioural expectations. As per Section 5 of the *Guidelines for the Governing Body's consideration in adopting a code of conduct for learners,* it is suggested that schools develop classroom rules consistent with the school's code of conduct, encompassing appropriate repercussions for instances of non-adherence. It is recommended that these regulations be prominently displayed on the classroom wall and disseminated to learners at the start of the academic year (RSA, 1998). The findings from this study revealed that classroom rules are used by schools A and D. The SSIs, the FGD and documents analysed validated such findings.

Determining the correct number of rules within the classroom is often emphasised as a fundamental element contributing to the effectiveness of stated rules (Alter & Haydon, 2017). While there is variation in the guidance provided by other literature regarding the optimal quantity of regulations, a consensus exists that fewer rules are generally more desirable than many (Kerr & Nelson, 2010; Alberto & Troutman, 2013 cited in Alter & Haydon, 2017). These authors further argue that for effective behaviour management classroom rules should be as few as much as possible and expressed positively to elucidate appropriate and desirable behaviours. Contrary to the elements of effective classroom rules, the document analysis revealed a deficiency in the understanding of the appropriate methodology for formulating classroom rules. Some classrooms in School D had between six and 14 rules, some of which are stated in the negative. Likewise, some classroom rules at school A had 10 to 18 classroom rules, some of which are also stated in the negative.

The study's findings indicate that teachers at the schools employ a strategy wherein they establish a contract with both over-age learners and their parents, specifically about their behaviour. Learners demonstrate their commitment to conduct themselves in a manner that aligns with the expected standards of behaviour and actively participate in all school-related activities by formally agreeing and signing the document. Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in their referral to ABET. The initiative is a proactive measure undertaken by the SGB and the SMT. According to Hepburn and Beamish (2020), proactive measures are the strategies implemented as preventative measures to discourage the behaviour from happening.

The roles of the SMT encompass various responsibilities, including but not limited to the following: fostering personal and professional growth in oneself and others, overseeing the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring accountability, and guiding the overall direction and advancement of a school (DBE, 2016). This suggests that individuals in positions of power, including the principal, deputy principal, and DHs, should actively play a role in implementing effective strategies to address CDB in schools.

The findings revealed that the SMT assumes the responsibility of guiding teachers within their purview regarding strategies to mitigate the occurrence of CDB within their classrooms. The study also found that principals and deputy principals regularly

monitor the school premises to ensure that teaching and learning processes are implemented as intended. In case of disruptions, they promptly communicate with the designated DH responsible for the teachers whose classes are causing disturbances, seeking their intervention. When teachers are absent from classes, the SMT first engages in discussion with the teacher to remind them of their responsibilities. However, if this behaviour persists, the participants indicated that the SMT imposes charges against the teachers and initiates a formal disciplinary hearing. The Employment of Educators Act No 76 of 1998, with subsequent amendments, establishes the disciplinary code and process for educators. The infractions are classified into two categories: Serious Misconduct (as outlined in sections 17) and (Other) Misconduct (as outlined in section 18). The legislation mandates that employers must initiate disciplinary procedures upon receiving an accusation of misbehaviour, regardless of the specific classification of the offence (RSA, 1998).

6.2.3.2 Non-policy-related strategies

Despite the school implementing legal measures to address CDB, the findings also indicated that schools employ measures that do not follow the legislative measures governing schools in South Africa. These measures encompass instances of the SMT disregarding suspension procedures, swearing and pinching learners, and expelling learners from the classroom.

Section 8(5)(a) of the SASA 84 of 1996 states that the code of conduct of a public school should include provisions that ensure due process is followed in disciplinary proceedings related to learner conduct (Mollo & Joubert, 2019). Chapter 2 of SASA (RSA, 1996) also specifies the proper procedure to be followed in the event of a learner's misbehaviour at school and who has the authority to suspend the learner and how long the suspension should last. It is stipulated that the maximum length of suspension of learners is one week, and it is the responsibility of the SGB to do that. This is intended to safeguard the rights and interests of the learner and any other individuals involved in such proceedings. Disciplinary proceedings can yield significant consequences for learners, thus emphasising the utmost importance of adhering to legal principles by those responsible for their administration (Smit, 2019). In practice, Smith, Beckmann and Mampane (2015) found that legal principles are often not

followed or are misapplied and that education officials and even the courts have overturned several schools' results and punishments.

As per section 4.1 of Chapter A of the PAM, the principal may appoint an evidence leader who becomes the prosecutor in disciplinary proceedings and is supposed to conduct an impartial disciplinary procedure at the school (RSA, 2016). School disciplinary hearings are comparable to court proceedings and can be viewed as quasi-judicial hearings to settle learner infractions (Smith, Beckmann & Mampane, 2015).

The findings of this study showed that schools are ignoring the suspension producers of learners and, by doing so, violating their rights to fair treatment (Smith, Beckmann & Mampane, 2015). Both document analysis and interviews (SSIs, FGD) showed that in the schools, suspensions for learners are handled by the principals, as there was no evidence of a disciplinary committee established in any of the schools. It is reasonable to argue that if only one individual is responsible for administering suspensions, it can compromise due process, fair treatment, and justifiable disciplinary hearings. This is the reason why one of the participants expressed concern regarding learners who have been subjected to suspensions lasting longer than 20 days which is against the law. Under section 9(1)(a) of the SASA (RSA, 1996), the governing body of a public school is authorised to conduct a fair hearing and implement a temporary exclusion of learners from school as a corrective measure for a duration not exceeding one week.

Under the *Code of professional ethics*, teachers are expected to employ appropriate language and conduct when engaging with learners, thereby fostering an atmosphere that commands respect from the learners (SACE, 2000). Similarly, the National School Safety Framework (NSSF) mandates that teachers are responsible for serving as positive role models for learners (DBE, 2015). Nonetheless, the results of this study showed that this is not the case in the schools since teachers resort to swearing while addressing learners' CDB. According to Statistics South Africa (2021), out of 1 million school-going children between the ages of five and 17, approximately 13.7% of learners reported verbal abuse perpetrated by teachers. Children, being social learners, are prone to mimic the actions of their teachers and repeat them, either in front of the same teacher or elsewhere. Assertive disciplinary theory models, which

provide a framework for creating an optimal learning environment, emphasise that teachers have choices in how they respond to CDB, cautioning against the use of ineffective approaches (Charles & Senter, 2005). Given the impressionable nature of young learners and the myriad of influences they encounter during their adolescent years, it is imperative that teachers consistently prioritise adopting a positive approach in their responses (Charles & Senter, 2005).

The findings are relevant to Motseke's (2020) study, which discovered that primary school teachers swear at learners when addressing indiscipline as the recommended measures seem ineffective. The implication is that learners may not even alter their behaviour if they begin to experience swearing in elementary school. Van der Merwe, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2015) assert that swearing can be considered an indicator of teacher aggression that comes from heightened levels of frustration, stress, powerlessness, and hopelessness experienced by teachers. The authors additionally stressed that learners who experience teacher aggression undergo psychological and emotional distress that substantially impedes their educational achievements (Van der Merwe, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 2015). This demonstrates the importance of teachers making a concerted effort to refrain from succumbing to a state of anger when addressing CDB.

It is not only a violation of section 10(1) of the SASA for any individual to apply physical punishment to learners in a school setting but also of the constitution. Section 12(1) of the constitution states that everyone has the right to freedom and security. This includes the right not to be abused, treated, or punished in a cruel, inhumane, or degrading way. Furthermore, section 28(1)(d) shields all children from being hurt, neglected, abused, or poorly treated (RSA, 1996b). However, the findings of this study show that when teachers address CDB in the classroom, they pinch learners. The participants indicated that they use pinching as an alternative when yelling and swearing does do not yield the desired results.

Thobenyane and Zulu (2019) and Sipho and Percival (2021) assert that physically disciplined learners frequently act aggressively towards their classmates or even against teachers, implying that one negative effect of physical punishment is that it fosters enmity, anger, and hostility between learners and teachers. Nunan and Ntombela (2019) further assert that corporal punishment causes learners to become

more aggressive and motivates them to attack individuals who chastise them. The implication is that teachers may promote the spreading of CDB even if they believe they are addressing it.

According to section 29(1) of our constitution, everyone has the right to basic education, which includes adult basic education and further education and learning. Thus, sending learners out of the classroom during class time violates their right to education. The findings revealed that another non-policy-related strategy teachers use to manage CDB is chasing learners out of the classroom. The results are similar to Motseke's (2020), who discovered that the primary objective of removing a disruptive learner from the classroom is to enable teachers to maintain an uninterrupted teaching environment, thereby indicating that the teachers failed to manage the disruptive behaviour of the learner.

Paulson et al. (2022) assert that teachers need to know the factors contributing to disruptive behaviour among learners. One such factor is the possibility that learners may exhibit disruptive behaviour simply due to because they do not want to be present in the classroom. Hence, when a teacher employs an exclusionary measure, such as chasing them from the classroom, it creates a potential loophole in the school disciplinary framework. Similarly, Thilagaratnam and Yamat (2021) stress that behavioural factors manifest when a learner is subjected to reinforcements, which function as consequences for the exhibited behaviour. Thus, if learners are aware that misbehaving will result in their removal from a specific class, they may exhibit repetitive wrongdoing, potentially leading to the avoidance of attending the lesson, particularly if they lack interest in the subject matter or the teacher. Forsberg et al. (2021) state that diverse motivations influence learners' behaviours. Consequently, teachers should understand and accommodate these motivations rather than excluding learners.

From the perspective of assertive discipline, chasing learners from the classroom or referring them to the principal's office does not contribute to teachers' attainment of self-actualisation in maintaining order within their classrooms (Charles & Senter, 2005). Instead, such actions create a sense of failure on the side of a teacher and impacts learners, including those who are not disruptive. Over time, learners tend to

lose confidence in a teacher of this nature. Therefore, a teacher should exhibit assertiveness in their professional role (Canter, 1989).

6.2.4 The challenges experienced by the staff when managing classroom disruptive behaviour

The findings revealed that the participants encounter dynamic challenges relating to managing CDB which can be categorised as either school-based (internal) challenges or challenges arising from external factors.

6.2.4.1 Internal challenges

The findings revealed that the school-based challenges that staff experience are lack of unity, phase and grade ownership, dysfunctional discipline committees, lack of infrastructure, mode of school-parent communication, young and novice teachers, and teachers' resistance citing unions.

The study's findings indicated a lack of cohesion among teachers, consequently hindering the effectiveness of strategies to address CDB. The participants reported encountering a scenario in which the staff adopt varying approaches to handle CDB, even when faced with similar instances of CDB. The participants shared that in some instances, individuals would make an effort to address the behaviour, while other staff members would choose to disregard it. The findings are consistent with Nhambura (2020), who also found that there is a notable absence of cohesion among teachers when managing disciplinary issues in schools and attributed this to certain teachers who perceive the responsibility of maintaining discipline as solely belonging to the SMT. Sahlin (2023) argues that fostering unity not only within schools but also extending it beyond the school environment might have a beneficial impact on the normative and cultural-cognitive dimensions within schools. One strategy for influencing teachers' conduct involves fostering a sense of unity within the school community through various means, thereby aligning all stakeholders towards a common objective (Naidoo, 2021). Juta and Van Wyk (2020) assert that establishing positive interpersonal connections among teachers and learners is crucial for successfully implementing classroom management strategies. According to Mpisane (2015), the SMT's main role is to enhance learners' educational opportunities by influencing teachers' behaviour.

Furthermore, the participants pointed out that one other challenge they encounter when addressing CDB is the labelling of other staff members based on the grades and phase they teach. The participants indicated that some teachers are labelled as the General Education and Training (GET) while others as FET teachers. The tagging of teachers in South African secondary schools based on their teaching phase has not received sufficient attention in the literature. While some teachers may have specialised in the senior phase (grades 6–9), the research findings imply that others may meet the qualifications to teach in the FET phase but are currently assigned to the GET phase and never given a chance to move into the FET phase. This may be due to decisions made by the SMT or because those that are already teaching in the FET phase when they arrive at the school are unwilling to relinquish their classes and provide opportunities for others to develop. The excerpt in Annexure A32 of the PAM gazette No. 46879 demonstrates that the principal is responsible for timetabling and ensuring that staff workloads are distributed equitably (RSA, 2022). The participants indicated that teachers who solely teach in the GET phase develop a prejudiced disposition towards FET teachers and resist implementing strategies that could potentially improve learner behaviour. This resistance may stem from concerns that such strategies could inadvertently advance FET teachers' results and boost their chances of teaching happily without the stress of CDB.

The participants further shared that teaching at the grade 12 level presents numerous opportunities. One of the available opportunities includes remunerated weekend classes designed to offer additional support to grade 12 learners. Another possibility is participating in the selection process for grading the final examination papers at the end of the academic year. One of the selection criteria for becoming a grade 12 marker is a minimum of two years of teaching experience in the relevant subject at the grade level. This also implies getting additional money and practical knowledge. Another advantage lies in the opportunity to compete for promotional positions. One of the other advantages of being appointed to a DH position is having prior experience teaching the relevant subject at the grade 12 level and marking it during final examinations. The final advantage involves the recognition and accolades received. Teachers who teach grade 12 are more likely to receive provincial or national awards when their respective subjects perform exceptionally in the final examinations. As participants shared, when teachers are labelled, it makes them more likely to oppose

CDB measures that would otherwise allow FET teachers to be recognised for their success at the expense of the behavioural management skills that GET teachers teach students in lower grades.

Moreover, according to the PAM, the principal has to establish multiple committees to improve the school's teaching and learning quality (RSA, 2022). One example of such a committee is a disciplinary committee which addresses behavioural concerns that impede efficient teaching such as CDB. However, the findings of this study revealed that none of the four schools has established disciplinary committees, which raises questions about the fairness and transparency of the disciplinary hearing process (Smit, 2019). The disciplinary committee holds significant importance within a school as it is established to safeguard the learners' right to a fair and equitable hearing, as stipulated in Section 33 of the Bill of Rights (Mollo & Joubert, 2019). According to Smith, Beckmann and Mampane (2015), a disciplinary committee consists of at least two members from the governing body who act as an unbiased tribunal during the proceedings involving charges brought against a learner. One of the responsibilities assigned to the committee entails the examination of purported instances of severe misconduct, providing notification regarding the hearing, and facilitating the introductory proceedings during the hearing (Smith et al., 2015).

The absence of disciplinary committee findings in schools are similar to Nkabinde's (2020), who found that two of the sampled schools in his study failed to produce the minutes and records of the disciplinary committee during document analysis, which suggested that it was not established. Although the document analysis findings from all four schools in this study indicated that all the schools do not have disciplinary committees, some schools in South Africa do have them. Nhambura (2020) discovered that disciplinary committees had been constituted in all three secondary schools in a study conducted in Vryburg, Northwest and play their part in addressing issues related to school discipline. Such findings implied that leadership is effective in such schools, which can be linked to PD opportunities that empower principals to execute their core duties efficiently.

In addition, the study's findings showed that schools encounter difficulties due to inadequate facilities such as a shortage of chairs which necessitates learners borrowing chairs from different classrooms. Throughout this process, the participants

indicated that the classes experience disruptions. Dhurumraj (2013) asserts that numerous public schools in South Africa encounter obstacles stemming from insufficient infrastructure, hence impeding the educational process. Several scholarly investigations (Bäckström, 2021; Gómez Mármol et al., 2018; Maulidina et al., 2022) have similarly documented an adverse influence of CDB on learners' academic performance, reinforcing the association between resource scarcity, academic achievement, and CDB. Dhurumraj (2013) also found that teachers working in under-resourced schools are prone to adopt an indolent instructional approach due to the lack of improvisation alternatives leading to CDB. One could contend that CDB and resources are interdependent concerning learners' performance in school. While the scarcity of chairs as the findings revealed may be related to the prevalence of overcrowding in schools, it may also be related to inefficient planning, maintenance of school furniture, and use of school-allocated funds, all of which are the duties of the SMT.

Furthermore, the study found that when a learner is found to have violated the school's code of conduct, it is customary for the school to issue a letter inviting the learner's parents to a meeting. This meeting aims to facilitate collaboration between the school and the parents to address and rectify the learner's behaviour. The participants indicated that they encounter challenges because certain correspondence fails to reach their intended recipients. This is because the very learners who should be disciplined are the ones entrusted with the responsibility of delivering the letter to their parents. In these situations, the participants indicated that schools often implement alternative measures when a learner fails to arrive with a parent. The measures the participants shared include sending the learner back home until they come back with a parent or legal guardian.

The study also revealed that one of the internal challenges is young and novice teachers. Participants revealed that such teachers encounter challenges in maintaining discipline within their classrooms. Forsberg, Chiriac and Thornberg (2021) acknowledge that when learners are left with new teachers at school, they become more disruptive than when they are with older or more experienced teachers. The findings of this study concerning this challenge are similar to the findings reported by Majani (2020) in Tanzania, which found that learners go to the point of playing music

in the presence of novice teachers. O'Neil and Stephenson (2012) and the OAGWA (2014) have identified a similar challenge concerning young and novice teachers, attributing teachers' deficiencies to inadequate training.

Nhambura (2020) suggests that schools should offer orientation programmes and mentorship opportunities to newly appointed teachers to facilitate their adjustment and integration into the school environment. The primary objective of mentorship is to impart information, offer support, and provide guidance to enhance the probability of success for those with less experience inside the organisation and in their future pursuits (Leepo, 2015).

The freedom of association is a fundamental labour right that the constitution protects. It applies to all employees within an organisation, regardless of their status or seniority. According to Section 4 of the Labour Relations Act, each employee possesses the right to engage in the establishment of a trade union and to become a member of a trade union if they adhere to its constitution. Moreover, the employee can engage in the union's activities and exercise their right to run for election. The findings of this study indicated that the SMTs find it challenging to implement some school-initiated strategies to curb CDB because teachers resist by using the union they are affiliated with as an excuse. The SMTs specified that the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) is the most cited union by teachers when resisting initiatives they may not want to take part in. Based on a series of five reports conducted by the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE), it was observed that SADTU holds a prominent position as one of the unions representing the largest proportion of teachers in South Africa (CDE, 2023). According to the report, SADTU possesses significant influence not solely due to its large membership but also because its members are distributed throughout the DBE hierarchy. Dlamini, Smit and Loock (2014) investigated the influence of union leadership on principals' identity and found that the overall membership of SADTU exerts significant influence over them in their roles as principals. It can be inferred that the reluctance of the SMTs to actively pursue measures aimed at addressing CDB may be attributed to the possibility that certain members of the SMTs are afraid of the union's influence or are incompetent and unaware when operating within the parameters of the school's policy.

6.2.4.2 External challenges

The participants indicated that lack of parental support and the lack of social workers are some of the external challenges they face when addressing CDB.

The scholarly community has widely recognised the significance of parental involvement in fostering children's intellectual and social development (Posey-Maddox & Haley-Lock, 2020; Segoe & Bisschoff, 2019). Nevertheless, the findings of this study revealed that all aspects of the involvement of parents, such as direct engagement, accessibility, and accountability (Phares & Rojas, 2018) are not present in schools and make it difficult for schools to handle CDB successfully. Rachel, Roman and Donga (2022) have noted that parental involvement remains a persistent challenge in South Africa, particularly within township schools. Similarly, Berkowitz et al. (2021) and Sibanda (2021) have separately documented that within socioeconomically disadvantaged areas an excessive dependence on social assistance programmes can lead to parental neglect of their children's education – this is because of the insufficient financial support provided which fails to address necessities adequately. As a result, parents are compelled to prioritise economic pursuits over engaging in their children's education (Sibanda, 2021). The effective management of CDB has been demonstrated to require collaboration among various stakeholders (Lunga, 2020). Hence, fostering parental involvement strategies in their children's education, regardless of barriers aligns with Section 8 of the SASA, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that social workers are not readily accessible, specifically in School A. The participants indicated that one social worker is responsible for multiple schools, and it becomes a challenge when urgent matters arise as their immediate availability is limited in such situations. The participants shared that although they try to address concerns related to learner behaviour, their expertise is often limited, necessitating the involvement of additional professionals such as social workers to provide supplementary help. The National Association of Social Workers NASW (2010) asserts that social workers assume essential roles within educational institutions as they are entrusted with a multitude of obligations. The responsibilities encompassed in their role involve conducting thorough assessments and social histories that consider the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of individuals. This includes evaluating learners for substance use, examining their

support systems, and assessing their physical and emotional well-being. In addition, it involves identifying obstacles to academic performance, addressing issues related to peers, and evaluating the presence of thoughts related to suicide or homicide, among other important issues.

6.2.5 Mitigation strategies for classroom disruptive behaviour

Within this theme, the data suggested that schools should undertake a range of initiatives, including refinement of their practices, introducing team-building activities, providing PD opportunities for staff, and acquiring an adequate supply of social workers from the relevant department. The participants alleged that these measures may help mitigate the prevalence of incidences related to CDB and strengthen how they handle it.

6.2.5.1 Refine school practices

The study discovered that schools should enhance their practices to strengthen how they handle CDB challenges. Mitigation under refinement of practices suggested by the participants includes teaching learners how to behave, ensuring firm implementation of policies, profiling learners' behaviour from the primary level, introducing a variety of sporting codes, introducing a talent- and skill-based approach to education, teacher accountability, improving strategies for parental involvement and digitalising parent-school communication.

The findings revealed that the disruptive presence of CDB indicates deficiencies in learners' social and behavioural competencies. Hence, it is imperative for teachers to proactively engage in teaching learners about the appropriate behaviour to facilitate their personal growth and progress. Bennett (2021) asserts that teachers should not solely rely on instructing learners to behave and subsequently offer praise or reprimand to manage their behaviour. The author argues that teachers ought to adopt a consistent approach towards managing classroom behaviour comparable to their approach to other practical skills within the curriculum. This entails the deliberate teaching of learners about the anticipated behaviours, assessing their comprehension, and providing extra guidance as needed. According to Bashant (2020), it is recommended that teachers assume that learners will achieve success in the classroom and infer the presence of obstacles if such success is not attained.

Subsequently, teachers should acknowledge that they are responsible for identifying and addressing the underlying issues.

Based on the theoretical framework of ADT, which underpinned this study, Canter (1989) argues that a change in perspective is necessary. This shift involves moving away from the assumption that learners inherently possess knowledge of appropriate behaviour. Instead, it requires recognising that CDB indicates a lack of specific behavioural skills. The participants also reiterated Canter's (1989) suggestion that the shift may assist schools in avoiding the mere dissemination of the code of conduct to learners, followed by the expectation that they will conform to it. The proposed modification will involve a shift in focus towards developing strategies for breaking down the code of conduct into practical skills that can be imparted to learners, enabling them to effectively navigate the school environment and reinforce the desired behavioural norms. In this approach, teachers employ a code of conduct not primarily to apprehend learners engaging in misconduct but rather as a tool to ascertain the specific areas in which learners require behavioural instruction. Based on ADT, it means teachers impart the anticipated behavioural standards and then may rely on the school's code of conduct to administer disciplinary measures to those learners who persist in engaging in misbehaviour despite receiving teaching (Canter, 1989).

Furthermore, the participants suggested a firm implementation of policies in schools. They alleged a discrepancy in their application of policies as some staff members reprimand learners and apply certain repercussions for certain incidences of CDB, but others overlook such incidences. The concept of consistency significantly influences learners' attitudes about behaviour management (Malone & Tietjens, 2000). The scholars further posit that when learners articulate their aspiration for their teacher to exhibit fairness, it may be deduced that they are seeking a sense of uniformity in the actions and decisions made by their teachers.

To mitigate the chance of encountering learners whose specific requirements are unknown to teachers, the participants suggested that there should be improvements made to the admission requirements in that learners' previous behavioural assessment in the form of SNA forms should be a mandatory requirement. According to participants, the practice would give the school a better understanding of the characteristics and needs of the accepted learners, hence facilitating the allocation of

appropriate resources to accommodate them. Implementing such improvements necessitates establishing a standardised procedure in primary schools to effectively identify and record learners' behavioural difficulties and support requirements. As participants articulated, this proactive approach ensures a seamless continuation of successful interventions when learners transition to secondary school. Other than that, the participants also suggested that secondary schools should identify difficult learners as early as January, when the academic year begins, to plan properly to address some challenges related to CDB. Minister Motshekga (DBE, 2014) asserts that the implementation of the SIAS policy affords a significant proportion of school-aged learners facing obstacles to learning, including those with disabilities, the entitlement to fundamental education and the provision of necessary assistance within their school community.

Learners who engage in extracurricular activities engage in social interactions and explore novel routes, fostering the cultivation of their specific potential (Naidoo, 2021). To address CDB resulting from a lack of diverse athletic codes, the participants suggested that sports should be prioritised to promote the comprehensive development of learners, including both discipline and academic success. According to Shaffer (2019), extracurricular activities have been found to provide students with a range of benefits, including enhancing their social and life skills, developing a future-oriented mindset, and cultivating their leadership abilities. According to Annexure A33 of the PAM document, gazette No. 46879, and Chapter 6 of the NSSF, the principal should promote extracurricular and co-curricular activities inside schools.

In addition, the results of this study demonstrated the significance of implementing a skill- and talent-based approach to education. The participants voiced their endorsement for implementing an educational strategy in primary schools that acknowledges learners' many skills and capabilities, allowing them to focus on their strengths rather than simply conforming to the standardised curriculum standards for all learners. The participants highlighted that compelling learners to engage in disciplines in which they lack proficiency increases the likelihood of experiencing academic difficulties and CDB. Conversely, if learners can focus on areas of strength, the probability of exhibiting disruptive behaviour is reduced.

According to Yohana et al. (2020), there is a need for educational interventions that consider learners' individual qualities and talents as the foundation for their subsequent growth and progress. The practice of evaluating learners only based on topic matters has been exposed to longstanding criticism. Renzulli (1971) posited that the initial conceptualisations of giftedness mostly centred on intelligence evaluations and failed to adequately acknowledge the existence of a broader range of highly important human qualities. Yohana et al. (2020) discovered that a talent development education-based strategy could impact learners' competencies, including their self-awareness, work skills, and problem-solving abilities as well as enhance their character and personality. However, Yohana et al. (2020) also discovered that it is crucial to acknowledge that the approach does not arise spontaneously but rather necessitates the presence of skilled teachers, a conducive school environment, active parental involvement, engaging learning activities, and the availability of activity centres equipped with suitable facilities which are crucial factors. This implies that governmental intervention is necessary, as implementing such an initiative may necessitate a significant transformation within the education sector.

The results suggested that to decrease situations where teachers of certain grades would try impeding school-initiated efforts to address CDB, schools must hold teachers accountable for discipline issues. They indicated that teachers would realise that they must collaborate to address CDB if they hope to prevent dysfunctionality within the school. Smith and Benavot (2019) acknowledge that accountability is a fundamental aspect of modern education that facilitates effective performance by those responsible for achieving predetermined objectives.

The study has identified parental involvement as a significant challenge that the staff face in the schools. The findings indicated that schools may contribute to the worsening of this issue by selectively contacting parents solely in instances of negative behaviour, such as when their children engage in misconduct. To tackle this issue, the participants suggested schools should modify their approach by actively engaging parents, even during positive performance, to foster a sense of belonging and involvement. Again, the data revealed that this can also be achieved by extending invitations to parents during sporting activities and other school events to bond with teachers and schools. Lekalakala (2019) attests that collaborative endeavours

between parents and teachers promote the development of learners' self-discipline and alleviates the burden on teachers by decreasing the time they spend addressing the disruptive behaviour of learners. Similarly, Le Mottee and Kelly (2017) assert that the likelihood of learners participating in disruptive behaviour decreases when teachers and parents create stronger connections with each other and the school. The legislation governing education, such as the SASA, mandates parental involvement in schools. Therefore, it is imperative for schools to enhance their approaches in fostering a sense of collaboration with parents, since this partnership plays a pivotal role not only in maintaining discipline but also in promoting academic achievement among learners.

The study has also indicated that learners do not deliver letters to their parents when the parents are invited to talk about disciplinary issues related to their children. The participants proposed that schools implement bulk messaging systems to address and mitigate such behaviour. Given that parents possess cell phones, they will probably receive school communication hotlines. Therefore, schools should adopt the integration of technology in their communication strategies with parents as mobile phones are consistently in the possession of their users. This initiative shows that updating parents' credentials regularly and efficiently in the system is imperative to prevent learners from intentionally providing their mobile numbers instead of their guardians' information during data capturing.

6.2.5.2 Team building through sports and camps

The participants proposed implementing sports activities to enhance unity and foster collegial connections between teachers and learners in response to the issues associated with a lack of cohesiveness. Moreover, concerning teachers' challenges in planning and the incapacity of young teachers to manage their classrooms, the participants suggested that mentoring programmes be implemented through camps. They alleged that these programmes would provide guidance and support in instructional preparation and implementing strategies to mitigate the impact of CDB exhibited by less engaged learners in the classroom. Leepo (2015) established that capacity building is essential in enabling individuals within schools to actively engage in programmes and activities to promote their personal development and self-reliance. The anticipated outcome of this development is to increase collegial understanding

and assistance which is vital in the day-to-day functioning of schools including the management of CDB.

6.2.5.3 Professional development

According to the PAM document gazette No 46879, it is incumbent upon the SMT to facilitate their own personal growth and development as well as those of their subordinates to effectively fulfil their professional obligations. The participants proposed potential avenues for PD centred on policies and methods for behavioural practices to improve their day-to-day activities inside schools. This form of growth would successfully address the limitations seen in both the SMT and teachers with various job-related challenges identified in the study. The establishment of a continuous PD programme for staff that focuses on all elements of a school has been widely praised by researchers as discussed (Nhlumayo, 2022; Zide & Mokhele, 2019). The programme has been recognised for its potential benefits, in that it could be structured to align with its intended purpose and contextual requirements. In this instance, it might be developed specifically for schools that are in a township context. Furthermore, continuous PD is advantageous for teachers as it enables them to stay updated on new advances in their field of education (Zide & Mokhele, 2019) and in the context of this study, could include legislative changes related to the management of learners' behaviour in schools.

6.2.5.4 Provision of more social workers

The participants also proposed that the education department ensure the accessibility of social worker services to address situations where their immediate availability is required yet lacking. They suggested that the number of social workers should be increased to ensure that each school receives adequate attention and timely assistance for its specific problems. Their suggestion is a potential solution to address the issue of one social worker being responsible for an excessive number of schools. The NASW (2010) asserts that social workers play crucial roles in schools by complementing teachers' professional expertise. They are responsible for tasks such as assessing thoughts of suicide, evaluating the physical and mental well-being of students, and conducting comprehensive assessments that consider the biological, psychological, and social aspects of learners (NASW, 2010).

6.3 Conclusion

The study explored the experiences of secondary staff on the dynamics of managing learner's CDB. This study revealed that CDB is influenced by a combination of external, school and learner factors. These findings provided evidence that these schools are likely to experience academic underperformance since CDB negatively impacts teaching and learning.

The research further shed light on how schools are making concerted efforts to address CDB challenges through various initiatives. Such efforts include employing policy-related methods such as multisectoral partnerships with other departments, implementing the SBST, using the school code of conduct, incident books, classroom rules, and implementing conduct agreements for over-aged learners. Nevertheless, the study also revealed that the staff members employ techniques not directly aligned with established policies. These strategies include disregarding suspension procedures, physically restraining students, and forcibly removing them from classrooms. These approaches demonstrated the importance of ongoing PD for staff to stay knowledgeable about contemporary strategies for managing classroom disruptions in the always-evolving field of education.

The study also indicated that when the staff members address CDB, they face both dynamic internal and external problems. The internal obstacles encountered by the staff encompassed issues such as a lack of cohesion among members, ownership of phases and grades by other staff members, dysfunctional disciplinary committees, insufficient facilities, ineffective modes of parent-school communication, the challenges by young and novice teachers, and resistance among the teaching staff citing unions. These findings suggest that there may be a potential challenge in developing leadership ability to foster a sense of cohesion, conformity, and new ways to address internal challenges within schools. The external obstacles these schools face include a dearth of parental involvement and limited access to social workers in some schools to address social factors contributing to CDB.

The research further found that schools can reduce the prevalence of CDB, and the difficulties staff encounter in dealing with it if they improve strategies for parental involvement, adopt a talent and skill-based approach to education, hold teachers

accountable, introduce a variety of sporting codes, and digitise parent-school communication. The research also revealed that social workers' availability and staff morale would benefit from more teamwork and PD opportunities.

6.4 Recommendations

To mitigate school-contextual factors that contribute to CDB, the staff, especially the SMT, should be capacitated in various areas such as monitoring, establishing functional school committees (disciplinary and SBST), implementing textbook retrieval systems, functional induction programmes for young and novice teachers and outsourcing PD.

It is recommended that the district establish a District Support Team (DST) that would capacitate staff on policy and discipline-related operations for effective teaching and learning. These areas should include but are not limited to the code of conduct, suspension of learners, differentiating between discipline and punishment and implementation of the NSSF.

The study also recommends that the district monitor the admission of learners in schools so that there is no over-admission leading to overcrowding. The study revealed that the classes are overcrowded, and that this situation contributes immensely to CDB. Furthermore, the study recommends that the district facilitate the school to establish various athletic discipline opportunities for learners to showcase their talents.

Implementing the SIAS policy should be obligatory across every school. Presently, schools are only being encouraged to screen learners. The findings revealed that secondary schools admit learners without SNA forms. Thus, such practice makes it challenging to develop strategies for effectively managing disruptive behaviour among learners, particularly those with severe learning disorders.

The admission policy should delineate the age requirements for learners to be enrolled in each grade level and explicitly states that parents should enrol their children in ABET if they exceed the designated age limit. The study evidenced that teachers are challenged by the behaviour of older learners which affects them and these learners' peers in the same classroom. In the context of secondary schools, it should explicitly

prohibit the admission of learners who exceed the designated age range. Presently schools can only go as far as encouraging parents to enrol their children in ABET. There is a loophole in that parents may refuse to take up the schools' recommendations.

To add to existing strategies, strengthen the management of CDB and alleviate its associated challenges, the study recommends the *AECLE* model. The model is presented and discussed in the following chapter (Chapter Seven).

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the limitations of this study, the following future research recommendations are given:

- Future research can be undertaken on a broader scale, encompassing a more significant number of schools and extending to other districts and provinces.
- Another study might potentially be undertaken using a sample of learners.
- Further research can be conducted to establish a comparative analysis between quintiles 3, 4, and 5 schools.
- Since the proposed AECLE model has not been tested, future research can be conducted to test its effectiveness.
- Further study should focus on schools' strategies in addressing pervasiveness of substance abuse.

6.6 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the findings, discussion, and conclusions. The findings from the data were discussed in sequence related to the research questions and the themes that emerged in the previous chapter. The themes discussed were a) staff conceptualisation of CDB; b) factors contributing to CDB; c) the strategies that the staff use to address CDB; d) the challenges experienced by the staff when addressing CDB; and e) mitigation strategies for CDB. The chapter concluded with recommendations that are linked to the findings and discussion. The next chapter presents the research journey and contribution of the study.

Chapter Seven: Research Journey and Contribution to Knowledge

7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the trajectory and experiences derived from conducting this study and the study's contribution to the current body of knowledge. The chapter commences with an introductory summary of the research's background, followed by a discussion of the author's journey. Subsequently, the chapter delves into the lessons derived from this journey, presents the contribution to knowledge through a model, and then outlines the study's limitations. Finally, the chapter concludes with a final word.

7.2 Introductory Summary of the Research Background

This study explored the experiences of secondary school staff regarding the dynamics involved in managing learners' CDB. Scholars have recognised the importance of proficiently managing CDB as a favourable measure towards facilitating efficient teaching and achieving the intended objectives for schools (Kessels & Heyder, 2020; McLean et al., 2020; Sibiya et al., 2019). The study investigated the staff's experiences to comprehend their understanding of the dynamics of managing CDB.

According to the literature, proactive measures of managing CDB are more effective than reactive approaches (Hepburn, Beamish & Alston-Knox, 2021; Gregory et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers should be knowledgeable about these proactive tactics to prevent CDB rather than only reacting to it after it has happened. Given teachers' significant impact on creating a favourable educational setting (Canter, 1989), it was imperative to explore their experiences to establish effective measures for enhancing the management of CDB in schools.

7.3 My Research Journey

The motivation behind my decision to pursue this research is rooted in my extensive teaching experience across various countries and provinces. Specifically, what sparked my interest were my encounters with the difficulties arising from a lack of organisational structure resulting in various encounters with CDB in my previous

teaching positions. I wanted to investigate the strategies teachers employ in various schools to offer valuable insights and help fellow teachers facing similar circumstances to me. Moreover, my personal development was also influential in that the environment in which I was raised was characterised by the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools. Thus, my upbringing motivated my pursuit of viable alternatives to conventional disciplinary practices for CDB.

In the first chapter of this study, I presented the research problem as a basis for the study. I argued that the quality of learners' education is contingent upon teachers effectively achieving the objective of delivering the lesson. However, this delivery is frequently hindered by CDB, which compels teachers to interrupt the teaching and learning process to address the disruptions (Alibec & Sirbu, 2020). I further argued that, as literature attests, despite the government's initiative to implement alternative measures to physical punishment (Moyo, Khewu & Bayanga, 2014), incidents of this practice often occur in schools (SACE, 2021). Therefore, it was imperative to explore the staff experiences regarding the dynamics of managing CDB.

The subsequent study questions were then formulated.

1. What are the views of secondary school staff on the factors that cause learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in school?
2. How do secondary school staff manage the dynamics of learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms?
3. What challenges do secondary school staff experience in the dynamics of managing learners' disruptive behaviour in classrooms?
4. Which strategies can be used to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of disruptive behaviour in classrooms?

It was imperative to adopt a structured approach while formulating the questions, commencing with an exploration of the perspectives held by staff members regarding the causes of CDB, their actions inside schools, the obstacles they encounter, and their opinions on potential measures to mitigate CDB. These questions facilitated the study to attain its main aim of exploring secondary school staff's experiences on the dynamics of managing learners' CDB.

In Chapter Two, the theoretical framework known as ADT was introduced, serving as the lens for this study. The ADT facilitated the investigation by elucidating the methods of establishing a conducive educational environment devoid of disturbances in schools, identifying the individuals involved in this process and their specific responsibilities, and outlining the strategies for effectively fulfilling their roles.

Chapter Three presented a comprehensive literature review encompassing local, continental, and international sources pertaining to the concept of CDB. The chapter was organised in a sequential way, commencing with an exploration of the underlying motives for disruptive activity. It then delved into the subsequent impact of such behaviour and examined the diverse elements that contribute to its occurrence inside and beyond the school environment. The chapter concluded with a section discussing the recommendations put out by scholars regarding the management of CDB in educational institutions.

Chapter Four of the study encompassed a comprehensive presentation and discussion of the research design and method employed in the study. The interpretive paradigm, which views knowledge as a social construct, posits that it emerges via individual exchanges and interactions within certain contexts. This aligns with the qualitative research approach that I employed. Given the objective of exploring the staff experiences, it was deemed appropriate to employ a phenomenological research design to gain insight into the lived experiences of staff members in their respective schools regarding CDB. Furthermore, I provided a detailed discussion of the research sites and outlined the protocols that were adhered to, to obtain the necessary permissions for data collection. In addition, I explained the study's participant selection process and the justification for the chosen approach. Moreover, I engaged in a comprehensive discussion of the data collection methods employed and the use of qualitative content analysis to analyse the data, specifically using the ICA approach. I concluded the chapter by explaining the measures taken to assure the trustworthiness of the study and addressing the ethical considerations involved.

After providing an overview of the research strategy and methodology, I continued to the presentation and analysis of the results in Chapter Five. I engaged in a comprehensive analysis of four overarching themes and their respective subthemes. The major themes are the conceptualisation of CDB, the contributing factors to CDB,

the approaches employed by staff to address CDB, the obstacles encountered by staff in managing CDB, and the mitigation strategies.

Chapter Six encompassed a discussion of the findings in conjunction with the existing literature, followed by conclusions and recommendations for future research. In the subsequent section of this chapter, I present the experience gained from the study journey.

7.4 Lessons Learned in the Research Journey

This section outlines the research journey, starting with the knowledge acquired about the concept of CDB then the methodological aspect of the study.

Throughout this study, I have acquired a more profound comprehension of CDB by examining it through the lens of participants who assert its intentional nature. This observation improved my understanding that CDB can manifest in two distinct forms: deliberate and unintentional. I realised that several external elements, school-contextual and learner-specific factors can influence behaviour. This learning experience holds significant value for me as it enables one to critically analyse the underlying motives behind CDB before arriving at assumptive conclusive determinations regarding its causes.

The study has also provided me with valuable insights into recognising the impact of CDB on the well-being of teachers as individuals, the staff as a whole, the overall atmosphere of the school, and learners' academic performance. It has been observed that the influence of certain events or circumstances can elicit varying responses among individuals, leading them to adapt and respond in diverse and dynamic manners to CDB. To address such diverse behaviour, schools should adopt proactive tactics. My study journey has also afforded me vital lessons regarding the similar issues faced by schools and the distinctive challenges influenced by a range of factors. First and foremost, I have learned that punishment and discipline are often regarded as synonymous concepts within schools. Therefore, when staff members administer punishment, they often assume they are disciplining the learners. Through the process of acquiring knowledge, I have realised the significance of understanding the differentiation between these two concepts, as they can greatly aid schools in their operational methods.

The research journey has additionally afforded me significant insights into schools' coping methods. There exist strategies that conform to the policy and those that do not. This learning experience has proven beneficial in demonstrating the necessity of providing regular PD to staff members regarding the management of learner behaviour in a compassionate manner. Thus, the duration of one's teaching experience does not inherently guarantee comprehensive expertise in all facets of education, including contemporary developments within the continuously evolving field. I learned that staff should stay up to date with behaviour management practices that align with legislation which continuous PD can provide.

In general, research has contributed to a heightened level of knowledge, empathy, and efficacy in advocating a shift in policy and school practices towards establishing a conducive learning environment for children and resolving CDB issues the teachers encounter.

Drawing on my methodological experience, I have acquired valuable insights – the first being the importance of integrity in research, particularly during data collection, analysis, and reporting. I learned to implement a systematic approach to organising and managing research-related material and documents. This includes arranging folders in a logical sequence that facilitates the recall of completed tasks and aids in planning future actions based on feedback received from my supervisor. I have acquired the ability to maintain resilience and openness to critique concerning my writing, particularly in terms of logic, organisation, and presentation. This skill has significantly contributed to the development and advancement of my academic pursuits. I have also acquired the ability to anticipate potential letdowns and exhibit respect towards the choices made by participants. I experienced a scenario in which one participant decided not to participate during the scheduled date for the interview when I arrived at their school. Other than that, one participant was absent during the FGD. Despite experiencing frustration, I consider this to be quite beneficial for my future research endeavours. It will help me adopt a tolerant attitude, acknowledging that not all selected and volunteered individuals are likely to engage in a study.

7.5 Research Contribution

Despite its narrow scope, the study has substantially contributed to the existing CDB management practices. Significant elements contributing to CDB, such as an inefficient textbook retrieval system and gaps in admission policies, contribute to advancing research in this area. Concerning the measures implemented by schools to combat CDB, this study introduces proactive practices like conduct agreements developed by the SGB specifically for learners beyond the average age in each grade. The study contributes to our understanding of the problems encountered by teachers in managing CDB and sheds light on issues related to phase and grade ownership in schools, the methods of communication between schools and parents, and teachers' resistance using the union they are affiliated with as an excuse.

In addition, the study presents the *AECLE* model as an alternative to mitigate CDB and enhance an optimal classroom environment that promotes effective teaching and learning. The model draws on the assertive discipline theoretical framework that has been used as the lens of this study. While the model has not been tested, it appraises the theory and the effective management of CDB, thereby addressing the identified gaps as indicated in this study. The proposed model suggests a collaborative effort to empower teachers to adopt a proactive stance in the classroom. It employs a systematic and uniform approach that can be assessed and adapted to suit various contexts and learner qualities.

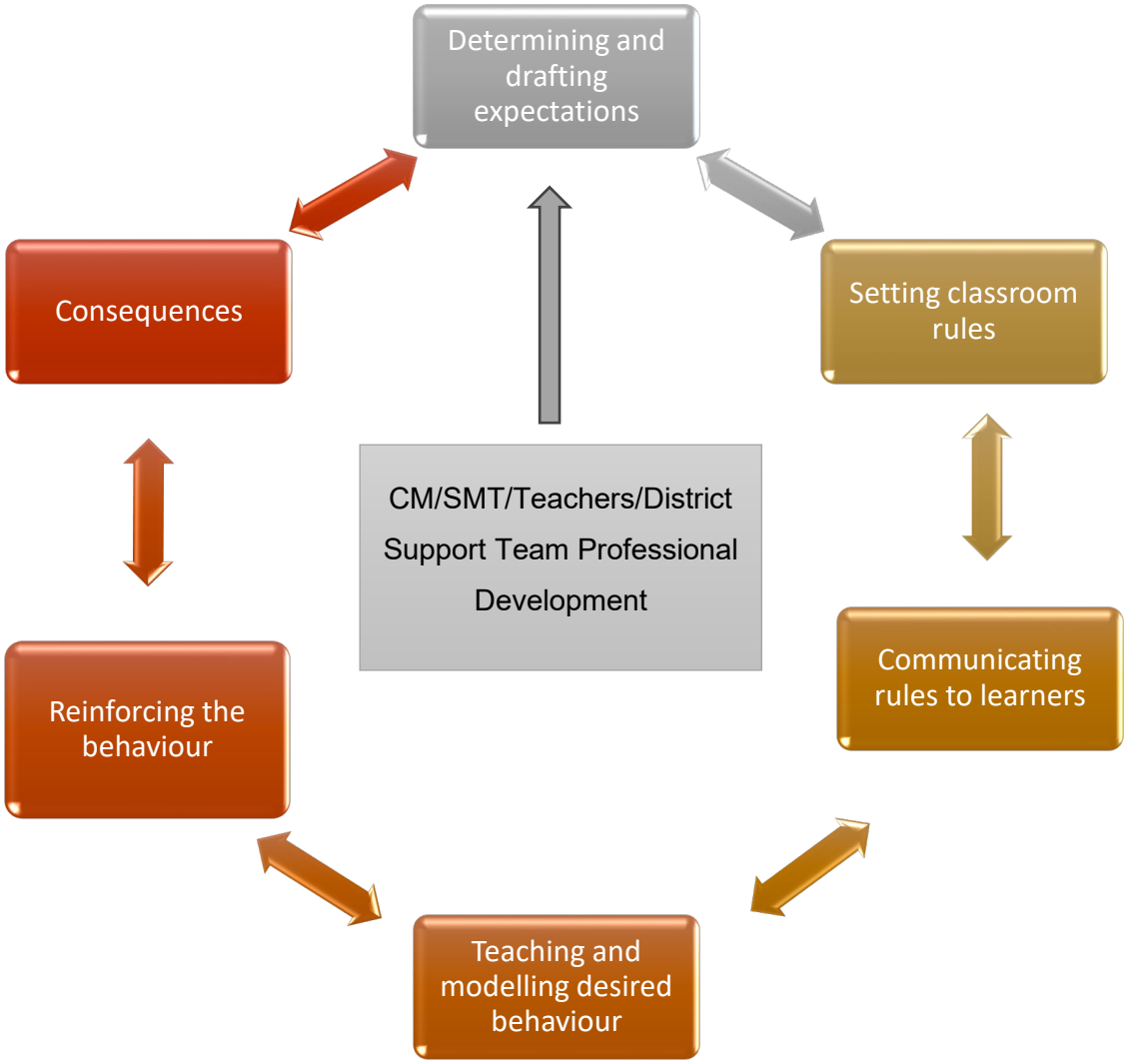


Figure 7.1: Alternatives to Establishing Conducive Learning Environment (AECLE) Model

The centre part of the model is the proposed DST collaborating with the SMT and Circuit Manager (CM) to outsource teacher support services related to classroom management. This form of teacher development encompasses the capacity development of the staff related to six components of the model: determining and drafting expectations, setting classroom rules, communicating rules to learners, teaching the rules or modelling the behaviour, reinforcing the behaviour, and applying the consequences. The centre part regarding the CM and SMT aligns with the policy such as PAM.

The PAM document in gazette No 46879 stipulates the following roles for these stakeholders: the CM's role is to assist and support school principals, SMTs and SGBs in effectively managing and regulating schools; the principal should prioritise the maintenance of excellent discipline; a deputy's role is to support the principal in effectively overseeing the school and facilitating the educational development of learners; and the DH's responsibility is to ensure the correct promotion of the subject, learning area, and teaching of the learners, which can arguably happen when a conducive learning climate is established.

Determining and drafting expectations: The staff reviews common incidences of CDB a school experience the most. The review process is done by considering the records such as incident books, SA-SAMS, and school-parental engagement records. After doing an analysis, they establish expectations targeting the behaviour that causes significant problems in their school. One advantage is that the school can concentrate on its distinct challenges and strategise accordingly while fostering inclusivity to enhance cohesion and buy-in of all teachers.

Setting classroom rules: The proposed model highlights the importance of staff members uniformly developing classroom rules. This study found that teachers independently designed their classroom rules and that those rules were too many and stated in negative language. A collaborative attempt of this nature will effectively establish uniformity in the number of classroom rules and the language employed in developing such rules. In this model, learners do not become part of the classroom formulation as the staff is entrusted with the power and authority to determine what behaviour they expect in the classroom for learning and teaching to happen. Besides, the model considers that the staff has experience through their training and knowledge of the school to know what behaviour prevents or allows them to teach effectively. The staff should set classroom rules and corresponding consequences that may be applied if learners do not adhere to the rules.

Communicating rules and expectations to learners: Once classroom rules have been established, it becomes the staff's responsibility to explain them to the learners, because learners are not part of the process. The staff explains the significance of setting standards and expectations and the rationale behind them. During this phase,

the staff also communicates the consequences to learners so they know what will happen if they choose not to abide by the rules.

Teaching and modelling desired behaviour: During this phase, the staff teach and model the anticipated behaviour to learners. The staff undertake this exercise because of their recognition that secondary school students are in the adolescent phase of development, wherein their behavioural patterns can undergo dramatic and significant transformations. Consequently, staff do not presume that learners possess knowledge of the appropriate behaviour because they understand this stage of development. Through the implementation of this approach, learners are allowed to exercise choice in their behaviour, as they are provided with teaching regarding the required norms and standards of behaviour.

Reinforcing good behaviour: This phase is supported by the assertive discipline theoretical framework that posits the essentiality of positive reinforcement in effectively managing a classroom environment. During this phase, the staff support and encourage positive behaviour. The focus is on the behaviour rather than on providing satisfactory responses. It is generally considered good behaviour to actively participate by answering questions, but the rules might require learners to raise their hands when they wish to speak. In such cases, it is recommended that the staff acknowledge and commend learners for their adherence to this rule, too. This approach assists teachers in actively recognising and acknowledging positive behaviour from learners, thereby redirecting the staff's focus towards commendation rather than reprimands.

Consequences: At this point, learners would have been provided extensive support to modify their disruptive behaviour. Therefore, those who opt not to engage in appropriate behaviour have deliberately made those choices. Hence, the staff implement disciplinary actions such as enforcing a code of conduct to address varying degrees of misconduct.

7.6 Study Limitations

The study's limitations arose from its narrow scope, as it was exclusively carried out in a single province, one education district, and a limited selection of quintile 3 schools. Although the data lacks generalisability, it does indicate trends in CDB. The study

employed a limited sample size, consisting of a few teachers and SMT members while excluding the learners. Despite these limitations, the study has provided a strong foundation for future research.

7.7 Final Word

Classroom disruptive behaviour (CDB) can detrimentally affect both students and teachers, undermining the entire learning environment. Successful management of this behaviour guarantees everyone's success; therefore, its prevention is crucial in schools. Preventing CDB appears attainable with a multifaceted strategy that involves proactive classroom management techniques based on teachers' ability to work together to create a plan to help them maintain consistence and fairness throughout the process.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

16-Jan-2023

Dear Mr Motsekiso Calvin Letuma

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Dynamics of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour: Experiences of secondary school staff, South Africa

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2022/1662/22

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

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Adri Du Plessis
Digitally signed by Adri Du Plessis
Date: 2023.01.17 14:24:39 +02'00'

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Appendix B: Permission from Department of Education

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Research Permission: M.C. Letuma
Tel. 051 404 8808
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za

education
Department of Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

3 Brand Street
Dewetsdorp
9940

Dear Mr. M.C. Letuma

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: MOTHEO DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Motheo Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the University of the Free State are as follows:

Topic: Dynamics of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour: Experiences of secondary school staff, South Africa.

1. **List of schools involved:** [redacted]
2. **Target Population:** Eight teachers and six SMT members at the selected schools.
3. **Period of research**: From the second week of February 2023 until 30 September 2023. 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 should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
   - 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,

Mr. MZAMO W. JACOBS
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 20/10/2022

Appendix C: Permission from the principal

1274 Ramanamane Street
Morojaneng
Dewetsdorp 9940

The Principal
_____ Secondary School

RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY

My name is **Motsekiso Calvin Letuma**, a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (Educational Management and Leadership) student at the University of the Free State. I am required to conduct research as part of my degree requirements. In this respect, I kindly seek permission to conduct research at your school.

The study is entitled: **"Dynamic of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour: Experiences of secondary school staff, South Africa."** This study aims to explore secondary school teachers' experiences on how they manage the dynamics of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in schools. It also aims to propose an action that should be taken by the Department of Education, Policy makers and schools to empower teachers regarding learners' classroom disruptive behaviour.

The participants from your school will either be teachers or School Management Team (SMT) members. Their participation is voluntary, and they will be made aware of the ethical issue that they can withdraw from the study without informing anyone. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured all the time, that is, before the study begins, during the study process and after the completion of this study. Data generation methods that will be used will include focus group discussions, document analysis and semi-structured interviews. For focus group discussion, only four teachers will be required to participate, and regarding semi-structured interviews, only three SMT members will participate. I would also request copies of the documents such as the *School Code of Conduct*, Minutes of Disciplinary Committee, Records of disruptive learners who were referred to an external organisation and any other document that may be relevant to the study.

In addition, should you have any queries, please feel free to contact me (researcher) on the following contact details: Motsekiso Calvin Letuma on 0740948737 or email: letumacalvinmotsekiso@gmail.com, or My supervisor(s): Dr L Mdodana-Zide on: Office telephone number: +27587185176 or email address: mdodanaZide@ufs.ac.za.

Thank you in advance.

Permission granted (Names)	Date	Signature

Appendix D: Information leaflet and consent form

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS

Research study information leaflet and consent form

Date

……

Title of the research project

Dynamics of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour: Experiences of secondary school staff, South Africa.

Principle Investigator

Letuma Calvin Motsekiso **Contact**: 0740948737 **email**: letumacalvinmotsekiso@gmail.com

Faculty and Department:

Faculty: Education

Department: Education Studies

Study leader(s)

Dr Mdodana-Zide L Cell : 0838641510 Office: 0587185176

Aim/purpose of the study

Explore the experiences of secondary school teachers on the dynamics of managing learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in schools.

The researcher's place of work

I am an educator employed by the Free State Department of Education. I am working at Metsimaphodi Secondary School in Dewetsdorp.

Has the study received ethical approval?

This study has received approval from the Research Ethics Committee of UFS. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher.

Approval number: UFS-HSD2022/1662/22

Why are you invited to take part in this research project?

You are invited to take part in this study to share your views regarding your experience of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour when you execute your day-to-day teaching duty.

The nature of participation in this study

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time without giving anyone a reason. The study will employ a focus group discussion and semi-structured interview. A Focus group discussion is when more than one participant gathered to discuss the topic. Focus groups will only be used with teachers and the discussion is expected to last for approximately one hour. A semi-structured interview is an interview between participants and the researcher where different mixtures of questions are asked to stimulate thorough and various responses related to the research question. Semi-structured interviews will be used with only the School Management Team (SMT) members. The following are the questions that will be asked during the discussions and interviews:

1. What are your views on the factors that cause learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in school?
2. How do you manage the dynamics of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
3. What challenges do you experience in the dynamics of managing learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
4. Which strategies can be used to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of classroom disruptive behaviour in schools?

Can the participant withdraw from the study?

Being in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without providing a reason.

What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?

Participating in this will benefit teachers, schools, and the Department of Education to gain knowledge of how learners' classroom disruptive behaviour manifests, its impact and ways to address it.

What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?

The study will require you to sacrifice your own time after working hours. Be informed that your views will be revealed to the other group members during the discussions. Sometimes one person may have experienced the worst scenario of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour, which may make them too emotional.

To mitigate the inconvenience, I will adapt my plan to the time you will find convenient. I will also appeal to other group members to treat everyone's view confidentially before beginning interviews and discussions. If the questions asked evokes unbearable emotions, I suggest the participant see a psychologist.

Will, what I say be kept confidential?

All your views and identities will be kept confidential. For example, your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym, and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. However, your answers may be

reviewed by people responsible for ensuring that research is done properly, such as the Research Ethics Committee members. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to my supervisor unless you permit for other people to see the documents. A study report may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report. While I will make every effort 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 the information confidentially. I shall, however, encourage all participants to do so. For this reason, I advise you not to disclose personal and sensitive information in the focus group.

How will the information be stored and ultimately destroyed?

I will store the hard copies of your answers for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in my house for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?

There are no incentives or remuneration for participating in this study. Participation is done voluntarily.

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 or require any further information about any aspect of this study, don't hesitate to get in touch with me (Letuma Calvin Motsekiso; Cell 0740948737; email, letumacalvinmotsekiso@gmail.com). The findings will possibly be accessible from August 2023.

Should you have concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisor (Dr Mdodana-Zide; email, mdodanZideL@ufs.ac.za; Cell 0838641510, office, 0587185176).

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

Consent to participate in this study

I, the undersigned, _____confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study referred to as the **Dynamics of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour: Experiences of secondary school staff, South Africa**, conducted by **Letuma Calvin Motsekiso.**

I, the undersigned participant, further confirm that–

1. the researcher has explained the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of my participation in the study;
2. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the attached information sheet;
3. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study;
4. I understand that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable);
5. I voluntarily provide the UFS and the researcher with my personal information and consent to the UFS and the Researcher collecting, disclosing and processing my personal information in order to conduct the study and any related activities in relation thereto;
6. I hereby acknowledge and confirm that I understand the purpose for which the UFS and the researcher may collect, store, use, delete, destroy, outsource, transfer or otherwise process, as the context and circumstances may require and as contemplated in terms of POPIA, my personal information as set out herein;
7. I am aware that the findings of the study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings and that my personal information will be aggregated and deidentified at such stage;
8. I also give the UFS permission to share, without notification, the collected data with other researchers at the UFS or other Higher Education Institutions. This permission depends on the same principles of ethical research practices, anonymity/confidentiality, safekeeping of information, and other issues listed above.

I, the participant, agree to the recording of the interviews and group discussions

Full Name of Participant: _____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____Date: _____

Appendix E: Interview guide

Interview Schedule

Main Research Question

What are the experiences of secondary school staff on the dynamics of managing learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in South Africa?

Subsidiary questions

1. What are the views of secondary school staff on the factors that cause learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in school?
2. How do secondary school staff manage the dynamics of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in schools?
3. What challenges do secondary school staff experience in the dynamics of managing learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in schools?
4. Which strategies can be used to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of classroom disruptive behaviour in schools?

Question for teachers (Focus Group Discussions)

1. What do you understand by the concept classroom disruptive behaviour?
2. Do you experience learner classroom disruptive behaviour in your school?
3. What factors contribute to learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in school?
4. In what way do the factors contribute?
5. How does learners' classroom disruptive behaviour affect the school?
6. How do you manage learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
7. What are your school's practices regarding the management of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
8. What challenges do you encounter when managing learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
9. What can be done to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
   - By whom? How?

1

Questions for SMT (Semi-Structured Interview)

1. What do you understand by the concept classroom disruptive behaviour?
2. Do you experience learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in your school?
3. What factors contribute to learners' classroom disruptive behaviour in school?
4. In what way do the factors contribute?
5. How does learners' classroom disruptive behaviour affect the school?
6. What are school management practices in discouraging learners' classroom disruptive behaviour?
7. What challenges does the management encounter in these practices?
8. What can be done to alleviate the challenges and strengthen the management of learners' disruptive behaviour?
   - By whom? How?

2

Appendix F: Turnitin report

Motsekiso Calvin Letuma Thesis.docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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Appendix G: Editor's letter

Nikki Watkins
Editing/proofreading services
Cell: 072 060 2354 E-mail: nikki.watkins.pe@gmail.com

26 November 2023

To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that I have language edited and proofread the Phd thesis

Dynamics of Managing Learners' Classroom Disruptive Behaviour: Experiences of Secondary School Staff, South Africa

By

MOTSEKISO CALVIN LETUMA

UK Centre of Excellence Editing and Proofreading Diploma
SA Writers College Certificate of Copy-Editing and Proofreading

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