

**COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE LEARNER  
DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

**By**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, **COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNERS DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS**, hereby submitted for the qualification of Masters in Education (M. Ed.) at the University of Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work for a qualification at/in another university/faculty.

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Name: MOETI GEORGE MANAMELA

Date: 31 July 2021

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, brothers and sisters.

Especially to my late father Karabi Brown Manamela, late mother Gohentsemang Rosy Manamela, late younger brother Joseph Maluleka (Manamela), late last-born sister Goitsewang Selma Manamela and late elder brother Diteko Richard Manamela;

For their unending love and support and for all the sacrifices they made for me over the years.

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## **ABSTRACT**

In this study, the researcher explored the collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools, further aimed at assisting educators, school management teams and school governing bodies on how to use collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools, in order to ensure effective teaching and learning and a safe school environment in schools. In this study, a literature search on national, continental and international sources was conducted on how educators, school management teams and school governing bodies can use collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools.

To best explain the natural progression of the phenomenon under study, namely collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools, transformative learning theory was applied to the study. The study employed a qualitative approach to how collaborative leadership strategies may be effective in improving learner discipline strategies in schools. Individual, in-depth interviews and focus group interviews were employed to collect data from participants. They comprised of five educators from two schools in Bloemfontein (two educators of one school participated as educators and as school governing body members, five school management team members from two schools in Bloemfontein, as well as three school governing body members from one school in Bloemfontein). The researcher analysed data using codes and themes that emanated from the data.

Key findings of the investigation revealed that learner code of conduct is used as a learner discipline strategy, because it is a form of legislation that reflects the democratic principles of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996(b)) by supporting the values of human dignity, equality and freedom. Learners' lack of discipline is a challenge encountered by schools when they implement learner discipline strategies, because learners' lack of discipline contributes to learners' aggressive behaviour and during detention a learner is required to remain in a presumably undesirable place for a specified amount of time, outside school hours.

**Keywords:** Collaborative leadership strategies and learner's discipline

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS.....	xii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	4
1.3 PARADIGMATIC AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY.....	5
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	6
1.4.1 Primary Research Question.....	6
1.4.2 Secondary Research Questions.....	6
1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	7
1.5.1 Research Aim.....	7
1.5.2 Research objectives.....	7
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN.....	7
1.6.1 Research methodology.....	7
1.6.2 Research approach: Case study.....	8
1.6.3 Research paradigm: Interpretivism.....	8
1.6.4 Selection of research participants.....	9
1.7 DATA COLLECTION.....	10
1.8 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING.....	11
1.9 VALUE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.....	12
1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION.....	12
1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	13
1.11.1 Credibility.....	13
1.11.2 Transferability.....	13
1.11.3 Dependability.....	14
1.11.4 Confirmability.....	14
1.11.5 Safeguarding against risks.....	14
1.12 KEY CONCEPTS / CLARIFICATION.....	15

1.13	DIVISION OF CHAPTERS.....	16
CHAPTER 2 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WITH THE IMPLEMENTAION OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES..... 17		
2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	17
2.2	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	18
2.3	CHALLENGES RELATING TO BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS....	20
2.3.1	Learner discipline problems in schools.....	21
2.3.2	Learner’s absenteeism in schools .....	25
2.4	DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS.....	30
2.4.1	Detention .....	30
2.4.2	Suspension.....	31
2.4.3	Expulsion .....	32
2.4.4	Corporal punishment.....	33
2.5	COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND LEARNER DISCIPLINE ...	35
2.5.1	The skillset of collaborative leaders .....	35
2.5.2	Barriers to collaborative work in learner discipline.....	36
2.5.3	Connecting to communities through community-based learning to address learner discipline.....	37
2.5.4	Collaborative strategies when dealing with learner’s discipline.....	38
2.6	DISPROPORTIONAL IMPACT OF POLICIES ON LEARNERS DISCIPLINE AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP .....	38
2.6.1	International policies on learner discipline.....	38
2.6.2	Continental policies on learner discipline .....	39
2.6.3	National policies on learner discipline .....	39
2.7	SUMMARY .....	40
CHAPTER 3 THE NATURE OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE AT SECODARY SCHOOLS: A COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACH..... 42		
3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	42
3.2	CHALLENGES REGARDING LEARNER DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS .....	43
3.2.1	Schools in Australia .....	43
3.2.2	Schools in Kenya .....	44
3.2.3	Schools in South Africa.....	46
3.3	STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH LEARNER DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	50
3.3.1	Gangsterism .....	50
3.3.2	Vandalism Behaviour and Abhorrent Graffiti .....	52

3.3.3	High Rate of Educators Resignations.....	52
3.4	COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNER DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS.....	52
3.5	CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY SCHOOLS WHEN IMPLEMENTING LEARNER DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES .....	54
3.6	EDUCATORS, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DETENTION AS A STRATEGY TO DISCIPLINE LEARNERS .....	56
3.7	SUMMARY .....	57
CHAPTER 4	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	58
4.1	INTRODUCTION .....	58
4.2	RESEARCH PARADIGM .....	58
4.2.1	Qualitative Research Approach.....	59
4.2.2	Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research.....	60
4.2.3	Research Design .....	62
4.2.4	Sampling.....	63
4.3	DATA GENERATION PROCEDURE .....	64
4.3.1	Interviews .....	64
4.3.2	Focus group discussions.....	65
4.3.3	Key characteristics of focus group discussions .....	66
4.3.4	Advantages and limitations of focus group .....	66
4.4	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	66
4.5	DATA COLLECTION .....	68
4.6	DATA ANALYSIS.....	68
4.7	SUMMARY .....	69
CHAPTER 5	DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION.....	70
5.1	INTRODUCTION .....	70
5.2	SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS.....	70
5.3	PREPARING FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY.....	71
5.4	THE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS.....	72
5.5	CODING AND CATEGORISING DATA .....	74
5.6	DATA GATHERED THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS, SMT AND SGB MEMBERS.....	75
5.6.1	Secondary Research Objectives and Question Framework Presented to Deputy Principals, Head of Departments, Educators and SGB members.....	75
5.6.2	DATA ANALYSIS.....	83
5.7	DATA GATHERED WITH IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS.....	84

5.7.1	Theme One: Learners discipline strategies .....	84
5.7.2	Theme Two: Challenges Encountered .....	91
5.7.3	Theme Three: Collaborative Leadership .....	94
5.8	DATA GATHERED THROUGH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH SMTs 100	
5.8.1	Theme One: Learners discipline strategies .....	100
5.8.2	Theme Two: Challenges encountered.....	106
5.8.3	Theme Three: Collaborative leadership .....	110
5.9	DATA GATHERED THROUGH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY.....	114
5.9.1	Theme One: Learners discipline strategies .....	114
5.9.2	Theme Two: Challenges encountered.....	121
5.9.3	Theme Three: Collaborative leadership .....	125
5.10	SUMMARY .....	128
CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION .....		130
6.1	INTRODUCTION .....	130
6.2	RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	130
6.2.1	Which collaborative leadership strategies are used to improve learner, discipline in secondary schools? .....	130
6.2.2	Which challenges are experienced by schools when implementing learners discipline strategies?.....	138
6.2.3	What are the perceptions of educators, school governing bodies and school management teams regarding collaborative leadership strategies when implementing detention as learner discipline strategy? .....	141
6.2.4	How may collaborative leadership strategies be recommended for the implementation of detention as learner discipline strategy in secondary schools?.....	142
6.3	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	143
6.3.1	Recommendation 1: Corporal Punishment and learners discipline policies ..	143
6.3.2	Recommendation 2: Collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools. ....	143
6.3.3	Recommendation 3: ATCP as a collaborative strategy to improve learner discipline in schools. ....	144
6.3.4	Recommendation 4: Detention as a collaborative strategy to improve learner discipline in schools. ....	145
6.4	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	145
6.5	CONCLUSION.....	146
REFERENCES.....		147

ANNEXURES .....	174
ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE .....	174
ANNEXURE B: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE .....	175
ANNEXURE C: CONSENT FORMS: EDUCATORS .....	176
ANNEXURE D: CONSENT FORMS SMT .....	178
ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM: SGB.....	180
ANNEXURE F: RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION LEAFLET .....	182
ANNEXURE G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: EDUCATORS .....	184
ANNEXURE H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT).....	186
ANNEXURE I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB).....	188
ANNEXURE J: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR .....	189
ANNEXURE K: TURN IT IN RECEIPT AND REPORT .....	190

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Proposed study sample .....	9
Table 2.1: Linear and systems thinking compared .....	19
Table 2.2: Summary of learner absenteeism at schools around the world.....	26
Table 2.3: Summary of learner bullying at schools around the world.....	28
Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews.....	65
Table 4.2: Advantages and disadvantages of focus group discussions .....	66
Table 5.1: Profile of participants.....	72
Table 5.2: Accumulated experience of participants .....	74
Table 5.3: Steps in coding the data .....	75
Table 5.4: Secondary research objectives of the study .....	75
Table 5.5: Secondary research objectives and question framework presented to educators	77
Table 5.6: Secondary research objectives and question framework presented to SMT members.....	79
Table 5.7: Secondary research objectives and question framework presented .....	81
Table 5.8: Themes and Sub-Themes .....	83

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Global and South African perspectives on learner discipline problems (Source: Author's own construction) .....	24
Figure 3.1: Comparison of the situation in Kenya and South Africa (Source: Author's own construction) .....	49

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

<b>ATCP</b>	Alternatives to Corporal Punishment
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>ELRC</b>	Education Labour Relations Council
<b>FEDSAS</b>	Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools
<b>MEC</b>	Member of Executive Council
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>RSA</b>	Republic of South Africa
<b>SADTU</b>	South African Democratic Teachers Union
<b>SASA</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>TV</b>	Television

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Marciniak (2015) learner's discipline in the educational environment is the result of carefully designed treatment of classroom disruptions. School discipline is regarded as generally accepted form of behaviour expected of students and teachers (Semali & Vumilia, 2016). Barnwell (2013), however, indicated that schools are experiencing continues challenges with negative learner behaviour because of a lack of discipline, respect, bad influences as well as a lack of control mechanisms. Ismail et al. (2013) state that the number of learners who are behaving negatively at schools are increasing on a daily basis. Coupled with this, Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014) are of the idea that "one of the most common complaints of teachers all over the world is that of disciplinary issues" (p.79).

From an international perspective, Osher et al. (2010) report that learner disciplinary problems in Australian schools impedes education, delay managerial time and add to educator burn-out. Meador (2020) is of the opinion that schools in Australia face several learner's disciplinary problems daily, which impacts learners learning negatively. Sullivan et al. (2014) are of the opinion that the most challenging learner's disciplinary problems in Australia are, among others, the responsibility to complete schoolwork, distraction during lessons, unwillingness to participate in scholastic activities, talking aloud and truancy.

Furthermore, Sullivan (2015) states that one of the greatest concerns of educators today in Australia is classroom management, which often leads to burnout, unhappiness with the job environment and premature exit from their occupation. Nooruddin and Baig (2014) observe that learners in schools in Australia play a vital role in managing learner's disciplinary problems through development of policies, procedures, rules and regulations. To counterbalance inappropriate learner behaviour, Elbla (2012) recommend that Australian schools' administrators and educators are to produce well-educated and disciplined learners. Matthews (2017) asserts that Australia has a problematic situation of classroom discipline in schools. In similar vein

Kenely (2015) says that issues of classroom discipline and learner misbehaviour are among the most serious problems in schools that requires a collective approach from all stakeholders.

According to Macharia et al. (2014), many schools in Kenya struggle to address learner's disciplinary problems. Onyango et al. (2016) further state that in Kenya learner's disciplinary problems contribute to public tumult and continue to appear more noticeable in the nationwide agenda, unpunctuality, noisemaking, truancy, fighting, defiance, bullying, drug abuse, drug trafficking and possession of pornography (Simba et al., 2016). Al-Amarat (2011) further reveals that in schools in Kenya educators are faced with learner's disciplinary problems such as disremembering school equipment, recurrent absenteeism, inattentiveness, hyperactivity, unsuitable conversations in the classroom, sabotage, ferociousness and learners refusing to do task and school work's.

Kiprop (2012) states that the head teachers at schools in Kenya have a very important part to play in dealing with learner's disciplinary problems in schools. Macharia et al. (2014) confirm that the government of Kenya introduced physical punishment in schools in Kenya in 1972. In the same vein, Maina and Sindabi (2016) confirm that, "the government of Kenya declared the ban of corporal punishment as a method of disciplining learners through Legal Notice No.56/2001 thus nullifying the earlier Legal Notice No.40 of 1972 contained in the Education Act 211." Learners' discipline at school in Kenya is "the core factor that influence effective learning and character building" (Ngunyi, 2014). In South African schools, educators, parents, school governing bodies and school management teams are faced with learner disciplinary challenges (Ndofirepi et al., 2012). According to Moyo et al. (2014), learner disciplinary problems in schools in South Africa result in acts of assault, destruction of buildings, absenteeism, rape, smoking, defiance, theft, bullying, felony, murder as well as wide-ranging aggressiveness. To address these behavioural issues, the leadership of schools should pay attention to insisting suitable and effective disciplinary measures, ensuring that learning and teaching take place in schools.

Learner disciplinary challenges in schools are attracting growing attention of many worldwide (Moyo et al., 2014). Similarly, Mestry and Khumalo (2012) are of the view that schools internationally are currently suffering because of disciplinary challenges

caused by learners. South African educators battle with learner disciplinary problems in schools. They are frustrated and are at wits end because they lost the battle in terms of maintaining discipline at schools (Wolhuter & Russo, 2013). Smit (2013) further notes that 85% of educators in South Africa hold the view that learner disciplinary problems resulted in job dissatisfaction, whilst 79% considered abandoning the teaching profession.

According to Silbert (2013), before 1994, South African schools depended on corporal punishment as corrective measure to discipline learners. However, after 1994, physical punishment was abolished in that, “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel way” (RSA, 1996a, Section 12). Congruent to the latter stipulation, corporal punishment was banned in that, “no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution” (RSA, 1996b, Section 12). Both stipulates in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996a) and the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996b) imply that corporal punishment is unlawful because it could be damaging to learners’ impending arrangements with the education system. As such, learners’ disciplinary problems should be addressed so that a more encouraging school environment is fostered. The importance of addressing learner discipline problems in schools in South Africa is to ensure that learners feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted, safe and secure (Rampa, 2014).

According to Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014), discipline helps learners to have self-control and acceptable behaviour. Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) note that in South African schools, learners’ discipline is a problem and teachers are uncertain what methods to implement to maintain discipline in schools. Du Plessis (2018) further reveals that the situation of discipline problems in South African schools is exacerbating and this causes even more frustration to teachers.

In South Africa, school leaders and educators institute disciplinary measures when learners breach the behavioural expectations established by the school. Generally, school use numerous forms of disciplining learners, such as emotional punishment, detention, time-out, withdrawal of privileges, suspension and expulsion (Ndofirepi et al., 2012). This study focussed specifically on detention as a disciplinary strategy used

at schools and how school leaders may implement collaborative leadership strategies in this regard.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The expectation for a disciplined school environment asks from education authorities:

*“...to create an enabling education system that supports the full personal development of each learner, and contributes to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large. It emphasises the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes...”* (DBE, 2012, p.2).

This departmental stipulation implies that learner discipline is very significant issues in education, and, through it, learners and teachers may accept responsibility for behaviour control, initiate special peace, whilst they master to be corrective in terms of undesirable behaviour (Ali et al., 2012). However, schools in contemporary times regularly are experiencing numerous disciplinary problems that adversely influences student learning (Meador, 2020). Although teachers and school administrators work tirelessly to address disciplinary problems, it seems to remain a daunting challenge. Whilst Jinot (2018) states that a lack of learner discipline is indeed a major challenge in schools, Gyan et al. (2015) confirm that the deteriorating rate of discipline in schools resulted in the attrition of high educational attainments, discouraged teachers and brought unhappiness and dissatisfaction to several families and this is happening all over the world.

For instance, learner discipline problems in schools in Australia stem from amongst others, learners who do not listen to what the educators say and learners with learning difficulties (Hiatt, 2017). Furthermore, Donnelly (2013) reports that many Australian teachers are leaving the profession because of disruptive behaviour by learners and the fact that no particular successful mechanism are in place to address discipline challenges. In another study, Odour (2017) is of the opinion that Kenya has too many learners discipline rules which are at times severe, ambiguous and which were compiled without having involved stakeholders like learners and parents. This implies that both learners and teachers sometimes refuse to adhere to disciplinary measures in schools.

In the South African education context, teachers are of opinion that learner discipline may be a direct flow from policies that curb them to maintain discipline. Apart from legislation, learner discipline problems affect learning and teaching which further result in weak academic performance (Moyo et al., 2014). Consequently, learner discipline problems interfere with teaching and learning in South African schools and if it cannot be handled properly, education cannot be successful (Emekako, 2016).

### **1.3 PARADIGMATIC AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**

This study proposed collaborative and inclusive discipline management strategies for secondary schools to address learner discipline. The study used the Systems Theory (ST) which is an interdisciplinary theory system in scientific domains such as nature and the society. The aim of the theory is to investigate phenomenon from a holistic approach (Mele et al., 2010). Significantly, an investigation is launched into the relationships between the role players and their actions, which, through their interaction, become more important towards a common goal or a shared purpose. According to Feldt (1986), a system entails various structures of parts which stand in relation with supra-systems and subsystems. Based on the afore-mentioned and in the case of learner discipline in schools, there are different structures which deals with learners' discipline in schools and all of them should work together to reach a common goal.

Notably School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and Senior Management Teams (SMTs) are supra-systems because they are responsible of making sure that schools must have learners discipline policies and these policies must be properly implemented. Educators, parents and communities are subsystems because they work in relationship with SMTs and SGBs to ensure that they achieve a common goal of making sure that learners discipline problems are properly dealt with in schools.

Roach (2016) emphasizes that the ST enables researchers to look at organizations and that each organization is part of a system with three constituents which are the organization, its public and its objectives. Broks (2016) states that the ST is a great tool which is used to solve many problems. Naicker and Mestry (2016) are of the idea that when the researcher applies system theory to the school in an individualistic manner, this may lead to some degree of change.

Principles of the ST are regarded as introduction, historical review, basic definitions and types of basic problems of system, open and closed systems theory applications, optimal control of system in different scientific fields and basic steps in system design (Jansen van Vuuren, 2002). The ST is relevant to the aim of the research study because it will enable the researcher to recommend collaborative leadership strategies to address learner discipline problems by using detention as an approach to improve learners' discipline.

The researcher requested and studied learner disciplinary policies at two Mangaung Schools. This assisted the researcher in understanding the perspectives that teachers have about learner discipline in the two schools. The researcher approached one school in town and one school in Heidedal. The reason of choosing those two schools at different areas was to find out how learner disciplinary strategies are implemented in different areas. Such information guided the researcher in terms of articulating collaborative leadership strategies as a way to address learners' discipline problems in schools. An application of the ST was deemed relevant, because enabled me to meet relevant people who are dealing with learner disciplinary problems. These relevant people were educators of the two schools (especially those who are members of the school disciplinary committee), SMTs and SGBs of the two schools.

The researchers' investigation into learner discipline problems in schools was guided by research questions which are indicated in the next section.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.4.1 Primary Research Question**

Which collaborative leadership strategies are recommended to improve learner's discipline in secondary schools?

### **1.4.2 Secondary Research Questions**

- Which challenges are experienced by the schools when implementing learners discipline strategies?

- What are the perceptions of educators, school governing bodies and school management teams regarding collaborative leadership strategies when implementing detention as learner discipline strategy?
- How may collaborative leadership strategies be recommended for the implementation of detention as learner discipline strategy in secondary schools?

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.5.1 Research Aim**

To recommend collaborative leadership strategies to improve learners' discipline in secondary schools.

### **1.5.2 Research objectives**

- To obtain information about the challenges regarding learner's discipline strategies implemented in secondary schools.
- To explore the perceptions of educators, school governing bodies and school management team's regarding the implementation of detention as a learner discipline strategy.
- To recommend collaborative leadership strategies for the implementation of detention as a learner discipline strategy.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **1.6.1 Research methodology**

The researcher used qualitative research (QR) methodology. According to McNiff (2016), QR comprises of an understanding of explanations and views, whilst providing perceptions regarding problems under investigation. Significantly, QR is: (a) exploratory in nature (Jost 2016); (b) empirical research where information is not numerical like in the case of quantitative research (McLeod, 2017); and (c) useful to

analyse researchers' roles, the history of the research field, its application in policymaking and its impending effect on educational development (Cooley, 2013).

### **1.6.2 Research approach: Case study**

According to Baxter and Jack (2010), a “case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and desirable” (p.545). Palmer et al. (2021) concur that “case study conveys information from the perspective of the respondents. Case study explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time, through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes. Case study characteristics are particularistic, evocative and experiential” (p.73).

The researcher explored learner discipline problems in schools and how collaborative leadership strategies can assist teachers, SMTs and SGBs to improve learner discipline in schools. The case study approach was, therefore, be useful to assist the researcher to research how collaborative leadership strategies can improve learner discipline in schools.

### **1.6.3 Research paradigm: Interpretivism**

According to Rahman (2015) the term “interpretivism” emerged with the view that there are fundamental differences between the theme of social science and the theme of natural sciences. Thanh and Thanh (2015) state that interpretivism is useful in that researchers are positioned to explore their world by understanding the thoughts or experiences of individuals. Drawing on Thanh and Thanh (2015), the researcher's intention was to interpret the perceptions of educators, SMTs and SGBs regarding their learner discipline problems in schools, so as to be able to recommend collaborative leadership strategies for the implementation of detention as a learner discipline strategy.

#### 1.6.4 Selection of research participants

It should be noted that qualitative researchers often use purposive sampling because they would select those cases that provide the best opportunity to learn (Creswell, 2007; 2013). Notably, “sampling is the act, process or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole phenomena” (Gentels et al., 2015, p.1772). Gutterman (2015) is of the idea that sampling in qualitative research is not a solitary development choice, but it is an iterative sequence of choices throughout the research process.

Consequently, the researcher purposefully selects those individuals and sites that hold the maximum possibility for providing a better understanding of a research study’s problem and dominant phenomenon (Du Plessis, 2018). Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2011) explains that purposive sampling assists the researcher to choose individuals who can offer rich data. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects participants. They are purposely selected, because of their appropriateness in contributing positively to the research aim. The current study will employ purposive sampling, as the targeted sample is effortlessly reachable to the researcher. Participants from two different schools in the Motheo region of the Mangaung district in Bloemfontein in the Free State province in South Africa were recruited to share their experiences because they have rich information on the topic.

Information regarding the participants is presented graphically in Table 1.1 below.

**Table 1.1: Proposed study sample**

<b>PARTICIPANTS GROUP</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY</b>	<b>SCHOOLS IN MANGAUNG DISTRICT X2</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	Interview schedule		
School A			2
School B			3
<b>SGBs</b>	Interview schedule		3
School B			
<b>SMTs</b>	Semi-structured interviews		
School A			2
School B			3
			<b>13</b>

The participants were chosen because of the following reasons. Firstly, educators, as people who are responsible for the implementation of detention, as disciplinary strategy, was able to voice the challenges they encounter when implementing such strategies, both in the classroom and in the whole school. Secondly, SMTs, as the supervisors and monitors for the implementation of detention strategies, was able to share the challenges they encounter when supervising and monitoring the implementation of policies, was able to elaborate on learner disciplinary strategies they adopted.

Significantly, purposive sampling is extensively applied for the selection of information-rich cases associated with the phenomenon of importance (Palinkas et al., 2015).

## **1.7 DATA COLLECTION**

The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interviews as a data collection tool. Data were collected at two selected secondary schools. At school A, data were collected on 11 September 2019 and at school B data were collected on 13 September 2019. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014), “in-depth interviews are qualitative data collection methods, which the researcher uses to pose questions to participants with the aim of learning more about their views, opinions and beliefs about a specific phenomenon” (p.193). DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) argue that semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research and in this method, there is a dialogue between researchers and participants. In this research, the researcher interviewed educators who are members of the schools’ disciplinary committees, members of the SMTs, as well as members of SGBs of the two schools.

The interviews were aimed at obtaining information regarding: (a) challenges regarding learner discipline strategies implemented in secondary schools; (b) perceptions of educators, SMTs and SGBs regarding the implementation of detention as a learner discipline strategy; as well as (c) strategies implemented to address detention as a learner discipline strategy. McMillan and Gogia (2014) points out that the collected data collection subsequently be analysed and interpreted. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

## **1.8 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING**

In this study, data analysis was conducted through utilising thematic analysis. Codes and themes were ascribed to the data. Dudovskiy (2018) is of the idea that data analysis in qualitative research includes recognizing mutual patterns within the answers and critically analysing them to realize the research aim and objectives.

Kalpesh (2013) says that data analysis is a method which is used to examine, convert and modify the collected data with the aim of attaining a particular conclusion to the specified situation. Robinson (2014) claims that sampling is central to the practice of qualitative research methods but if the researcher compares it with data collection and data analysis the researcher will realise that data sampling processes have been discussed relatively little.

Aligned with thematic analysis, the researcher will make use of qualitative coding in the following way:

Coding, the process of separating data into different parts by grouping likewise threads together (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013), was used, because it gives the researcher the perfect chance to scrutinise the data. Additionally, it also allowed the researcher to generate findings, develop explanations, conclude the findings and make relevant suggestions (Rule & John, 2011). The data was coded by drawing on Creswell and Creswell (2018), by following the steps below to derive themes in terms of transformative leadership and multicultural schools:

**Step 1:** The raw data was organised and prepared for analysis.

**Step 2:** Data was perused to familiarise the researcher with it and reflect on the overall meaning thereof.

**Step 3:** Coding process commenced according to the themes and description.

**Step 4:** The coding process was used as a method to describe themes. Coding was applied to formulate small themes, which then became the major findings and was used as headings in the findings of this dissertation.

**Step5:** Description of the themes was then presented. A description passage was used to express the findings of the analysis.

**Step 6:** Interpretation of the findings followed, which then called for action agendas for reform and change.

In terms of the above, the researcher drew on Mugrove (2016), who claims that the data analysis and explanation are when the researcher takes the collected data, visualizes it, analyses it, adds more dimensions or measures on it and uses the data to draw conclusions or make recommendations.

## **1.9 VALUE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

Spence (2013) states that the value of research is to have impact and generate new understanding. On the other hand, Handelsman (2015) is of the idea that the value of research is to transform an idea from fundamental discovery to practical application. This study might contribute to the improvement of learner discipline in schools by requesting the Free State Department of Education to organise more training sessions on learner discipline problems, to teachers, SMTs and SGBs. It might also encourage the Free State Department of Education to thoroughly monitor the implementation of collaborative learner discipline strategies after these training sessions.

This study also aimed to provide alternative information to educators, SMTs and SGBs as to how to deal with learner discipline problems at schools. At the training sessions, the information educators, SMTs and SGBs will receive training on many alternative ways of dealing with learner discipline problems, which they can properly implement at schools. It may also assist the Free State Department of Education with improving learner discipline in schools. When educators, SMTs and SGBs are well trained on how to deal with learner discipline problems, and the Free State Department of Education thoroughly and continuously monitor the implementation of learner discipline problems strategies as received at training sessions, the discipline situation at schools will improve.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

Qualitative studies do not rely on external tools to judge the trustworthiness of a study so therefore it is important that the outcomes are trustworthy and reliable. This study

needed to be sound and justifiable and had to be “rigorously conducted” to make an impact on the audience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p.238). Consequently, the researcher conducted the study in an ethical and moral manner (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Roberts & Priest, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher referred to four criteria, namely credibility, transferability dependability and conformability (Cope, 2014; Connelly, 2016).

## **1.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

### **1.11.1 Credibility**

For the researcher study to be deemed valid and reliable, it also had to be credible, an important factor to ensure trustworthiness. To make sure that the study was credible, the researcher made use of credible sources like reliable participants, statistics and relevant academic articles and journals to obtain precise and detailed information (Cope, 2014) about learner discipline in the two schools in the Motheo Region of the Free State province. Furthermore, drawing on Nieuwenhuis (2007), the researcher had frequent information sharing sessions with the supervisor, and the researcher’s reflective notes and member checks. Through informal conversations, the researcher also ask participants to comment on the interpretation of the findings from their narratives.

### **1.11.2 Transferability**

Shenton (2003, p.69) notes that transferability “is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations.” Nieuwenhuis (2007) is of the view that transferability invites readers of the study to establish connections between aspects of the study and their own experiences. It therefore refers to how other people may assess similarities between their own situations and the study that is being carried out. To enhance transferability in this study, the researcher involved SMTs, SGBs and educators in the two schools in the Motheo Region of the Free State Province, considering different levels of teaching experiences and involvement in disciplinary procedures, and will include both males and females.

### **1.11.3 Dependability**

Connelly (2016), states that dependability is about the firmness of the data over time and over the conditions of the research. Dependability is usually established through the research design and its application, the components of gathering data and the thoughtful appraisal of the project. To support the consistency between the research outcomes and the data generated in this research study, reflective notes were kept in a reflective journal by the researcher during the course of the study.

### **1.11.4 Confirmability**

Nieuwenhuis (2007) defines conformability as the extent to which the outcomes of the research are fashioned by the participants and not by the researcher's drive and interests. To reduce bias, the researcher admitted predispositions from the onset and used an audit trail, which allowed observers to trace the course of the research through all its steps. In addition, the researcher asked the supervisor to monitor the generated data, because data analysis by more than one person ensures quality assurance (Connelly, 2016).

### **1.11.5 Safeguarding against risks**

Participants must at all times feel protected during the study (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The researcher took the necessary precautions and made a concerted effort to uphold professional and ethical standards at all times. The purpose of the study was communicated to participants and was included upon an indication of their willingness to participate. They were also assured of their anonymity, as well as the fact that they may have removed themselves from participating in the study at any time. Assurance was given that they would not be penalised and that their data were removed. Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the:

- (a) Free State Department of Education;
- (b) Principals of the two schools in the Motheo region of the Free State province;

- (c) Teachers and SMTs of the two schools in the Motheo region of the Free State province;
- (d) SGBs of the two schools in the Motheo region of the Free State province; and
- (e) Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured the participants that their rights would be respected and protected, described the intended use of the study and informed them of the choice to participate and to choose to withdraw from the study.

## **1.12 KEY CONCEPTS / CLARIFICATION**

### **COLLABORATIVE**

Faota and Faota (2011) are of the idea that when leaders engage in a shared practice with team members to plan and implement intervention, it may help to decrease possible terminations of services and it may guarantee that the intervention provided is indispensable.

### **LEADERSHIP**

One of the core functions of leadership is to ensure that things are presented in an improved way. Leadership is typically best considered and managed collegially and constitutionally (Summerfield, 2014).

## **STRATEGIES**

According to Nickols (2016) strategies refer to a general plan of action for achieving one's goals and objectives. Strategies are intended to address matters of general importance.

## **LEARNER DISCIPLINE**

Nene (2013) believes that the term "discipline" may be regarded as any preparation envisioned to advance ethical character or harvest a particular pattern of behaviour.

### **1.13 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS**

The division of the chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background to the study

Chapter 2: Challenges experienced with the implementation of learner discipline strategies

Chapter 3: The nature of learner discipline at secondary schools: A collaborative leadership approach

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter 5: Data presentation and interpretation

Chapter 6: Findings recommendations and conclusion

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED WITH THE IMPLEMENTAION OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter collaborative leadership strategies are recommended to improve learner discipline in schools. The chapter will also focus on learner discipline challenges in South African schools with specific reference to the role of educators, SGBs and SMTs, whilst attention will also be paid to learner discipline policies globally and the South African context. The role of the Department of Education on learner discipline problems will also be discussed. This chapter concludes with a focus on policies relating to learner discipline which are to be implemented by educators, SGBs and SMTs.

Learner discipline problems in schools have gained increasing reaction by academic researchers internationally. Learner discipline problems are described as inescapable and serious, a matter which undesirably influences teaching and learning. It comprises of issues such as assault, disobedience, vandalism, murder, truancy, intimidation and smoking, among other things (Moyo et al., 2014). Learners disobey school rules and regulations and have little or no respect for their educators and the school administration (Temitayo et al., 2013).

The afore-indicated challenges are common in schools in the Motheo region in the Free State province in South Africa, resulting in schools experiencing a disciplinary crisis. According to Spaul (2013), examples as given in the afore-indicated paragraph may be because of the notion that teachers, learners, SMTs and SGBs are not equally represented in the design of turnaround disciplinary procedures. For this reason, an investigation is required to come up with collaborative leadership strategies to turn around learner discipline practices. Such strategies may help the principals, teachers, SMTs and SGBs to execute learner discipline practices effectively. Consequently, this study outlined turnaround learner discipline practices required to support the implementation of discipline that can be envisioned and included in the training of classroom teachers. Such an investigation required that education policymakers,

examine turnaround learner discipline practices in their own right within a specific terrain of public debate.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Grant and Osanloo (2014) reveal that theoretical framework is an essential characteristic in the research process. The significance of a theoretical framework is underscored by the particular topic that was investigated, the formulation of research questions, the review of relevant literature, the research approach as well as the way in which information was analysed. Grant and Osanloo (2014) further disclose that a theoretical framework is the basis from which all information is built for a research study. It functions as the: (a) edifice and substance for the foundation of a research study; (b) statement of the problem; (c) a study's purpose; (d) the importance of the study; and (e) the research questions. It offers a foundation for the literature that was reviewed, whilst also provide the groundwork for the research methods and data analysis.

Mwangeka (2020) states that systems theory was advanced by Von Bertalanffy in the 1930s and after the Second World War. School leaders, educators, school management teams and school governing bodies, can use systems theory to solve inherent learner discipline problems in their schools. When school leaders use systems theory, there can be relationship between their ideas (strategies) and interventions they use to deal with learner discipline problems in their schools. Systems theory can assist school leaders to determine clear and precise objectives when developing learner discipline policies (learners' code of conduct).

According to Mania-Singer (2017), systems theory provides the framework which the researcher can use identify how educators, school management teams, school governing bodies, parents and department of education work together to deal with learner discipline problems in schools. Systems theory assist the researcher to identify and understand the role of the above-mentioned stakeholders when they deal with learner discipline problems in schools. Systems theory assist the researcher to identify and understand the discrepancies which exist among stakeholders when dealing with learner discipline problems in schools.

Systems theory assists the researcher to identify and understand interactions, decision making, problem solving processes, individual and collective growth and positive relationships among stakeholders when dealing with learner discipline problems.

Ndaruhutse et al. (2019) are of the idea that when the researcher uses systems thinking the researcher can understand how different school stakeholders interact and impact each other. The researcher can analyse formal and informal interrelationships and how they influence the functioning of schools. The researcher can recognise more complex interdependencies and how multiple school stakeholders may affect each other in different ways.

The researcher can identify systems thinking is different to linear or cause and effect thinking as indicated on Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Linear and systems thinking compared**

<b>Traditional, linear thinking</b>	<b>Systems thinking</b>
Looks at individual parts often in isolation	Looks at the whole of the system
Focuses on content	Focuses on progress
Takes a cause and effect approach and sometimes attempts to fix symptoms rather than underlying problems	Seeks to understand potential causes and the dynamic factors that might be at play, including feedback loops
Tends to think 'technically' about a problem and think that a problem is easily solvable by a simple solution	Tends to think 'big picture' including factoring in incentives and the political economy when thinking about how hard it might be to solve this problem

The vision and structure for the study would be vague in the absence of a solid theoretical framework. Notably, a research strategy with a strong theoretical framework, gives directions to a structured study, enabling researchers to establish smooth flow between different chapters (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

If researchers would wear conservative lenses, their views of the world would be different from those who are wearing liberal lenses. The researcher's observation in relation to educational research implies that researchers' theoretical framework reflects where the researcher stands intellectually in relation a study's research

questions, data analysis, research findings and meaning making regarding information (Dom et al., 2018).

Notably, the study employed Systems Theory (ST) as its theoretical framework which involved a comprehensive field of research with diverse focus areas as well as conceptualization of phenomena under study. Von Bertalanffy (1956) explains an ST as a compound of interrelating features in all research disciplines, aiming at finding principles useable to all systems. Adding to the afore-mentioned, Roach (2016) is of the idea that the ST is a way of looking at organizations, bearing in mind that important matters such as the organization, its publics and its goals are to be considered during the application of the theory. Whilst Broks (2016) states that the ST is a great tool which is used to solve many problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Naicker and Mestry (2016) contend that an application of the theory at school level may contribute changes which are based on particular principles.

According to Bertalanffy (1969), when the researcher is looking at the problem in isolation without looking at all causes surrounding the problem the whole attempts to solve the problems could collapse. Thus, an application of the systems theory in this study can assist with information regarding collaborative leadership strategies to address learner discipline in schools because it may: (a) guide the research and organise its ideas; (b) provide a context for predictions, provide thoughts and guides researchers to significant questions about learners discipline; and (c) suggest ways for researchers to be able to interpret data, whilst increasing researchers' attentiveness of interconnections and of the importance of data collection.

The researcher holds that the systems theory as theoretical framework can be regarded an intellectual structure which may guide me in terms of my study as well as providing him with information regarding his view of the data (*vide*: Troudi, 2014).

### **2.3 CHALLENGES RELATING TO BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS**

Although the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a), in compliance with the 1996 Constitution (RSA, 1996b), was introduced to replace the inequalities of the apartheid policies, including disciplinary policies and practices, learner discipline is still an unbearable problem. Learner discipline problems are, however, not limited to South

Africa only. Subsequently, this section will focus on some international as well as South African perspectives regarding issues relevant to learner discipline in schools.

### **2.3.1 Learner discipline problems in schools**

#### **2.3.1.1 *Australia***

Matthews (2017) states that Australia has a problematic situation in terms of school discipline. Almost in every classroom there is noise and disorder, learners do not listen to what the educator is saying, and learners find it difficult to learn. For instance, educators told the ABC News that learner discipline problems are the biggest classroom disruptions they experienced.

The implication of disciplinary problems in this country is that some educators consider resigning from their jobs. Arguably, the ongoing learner disciplinary problems in Australian schools are evidence that the issue of learner discipline in schools need constant attention.

#### **2.3.1.2 *Russia***

Lopes and Oliveira (2017) are of the idea that classroom discipline is a multifaceted challenge for educators, parents, school administrators, learners in Russian schools. Learner discipline problems have been a serious issue, highlighted by the media and the public. A major challenge faced by educators is classroom disruption, bullying and absenteeism. Educators spend a lot of time dealing with classroom disruption instead of spending time on effective teaching and learning. The scholars (Lopes & Oliveira, 2017) further recommends that learners discipline problems should be addressed on both educational as well as political levels.

#### **2.3.1.3 *Japan***

Learner discipline problems in Japanese schools include truancy, bullying, breakdown in classrooms, school refusal syndrome and juvenile delinquency. Learners in schools are unruly, refuse to behave, refuse to listen or refuse to stop talking. The afore-

mentioned problems easily result in violent actions in classrooms which ultimately leads to classroom disruption, making teaching and learning extremely difficult (Shin-Chan, 2017).

#### **2.3.1.4 Switzerland**

Sun and Shek (2012) are of the idea that the most common disruptive learner discipline problems in Swedish schools are disrespectfully outspoken, followed by laziness and inattentiveness. The most intolerable learner discipline problems are disrespecting educators in that learners are rude and disobedient, whilst they also tend to express verbal hostility. Additionally, learner discipline problems include disorderly conversations, continuing circumvention of homework, joking, annoying other learners, as well as insolence and aggression, among others. Learner discipline problems impede the effectiveness of teaching and encumber opportunities for learning.

#### **2.3.1.5 America**

Meador (2020) asserts that schools in America face several issues on daily basis that negatively impacts learners' learning and teachers' teaching time. Learners discipline problems cause distractions which causes classroom disruption, limiting valuable time which could have been spent on learning and teaching.

#### **2.3.1.6 Kenya**

Karanja and Bowen (2012) mention that schools in Kenya have been plagued with learner discipline problems which impacts negatively on the quality of education. Because of learner's discipline problems there has been destruction of school property and even lives have been lost. Learners discipline problems negatively affect the academic performance of learners and lead to poor performance.

Karanja and Bowen (2012) further mention that in spite of learner's discipline problems policies, schools have been plagued with cases of learner's discipline problems. With

the same vein Simatwa (2012) claims that Bungoma Country in Kenya experience many cases of learner's discipline problems in schools.

#### **2.3.1.7 Botswana**

The most common learner discipline problems in Botswana schools can be attributed to absenteeism, aggression, intimidation, dishonesty, watching pornography and showing insufficiency, among others (Simuforosa & Rosemary, 2014). Learner discipline problems cause serious disruption in terms of teaching and learning. Learners learn less and keep their peers away from learning. Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014) further claim that teaching contact time is reduced because more time is used to manage learners discipline problems rather than teaching.

#### **2.3.1.8 Tanzania**

Yaghambe (2013) claims that learner discipline problems are of major concern in Tanzanian schools. Learner discipline problems are the foremost difficulty that stands in the way of effective learning and teaching. Learner discipline problems in schools include bullying, absence of reliability, excessive noise, corporeal mistreatment of other learners, disorderliness which comprises defacement and an absence of preparedness to enact self-directed learning. Yaghambe (2013) further claims that it has been established that learner discipline problems are caused by living in dysfunctional families, hunger, fatigued, drug abuse, peer pressure, educators' controlling teaching styles, among others. In support of the afore-mentioned, Belle (2017) indicates that learner discipline problems should be regarded as a serious concern because it usually contributes to disruptive classroom behaviour.

#### **2.3.1.9 South Africa**

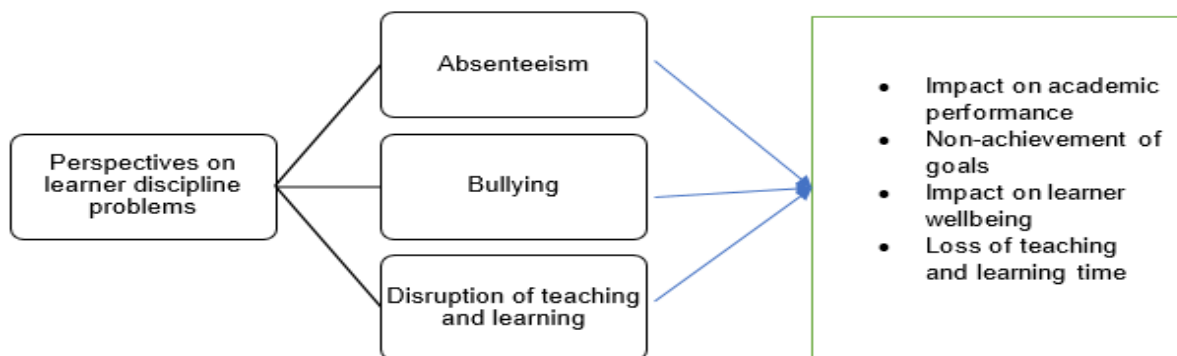
Wolhuter and Russo (2013) assert that educators battle with learner discipline problems South African schools. Smit (2013) mentions that South African educators feel disempowered because of the abolition of corporal punishment which was one of the traditional measures to maintain order and discipline. Smit (2013) also mentions

that many educators put the blame on the government with regard to learner discipline problems and indicate that they are no longer having powers of punishing learners after the ban of corporal punishment by the government. Presently educators are pleading for the return of corporal punishment as a way to instil discipline in schools.

According to Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013), learner discipline problems in South African schools can also be linked to defiant behaviour, extreme frustration, unable to adequately cope with academic requirements, rejection, bullying, absenteeism, family problems and physical or emotional abuse. The afore-indicated issues contribute to disruption in terms of teaching and learning.

Van Wyk and Pelsler (2014) argue that inadequate sources, lack of commitment and training of school leaders may further contribute to more learner discipline problems because of education stakeholders' inability to unwillingness to address challenges. On closer reading about learner discipline problems as indicated in the above countries, three issues seem to feature very strongly: learner absenteeism, bullying and learning and teaching disruption.

These issues can be illustrated in the following way:



**Figure 2.1: Global and South African perspectives on learner discipline problems (Source: Author's own construction)**

The three dominant aspects regarding learner discipline problems, as indicated in figure 1.1, will be discussed next.

### **2.3.2 Learner's absenteeism in schools**

Absenteeism is not only a display of low educational attainment, but also a robust display of reduced life and social achievement (Williams, 2010). Absenteeism is challenging because it may be difficult to construct a good basis for responsibility and discipline. Therefore, it may lead to difficulties in future work life, lead to possible concrete concerns, such as joblessness or low salary and incompetence to work at a steady job (Gentle-Genitty, 2008; Gentle-Genitty et al., 2020). Moreover, as absenteeism intensifies, learners are tending to experience emotional difficulties such as behavioural disorder or depression. They may also show behavioural configurations such as involving themselves in violent acts outside and inside of the school, leaving school, attaining detrimental behaviours as well as teenage pregnancy (Lannegrand-Willems et al., 2012). This implies that absenteeism may be regarded as a forecaster of academic failure, especially for those learners who do not regard attending schools as serious.

A few causes of absenteeism include, but are not restricted to individual factors, family factors and school factors. Individual factors may include issues such as feeling socially and academically inadequate and finding classes boring, whilst encouraging practices related to school seem to be less evident than those who attend school frequently (Clark, 2008 as cited in Demir et al., 2015). Thus, self-confidence, self-reliance, attentiveness, social skills and self-management of learners seem to be low. They experience a feeling of powerlessness and are convinced that they are disrespected by other learners.

According to Robinson et al. (2009), schools' procedures may be inconsistent, resulting in learners not receiving strong messages regarding regular school attendance (Gentle-Genitty et al., 2020). It appears as if absenteeism can be regarded a significant contributor to learner discipline problems in schools around the world.

This is indicated in a summary regarding research done in many countries globally of which a few are mentioned in this study (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.2: Summary of learner absenteeism at schools around the world**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Scholar</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Russia	Díaz et al. (2020)	Learner's absenteeism affects their academic achievement. If learners are not at school. They are missing out on instructional time.
Kenya	Maina (2015)	Learners who regularly absent themselves from school lose lessons, miss important knowledge and competencies and this negatively affect their academic performance. Child labour is one of the major causes of learner's absenteeism.
Botswana	Masogo (2015)	Learners are skipping lessons during the day, avoiding class for an entire day or merely remain absent for numerous days. The aforementioned action by learners limits valuable opportunities with respect to teaching and learning.
Tanzania	Nyamubi (2015)	In Tanzania learners are forced to pay attention to issues such as basic food and health care, poverty and orphan-hood. The afore-mentioned regularly result in learners stay absent or even dropout, implying that their rights to development and educational opportunities are impeded.
Ghana	Glenn (2015)	Learners in schools in Ghana do not attend school regularly. Poverty seems to be the main reason why learners stay absent from school. Learners are compelled to assist families with farming, fishing and jobs on markets, instead of attending school.
South Africa	Coetzee & Venter (2016)	Learner's social and economic circumstances result into involuntarily learner's absenteeism.

Mboweni (2014) holds the view that learner absenteeism remains a main reason why learners perform poorly in schools. The belief is that learners who stay absent from school do not learn and they may ultimately drop-out or fail. Evidently, learner absenteeism undesirably influences teaching and learning in schools and is regarded

as a strong reason for high failure rate. Otto (2016) states that learner absenteeism remains a demanding concern in schools worldwide even at schools where well-functioning educational systems are in place. According to van de Werfhorst et al. (2015, p.2) well-functioning educational systems advance fairness of opportunity, improve efficient learning and sorting, prepare learners for labour market allocation and socialize them to vigorously contribute to society. These four aspects of educational systems are the core functions of education.

### **2.3.2.1 *Bullying of learners in schools***

De Wet's (2013) article on bullying includes an insightful view about Olweus (2001):

“... a student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative action on the part of one or more other students” (p.5).

Following De Wet's (2013) argument, this description highlights the harmful actions that are carried out recurrently. The description additionally specifies that bullying is a typical example of an unevenness in strength or power: individuals who are exposed to harmful actions struggle to defend themselves (Olweus, 2001). The same author (Olweus, 2001) recognizes eight detailed practices of bullying: verbal and physical (comprising sexual and racial) harassment; intimidating and forced actions; and more secondary methods of harassment, including interpersonal abuse in the form of active social separation and the spread of rumours, among others.

Bullies are generally described as individuals who are violent, threatening, self-assured and imprudent, among others (Meland et al., 2010). It appears that bullies are unhappier and doubtful than their peers who do not engage in bullying. Meland et al. (2010) further indicate that bullies have interpersonal issues with educators and parents. According to research, bullying has a huge impact on learner well-being as well as academic performance.

This is indicated in a summary regarding research done in some countries internationally of which a few are mentioned in this study (Table 2.3):

**Table 2.3: Summary of learner bullying at schools around the world**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Scholar</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Australia	Trounson (2017)	Learners who suffer frequent bullying are at greater risk of being left well behind in their learning.
Japan	Kwano (2016)	Bullying has detrimental and long-lasting effects on the academic performance of both the bullies and their victims.
America	Turkman et al. (2013)	Bullying is detrimental to learner's well-being and academic achievement and progress.
Kenya	Okwemba (2018)	Whilst learners who are bullied become bullies themselves, they suffer psychological challenges and perform weak in their school work.
Botswana	Tjavanga & Jotia (2012)	Learners who happened to be victims of bullying do not do well academically, they do substantially worse in school's work and they perform substantially worse academically than other learners.
Tanzania	Ndilema (2013)	It always occurs from time to time and have negative impacts especially on learner's academic performance, emotional and social development and a gradual increase of violence.
Egypt	Al Buhairan et al. (2017)	Learners who are bullied experience psychiatric disorders, corporeal well-being difficulties, responsive and behavioural difficulties. They also have poor academic performance, high rate of hopelessness, sleeplessness, feelings of uselessness, lonesomeness, low self-worth, irresponsibility, and suicidal behaviour.
Ghana	Antiri (2016) Kibriya et al. (2015)	Ten to sixteen percent of learners are under constant fear, easily feel sick and are unable to concentrate on their studies. Learners who are bullied are more likely to indicate that they are unhappy, have few friends and that they are lonesome. They are more likely to develop new psychological and emotional difficulties compared to learners who did not experience bullying before.
South Africa	Suski (2016) Salehi et al. (2016)	Bullying can lead to poor academic performance, learner's dropouts, depression and suicide. Bullying is common in schools, with disturbing concerns which harmfully affect not only teachers and learners, but the wider public as well.

Drawing on Protogerou and Flisher (2016), it seems that, even if learners consider bullying as immoral, they continue to boost the bully, instead of helping the victim. Mostly boys are the ones who bully and who are victims of bullying. Evidently, bullying becomes a source for severe corporeal, emotional and emotive damage that can last forever.

### **2.3.2.2 *Learning and teaching disruption***

Kidam (2016) asserts that learner's disruptive behaviour in schools remains a great problem. Disruptive behaviours refer, fundamentally, to any behaviour that interrupts activities at school, predominantly those behaviours that disturb educational activities in the classroom.

Disruptive behaviours amount to an effort that navigates learners to be disrespectful, show disregard for good teacher-learner relationships and are detrimental to effective learning in schools. Notably, disruptive behaviours are threatening to activities presented in class, and requires that solutions are to be found to counterbalance inappropriate behaviour, aiming at schooling learners to be worthy citizens of the country. Roberts and Venkat (2016) share some interesting views in terms of disciplinary strategies to counterbalance problem experienced in schools. First, a behaviourist view accepts that disruptive classroom behaviour can be managed through effective supervision by the teacher. Second, an interpretive opinion contemplates disruptive classroom behaviour as a way to communicate with learners so that their views and conduct can be interpreted (Papatheodorou, 2005). This understanding recognizes that teachers' interpretations of disruptive behaviour would probably have an influence on how they act on such behaviour. Having said the latter, it became clear to me that there might be ways in which learner discipline problems can be addressed. Consequently, some strategies, already in the public domain, will be shared next as to how learner discipline problems may be addressed.

## **2.4 DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS**

This section explicates some disciplinary strategies that are currently implemented in schools internationally. Disciplinary strategies that was dealt with in this section are detention, suspension, expulsion and corporal punishment.

### **2.4.1 Detention**

The aim of detention is used to isolate learners, especially if they do not behave as expected after warning them (Sullivan, 2015). Fluke et al. (2014) assert that detention takes place when a learner is required to stay in a seemingly unwanted space for a quantified period beyond school hours. Learners are not sent home, but they have to report to a nominated classroom where they must remain for an indicated timeframe. Some schools conduct detention on Friday evenings when activities such as social events and athletics are taking place as an effort to make detention something learners would avoid. A study by Fabelo et al. (2011), found that learners in detention were much more likely to drop out, prevented from academic progress or they simply become involved in illegal activities. Similarly, detention did not improve academic performance.

Morrison (2014) discussed a survey of learners with ages between 11 and 16 at a school in England to determine their approaches to rewards and punishments. The discussion revealed that detention does contribute to an improvement in learner behaviour. Although learners might have learnt that bad behaviour have consequences, it did not learn them to behave any better. One option that seemed beneficial was detention during lunchtime. Grazak (2013) explains that detention during lunchtime is usually implemented when learner discipline is regarded as insignificant in schools. Learners would serve time with teachers or the principals where they are motivated to talk about difficulties in their lives. Such conversations may contribute to the development of acceptable relationships between learners and their teachers.

Detentions are one form of discipline that is used in schools. As indicated in the aforementioned paragraph, detention is associated with particular consequences. This

should not be considered in a flippant manner because successful detention requires that educators support each other, SMTs and SGBs (Marciniak, 2015).

#### **2.4.2 Suspension**

Drawing on Lacoë and Steinberg (2018), suspension refers to the provisional exclusion of learners from an educational environment for a defilement of school rules or policies. The consequence is that learners are not allowed to attend school or participate in school activities for a given period of time. The timeframe of exclusion will depend on the seriousness of the offence committed by learners.

Various methods of suspension have been the typical practice of reprimand for educational systems to reduce discipline violations and remove undesirable behaviour (Nelson, 2020). For example, in-school suspension and out of school suspension, take learners from classrooms, resulting in learners being denied opportunities to teaching and learning. Nelson (2020) asserts that in-school and out-school suspension have been implemented as a disciplinary procedure by SGBs, attempting to emphasise the seriousness of learner discipline problems. When an out-school suspension is implemented, the assumption is that parents should take responsibility for their learners, whilst trying to correct any forms of misbehaviour.

In the South African context, SGBs authorise, “a principal or deputy principal to implement suspension, as a preventative procedure, especially when learners are charged with a serious misconduct offence” (RSA, 1996a, Section 8). Notably, before learners are suspended, parents and learners may provide reasons why learners should not be suspended. In the case of suspension, the disciplinary actions must begin within one week after the suspension. “If the proceedings do not commence within one week, approval for the continuation of the suspension must be obtained from the Head of Department at the provincial offices of the Department of Basic Education. Such suspension was applicable until a finding of not guilty is made or, in the case of a finding of guilty, until the appropriate sanction is announced” (RSA, 1996a, Section 8).

Simatwa (2012) indicates that the Ministry of Education in Kenya is adamant that a learner may be suspended from attending school by principals or their representatives.

Suspension takes place if the learner's behaviour or language is routinely or repeatedly such that it may jeopardize the preservation of an appropriate standard of ethical and societal behaviour in schools or if any solitary action or sequence of actions, subversive of discipline, is committed.

Koon (2013) further indicates that learners who are suspended from school miss a lot of teaching time and this always result in poor academic performance. Suspended learners tend to be suspended more frequently in subsequent years because of the bad influence they get from other learners. They are mostly held back a grade, likely to repeat a grade and mostly dropping out of school. Adams (2015) is of the opinion that the suspension of disorderly learners may motivate others not to be obedient, whilst engaging in teaching and learning. Adams (2015) also feels that learner's suspensions are necessary because, when bad learners are removed from schools, good learners will behave well, learn and will experience good academic performance.

### **2.4.3 Expulsion**

Expulsion from school is a life-changing moment and can leave a huge mark in students' lives, contributing to a feeling of miserableness (Nagaratnam & Yeo, 2018). School discipline policies that dismiss learners by means of expulsion generate a variety of dysfunctional concerns: learners' absence from class may contribute to a decline in a sense of connection or even a sense of belonging. When learners experience a total exclusion from school, it may promote disconnected behaviours, such as absence, continuing truancy, and harmful conduct (Hemphill et al., 2006; Losen et al., 2015), which, in turn, aggravates a broadening in learner achievement.

In the context of education in Kenya, Ngimor (2011) reports that the Basic Education Act states that: "only the Education Cabinet Secretary will make regulations for learner's expulsion in schools" (Section 35(3)). In another account Legal Notice, Number 39 of 2015 gives specific regulation to make this section of the Act operational. It needs to be mentioned the Kenya Education Boards have not been active, principals or head teachers have been unilaterally expelling learners in schools without referring learner's expulsion cases to the Education Cabinet Secretary. Congruent the aforementioned views by Ngimor (2011), head teachers in schools have no absolute powers to use expulsion as an endorsement without referring such cases to a Director

of Higher Education, Board of Governors, the Education Secretary and Provincial Director of Education (Education Act Cap 211). Simatwa (2012) says that expulsion, as permission to exclude learners from schools are to be used carefully and should be used as a last resort. If a suspended learner had to be expelled, the parents and the learner must be informed, without delay, and the Education Secretary, Provincial Director of Education, Director of Higher Education and Board of Governors must also be informed.

Thomas (2015) shares the view that South African learners who might be in line for expulsion have the right to a hearing. However, Wolhuter and Russo (2013) indicate that heads of provincial Education Departments in South Africa are mostly unwilling to authorize the expulsion of learners who may be guilty of severe misbehaviour. In terms of South African law, "Heads of provincial Education Departments have the final say when it comes to the expulsion of learners" (RSA, 1996a, Section (9)(2)) because "SGBs can only recommend expulsion" (RSA, 1996a, Section 20(i)).

Significantly, many schools internationally have started to decrease their expulsion rates by approving restorative methods which concentrate on consideration, relational-bases discipline, making amends, communication, and community building, instead of implementing punishment as an only option (Skiba et al., 2014). Restorative discipline is a method to deal with behavioural challenges which built on personal conviction, with systems - comprising reconciliation groups and adult or peer arbitration - by which learners mirror on errors, repair associations and are subjected to therapy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

#### **2.4.4 Corporal punishment**

Citing a stipulation from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2007), Gorea (2015) shares the view that, "corporal punishment may be regarded as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light" (p.59). Notably, various methods are used to punish the children, ranging from slapping on the face or caning on the palms of the hands to teachers becoming so aggressive that they use fists, kicks and other means resulting in possible injuries to learners.

In Tanzania, schools still implement corporal punishment as an unchanging and state authorized measure to punish learners for disciplinary problems (Odhiambo, 2017). There are nationwide guidelines that overtly allow corporal reprimand, containing direction regarding the use of canes in schools. School administrators frequently punish learners on their hands or on their customarily covered bottoms with a light, elastic cane, but excludes punishing them with any other device or other parts of their bodies. According to the afore-mentioned guidance document, learners should not be punished more than four strokes. Female learners should merely receive punishment from a female educator and learners who reject punishment or educators who infringe guidelines may be subjected to punitive measures.

Similar to the situation in Tanzania, corporal punishment is the most common method used in schools in Botswana to discipline learners (Mabusa et al., 2015). There are procedures and guidelines that govern the application of corporal punishment. The laws allow the application of corporal punishment in schools. The Education Act is a guiding instrument for the administration of corporal punishment and according to section 21 of the Education Act corporal punishment shall only be administered as the last resort.

Surprisingly, despite the presence of the Education Act, incidences of reckless use of corporal punishment in schools continue to be reported (The National Education, Corporal Punishment Regulations 1979, Article 60 of the National Education Act 1978). In, South Africa, corporal punishment was forbidden since 1996. In terms of the law, “no person may administer corporal punishment at a school against a learner. A person who contravenes this provision is guilty of a criminal offence and that he/she can receive a sentence that can be imposed for assault if he/she is convicted” (RSA, 1996a, Section 10(1)). The same act further states that,

*“everyone has the right to freedom and security, including the rights to be free from all forms of violence, not to be tortured, not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way”* (RSA, 1996b, Section 12(1));

and that all children should be safe from,

*“maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation”* (RSA, 1996b, Section 28(1)).

The afore-mentioned constitutional regulations aligns with the National Education Policy Act (1996c) which mandates that the Minister of Education must develop

guidelines about the regulation of and disciplinary actions against learners in ensuring that corporal punishment will not be administered by anyone or that learners would be subjected to emotional or bodily mistreatment at any educational institution.

Amnesty International (2015) has beautifully highlighted the rights of students through an equation, “ $hrc = i+u+r4$ ”. This equation signifies that education is for everyone and it is individuals’ ability to recognize and respect each other's rights and responsibilities. Despite such powerful indication (Amnesty International, 2015), corporal punishment remains a challenge in schools. There is need to make the management of schools, teachers and learners aware that it is illegal to resort to corporal punishment for the mistakes done by the learners. SGBs, educators and SMTs should rather search for effective approaches to handle learner discipline problems in schools.

## **2.5 COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES AND LEARNER DISCIPLINE**

### **2.5.1 The skillset of collaborative leaders**

Arbabi and Mehdinezhad (2016) assert that collaborative leadership is an important leadership style which may develop and promote organizations. Collaborative leadership is demarcated as employees’ involvement in various levels in the organization to recognize difficulties, investigate circumstances and suggest solutions, so that, employees can decide as to how implement solutions and support their supervisors to solve problems.

Common qualities of effective leadership of character, integrity, competence and compassion will always be there (O’Leary et al., 2012), but in a rapidly changing-world leaders will also have to:

- **Build cross-cultural bridges** – Freeze (2019) is of the idea that it is important for to understand individual’s diverse cultural backgrounds.
- **Create a sense of authentic community** – Kovács (2019) posit that for a leader to create a sense of authentic community a leader must believe in what a leader is promoting.
- **Deal with complex and thorny issues** – According to Alexakos et al. (2016), when a leader deals with complex issues, such leader must show compassion,

a leader must be non-judgemental and a leader must acknowledge deep emotional challenges.

- **Understand the power of true collaboration** – Goman (2017) states that it is important for leaders to understand the power of true collaboration because collaboration produces a win in today's world.
- **Courage to take intelligent risks** – Fincke (2021) feels that when leaders have the courage to take intelligent risks they open up to new opportunities and better decisions.
- **Tolerate ambiguity** – As a leader when you feel that you are uncertain about something or you do not have an answer you can be 100% confident about, be prepared to tolerate ambiguity (DuBrin, 2018).
- **Support collective and coherent action** – Leaders can support collective and coherent action by agreeing on specific steps and by facilitating mutual learning and exchange of experiences (Dongxiao et al., 2017).
- **Help peers make better decisions** – It is important for leaders to have new forms of collaborative or shared leadership to make better decisions (Kezar & Holcombe, 2017).
- **Identify the “synergistic” opportunities** – Good leaders combine or share their ideas so that they can become more valuable, more solid and much better than when they are separated (Luenendonk, 2019).
- **Avoid redundant effort** – Leaders must make sure that their information is updated to reflect the latest information so that they can avoid redundant effort (Hughes et al., 2018).

It stands to reason that competent leaders are the ones who believe in collaborative leadership. They work together with all stakeholders to ensure quality work relationships and sound interpersonal interactions within and ultimately for the success of their institutions.

### **2.5.2 Barriers to collaborative work in learner discipline**

There are several barriers and tough hurdles to successful collaborative work (Gabriel-Petit, 2017), which any leader who wants to engage in collaborative practices needs to understand notably:

- **Hierarchy** – a system that organizes things according to importance. Hierarchy negatively impacts collaborative work when there is increased conflict among leaders (Greer et al., 2018).
- **Campus culture** - a powerful source of socialization. Campus culture should be regarded as barriers to collaborative work when leaders do not search for methods to provide leadership to unite collaborators and do not create opportunities for collaboration (Schieffer, 2016).
- **Senior team capacity** – becomes barriers to collaborative work when the senior leader is afraid of looking weak to lead others (Gilson & Agyepong, 2018).
- **Poverty of networks** – which refers to a lack of ties to resources such as knowledge, wealth, skills, power and information. A poverty of networks arises when collaboration does not result in capacity building and when collaboration is not sustainable (Varshney et al., 2016).

It is evident from the above that barriers to collaborative leadership may ultimately become stumbling blocks to teamwork. Leaders must be able to devise strategies to deal with different barriers to collaborative leadership which may arise.

### **2.5.3 Connecting to communities through community-based learning to address learner discipline**

Community and other stakeholders like health sector workers, NGOs, parents, correctional service, educational psychologists, the media and social workers should share the obligation of constructing and upholding a setting which is favourable for learning and teaching. They should automatically be co-responsible for learner discipline in schools (Mtsweni, 2008).

One way to connect communities through community-based learning, may be through the establishment of a collaborative educational setting. Significantly, it is advisable that principals are knowledgeable about the establishment and management of professional learning communities (Balyer et al., 2015). When creating a collaborative educational setting, school principals must be able to group various stakeholders (as indicated above) into operational players for active collaboration, trust in the intrinsic

capacity of the team members to serve in such capacity and anticipate opportunities for involvement in important decisions, empowerment of leadership teams and encouragement regarding risk-taking. Marzano et al. (2005) refers to this kind of redistribution of authority as involvement, or the degree to which the school leader includes various role-players in the intention and application of relevant policies. Marzano et al. (2005) advises that school leaders provide opportunities for involvement in policy-making processes, decision making and building of leadership teams.

Thus, a collaborative environment may, among others, encourage emotional support, shared collaboration, and individual development.

#### **2.5.4 Collaborative strategies when dealing with learner's discipline**

Du Plessis (2015) confirms that schools have to develop a disciplinary code in consultation with all relevant stakeholders to manage learner discipline problems. Schools are an integral part of the community and have a responsibility to work collaboratively at a local level and everyone who cares about children should care about poor discipline and school violence (Du Plessis, 2015).

## **2.6 DISPROPORTIONAL IMPACT OF POLICIES ON LEARNERS DISCIPLINE AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP**

### **2.6.1 International policies on learner discipline**

#### **2.6.1.1 *Australia***

Australia's Education Laws were adopted from Anglo-Celtic models. In South Wales, the Minister of Education has the authority to regulate learner discipline in government schools and prepared rules for schools to implement as part of their discipline codes (Section 35 Education Reform Act, 1990). In Victoria, school principals and councils are responsible for the implementation of discipline policies and can determine the extent to which such policies are implemented (Regulation 5.4 and 5.3 (b) (Education Regulations, 1998). In Queensland, the principal of a government school is directly responsible for the advancement of acceptable conduct of learners (Regulation 32

Education Regulations, 1988). In Western Australia, the authority to ensure acceptable learner behaviour is the responsibility of teachers (Regulation 28 (2) (Education Regulations, 1960). Where there are no direct constitutional or governing authorities, the school can depend on common law to articulate practical guidelines regarding learner discipline (Funder, 1996).

## **2.6.2 Continental policies on learner discipline**

### **2.6.2.1 Kenya**

Anayo (2014) asserts that Kenya Government policy on school discipline stipulates that principals' power to manage discipline must include educators and parents and that Kenyan schools discipline policies should be in line with government policy. Karuri (2015) claims that the Kenya Ministry of Education's (2008) Safety and Health Manual necessitates the compilation of a school security principles handbook for implementation by schools. The Education Act of 1980, elaborated in the Manual for Heads of Schools of Secondary Schools (Ministry of Education, 1980) that principals have been engaged to apply the approved principles to the advantage of the learners, parents, educators, government and the entire country.

### **2.6.2.2 Tanzania**

Yaghambe (2013) mentions that Tanzania Education Act number 25 of 1978 gives authority to the Minister of Education to ensure that policies are developed to ensure discipline in schools. The corporal punishments regulations of 1979, under section 60 of the Education Act, legalize the application of corporal punishment in dealing with learner disciplinary problems in schools.

## **2.6.3 National policies on learner discipline**

### **2.6.3.1 South Africa**

Du Plessis (2015) holds the view that the importance of school discipline policies is implemented to ensure acceptable and constructive learning environments. Van Wyk

and Pelsler (2014) argue that policies provide for the structures and organization of the school and school policy gives direction to the everyday processes in terms of learner discipline. Policies set strong regulations, lessen the effects of obvious prejudice, enable implementation of particular intercessions and lessen inequitable actions (Green et al., 2015).

National policies for discipline in schools should advance and protect learner's rights contained and must be in line with approved global agreements (Meix-Cereceda, 2020). A national school disciplinary policy should support peaceful conflict resolution, equality and human rights, whilst encouraging independent and critical thought, fostering a culture of respect for teaching and learning and contributing to equal educational opportunities for all.

The importance of discipline policies for South African schools are emphasised in the Constitution of the RSA (1996b). With a focus on the right to a safe school environment. It is the work of all school leaders to make sure that all learners are safe at schools. One way in ensuring the safety of all learners is by means the implementation of a code of conduct, aiming at creating a well-organized and focused school environment. It is through the code of conduct for learners that effective learning and teaching can take place in schools.

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

All learners have the right to education and the right to safe school environment. Based on this it is the responsibility of all public schools governing bodies to ensure that they develop and adopt learners' code of conduct. Literature reveals that learners' code of conduct is important in all schools to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning.

In future it will be important that research should be conducted on learner's code of conduct and strategies which are used by schools to deal with learner's discipline problems. This is prompted by the fact that although there are learners' code of conduct and strategies to deal with learner's discipline problems in schools, worldwide learners discipline problems continue to exist in schools. Let, us all join hands together and deal with learner discipline problems in schools for the better future of our learners.

Learner discipline problems and challenges occur globally and no one country's is unique, they are very similar. Learner discipline problems are dealt with as they arise and each solution is tailor-made to the specific case and point in time as they may be influenced by outside elements and beliefs.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE NATURE OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE AT SECODARY SCHOOLS: A COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACH

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Masingi (2017) reports that learner discipline problems at schools are caused by issues such as lack of parental support, peer pressure, inability to do the school work, poverty, overcrowding and an absence of inspiration to be successful. The aforementioned problems are further strengthened by a possible absence of well-formulated school rules as well as a lack of parental involvement.

Learner discipline problems seem to be a challenge in many schools around the world. Research indicates that there are no single way in which schools can deal with discipline problems because of the absence of effective measures that would sufficiently address problems that may occur (Dhlamini, 2014).

According to Cullen (2018), collaborative leadership approach may be a useful method for obtaining positive outcomes with reference to collective intelligence. Cullen (2018) is of opinion that, with respect to collective intelligence, leaders consider the intelligence levels of a group as more significant than that of a single individual. Collaborative leadership approach depends on the capacity to have an impact on others and to inspire individuals to make contributions, to lead their groups to accomplishment and to promote shared aspirations, respect and trust (Cullen, 2018). Collaborative leadership approach improves teamwork, morale and accountability. It helps leaders to improve their problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities. An implementation of a collaborative leadership approach signifies that individuals' work as teams, whilst fostering sturdy relations founded on understanding, open communication channels as well as shared respect (Cullen, 2018).

The objective of the study was to investigate the nature of learner discipline in secondary schools in the Motheo Region of the Free State Province in South Africa. The aim was to propose collaborative leadership strategies which may be useful to address learner discipline problems in schools. Consequently, this chapter reviews literature which focus on the following aspects pertaining to discipline problems in

secondary schools: issues pertaining to the enactment of learner discipline approaches; tactics to deal with learner discipline problems; collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline; disciplinary encounters experienced by schools when employing learner discipline strategies and educators, SGBs and SMTs' perceptions of the implementation of detention as a method to maintain discipline in schools.

### **3.2 CHALLENGES REGARDING LEARNER DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Before 1994, the enactment of corporal punishment was a way of disciplining learners in South African schools. The adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996b), corporal punishment was banned. The prohibition of corporal punishment resulted in learners became cognizant of their constitutional privileges. Learners were aware that educators who continue to use corporal punishment would face legal sanctions if taken to court. Educators became despondent and helpless because learners forced their hands and ignored the responsibilities that come with their rights. Learners' disobedience and unacceptable conduct as well as teachers having been left without protection in terms of dealing with disciplinary problems, pose an extreme challenge in the present South African education system (Naicker, 2014).

#### **3.2.1 Schools in Australia**

In the Australian context, the authority of education is consigned to the six states and the two self-determining regions which are formed as part of the centralized state (Wolhuter & Russo, 2013). A Ministry of Education has been assigned to each state which has the authority to run education matters as outlined in educational legislation. Each state control learner discipline problems in schools and establish guidelines for codes of conduct. Educators in Australian schools employ different strategies to control learner discipline problems in accordance with governmental procedures, school policy and relevant educational laws (Wolhuter & Russo, 2013).

Educators are not allowed to use corporal punishment because it is banned in schools except for those schools in the Northern Territory where educators use corporal

punishment to deal with learner discipline problems. Methods which can be used by educators to maintain learner discipline are suspension, detention, expulsion as well as school and community service (Wolhuter & Russo, 2013).

Sullivan et al. (2014) feel that learner discipline problems are increasing in schools. The ongoing learner discipline problems forced politicians and SGBs to draft policies, strategies and practices in an attempt to address such problems in the hope that the negative school climate, caused by behaviour problems, will improve.

### **3.2.2 Schools in Kenya**

According to Mwaniki (2018), learner discipline problems evoked concerns among all stakeholders worldwide. Common learners discipline problems in schools are sneaking out of the school, compound, drug abuse, deliberate breaches of school rules, delinquency, drunkenness, truancy, absenteeism, persistent late-coming, bullying, laziness and theft. In an attempt to address the afore-mentioned discipline problems, student councils (prefect body) have been established. Student councils in Kenya are representative structures through which learners in secondary schools become involved in schools' affairs.

Nandeke et al. (2017) note that Kenyan schools involve learners by means of a student council who are regarded as participants in the designing of a code of conduct, but learners never took punishment positively. In fact, the situation in terms of learner discipline deteriorated because learners outwardly rejected any form of corrective measure. Nandeke et al. (2017) further note that educators, SMTs, parents and society at large regard learners' participation in management of discipline in schools as problematic. They believe that learners are young children, undeveloped and lacking the knowledge and practical information that is required in the administration of schools.

Ajowi (2013) mentions that schools in Kenya have been experiencing learner discipline problems since 1971. To deal with learner discipline problems, the government introduced corporal punishment in 1972 (Education Act Cap 211, 1980). Educators unfortunately transformed corporal punishment into an apparatus of fear and cruelty. Learners lost their lives as educators cruelly applied corporal punishment on them and

others endured irremediable emotional harms. The latter indicated negative experiences resulted in the banning of corporal punishment by the Kenyan government in 2001 (Republic of Kenya, 2001: Legal Notice 56/2001).

Ajowi (2013) further expounds that the government recommended that management and therapy facilities in schools should be supported to provide for an innovative approach of handling learner discipline problems. Unfortunately, leadership and therapy in schools are inappropriate and for this reason uncertainties exist as to whether alternative to corporal punishment was implemented. Although the government strengthened guidance and counselling services in school, learner discipline problems increased.

Onyango and Simatwa (2016) mention that the banning of corporal punishment in Kenyan schools was enacted through the Basic Education Act of 2013. This happened as a consequence of recommendations made by a Task Force on learner discipline problems and disorder in secondary schools. The Task Force revealed that physical punishment was one of the contributing factors with respect to learner discipline problems in schools. Onyango and Simatwa (2016) further mention that it is disappointing to realise that after the ban of physical punishment, learner discipline problems remained a major concern in Kenyan schools. Learners no longer have respect or fear for educators because they are aware that they may not be harmed in any particular way. They (Onyango & Simatwa, 2016) also mention that a high shortage of educators is also a cause of learner discipline problems because learner enrolment increased tremendously and this resulted into the shortage of educators.

Ndaita (2016) finds out that it has been learner discipline problems remain an ongoing issue in Kenyan public schools. The government of Kenya tried to set up committees to investigate the root causes of learner discipline problems and recommended concrete solutions to address the situation in public schools. Unfortunately, despite many recommendations and subsequent actions by educational stake-holders, learner discipline problems in public schools just seems unable to go away. Onyango et al. (2016) are of the idea that learner discipline problems in Kenyan schools resulted in challenges pertaining to teaching and learning which further have a negative impact on learners' educational performance. Learners disobey school rules, confront educators and destroy school property. Onyango et al. (2016) further elaborate on the

situation and indicate that the Kenyan responded to learner discipline problems by banning corporal punishment in schools in 2001. In an attempt to address discipline problems, the Kenyan Ministry of Education instructed educators to adopt other measures to curb various cases of learner discipline problems in schools (Onyango et al., 2016). Educators were instructed to establish guidance and counselling units, to come up with practical teaching approaches and to include learners in drafting disciplinary procedures in schools (Onayngo et al., 2016).

### **3.2.3 Schools in South Africa**

According to Du Plessis (2015), learner discipline problems are not new to schools in the South African education context. The question is whether learner discipline policies and procedures, which are employed in South African schools, address issues such as impartiality, justice and efficiency. Such question holds reference to the rights which learners have. The Bill of Rights states that, “everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected” (RSA, 1996b: Chapter 2, Section 10), but that such rights can be limited (RSA, 1996b, Section 36(1) (a-e)). Such restriction is only applicable to the degree to which restrictions are realistic and reasonable in an independent society founded on impartiality, autonomy as well as human dignity.

The afore-mentioned factors (impartiality autonomy and human rights) include the relation between the restriction and its purpose. Arguably, to address learner discipline problems in an equitable and fair manner, all stakeholders must be involved in drawing up code of conduct for learners (Du Plessis, 2015).

All stakeholders (educators, learner representative, SMTs and SGBs) must work together to develop solutions to learner discipline problems in schools.

Monare (2013) notes that the obliteration of corporal punishment in South African schools was followed by alternatives to corporal punishment (ATCP). Ntuli (2012) reveals that the South African Department of Education (DoE) introduced a manual with ATCP in 2000. The initial intention of the ATCP was to support educators to find more practical techniques to manage discipline in schools. The ATCP contains

legislation with respect to the banning of corporal punishment, whilst it also provides recommendations as to how learners can be disciplined.

Ntuli (2012) suggests a few disciplinary measures:

- **verbal warning** - in this case there is a disciplinary talk with the learner and parents;
- **community service** - in this case the learner is given the punishment of execution of responsibilities that may contribute to the improvement of the school environment such as gardening and cleaning the school yard;
- **demerits** - in this case learners are given credits at the beginning of the year and every time they misbehave, they lose those credits;
- **detention** - in this case learners are confined in a classroom during break or after school and remain there for about an hour;
- **suspension** - in this case the school governing body conduct a hearing and when a learner is found guilty a learner will be suspended from attending school for a prescribed period of time; and
- **expulsion** - in this case the school governing body after exhausting all school disciplinary processes and the learner continues to misbehave can recommend expulsion of that learner to the Provincial Head of Department of Education (Ntuli, 2012).

After the abolishment of corporal punishment, learner discipline problems became one of the foremost challenges in schools (RSA, 1996a). Educators who previously (before 1996) relied on the use of corporal punishment because it seemed to have been an effective measure in maintaining discipline in school. Unfortunately, educators, SMTs and SGBs had insufficient training in the implementation of these alternative methods pertaining to learner discipline (Bilatyi, 2012). Educators and management teams are still finding it increasingly demanding to maintain learner discipline in schools even with the promulgated ATCP (Bilatyi, 2012). Thus, although disciplinary actions such as expulsions and suspension can be regarded as effective (RSA, 1996a, Section 7), educators still experience difficulties in terms of keeping learners responsible for bad behaviour. Bilatyi (2012) is also of the idea that the new legislative framework sets out guidelines as to how schools can enact a code of conduct in order to maintain discipline. It is expected that all learners must observe the procedures outlined in a

code of conduct when they enrol at the school. Learners should be educated about actions which may be implemented if they breach the code of conduct. Educators and SMTs are expected to know the code of conduct and they must also receive training on how to implement the code of conduct at schools.

In a study on ATCP in the Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province, Singo (2017) found that unsuccessful discipline administration in schools usually endanger the effective implementation of disciplinary procedures. Both educators and principals continue to find themselves in a dilemma when employing existing disciplinary procedures, due to a lack of preparation in terms of the implementation of ATCP. Monare (2013) also notes that, although a code of conduct for learners should be drafted specifically to deal with learner discipline problems in schools, educators, SMTs and SGB are poorly educated and have little or no ability to draw up or implement a code of conduct for learners within the legal framework and struggle with the implementation ATCP.

According to Masingi (2017), learner discipline problems negatively affect learners' academic performance. Learner discipline problems impede the culture of learning and teaching, it results into malfunctioning of the school and it impairs on learner's ability to learn. Learner discipline problems do not only disturb educators, it also disturbs community members, different stakeholders, political structures and religious leaders.

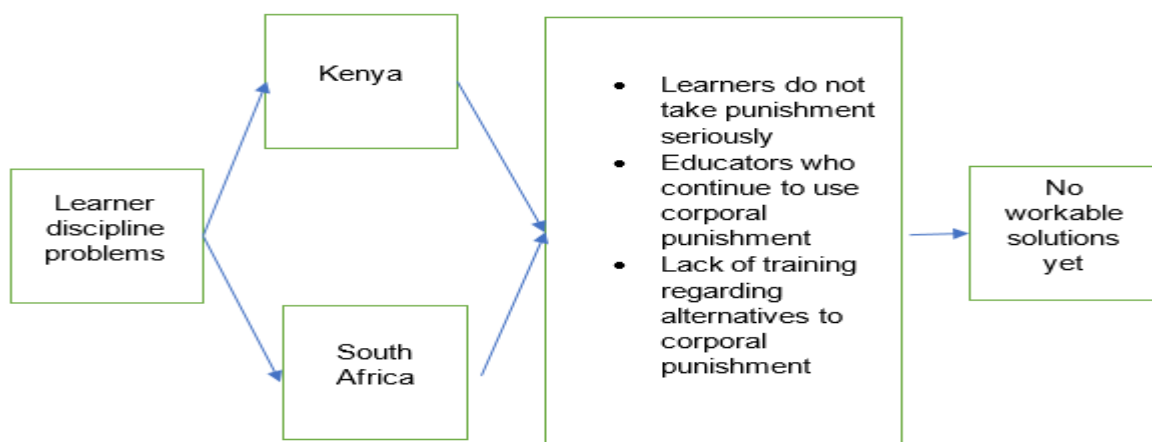
For example, most of learners drop out of school when they find out that they have to repeat grades. Some of them join gangsters and criminals, some of them abuse drugs and alcohol and some of them become arm robbers. In this case the tax payers' funds are wasted because the fund does not serve their purpose of developing learners into responsible citizens (Masingi, 2017).

Many educators are frustrated because they teach under conditions which are unbearable. For instance, where learners shoot and kill other learners and in cases where learners shoot and kill educators (Masingi, 2017). According to Maphosa and Shumba (2010), "current research shows that cases of learner indiscipline are on the increase in South African schools and in some cases, learners are alleged to have murdered others in the school premises" (p.387). Furthermore, Chetty (2018) reported

that a female educator was stabbed in the stomach by a learner in the classroom at one of the public schools in Soweto, Gauteng.

Magaba (2018) states that learner discipline problems have increased in ways that have brought considerable concern to endure on educators' lives as well as their everyday teaching practices. Magaba (2018) also states that after 1994, South Africa experienced a high number of educator's early retirement. Learner discipline problems are the cause of a high number of educators who are currently considering leaving the teaching profession. Educators become demoralised by having to deal with learner's discipline problems on daily basis. Educators claim that learner discipline problems affect the worth of their practices (Magaba, 2018). Therefore, some educators continue to apply corporal punishment as a means of dealing with learner discipline problems. In this regard Shaikhmag and Assan (2014) assert that many educators find it difficult to use any other form of punishment, except using corporal punishment. Educators argue that they continue to use corporal punishment as a means of dealing with learner discipline problems because parents use it at home and parents support its use at schools. Shaikhmag and Assan (2014) further declare that in fact, educators strongly believe that corporal punishment is their tradition and it has been there for ages in the history of schooling until it was challenged by politicians, human rights activists and researchers.

In Figure 3.1, a comparison between the situation in Kenya and South Africa is provided. This comparison outlines some challenges regarding learner discipline strategies in both countries.



**Figure 3.1: Comparison of the situation in Kenya and South Africa (Source: Author's own construction)**

Other than Kenya, South Africa voiced its commitment to proscribe corporal punishment at homes, schools or any other environment. This commitment is in line with the recommendations with the Universal Periodic Review of South Africa in 2012. The Department of Social Development reinforced suggestions to embrace the proscription in the review of the Children's Act and in 2014 which was issued a media declaration reiterating its commitment regarding the banning of corporal punishment. However, no clear explanation exists as to how learner discipline problems can be mitigated in both countries. What is clear though is that, despite the proscription of corporal punishment, learner discipline problems resulted in schools experiencing more behaviour challenges and this has a negative influence on teaching and learning as well as learners' academic performance.

### **3.3 STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH LEARNER DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **3.3.1 Gangsterism**

According to Mncube and Steinmann (2014), continuous gang-related aggressiveness at schools can be as detrimental as severe harassment and individual experiences of violence at homes as well as in the community. Gang-related ferocity in schools may contribute to learners to drop-out, avoid school or lose attentiveness in classrooms and may result in bodily, psychological and emotional consequences including anxiety and hopelessness. Gang-related ferocity may thus be described as a damaging phenomenon and has an undesirable influence on the provision of education quality.

Mncube and Steinmann (2014) feel that it is through collaborative leadership strategies as well as shared ownership, accountability and independence that schools and communities can be successful in decreasing the frequency of gang-related violence within their communities and schools. This implies that schools and communities must work as a team to combat gang-related violence. Schools must have a policy that provides guidelines for safety as well as a code of conduct to manage gang-related violence. A policy for safety as well as code of conduct should be attuned to meet schools' particular requirements concerning gang-related violence and learner discipline. Schools must have a collaborative working relationship, with emotional support structures, to address the negative impact of gang-related violence

and to strengthen operational managing approaches. This means that schools must work with psychologists and social workers to deal with gang-related violence.

Maphala and Mabunda (2014) hold the view that nearly all learners, who are involved in gangsterism, attend school on a daily basis, but that the aim is not to benefit from teaching and learning. They come to school specifically to disrupt school activities and to instil fear in learners and teachers. Maphala and Mabunda (2014) further states that, because of the high rate of gangsterism in schools, the Department of Education established a Safe Schools Programme to work with schools to guarantee a harmless school situation for active teaching and learning.

The Safe Schools Programme includes the connection of safety structures while also keeping the social environment into mind. This programme influences learners' conduct and learning activities, whilst it relies on the support from the community to keep schools safe, working in collaboration with community organisations and the local police. Organisations such as Neighbourhood Watches and Community Policing Forums assist schools to deal with gangsterism. It launched a School Call Centre which is available when learners can report forms of abuse as a way to stay protected from violent situations.

Gangsterism mostly affects Grade 4 learners and the subsequent learner behaviours become more predominant: poor educational enactment, knowledge difficulties, absenteeism and disruptive behaviour due to low self-worth. Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014) argue that learners who are easily recruited to become gang members are those learners who are poor academic performers or learners who have linguistic complications because they see themselves as failures in educational environments. Mncube and Madikizela-Madiya (2014) further state that the South African Government took several initiatives in order to try to curb gang-related violence in schools. Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007 has been constituted and deals with the search and confiscation of prohibited substances and unsafe weapons from learners in schools. This Act indicates that the SGB of a public school should approve a learner code of conduct to address issues related to gangsterism.

### **3.3.2 Vandalism Behaviour and Abhorrent Graffiti**

De Wet (2005) asserts that learner vandalism places a heavy burden on education budgets of schools. Learner vandalism leads to the collapse of teaching and learning because schools' academic programmes are frequently interrupted for the renovation of damaged constructions. Learner vandalism leads to emotions such as ineffectiveness, doubt and anxiety amongst learners and educators (De Wet, 2005). Vandals normally break windows, draw graffiti and cause destruction to classrooms, toilets, equipment, books, sports equipment and sports grounds. De Wet (2005) further asserts that vandals at some time destroy schools to such a degree that learning and teaching fail, whilst learners and educators are exposed to risks that are negative to individuals' well-being.

### **3.3.3 High Rate of Educators Resignations**

Learner discipline problems in schools such as learners been sexually assaulted in classrooms, internet bullying, gangsterism and prevalence of unsafe weapons signify the continuation of unsafe circumstances, further resulting in educators leaving the profession at a high rate (Hlatswayo, 2018). In 2011 the Secretary of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) reported that 67 000 educators resigned from teaching and they indicated learner discipline problems as the major reason for their decision (Hlatswayo, 2018).

## **3.4 COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNER DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS**

Sciullo (2016) indicates that a possible meaning of collaboration comes from "colabre or co-labour" which signifies that individual should work together. Collaboration is used by individuals such as SMTs, educators and SGBs to explain how they work as a collective across disciplines. They use this word to explain how they strategize, provide solutions and evaluate the effectiveness of the application of strategies for behaviour modification. Sciullo (2016) believes that is important for individuals to be conversant about collaborative practices so that they can work together in an effective manner. A collaborative effort requires positive engagement among stakeholders to

use resources to address discipline problems shared values (Scuillo, 2016). The intensity of their work depends on the ability of the individuals cooperating to have an encouraging impact on each other. Collaboration is a process which is allowing stakeholders with varied skills to propose resolutions to mutually demarcated difficulties. Zwikael et al. (2012, p.118) maintain that stakeholders in collaborative leadership have the role to ensure success in their organisation. Stakeholders should group to solve problems.

School leadership requires a collaboration and should comprise of educators, support staff, school community, SMTs and SGBs through the cultivation of relationships and networks. All stakeholders should be empowered in all areas which they are important in collaboration. Capacity building of stakeholders is defined as creating the conditions, opportunities and experiences for collaboration in order to bring effective change (Jacobson, 2011).

According to Woods et al. (2018) provide a detailed account of collaborative leadership and argue that it is a profounder understanding with respect to the notion of distributed leadership. Collaborative leadership transpires from the continuous practice of relations across the school and involves SMTs, SGBs, support staff, educators, learners and the community. Collaborative leadership is shaped by stakeholder's intents which express significance, determination, objectives and the motivation to bring about transformation regarding learner discipline problems. Collaborative leadership attracts consideration to both the situation that gives augmentation to leadership and the human inspirations of inventiveness and autonomy (Woods et al., 2018) created by the stakeholders as indicated in this section.

Collaborative leadership offers an appreciation of leadership that is both logically strong and morally obvious. Toor and Ofiri (2009) state that in leadership which is ethically explicit leaders must display ethical values and virtuous behaviour in their routine conversations, engagements, choices and behaviours to inspire others to follow their leadership characteristics. Caruana (2020) states that in leadership which is analytically robust leaders are capable of maintaining focus on vision and adapting their mental perspectives and psychological behaviours for them to achieve the vision irrespective of challenges facing them. Collaborative leadership is a process whereby

people work together to make things happen and it is collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Smith & Amushigamo, 2015).

According to Narain (2015) SMTs and educators are answerable for the daily management of schools and this includes managing learner discipline as well. SMTs and educators should embrace respectable discipline measures because they may play an important leadership role in schools. SGBs also play a vital role in learner discipline especially when they work in collaboration with SMTs and educators for the common good of the school (Naarin, 2015). There must be a worthy working connection between SGBs, SMTs and educators for the purpose of dealing with learner discipline problems in schools. Tierney (2011) asserts that when SGBs, SMTs and educators work collaboratively with one another they are able to build the strategic and organizational capacity to overcome learner discipline problems and achieve good results academically.

### **3.5 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY SCHOOLS WHEN IMPLEMENTING LEARNER DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES**

Semali and Vumilia (2016) observe that educators experience challenges when they implement learner discipline strategies in schools. Learner discipline phrases like maintaining discipline, disciplinary strategies, school discipline and learner discipline convey dissimilar connotations depending on the environment. Maphosa and Mammen (2011) claim that schools use school rules and codes of conduct to maintain discipline and when learners transgress school rules and code of conduct, they are punished. Dzivhani (2007) mentions that schools employ disciplinary strategies like suspension and expulsion to sustain learner discipline. Segalo and Rambuda (2018) maintain that school discipline helps to ensure functionality of education in schools and effective learning and teaching in schools. Rossouw (2003) says that learner discipline is the conduct of learners in schools. They all deal with solving learner discipline problems in schools. There are differences among them. The researcher feels that it is always good for schools to effectively deal with learner discipline to ensure effective learning and teaching.

Van Wyk and Pelsler (2014, p.834) claim that, "The Department of Basic Education is mainly responsible for the development of the laws and regulations which serve as a

guide for the formulation of disciplinary policies in schools. In many cases, however, there seems to be a lack of communication between the Department and schools, as well as inadequate training of school leadership with respect to policy implementation.” Nene (2013) indicates that “Educators suggested that alternatives measures, to corporal punishment were not very effective in curbing learner indiscipline in schools (p.v).”

Wolhuter and Steyn (2003) identified four groups of challenges experienced by schools when implementing learner discipline strategies such as factors related to the situation at home, schools, educators, and learners. Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) are of the idea that learner-related factors are the outcomes of a variety of causes which are personal like learners who feels frustrated because of being unable to adequately respond to school requirements.

Naicker (2014) mentions that educator-related factors are the outcomes of when educators experience challenges like disruption to teaching, defiance and disrespect towards teaching and teacher-targeted bullying. Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) are further of the opinion that school-related factors are the outcome of poor discipline within school settings and poor internal regulations. Naicker (2014) also mentions that home-related factors are the outcome of when parents apply disciplinary procedures to learners in a manner that is lawless and disorderly. Based on these four groups of challenges the researcher confirms that indeed schools are experiencing serious challenges when implementing learner discipline strategies. This clearly indicates that a lot has to be done to effectively deal with learner discipline problems in schools so that there can be safe environment and effective teaching and learning for good academic achievement.

Mlalazi (2015) states that at some stage parents, learners, community members and other stakeholders are not happy with the way in which approaches, to enhance learner discipline problems, are implemented in schools. It is worse when parents, learners, community members and other stakeholders raise their concerns and complaints through the media without first consulting the school and have a talk with the school.

One of the concerns of the afore-mentioned stakeholders is that they are not consulted by schools resulting in a feeling of being excluded. The consequence is that when

disciplinary measures are implemented and questioned by the mentioned stakeholders, negative feelings can be developed. For instance, parents may claim that they were not aware about particular discipline measures and might not understand why it has been implemented.

### **3.6 EDUCATORS, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DETENTION AS A STRATEGY TO DISCIPLINE LEARNERS**

De Witt and Lessing (2013) indicate that learner discipline problems are a foremost concern for all relevant stakeholders in schools. Educators find it challenging to deal with the absence of esteem and accountability, noncompliance, hostility and the refusal of authority demonstrated by some learners. Learner discipline problems have an undesirable impact on educators' occupational worth and this makes it difficult for educators to do their work properly.

Bilatyi (2012) notes that there are number of difficulties pertaining to the employment of detention as strategy to address discipline problems. Educators are inconsistent in overseeing learners during detention, some educators were disrupting detention by not applying procedures to assist with addressing discipline problems. For instance, SMTs sometimes do capacitate the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) so that they can provide support in dealing with learner discipline problems.

Some confirmation exists that detention may be effective in lessening behaviour problems for some learners in schools. Significantly, many learners recognize detention as a practical discipline procedure which, when implemented. Seem to be effective (Infantino & Little, 2005). In a study, learners who were subjected to suspension or detention were compared to each other (Atkins et al., 2002 as cited in Fluke et al., 2014). The researchers found that, despite the implementation of discipline strategies (detention and suspension) that the learners showed an increasing frequency of behaviour problems during the course of the study, implying that they (learners) became more disorderly and violent. It should be noted that the aim of detention should be to remedy, rather than to punish learners for unacceptable behaviour.

In another study, Paterson (2016) reports that teachers at a school in Montana act as private educational mentors during detention. Learners are requested to gather for small study room meetings, whilst every learner is mentored independently, especially on those subjects in which they need academic assistance. Paterson (2016) further argues that detention should be restorative in nature in that it should encourage learners and teachers to jointly discuss particular instances of unacceptable behaviour, consider the consequences and find resolutions to mitigate learner discipline problems.

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter highlighted three important aspects about learner discipline problems in general: a lack of seriousness by learners regarding punishment, the continuous application of corporal punishment by educators and an absence of adequate training, relevant to alternatives to corporal punishment. According to Belle (2016), the aforementioned aspects may be ascribed to a lack of an absence of responsive capability to address discipline problems on the side of the learners, as well as the educators. In response to the aspects regarding learner discipline problems, this chapter also indicated that a collaborative effort is required to address issues pertaining to discipline.

A collaborative effort necessitates confident commitment among educational role-players to employ operative approaches to speak to the discipline problems. Notably, collaborative leadership emerges from the unceasing repetition of relations across the school and involves support staff, the community, SGBs, SMTs, learners and educators. Collaborative leadership is shaped by role-players' intentions and commitment to transform the challenges regarding learner discipline at schools.

In the next chapter, the research methodology was unpacked in an attempt to provide an understanding as to how to propose collaborative strategies to improve learner discipline in schools when using detention as a disciplinary strategy.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to define the research methodology applicable to this study. According to Igwenagu (2016), "Research is a combination of both experience and reasoning and can be said to be the most appropriate way of discovering the truth. Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study" (p.4).

The chapter also covers aspects relevant to participant selection, data analysis method and demarcation of the study, whilst also addressing information pertaining to validity and trustworthiness of the research instruments. The description of the components of research methodology is directed at understanding how to recommend collaborative strategies to improve learner's discipline in schools when using detention as a disciplinary strategy.

#### **4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) are of the idea that paradigm describes a researcher's worldview regarding the phenomenon under study. According to McGregor and Murnane (2010), a paradigm is a set of values, assumptions, practices and concepts that foregrounds how realities are viewed. For instance, the belief still exists that a child should be disciplined by means of corporal punishment for every single mistake (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Interpreting the views of the afore-mentioned authors, my viewpoint is that a research paradigm could be regarded as beliefs or ideas individuals or community have about how to deal with a challenge facing them like learner discipline problems in schools.

Two types of research paradigms may be referred to: positivist and interpretivism. In positivist approach research is of good quality if the research has objectivity, reliability, internal validity as well as external validity. In interpretive approach the goal is not to discern general, value-free and context-free information and facts, but to obtain an

understanding of explanations provided by participants regarding the social phenomena they network with (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

The researcher preferred the interpretive paradigm because this research aim relies on participants' opinions on learner discipline problems in schools. An interpretive approach involves methodical analysis of informally significant action (Mohajan, 2018) which, in this research, refers to the collaborative strategies to improve learner discipline in schools. This implies that the researcher intends to interpret the views of educators to understand how they experience and mitigate learner discipline problems in schools. In an attempt to understand matters relating to learner discipline problems, this research will involve participants who have lived experiences regarding the phenomenon under study. This aligns with Creswell's (2013) notion that, when employing an interpretive paradigm, individuals' aim is to understand the world in which they live, whilst developing individual significance of their practices.

#### **4.2.1 Qualitative Research Approach**

It is very important in any research attempt to accentuate the methodology that was employed. The research used a qualitative methodology because it provides information that is significant and applicable in answering the research questions.

In qualitative research, no numerical information is used. Rather, qualitative research involves a naturalistic and interpretative methodology to its phenomenon under study (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative researchers learn about things in their normal environment, endeavouring to obtain knowledge of and interpret phenomena regarding the connotations individuals bring to them (McLeod, 2019). Jackson et al. (2007) assert that qualitative research is predominantly interested in considering individuals' experiences in an informational and humanistic manner. A qualitative researcher pays attention to individuals' textured practices and considerations regarding such experiences, rather than trusting a set of predetermined questions to provoke considered, involuntary choice responses with little scope for unrestricted answers to questions (Decieur et al., 2015). The qualitative researcher relies on the participants to provide detailed answers with respect to how they have fashioned or understood their experience. Jamshed (2014) observes that qualitative research is a

strategy employed researchers to map out an approach to problem-finding or problem-solving.

From the above definitions it can generally be asserted that using the qualitative research approach supports researchers in extracting the profundity and fruitfulness of the individual experience from their research contributors (participants). Qualitative research techniques emphasise the importance of the subjective experiences of the individuality of participants in the creation of their social worlds (Noon, 2017). The researcher feels that the data collected was as close to the participants' experiences as possible and as a result will yield more realistic interpretations.

The data was collected through interviews (Appendices G-I), an approach which is founded mainly on words and an exploration for circumstantial consideration of social realities (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Notably, each and every research is valuable because of the good qualities it holds. Consequently, the following characteristics of qualitative research may be deemed significant (Jamshed, 2014):

- Provision of a detailed and construed understanding of the collective realm of research participants by obtaining knowledge about their histories, physical and social conditions, their experiences and viewpoints.
- Samples that are small in measure and purposively selected on significant principles.
- Data collection approaches which typically comprise close interaction between the participants and researchers, which are collaborative and evolving, whilst allowing for developing matters to be explored.

Following the characteristics of qualitative research, the strengths and weaknesses will be outlined next.

## **4.2.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research**

### **4.2.2.1 *Strengths of Qualitative Research***

The researcher gained an insider's interpretation of the field because the researcher had close involvement with the participants. The research found issues that are often

missed, in the scientific field, such as subtleties and complexities. These are very small details or differences which are not obvious (McLeod, 2019).

Choy (2014) purports that qualitative research permits researchers to explore the opinions of similar as well as different groups of individuals, whilst unpacking opposing viewpoints within a community. The latter implies that the researcher will be able to get experiences of a certain group of participants and of different groups of participants and put them at ease so that they can provide the researcher with the needed information. Qualitative research's main strength is the ability to investigate fundamental standards, opinions and expectations. In qualitative research, the inquiry is broad and open-ended. The researcher has to ask more different questions, on the same matter, for participants to provide the researcher with more information. It tolerates the fact that participants may raise viewpoints of significance to them.

Qualitative research does not have fixed, predetermined set of matters to scrutinize. Naresh (2021) asserts that an application of qualitative research may be regarded as guiding research which may assist in uncovering significant matters prior to the implementation of review approaches. Significantly, qualitative research is not restricted to demarcated variables, but information may be in the form of objects, words or pictures. It can, therefore, be guiding in terms of innovative ideas within an area of research, whilst it may be considered as a worthy effort to get inside the minds of participants.

#### **4.2.2.2 Weaknesses of Qualitative Research**

Choy (2014) indicates that the major weaknesses of qualitative research are that the method takes time and that specific and significant information could be disregarded or could go overlooked. Notably, all researchers' explanations are incomplete, because participants have more power over the information to be accumulated. Johnson and Christensen (2012) believe that the weaknesses of qualitative research are that information provided should not be generalized to additional settings or other individuals. Rather, the findings might be distinctive to the comparatively few individuals involved in the research study and it is more demanding to assess the effectiveness of assumptions and notions with a large group of participants. Prasad

(2017) further believes that the major weaknesses of qualitative research are that the process is time consuming, an important issue that could be overlooked.

### **4.2.3 Research Design**

The researcher had to choose a suitable research strategy that would assist in exploring questions relevant to the research. Before articulating research questions, researchers should be clear about the study they intend to conduct. The literature review assisted the researcher in formulating the procedural emphasis of his research topic. The afore-mentioned views are confirmed by Brooks and Normore (2015) who postulate that the choice of a research design assist in locating the work within a methodological tradition. This is important because the choice of a suitable research design can indeed inform decisions about research questions during the research procedure (Brooks & Normore, 2015).

The most suitable manner in which to conduct this study was by means of qualitative research. Qualitative research underscores the idea that researchers should get close to the participants because involvement is a respectable method to appreciate social conduct. Hence the objective was to define social reality from participants' frame of reference, whilst also considering the researcher's perspectives.

Significantly, the researcher was positioned to view the participants' conduct in their natural settings, thus offering a greater deepness of understanding and tolerating more flexibility. Brent (2018) explains qualitative research as an approach that attempts to: (a) describe the conduct of individuals; and (b) clarify details behind their behaviour. Qualitative research aims to provide answers pertaining to how and why individuals make particular choices (Brent, 2018). Importantly, an exposure to the social settings of the participants enabled the researcher to provide detailed descriptions, whilst networking with participants in their usual environment assisted the researcher in considering actions and their conduct in their setting. Importantly, the researcher will provide clarity on what will happen during the interviews. Furthermore, the researcher assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity to avoid risk of harm to participants and the researcher.

The researcher visited the schools to interview educators (Annexure G), SMTs (Annexure H) and SGBs (Annexure I), aiming to obtain personal data regarding the implementation of learner discipline approaches. Explanations and clarifications were described orally. It was ideal to conduct the interviews at the schools because it enabled the participants to be free in their natural settings, allowing for more personal interaction and unrestricted flow of thoughts.

Another fundamental factor about research questions in qualitative research is that questions could be adjusted whilst having conversations with the interviewees. Creswell (2012) claims that qualitative research is a developing methodology. A developing practice designates that the purpose of a research study and questions probed by researchers could be modified depending on the answers provided by participants. This is accurate in terms of this research because investigative questions were asked to understand the participants' views. These probing questions differed depending on the views of participants. The intention was to understand and investigate the fundamental phenomenon: the role of educators, SGBs and SMTs in the implementation of learner discipline strategies and not to obtain unanimity in terms of participants' responses. It appears as if the depth of information plays a significant role in qualitative research because participants' views and descriptions may be multiple and meaningful (Creswell, 2013).

#### **4.2.4 Sampling**

Sampling can be regarded as a selection process with particular reference to members of the population, from a larger group to work with in order to come up with sensible conclusions from the study. Masiloane (2008) indicates that sampling in research allows the researcher to gather information which is representative of the whole population. The researcher selected participants, using purposive sampling. Etikan et al. (2016) assert that purposive sampling is a non-random technique that does not require fundamental philosophies or a fixed amount, of participants. It is a method used by researchers to make decisions regarding the information they wish to obtain in terms of the participants who will be part of a study. Researchers, therefore, select participants based on suitability as well as their experiences, knowledge and interests regarding a particular phenomenon.

### **4.3 DATA GENERATION PROCEDURE**

For researchers to understand society, they should need to obtain data which may be of relevance to their study. In this research study, data was obtained by means of interviews as well as focus group discussions.

#### **4.3.1 Interviews**

Interviews are an essential information gathering methods which involves oral statements between participants and researchers. The usefulness of the collected data was contingent with the way in which researchers conduct interviews as well as the quality of the interview design (Mathers et al., 2002). The participants' responsibility is to share information from their perspective or experience. The interviewer guides the interview process and strives to understand the participants' views and meanings of what they say. Interviews enable the researcher to gain in-depth information from participants.

Interviews are mainly suitable when the data to be obtained is regarded as thoughtful or trustworthy (Saven-Baden & Major, 2013). Additionally, Bhasin (2019) notes that the purpose of the qualitative research interviews is to study the practices, views or opinions of participants on a particular topic. Interviews assist the researcher to get and establish a deeper interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

Qualitative interviews are usually defined as either in-depth or semi-structured. The researcher used semi-structured interviews as they are grounded on a sequence of unrestricted questions about various matters applicable to the study. According to Saven-Baden and Major (2013) semi-structured interviews are sufficiently open-ended, allowing interviewees to share information regarding the topic and allow for comparable data that can be linked across participants.

Hancock et al. (2001) is of opinion that, when interviewees would experience effort in responding to a question or offers vague answers, interviewers may use clues to motivate interviewees to elaborate on their responses. Mathers et al. (2002) asserts interviewers have the autonomy to probe interviewees to provide elaborated versions of their responses or to follow a line of questioning suggested by interviewees.

A few advantages and disadvantages regarding interviews can be summarised in the following way:

**Table 4.1: Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• harvest data to directly respond to research questions and can also be used for follow-up questions up (Saven-Baden &amp; Major, 2013);</li> <li>• a useful way of getting a large amount of data quickly. The interviews are face-to-face conversations and, therefore, interviews do take up much time of participants and researchers (De Vos et al., 2007); and</li> <li>• an effective way of obtaining rich data (De Vos et al., 2007).</li> </ul>	<p>De Vos et al. (2007) indicate that participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may not be eager to provide information regarding the topic;</li> <li>• could at times be untruthful and may not be keen in telling the truth; and</li> <li>• may find the interview process emotionally disturbing.</li> </ul>

### 4.3.2 Focus group discussions

Freitas et al. (1998) perceive focus group as a kind of comprehensive interview during a conversation with a group of participants. Tormal (2003) suggests that a focus group is a special type of group interview. It mostly comprises of approximately five to ten participants, who are questioned in a relaxed, non-threatening environment.

The researcher set up appropriate times in order to conduct useful conversations with a group of participants. Group interviews lasted for 80 minutes and the individual interviews lasted for 125 minutes. All interviews were conducted in English. Interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondents to ensure comprehensiveness of the oral interface and to provide material for trustworthiness checks (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013) and to provide truthful records of the interview (Cresswell, 2012).

### 4.3.3 Key characteristics of focus group discussions

According to James et al. (2008) focus group interviews are simultaneously held with a small collection of participants to probe information regarding the topic. The aim is to motivate participants to reveal supplementary information through the exchange of ideas.

### 4.3.4 Advantages and limitations of focus group

Focus Group discussions is relevant to my study because Gizir (2007) is of the idea that focus group discussions assist the researcher to discover participants' emotions, beliefs, approaches, responses and understandings about the study. A few advantages and limitations of focus group discussions are indicated below.

**Table 4.2: Advantages and disadvantages of focus group discussions**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Freitas et al. (1998) observe that advantages of focus group are that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is reasonably easy to conduct;</li> <li>• allows for the exploration of topics and to generate hypotheses;</li> <li>• creates prospects to gather information from the group conversation, focusing on the topic under study;</li> <li>• has exceptional "face validity" (data); and</li> <li>• is relative cost-effective in relation to other approaches.</li> </ul>	<p>Reynard (2019) indicates that limitations of focus group are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some participants may dictate discussions, aiming at swaying viewpoints of some participants;</li> <li>• some participants may not be eager to disclose their views openly or exchange viewpoints on delicate matters although such opinions may be significant viewpoints in relation to the study; and</li> <li>• it may be challenging to show the relevance of information, especially in cases where groups exchange views that hugely differ from each other.</li> </ul>

## 4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To adhere to ethical principles, the researcher followed procedures recommended by Creswell (2013).

The researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of Free State's ethics committee before commencing with data collection (Annexure A). Data collection clearance was sought and granted by the University of Free State's ethics committee.

- The researcher further applied for consent to Free State Department of Education to conduct research at identified schools. The Free State Department of Education granted permission to the researcher to collect data in two secondary schools in the Motheo District, Bloemfontein in the Free State province. The researcher visited the two schools to request approval from Principals of the two identified schools. The copies of permission letters from the University of Free State and Free State Department of Education which granted the researcher authorization to conduct research at the two identified schools were given to the principals of the two identified schools. These letters were not used by the researcher to coerce educators, school management teams and school governing bodies to approve participation in this research, but reasonably to indicate that the research was official.
- Issues relating to the participant's involvement, such as unrecognizability, threats, privacy and benefits, were clarified in detail to each participant.
- Participants were requested to first familiarize themselves with the content of consent forms, before they would decide to participate. Notably, participants they were given two weeks to consider their participation.
- Participants were given sufficient information regarding: (a) the objectives of the research; (b) processes that would be followed; (c) possible disadvantages and advantages of participation; (d) integrity of the researcher; (e) data gathering procedures; (f) scope of the research; and (g) the manner in which the results were to be applied prior to beginning of the research.
- The researcher explained the typical roles of participants.
- Participants were formerly requested to sign approval forms as confirmation that they liberally acknowledged their participation in the research. The signing of consent forms was without any force.
- The researcher obtained participant's signed consent forms.
- Information about confidentiality and anonymity were shared with the participants - the removal of any identifying characteristics before the use of information.

- The researcher reiterated anonymity.

The afore-mentioned permitted participants to make a knowledgeable choice regarding their involvement in the study. Notably, all the selected participants took part in this study.

#### **4.5 DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is a method of collecting and quantifying data on variables of importance - a recognized methodical technique that allows one to respond to detailed research questions, test theories and appraise results (Kabir, 2016). After the interviews the researcher immediately took the recorded data to experts to transcribe and type data for analysis.

#### **4.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

Maree (2015) narrates that qualitative data analysis is grounded on an interpretative viewpoint intended at scrutinizing significant and representative content of qualitative information. Data analysis attempts to establish how participants make sense of a particular phenomenon by investigating their insights, attitudes, perceptions, information, standards, emotions and experiences regarding a phenomenon under study.

Furthermore, data analysis in qualitative research does not favour the application of pre-existing codes for arranging information, but it always has an emphasis, motivated by the research questions (Mihai & Nieuwenhuis, 2015). The data in this study was collected from focus group discussions as well as individual interviews. The researcher recorded every interview and submitted the records to the records specialists to be typed and transcribed. These are data analysis experts at the Central University of technology, Free State province in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Drawing on Creswell (2013), qualitative content analysis was done in the following way:

- arranging and consolidating information for analysis;
- converting information into themes through a coding method;

- summarizing the codes into themes and categories; and
- demonstrating the information in themes.

The researcher analysed data in the form of words and applied content analysis. Content analysis is a methodical method of understanding the qualitative data by organised and in-depth appraisal of data with the aim of identifying themes (Creswell, 2013). Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) indicate that the primary phase of analysing information is to, read and re-read interviews to obtain knowledge regarding the responses of the participants. The next step is to divide the information into smaller fragments or parts. Lastly, codes are formulated, after which categories are formulated.

#### **4.7 SUMMARY**

The researcher chose to use qualitative research approach because in qualitative research data is not measured by numbers but by facts. Qualitative researchers study things as they are and try to make sense out of what they gathered. In qualitative research the researcher gets close to participants and freely communicate with them. Participants may decide not to participate if they are not assured anonymity and privacy to avoid risk of harm to participants and to the researcher. When researchers would interview participants, they should allow participants to express themselves properly, whilst ensuring that they (researchers) do not dictate the interview process.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The primary goal of this research study was to recommend collaborative leadership strategies, aiming at improving learner discipline in schools. This chapter outlines the empirical methods that were used to gather data that was relevant to the research questions. Data analysis is discussed in collaboration with the literature reviewed. Marlow (2010) describes data analysis as a way of giving meaning to the collected data. Dudovskiy (2018) claims that data analysis in qualitative research encompasses classifying shared patterns in relation to participants' replies and analytically exploring them to achieve the aim and the objectives of the research. Kalpesh (2013) notes that data analysis is a method which is applied to review, change and adjust the collected data with the aim of achieving a particular supposition to the particular situation. A qualitative research approach was used to collect data in the individual interviews and group interviews. For analysis to be meaningful, data had to be presented. This chapter aims to present, analyse and discuss individual interviews and group interviews in relation to the participants' views about learner discipline problems in their schools.

The following is a presentation of the data collected during the in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 13 participants, consisting of five educators, three Head of Departments (HoDs), two Deputy Principals (DP) and three School Governing Body (SGB) members (see Table 5.1) from two different schools in Motheo District in the Free State Province.

#### **5.2 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The researcher used purposive sampling in this study. Etikan et al. (2016) refer to purposive sampling as a method in which the researcher chooses what information should be regarded as significant in finding individuals who might be keen to share knowledge by means of exchanging viewpoints and experiences. The target population were selected from 2 schools in Motheo District in the Free State Province.

In school A there were 2 educators, three SGB members (teacher's component), 1 SMT member who also participated as an SGB member and 1 SMT member not part of the SGB. This implies that school A provided the researcher with 4 participants. In school B there were 3 educators, 3 SMT members and 3 SGB members (teacher component), implying that school B provided the researcher with 9 participants. 13 Participants thus formed part of this study.

### **5.3 PREPARING FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

During preparations for the empirical study, the researcher delivered permission letters to the school principals of the two schools, requesting the participation of the selected educators, SMT members as well as SGB representatives. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the principals and assured them of the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher also left the consent forms with the principals, so that the selected participants could read the content thereof before attaching their signatures. Before conducting the empirical study, the researcher expounded the research aim, and, with their permission, recorded the interviews so that the data from responses could be transcribed and reported verbatim. At school A, the focused group interviews, which consisted of educators, SMT members and SGB members, lasted for approximately 80 minutes because the interviewer interviewed a number of candidates alone. Doyle (2020) believes that group interviews require more time than regular because multiple candidates are interviewed at the same time by one interviewer. At school B interviews lasted for 125 minutes and participants were interviewed individually.

## 5.4 THE PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

*Table 5.1: Profile of participants*

Participant	Title	Gender	Age	Employment Experience	Managerial Experience	Governance Experience	Highest Qualifications
<b>Code</b>							
<b>DPA01</b>	Deputy Principal School A	Male	50-59	18 years +	9 years +		BED Hons
<b>DPB01</b>	Deputy Principal School B	Female	40-49	20 years +	17 years +		Degree
<b>HODA01</b>	Head Of Department	Male	40-49	20 years +	8 years +	11 years +	BED Hons
<b>HODB02</b>	Head Of Department School B	Male	50-59	20 years +	7 years +		Diploma
<b>HODB03</b>	Head Of Department School B	Female	40-49	18 years +	9 years +		Hons
<b>EDA01</b>	Educator School A	Female	20-29	5 years +		3 years +	Degree
<b>EDA02</b>	Educator School A	Female	40-49	18 years +		5 years +	Degree
<b>EDB01</b>	Educator	Female	40-49	24 years +			Hons

	School B						
<b>EDB02</b>	Educator School B	Female	20-29	7 years +			Degree
<b>EDB03</b>	Educator School B	Female	50-59	20 years +			Degree
<b>SGBB01</b>	SGB Member School B	Female	60-69	38 years +		19 years +	Higher Diploma
<b>SGBB02</b>	SGB Member School B	Female	50-59	28 years +		14 years +	Hons
<b>SGBB03</b>	SGB Member School B	Female	30-39	18 years +		12 years +	Degree

Table 5.2 indicates the following regarding gender, age, employment experience, managerial experience and governance experience of the participants, representative of two schools in the Motheo district of the Free State province. The experience of both males and females is indicated in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2: Accumulated experience of participants**

Participants	Percentages	Average Employment experience	Average Governance experience	Average Management experience
Males	23%			
Females	77%	15 years	07 years	12 years
		--		

The researcher argues that the accumulated experience may be regarded as an indication of why the participants can be regarded as valuable and trustworthy to speak about learner discipline problems in schools.

## 5.5 CODING AND CATEGORISING DATA

Yi (2018) argues that coding is a process of data analysis where texts are broken up into the smallest items, whilst identified items are organised into relevant stories. Codes are the smallest unit of texts that carries similar meaning and it can be a paragraph, a word or a phrase. When researchers do proper coding, they will realise that the findings of their research will indeed be representing the responses of their participants. On the other hand, categorizing data is when researchers put comparable codes into the same categories and transfer them around in order to find a way that replicates their data analysis the best (Yi, 2018). To demonstrate, coding was done in the following way:

**Table 5.3: Steps in coding the data**

<b>Step 1</b>	The researcher will first make effort to acquaint him or herself with the data. The researcher will transcribe the recordings, read the texts and make notes to familiarize him or herself with the data. This is important because the raw data (transcripts) will be organized and prepared for analysis.
<b>Step 2</b>	The data will be read and coded. The researcher will compile own codes transpired from all transcripts to develop an initial coding framework which will be informed by the data in terms of participants' responses. The coding framework will be examined by an independent individual in the field of educational research. The independent individuals will be the researcher's supervisors who have the expertise to guide the researcher to ensure that the coding process can be regarded as reliable. The data will then be coded in order to capture the meanings of statements, and the codes will then be examined to identify patterns and relationships.
<b>Step 3</b>	The researcher will then make sure that the themes are suitable and precise depictions of the data.
<b>Step 4</b>	The themes will then be named and defined.
<b>Step 5</b>	The themes will be analysed and the findings will be interpreted.

## **5.6 DATA GATHERED THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS, SMT AND SGB MEMBERS**

### **5.6.1 Secondary Research Objectives and Question Framework Presented to Deputy Principals, Head of Departments, Educators and SGB members**

The secondary research objectives and the research questions are presented in Table 5.4 below.

**Table 5.4: Secondary research objectives of the study**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Research objectives</b>
<b>RO1</b>	Which challenges are experienced by the schools when implementing learner's discipline strategies?
<b>RO2</b>	What are the perceptions of educators, school governing bodies and school management teams regarding collaborative leadership strategies when implementing detention as learners discipline strategy?
<b>RO3</b>	How may collaborative leadership strategies be recommended for the implementation of detention as a discipline strategy for learners in secondary schools?



**Table 5.5: Secondary research objectives and question framework presented to educators**

<b>Code</b>			<b>Research objectives and questions framework presented to educators</b>
<b>RO1</b>	Learners discipline strategies	<b>A1</b>	1. Which learner discipline strategies do you use in your classroom to maintain learner's discipline?
			2. How can you describe the level of learner absenteeism, its influence on teaching and learning, general disruption and vandalism of properties at your school?
	Policies on learner's discipline strategies	<b>A2</b>	1. Are learner discipline strategies, which you are using to maintain an orderly classroom environment, in line with the South African Schools Act and the Bill of Rights contained in the South African Constitution? Please elaborate on the application of these policies in your school
	Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment	<b>A3</b>	1. Describe how your school deals with the abolishment of corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment?
	Suspension and expulsion	<b>A4</b>	1. Can you elaborate the steps you apply to suspend and expel learners at your school?
	Community involvement	<b>A5</b>	1. How do you connect to communities through community-based learning to address learner discipline?
	Detention	<b>A6</b>	1. Is detention one of your learner discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline, if yes, how are you implementing detention to assist you to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
<b>RO2</b>	Involvement of learners, parents, SMT and SGB	<b>B1</b>	1. Did you involve learners, parents, school management team and school governing body when you were developing learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at your school, how did you involve them?
			2. Did all the above-mentioned stakeholders understand and accept learners discipline strategies you use in your classroom to maintain learner's discipline? Elaborate on your role as a leader in this regard.

			3. Did you thoroughly explain steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom to all stakeholders? How was this discussed and implemented by the schools' leadership?
			4. Did all stakeholders understand and accept steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom? Elaborate briefly
			5. Were all stakeholders given the opportunity to adopt, sign and receive copies of learner's discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom? May you please elaborate on how this was done?
<b>RO3</b>	Collaborative leadership strategies	<b>C1</b>	1. Which collaborative leadership strategies and learner's discipline strategies do you use to maintain learner's discipline in your school? Can you describe them in detail?
			2. Which collaborative leadership strategies do you use to deal with learners who are found with dangerous objects and illegal drugs in your classrooms or school grounds? May you please elaborate on these strategies that you apply?
	Challenges encountered	<b>C2</b>	1. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing learners discipline strategies in your classroom?
			2. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing detention to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom?
			3. Which barriers to collaborative work in learner's discipline do you encounter at your school?
	Success stories	<b>C3</b>	1. Which success stories of implementing learners discipline strategies which you use to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom do you have?

**Table 5.6: Secondary research objectives and question framework presented to SMT members**

<b>Code</b>			<b>Research objectives and questions presented to SMT members</b>
<b>RO1</b>	Learners discipline strategies	<b>A1</b>	1. Which learners discipline strategies do you use at your school to maintain learner's discipline, describe them in detail?
			2. How would you describe the level of learner's absenteeism, learners bullying, learning and teaching disruption and vandalism of properties at your school?
	Policies on learner's discipline strategies	<b>A2</b>	1. Are learners discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline in line with the South African Schools Act, the Bill of Rights and the South African Constitution, which section of Bill of Rights do they address? Please elaborate on the application of these policies in your school
	Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment	<b>A3</b>	1. Describe how your school deals with the abolition of corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment
	Suspension and expulsion	<b>A4</b>	1. Can you elaborate the steps you apply to suspend and expel learners at your school?
	Community involvement	<b>A5</b>	1. How do you connect to communities through community-based learning to address learner discipline?
	Detention	<b>A6</b>	1. Is detention one of your learner's discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline, if yes, how are you implementing detention to assist you to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
<b>RO2</b>	Involvement of learners, educators, parents and school governing body	<b>B1</b>	1. Did you involve learners, educators, parents and school governing body when you were developing learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at your school, May you please describe how you involved them?

			2. Did all the above-mentioned stakeholders understand and accept learners discipline strategies you use in your classroom to maintain learner's discipline? Elaborate on your role as a leader in this regard.
			3. Did you thoroughly explain steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school to all stakeholders, how did you thoroughly explain these steps to all stakeholders?
			4. Did all stakeholders understand and accept steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
			5. Were all stakeholders given the opportunity to adopt, sign and receive signed copies of learner's discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school, can you elaborate on how this was done?
<b>RO3</b>	Collaborative leadership strategies	<b>C1</b>	1. Which collaborative leadership strategies and learners discipline strategies do you use at your school to maintain learner's discipline, can you describe them in detail?
			2. Which collaborative leadership strategies do you use to deal with learners who are found with dangerous objects and illegal drugs at your school, can you describe them?
	Challenges encountered	<b>C2</b>	1. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing learners discipline strategies at your school?
			2. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing detention to maintain learner's discipline at your school?

			3. Which barriers to collaborative work in learner's discipline do you encounter at your school?
	Success stories	<b>C3</b>	1. Which success stories of implementing learners discipline strategies can be told with respect to maintaining discipline in your school?

**Table 5.7: Secondary research objectives and question framework presented**

<b>Code</b>			<b>Research objectives and questions framework presented to SGB members</b>
<b>RO1</b>	Learners discipline strategies	<b>A1</b>	1. Which learners discipline strategies do you use at your school to maintain learner's discipline?
			2. How would you describe the level of learner's absenteeism, learners bullying, learning and teaching disruption and vandalism at your school?
	Policies on learner discipline strategies?	<b>A2</b>	1. Are learners discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline in line with the South African Schools Act, the Bill of Rights and the South African Constitution, which section of the Bill of Rights do they address? Please elaborate on the application of these policies in your school
	Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment	<b>A3</b>	1. Describe how your school deals with the abolishment of corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment?
	Suspension and expulsion	<b>A4</b>	1. Can you elaborate the steps you apply to suspend and expel learners at your school?
	Community involvement	<b>A5</b>	1. How do you connect to communities through community-based learning to address learner discipline?
	Detention	<b>A6</b>	1. Is detention one of your learner's discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline, if yes, how are you implementing detention to assist you to maintain learner's discipline at your school?

<b>RO2</b>	Involvement of learners, educators, parents and school management team	<b>B1</b>	1. Did you involve learners, educators, parents and school management team when you were developing learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at your school, how did you involve them?
			2. Did all the above-mentioned stakeholders understand and accept learners discipline strategies you use at your school to maintain learner's discipline?
			3. Did you thoroughly explain steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school to all stakeholders, how did you thoroughly explain these to stakeholders?
			4. Did all stakeholders understand and accept steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
			5. Were all stakeholders given the opportunity to adopt, sign and receive signed copies of learner's discipline strategies which you are using to maintain to learner's discipline at your school, can you elaborate on how this was done?
<b>RO3</b>	Collaborative leadership strategies	<b>C1</b>	1. Which collaborative leadership strategies do you use at your school to maintain learner's discipline, can you describe them in detail?
			2. Which collaborative leadership strategies do you use to deal with learners who are found with dangerous object and illegal drugs at your school, can you describe them?
	Challenges encountered	<b>C2</b>	1. Which challenges did you encounter when implementing learners discipline strategies at your school?
			2. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing detention to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
			3. Which barriers to collaborative work in learner's discipline do you encounter at your school?

	Success stories	<b>C3</b>	1. Which success stories of implementing learners discipline strategies can be told with respect to maintaining discipline at your school?
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The codes used to identify each question were formulated according to a specific objective the question addresses. Different aspects of each objective were numbered as A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, B1, C1, C2 and C3. These categories were further divided to assign a code to individual questions; hence, it is important to note that the numbers used in Column 4 of Tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7, only represent the order of the questions asked.

### 5.6.2 Data Analysis

Throughout the discussion, the researcher linked the responses of the educators, SMT members and SGB members to get a holistic understanding of the data. The results and interpretation was also be linked to the research objectives and the literature review of Chapter 2.

Yi (2018) is of the idea that themes are reflected by the categorization of codes. Themes can tell similar stories from people's perspectives or themes can tell numerous dissimilar stories that link to each other. Themes and subthemes are described as the final products of data analysis and are the analytical products of data analysis. Themes and subthemes can also be described as messages contained in the data (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). The researcher looked at the connection, relationship and message of the data to identify themes and subthemes.

**Table 5.8: Themes and Sub-Themes**

Main Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Learners discipline strategies	1.1. Learners' code of conduct (CoC)
	1.2. Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment
	1.3. Dangerous objects and illegal drugs

	1.4. Learners' absenteeism, learner bullying, learning and teaching disruption
2. Challenges encountered	2.1. Learners' attitude
	2.2. Disrespectful learners
	2.3. Parents' attitude
3. Collaborative leadership	3.1. Detention of learners
	3.2. Suspension and expulsion of learners
	3.3. Government policies on learner's discipline in schools

## **5.7 DATA GATHERED WITH IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS**

According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), an in-depth interview is a qualitative data gathering technique, used by researchers to ask questions to participants to learn more about their opinions, their views and their beliefs regarding a particular phenomenon.

Themes are abstracts which the researcher identify before, during and after data collection. Themes originate from reviewing the literature and from the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher identified themes by looking at key words in the collected data.

### **5.7.1 Theme One: Learners discipline strategies**

Respondents were asked: Which learners discipline strategies do you use in your classroom to maintain learner's discipline? Can you describe learners discipline strategies you use to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom? The focus was mainly on which learners discipline strategies educators are using to maintain learner's discipline. The strategies educators mentioned include learners' CoC, corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment, dangerous objects and illegal drugs and learner's absenteeism, learners bullying and learning and teaching disruption.

### 5.7.1.1 Learners' code of conduct

Learners' CoC:

- is a lawful document with guiding principles which reflect the democratic values of the Constitution by supporting the standards of human self-worth, fairness and autonomy (RSA, 1996(b));
- contains guidelines concerning learner behaviour; and
- defines the disciplinary processes to be applied in case of any disciplinary offences by learners (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

Evidently, learners' CoC is a school's authority to discipline learners for all negative behaviours and unacceptable acts which are regarded as immoral and unacceptable by the school. Despite the notion that a CoC aims at correcting behaviour, it also provides a positive environment for learning and teaching (Khan et al., 2019).

Educators EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 indicated that they regard learners' CoC as a strategy which assist them to maintain discipline in classrooms (*cf* 2.4.7.5). The same educators (EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03) also expressed the view that they always make sure that copies of the CoC are available, ensuring that learners are able to see and read it. EDA01 mentioned:

*I walk around in the classroom and read learner's code of conduct and classroom rules to the learners and them that they must abide by the rules inside the classroom and inside the school yard. I make them aware of the severity of the transgression of learner's code of conduct and classroom rules.*

EDB01 supported the idea that learners must adhere to learners' CoC and classroom rules and responded thus:

*In our classrooms we have learner's code of conduct and classroom rules which learners adhere to.*

Learner's CoC, which is guided by the Constitution (RSA, 1996b) and South African Schools Act (1996a), is used in South African schools to maintain discipline (*cf* 2.4.7.5).

Notably, discipline may contribute to effective execution of teaching and learning. The latter view is reinforced by Sebisha (2015) who emphasizes that a CoC is one of the

strategies outlining the norms, rules, and responsibilities or proper practices in schools to support learning and teaching environment (*cf* 2.4.7.5).

According to Redempta (2010), the Ministry of Education states that the principal has a decisive accountability of guaranteeing that discipline is upheld in schools. The principal is directly involved in instituting rules for learner behaviour, the consequences learners should face when they disobey rules and the approaches to be applied in implementing disciplinary procedures among learners.

The principal's responsibility is to provide guidance to the SGB in drafting policies for the school – this would include the views of teachers, parents and learners, among others. Involving learners and educators in developing discipline rules is essential in moulding schools becoming democratic social institutions.

For educators to follow the proper procedures to maintain discipline in their classrooms, they must always ensure that they develop discipline guideline in alignment with the CoC. Alter and Haydon (2017) state that classroom discipline guidelines should be in alignment with the CoC. Alter and Haydon (2017) think that classroom discipline guidelines should be in alignment with the CoC because classroom rules provide effective management system in a school. In this case, educators EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 are on the right track because they use the CoC to develop their classroom rules.

An SGB of a public school must approve a CoC for learners after meeting with the educators, learners and parents (RSA, 1996b, Section 8(1–2)). A CoC, referred to in subsection (1) must be intended at creating orderly and resolute school environment, devoted to the maintenance and development of the quality of the learning process (RSA, 1996b).

Section 39(3) of the Constitution provides that the Bill of Rights does not repudiate the reality of any rights or freedoms that are acknowledged or discussed by legislation, customary law or common law, to the level that they are consistent with the Bill of Rights (RSA, 1996b). This implies that the entirety of permissible guidelines and values of the South African common law as well as all the legislation of the pre-constitutional period continue to be binding and enforceable insofar as it is consistent with the Bill of Rights.

Section 1(a) of the Constitution determines that South Africa is a statutory democracy and that it is inter alia founded on the standards of sovereignty of the Constitution and the rule of law (RSA, 1996b). The sovereignty of the Constitution implies that everyone, including government, all government organizations, parents, schools, learners and educators should adhere to conventions postulated in the Constitution.

Respondents were also asked: Did you involve learners, parents, school management teams and school governing bodies when you were developing learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom? The focus was mainly on the involvement of learners, parents, SMTs and SGBs when learners discipline strategies were developed.

Educators EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 said that they involved learners when they developed classroom rules (*cf.* 2.5.4). EDA01 mentioned:

*In my classroom I involve all learners when I develop my classroom rules. I give them chance to ask questions and I also explain each rule to them.*

EDB02 also confirmed the involvement of learners when developing classroom rules and said:

*Yes, I did involve the learners. We went through all the classroom rules and they agreed with them. I put classroom rules on my classroom walls so that the learners can remember them. My classroom rules go with the school code of conduct.*

Learners' CoC is an agreement manuscript and its conscripting procedure should be described by the participation of non-educators, educators, parents and learners at school (*cf.* 2.4.7.5). Du Plessis (2015) confirms that schools have to develop a behaviour code in partnership with its community and have to manage learner behaviour in with the involvement of learners, their families and school staff. Du Plessis (2015) also notes that schools are part of the communities in which they operate and have a responsibility to work collaboratively with them.

#### **5.7.1.2 Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment**

Educators EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 made it very clear that they do not use corporal punishment in their classrooms. Corporal punishment was used

to discipline unruly learners and was used as a means of disciplining learners in schools. Educators are no more allowed by law to use corporal punishment as an approach to maintain learner discipline in South African schools. Notably, corporal punishment was banned in 1996 (*cf.* 2.4.7.1). EDA01 mentioned:

*We try many alternatives to corporal punishment like community service because we are not allowed to use corporal punishment to maintain learner's discipline in our classrooms.*

In supporting the ban of corporal punishment in schools EDB01 said:

*Sometimes we wish that corporal punishment could be there but unfortunately it is no more, and the principal is totally against it. We just follow alternatives to corporal punishment we have like referral system whereby we involve parents when disciplining learners.*

Rohrs (2016) indicates that corporal punishment is still practiced in some South African schools although it has been banned more than twenty years ago. Some educators still use corporal punishment for insignificant misbehaviours such as noise, inability to answer questions, late coming and not completing assignments.

Educators must use Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) as their strategy to maintain learner's discipline in their classrooms and at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.2). For ATCP to be implemented in an acceptable manner, collective leadership in schools by teachers, learners, parents, SMTs and SGBs are required. It is further advised that discipline guidelines are posted in every classroom, whilst parents, teachers, learners, SMTs and SGBs must have copies of school discipline policies and guidelines (*cf.* 2.4.7.2).

The ATCP was introduced in 2000 as a way to deal with learner discipline problems and to replace the application of corporal punishment (Tungat, 2006). The recommended disciplinary measures are demerits, verbal warning, community work and detention (Chisholm, 2007).

Research further indicates that, despite the introduction of the ATCP, learners discipline problems in schools continue to grow (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). Importantly, an effective implementation of the ATCP requires collaborative leadership

in schools. This implies that teachers, learners, parents, SMTs and SGBs should work together in dealing with learner discipline problems (Kalipa, 2015).

Wasef (2018) is of the idea that parents accepted the use of corporal punishment in schools and they also practice it at home against their children. There is a lack of parents who are reporting educators who are practicing corporal punishment in schools and in most cases, parents are encouraging educators to practice corporal punishment in schools. The respondents clearly agree that they are cognizant that corporal punishment should not be applied as a strategy to maintain learner discipline in their classrooms. They recognize that an implementation of strategies, as contained in the ATCP, should be regarded as official alternatives to maintain discipline.

This aligns with a stipulation which indicate that: “no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner. Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault” (RSA, 1996b, Section 10(1-2)). Furthermore, “Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right not to be tortured in any way; and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” (RSA,1996b: Section 12(1)).

### **5.7.1.3 Dangerous objects and illegal drugs**

Educators EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 were of opinion that they are always alert and make sure that no learner is allowed to possess dangerous objects and illegal drugs in their classrooms. EDA02 mentioned:

*If an educator suspect that a learner is in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs, an educator will immediately report the matter to the principal or immediate supervisor. The principal will come and conduct a random search in that classroom.*

Educator EDB02 supported the matter and said:

*I immediately call the principal or immediate supervisor when I suspect that there is a learner who is in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs. Once the principal starts with random search and seizure, I leave everything in his/her hands.*

In South African schools, principals or their representatives can search any group of learners or the properties of a group of learners for any dangerous objects or illegal

drugs once a doubt is recognized (*cf.* 2.4.7.4). This is confirmed by Joubert et al. (2013) in that they reiterate the important task of principals or their delegates in ensuring that classrooms remain safe learning environments. Notwithstanding the latter regulation (*cf.* 2.4.7.4; Joubert et al., 2013), South African educators seem to be aware that it is possible that learners can come to school with dangerous objects or illegal drugs.

As a result, they are always alert and make sure that no learner must be allowed to spend a day in their classrooms or at school while in ownership of unsafe items or unlawful drugs. They are also aware that, by law, only principals or their delegates are allowed to conduct random search and seizure (*vide:* RSA, 1996a, Section 8(a)(2)).

In addition, “every child has the right to protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation” (RSA, 1996b, Section 28(1)) and schools are obliged to, “respect, protect and fulfil these children’s rights in the educational context” (RSA, 1996b, Section 28).

#### **5.7.1.4 Learner’s absenteeism, learners bullying, learning and teaching disruption**

Educators EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 indicated that they always follow the guidelines of the CoC to deal with learner’s absenteeism, bullying and disruption of learning and teaching in their classrooms. EDA02 mentioned:

*Sometimes learners absent themselves because of their family problems like having to take the grandmother/grandfather to the clinic. Learners are sometimes experiencing bullying but it is not so much at our school. Learning and teaching disruption occurs only when some learners have an argument about something but when the teacher intervene it immediately come to an end.*

The matter was supported by EDB03 who remarked:

*It is normally 1% to 2% of learners who absent themselves when they feel that they have something like a running nose. It is very seldom where you can find that a big boy tries to bully a small boy maybe for money but that is dealt with immediately.*

*Learning and teaching disruption happens here and there to new teachers especially younger teachers, but we have marshals at our school to assist young teachers to*

*calm down the class so that the younger teachers can teach. Experienced teachers handle learning and teaching disruption on their own.*

In schools in South Africa teachers use learners' code of conduct to deal with any form of learner's discipline problems like learner's absenteeism, learners bullying and learning and teaching disruption (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

Sebisha (2015) asserts that a code of conduct for learners is one of the strategies used to make sure that learner's discipline exists in schools to support learning and teaching environment. Although, some South African schools encounter extreme challenges with learner absenteeism, bullying as well as disruption in learning and teaching disruption, schools in the Motheo district of the Free State seem to have an ability to minimize the afore-mentioned challenges.

### **5.7.2 Theme Two: Challenges Encountered**

This theme relates to challenges which are encountered by educators when they deal with learner behaviour and learner discipline in Motheo schools. It also relates to encounters faced by educators when they implement approaches to maintain learner discipline in their classrooms. For actual teaching and learning to take place in the classrooms, educators must first identify challenges they encounter when they deal with challenges such as learner behaviour and learner discipline. Thereafter, educators must develop strategies to deal with identified challenges to maintain learner discipline and to ensure that actual teaching and learning take place in their classrooms.

It is important for schools to have good relationship between: educators and learners, educators and parents, educators and SMTs as well as between educators and SGBs. Good relationships may promote acceptable behaviour and discipline which may result in a classroom atmosphere encouraging for effective learning and teaching. Consequently, respondents were asked: Which challenges do you encounter when using learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline in your classrooms, can you describe them? The challenges educators mentioned include learners' attitudes, disrespectful learners and parents' attitude.

### **5.7.2.1 Learner's attitude**

Jankauskiene and Sukys (2012) assert that some learners have negative attitudes towards school rules because they feel that their rights are being violated by rules and regulations. The participants indicated that learners sometimes feel that school rules pose limitations on the way they would like to behave, and that may be one of the reasons why they become aggressive in some instances. They (participants) also indicated that overcrowded classes contribute to learner discipline problems (cf. 2.3.1.11) and in this regard EDA01 mentioned:

*Learners who are the grade and who are over age think that they know it all. They come without books to the classroom and they do not do their homework. Lack of classroom space (overcrowding) cause chaos and learners discipline problems in the classroom.*

EDB01 brought in serious negative attitude of learners to support the idea that learners' attitudes are bad and have a negative impact on effective learning and teaching. The participant shared the following:

*There are learners who will challenge the authority, that's what teenagers do. They challenge the authority verbally and there are some learners who don't want to talk and they challenge by action. This means that these learners physically challenge their teachers and stop their teachers from taking any discipline action against them (EDBO1).*

Some learners' attitude in South African schools make it challenging for educators to use strategies to maintain discipline in their classrooms (cf. 2.3.1.11) and this may be why cases of learner discipline problems are increasing in South African schools (cf. 2.3.1.11).

According to Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013), dealing with learner discipline problems in South African schools is not easy and teachers don not know what to do to ensure that classrooms are to be regarded as safe educational spaces. O'Brennan et al. (2014) state that learners' lack of discipline is the cause of disruptive and aggressive behaviour which interferes with their academic performance. For instance, fighting, yelling and hitting are often reported by educators to be disruptive in terms of teaching and learning, resulting in teacher often requested support because other learners' rights to education are infringed due to lots of time being wasted. It is, therefore,

important that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) assist schools in dealing with learner discipline problems. For example, the DBE should put mechanisms in place so that issues such as overcrowded classrooms can be properly addressed as a way to support educators. In so doing, educators may be positioned to effectively address learner discipline problems, whilst also ensuring that teaching and learning are facilitated in an effective manner.

### **5.7.2.2 Disrespectful learners**

Learners are expected to respect their educators and abide by the classroom rules and learners' COC. Learners should be made aware of their rights, but equally of their responsibilities (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 adamantly indicated that some learners are disrespectful because they are unable to satisfactorily cope with disciplinary requirements at schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). EDA02 mentioned:

*Learners who are unable to read, who are struggling to read or who cannot read, tend to be ill-discipline, they are unruly and they create attention. Learners who do not want to wear school uniform are also ill-discipline.*

EDB02 supported the idea that learners are disrespectful towards their educators and said:

*Many learners are disrespectful towards their teachers. They are defying classroom rules and learners' code of conduct. They are extremely disrespectful and have no regard for the position we are in.*

Many educators are at a loss on how to deal with learner discipline problems in schools and this is quite frustrating to them (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). Smit (2013) mentions that educators feel helpless because of the abolition of corporal punishment which they regarded as an effective way in dealing with discipline problems at the time it was allowed to be implemented in schools.

### **5.7.2.3 Parent's attitude**

According to Kalimuthu and Saravanakumar (2018), parents' encouraging attitudes towards learners' education is important with respect to school attendance and

educational attainment. Parents' positive attitudes are also important in terms of building sound relationships with educators. EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB 02 and EDB03 feel that it is important for educators and parents to work together when dealing with learner discipline problems in schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). EDA02 mentioned:

*Some parents are not cooperative, when we call them and ask them to come to school to discuss their children's behaviour. They just don't care and leave everything in the hands of educators to struggle with the misbehaviour of their children.*

EDB03 supports the idea that parents are not cooperative when educators request them to come to school and assist in dealing with discipline problems. The participant said:

*Parents when they are called at school to be told about the misbehaviour of their children, they defend their children and accuse educators by saying that educators hate their children. They also challenge the classroom rules and learners' code of conduct when schools take steps against their children.*

Parents have to know that the success of their children depends on active participation as well as taking responsibility for the way learners behave in classrooms because basic education with reference to discipline and manners start at home.

Bodo (2020) is of the idea that aspects of life such as dress code, hairdos and basic manners start at home. As such, educators need parental support for them to succeed in dealing with learner's discipline problems.

### **5.7.3 Theme Three: Collaborative Leadership**

"Collaborative leadership is a management practice in which members of a leadership team work together across sectors to make decisions and keep their organization thriving" (Di Franza, 2019, p.1). When dealing with learner discipline problems in schools, there is a need for learners, educators, SMTs, SGBs, parents, departmental officials and the community to work together to deal with issues pertaining to learner discipline problems in schools (*cf.* 2.5.4).

Respondents were asked: (a) Did you involve learners when you were developing learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom? (b) Did you involve learner's parents, school management team and

school governing body when you were developing learners discipline strategies you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom?

EDA02 mentioned:

*Yes, in my classroom I do that. At the beginning of every year when I get new learners, we talk about the school code of conduct, classroom rules, referral system, points which are on the referral form and mutual respect. They immediately know what my values are and what I want in class. I give them chance to speak, ask questions and comment. The researcher, do you allow all of them to voice their views? Yes, I do. The researcher, if there is a need to change some rules? We talk about it. The researcher, you talk about it, is it an open discussion? Yes, it is an open discussion, this helps to know one another right at the beginning of the year. I think it is important to start the year like that. This comes with experience and age.*

EDB03 supported the matter and said:

*At the beginning of the year, I explain classroom rules to learners and give them chance to have their inputs. They all agree to the rules but in the middle of the year there will be those who start to disobey the rules.*

EDA01 mentioned:

*I involved parents, school management team and school governing body to make sure that my classroom rules are in line with the school code of conduct.*

In similar vein, EDB01 responded:

*Yes, I involved parents, school management team and school governing body because there is always communication among us.*

Collaborative leadership strategies educators mentioned include detention of learners, suspension of learners and expulsion of learners.

### **5.7.3.1 Detention of learners**

Fluke et al. (2014) assert that detention takes place when a learner is obligated to endure a seemingly unwelcome environment for an indicated amount of time outside school hours. Detention is mostly served after school or at a time which would be suitable for the educator, learner or the school. For instance, instead of going home at

the end of the school day, learners may be requested to report to a designated classroom where they remain silent or doing assignments for an arranged period of time. EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 said that presently, they do not use detention to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. EDA01 mentioned:

*We used detention, a long time ago, after school and it was always difficult for educators to stay behind and supervise detained learners.*

EDB01 supported the idea that they do not use detention at their school and said:

*I wish it was. I really think detention can work because at my child's school detention is there. At that school learners are dead scared of detention. Unfortunately, at our school it cannot work because 855 of our learners go home with interstate buses and the buses leave at 2H30. All learners who are using interstate buses buy tickets so they cannot miss the buses. Our school buses are used for learners who are taking part in different sporting activities.*

EDA01 says that it was always difficult for educators to stay behind and supervise detained learners. EDB01 wishes that their school could have detention but their problem is learners at their school.

Fluke et al. (2014) also assert that detention can also take place before school, during recess and in this case the learner is staying in the classroom while other learners go for recess or during lunch whereby the learner is required to eat lunch at a particular table or room away from other learners.

Some schools conduct detention on Friday evenings when several activities, collective proceedings and sports events are taking place as an effort to make detention something learners would avoid. Other schools conduct detention on Saturday and in this case, learners are instructed to bring school materials and complete homework or assignments during detention time.

SGBs after developing the learners' code of conduct they organise a parent meeting whereby parents will go through the learner's code of conduct and thoroughly discuss it. Then parents adopt and sign the learners' code of conduct. If detention is one of the disciplinary actions in that learner's code of conduct, the parents by virtue of adopting and signing that learner's code of conduct they give the consent for detention and all disciplinary actions which are in that learner's code of conduct.

Detention is necessary because it benefit learners academically rather than disadvantaging learners academically. Learners are not taken out of their classrooms during teaching hours, they are detained after school hours, before school hours and during breaks. Detention will benefit learners academically when educators give them classwork activities which must be finished during detention period.

Fluke et al. (2014) further assert that learners in detention are expected to bring study materials and complete homework or assignments during the detention time.

### **5.7.3.2 Suspension of learners**

Suspension is implemented when learners contravene a school's disciplinary regulations and subsequently denied an opportunity to attend school for a specific amount of time or days (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 regard suspension as a strategy which is used to deal with learners who are troublemakers at school (*cf* 2.4.7.6). They (EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03) also hold the view that suspension may be corrective in nature in that it may help educators to concentrate on academic activities rather than focusing on solving learner discipline problems (*cf*. 2.4.7.6).

EDA01 mentioned:

*When a learner misbehaves, we give a learner a verbal warning but if the bad behaviour persists a learner is given a final written warning. If a learner continues to misbehave the matter will be referred to the school disciplinary committee. Should a learner not stop to misbehave the school disciplinary committee will refer the matter to the school governing body for suspension of a learner. The school governing body, before suspending a learner, will give the learner a chance to respond to accusations. If the learner is found not guilty by the school governing body the learner cannot be suspended. This may send a negative message to the learner because the learner will feel that he/she proved the school wrong.*

EDB02 added to the afore-mentioned views and commented:

*The principal suspends a learner for a maximum of 5 days because the department of education does not allow principals to suspend learners for more than 5 days.*

During the time of suspension, learners lose out on valuable time and activities in terms of learning and teaching (cf. 2.4.7.6). To note, suspension may negatively encourage the rate of misbehaviour, especially with reference to those learners who may regard it as an ideal way of not attending school (cf. 2.4.7.6). Koon (2013) confirms that the rate of suspensions has increased and that it does not seem to be as effective as it is meant to be. Interviews revealed that both schools prefer suspension as a strategy to maintain discipline. It seems that educators in these schools are able to ensure effective facilitation of teaching and learning in that they enjoy a more peaceful class atmosphere. Adam (2015) assert that suspension may allow the rest of the class to relax and to learn – learners then learn and teachers teach, resulting in better academic progress.

Schools should, however, be cognizant that,

*“...the governing body may, on reasonable grounds and as a precautionary measure, suspend a learner who is suspected of serious misconduct from attending school, but may only enforce such suspension after the learner has been granted a reasonable opportunity to make representations to it in relation to such suspension” (RSA, 1996a, Section 9(1)).*

In some cases, the school governing body, after giving learners opportunities to present their side of the story might find the learner not guilty. Teachers will feel that the school governing body is taking the learner’s side and this gives the learner an opportunity to undermine teacher’s disciplinary actions.

### **5.7.3.3 Expulsion of learners**

Expulsion of learners refers to when learners are permanently removed from school (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03 indicated that learners who continuously disturb learning and teaching in the classroom have to be expelled from school (cf. 2.4.7.7). They (EDA01, EDA02, EDB01, EDB02 and EDB03) also feel that learners who come to school with dangerous weapons and illegal drugs must be expelled from school (cf. 2.4.7.7). EDA01 mentioned:

*The school governing body can recommend expulsion of learners if there is a need to do so. The school governing body will send the recommendation of the expulsion of learners to the department of education for approval or disapproval.*

EDB02 said that they also use expulsion of learners at their school and said:

*For expulsion of learners the school recommend expulsion of learners to the department of education. I can only remember 2 expulsion cases that we had in the past 13 years, but those learners were sent back to our school by the department of education and we did not succeed with that expulsion of learners.*

The teachers' views align with that of the DBE in that, "a learner at a public school may be expelled only by the Head of Department and if found guilty of serious misconduct after disciplinary proceedings contemplated in section 8 were conducted" (RSA, 1996a, Section 9(2)).

Parents of learners: (a) must be notified in writing about an expulsion; (b) have the right to question witnesses at a hearing; (c) have the right to representation during a hearing; and (d) may testify on their own behalf (Kraemer & Aleguire, 2015). An implication is that expelled learners forfeit opportunities to complete their studies (*cf.* 2.4.7.7).

Contrary to the afore-mentioned view, and although expulsion is applied as a disciplinary strategy, Thomas (2015) argue that learners should be provided with alternative educational opportunities during the expulsion period. According to SASA (RSA, 1996a), "if a learner who is subject to compulsory attendance is expelled from a public school, the Head of Department must make an alternative arrangement for his or her placement at a public school" (Section 3(1)). Expulsion of learners is not effective in schools because in most cases the department of education does not approve the expulsion of learners. Smit (2013) says that schools have at times find it challenging to expel ill-disciplined learners because of an unwillingness on by the provincial education Heads of Department to confirm an endorsement of expulsion. Instead of approving expulsion, learners are sent back to the school, whilst the DBE obliges schools to ensure that such learners are accommodated.

## **5.8 DATA GATHERED THROUGH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH SMTs**

Doyle (2020) is of the idea that semi-structured interviews are a gathering in which the interviewer does not rigorously follow an official list of questions. The interviewer asks more flexible questions to allow a conversation with the interviewees rather than concentrating on straight-forward questions and answers.

DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) assert that semi-structured interviews are frequently used in qualitative research. During semi-structured interviews, a dialogue takes place between the participants and researchers. This method allows the researcher to ask questions and follow-up questions, to gather unrestricted data, to explore participants' opinions, approaches and views about a specific theme and probe intensely into particular and sometimes delicate issues.

The researcher identifies themes before, during and after data collection. Themes emerge from reviewing the literature and from the characteristics of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher identified themes by looking at key words in the collected data. Themes are the final products of data analysis, the subjective meaning of data and messages contained in the data (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019).

### **5.8.1 Theme One: Learners discipline strategies**

Respondents were asked: Which learners discipline strategies do you apply to maintain learner's discipline at your school, can you describe it in detail? The focus was mainly on which learners discipline strategies school management teams are using to maintain learner's discipline. The strategies school management teams mentioned include a CoC for learners, corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment.

#### **5.8.1.1 Learner Code of Conduct**

A CoC is a legal document that mirrors the democratic values of the Constitution (RSA, 1996(b)) and it supports values such as human self-worth, fairness and autonomy. Whilst the CoC contains guidelines about learner behaviour and outlines the

disciplinary procedures to be applied regarding misbehaviours by learners (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012), its intention is to assist with providing a positive environment for learning and teaching.

School management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 said that they regard the CoC as a strategy which assist them to maintain discipline at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.5). DPA01 mentioned:

*We have our school discipline committee which deals with learner's discipline problems at school. It consists of school management team members and educators. The school discipline committee refers serious learner discipline cases to the school governing body for hearing.*

DPB01 supported the idea that the school management teams deal with learner discipline problems at their schools and said:

*We have a referral system where teachers write down learner's transgressions. If a learner reaches 10 demerit points, we call the parent and inform the parent about the learner's transgression.*

*If a learner reaches 20 demerit points, we organise a counselling session and after the counselling session a learner will be given a yellow card for a week. If a learner reaches 30 demerit points, a hearing will be called and the school governing body, the parents and the principal must be there. Depending on the transgression, a learner can be suspended for few days.*

In South African schools, the CoC is used to maintain learner discipline to ensure effective teaching and learning in classrooms. Importantly, the CoC should align with the South African Constitution (*cf.* 2.4.7.5). Sebisha (2015) supports the notion that a CoC is one of the strategies used to make sure that learner discipline exists in schools to support learning and teaching environment (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

For school management teams to follow proper procedures to maintain discipline at their schools, they must always ensure that, after a CoC has been drafted by the SGB and approved by parents, it be implemented in terms of the requirements as set out in the South African Schools which states that, "a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. A code of conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to

the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process” (RSA, 1996a, Section 8(1-2)). In this case, school management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 are on the right track by implementing a CoC in their schools.

Respondents were also asked: Did you involve learners, educators, parents and school governing bodies when you were developing learners discipline strategies to maintain learner’s discipline at your school, how did you involve them? The focus was mainly on the involvement of learners, educators, parents and SGBs when learner discipline strategies were developed?

School Management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 said that they involved SGBs, parents, learners and educators when they developed learner’s code of conduct.

HODA01 mentioned:

*Yes, we involved educators, parents, learners and school governing body when we developed learners’ code of conduct.*

DPB01 confirmed the involvement of educators and parents when they developed a CoC, but does not confirm the involvement of learners and said:

*Learner’s code of conduct is drafted by educators and school management team. Thereafter, it is presented to the school governing body and parents for their inputs and approval.*

The CoC is an agreement manuscript and its conscripting procedure should be characterized by the participation of non-educators, educators, parents and learners at schools (cf. 2.4.7.5). Du Plessis (2015) confirms that schools have to develop a CoC in partnership with its community and have to manage learner behaviour in partnership with the afore-mentioned educational stakeholders.

### **5.8.1.2 Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment**

School management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 made it very clear that they do not use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner discipline at their schools. In the past (before the promulgation of the South African Schools Act (1996)), corporal punishment was used as corrective measure for the

unruly behaviour of learners. SMTs are not allowed to use corporal punishment as an approach to sustain learner discipline in South African schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.1). HODA02 mentioned:

*We try many alternatives to corporal punishment and make sure that nobody uses corporal punishment at our school.*

In supporting the ban of corporal punishment in schools HODB02 said:

*Such punishment does not exist at our school. We just use all learner's discipline we have at our school to discipline learners.*

The views of SMTs align with a regulation that,

*“no person may administer corporal punishment at a school against a learner. A person who contravenes this provision is guilty of a criminal offence and that he/she can receive a sentence that can be imposed for assault if he/she is convicted”* (RSA, 1996a, Section 10(1)); and

*“everyone has the right to freedom and security, including the rights: to be free from all forms of violence, not to be tortured, not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way”* (RSA, 1996a, Section 12(1)).

To adhere to the regulations as stipulated in both the Constitution (1996b) as well as South African Schools Act (1996a), SMTs should rather implement strategies for corrective behaviour in terms of the ATCP (*cf.* 2.4.7.2). Notably, an effective implementation of the ATCP requires a collaborative action by teachers, learners, parents, SMTs and SGBs. Respondents of the two interviewed schools clearly understand that they can no longer use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. They know that an implementation of the ATCP should be regarded as the only strategies for maintaining discipline in schools.

### **5.8.1.3 Dangerous objects and illegal drugs**

School management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 always make sure that they immediately deal with learners who are found in ownership of unsafe substances and unlawful items. HODA02 mentioned:

*A learner will be suspended immediately and a hearing which include the parents of a learner, the school management team and the school governing body will be organised.*

HODB02 supported the fact that they immediately respond to the matter and said:

*We involve the police so that they must come and check for dangerous objects or illegal drugs and hand over the case to them after our internal hearing. By the time the case is now in their hands the school leave everything to the police for them to handle the matter according to their expertise.*

Joubert et al. (2013) state that the South African Schools Act pronounces all schools as drug-free areas and noticeably indicates that no individual may carry an unsafe object or prohibited drug onto the school grounds during any school activities. Being a law, the South African Schools Act states that, “applies to all schools and is aimed at safeguarding the interests of learners with regard to their right to education, which must take place in an environment free of drugs and dangerous objects” (RSA, 1996a, Section 8(a)).

From the responses it is clear that SMTs are aware that there is a possibility that some learners may be in possession of unsafe objects and prohibited drugs when at school or in the classroom. The participants further indicated that they alert and ready to deal with learners found in ownership of unsafe objects and prohibited drugs.

In ensuring that a safe school environment is indeed maintained, SMTs rely on the South African Schools Act 84 which states that, “

*“the principal or his or her delegate may, at random, search any group of learners, or the property of a group of learners, for any dangerous object or illegal drug, if a fair and reasonable suspicion has been established that (a) a dangerous object or an illegal drug may be found on school premises or during a school activity; or (b) one or more learners on school premises or during a school activity are in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs”* (RSA, 1996a, Section 8(a)(2)).

The aforementioned act is in accordance with the provision that, “every child has the right to protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation” (RSA, 1996b, Section 28(1)). This means that every child has the right family care or parental care. Teachers as parents of learners at school they feel that for efficient learning and

teaching to take place at school, the school must be free of dangerous objects and illegal drugs.

#### **5.8.1.4 Learner's absenteeism, learners bullying, learning and teaching disruption**

SMTs (DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03) make sure that they follow the guidelines of their schools' learners CoC when dealing with learner absenteeism, bullying and disruption of learning and teaching. DPA01 mentioned:

*The social environment we are living in creates learner's absenteeism, sometimes there are learners who are taking care of their grannies and this contribute to their absenteeism. Bullying is not so much a problem at our school if it is there maybe it is not reported. Learning and teaching disruption is taking place only when there are learners who are fighting.*

HODB03 supported the matter and said:

*At our school absenteeism is not that much but during examinations learners who are not writing on that day, do not come to school and claim to study at home where there is less distraction. On rare occasions learners write on the walls as a form of bullying other learners but as soon as we are informed about it, we arrange for its cleaning immediately.*

*Learning and teaching disruption is only when a learner walks out of the class during the lesson or not wanting to be taught but rather listen to music in his/her cell phone. That behaviour will be dealt with immediately through disciplinary strategies.*

Coetzee and Venter (2016) assert that learner absenteeism is complemented by multi societal and different risk elements that require an exclusive management methodology in South African schools. The South African Constitution supports a child-centred methodology, which requires a personalized inspection of the specific actual situation of the specific child. Some socio-economic factors like poverty and a lack of income contribute to absenteeism (Coetzee & Venter, 2016).

Considering the continuing international discussion on learner absenteeism, the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) held a Discipline Summit where learner absenteeism was deliberated (DBE, 2014, pp.12, 23, 25). Furthermore, Salehi et al.

(2016) indicate that bullying is mainly corporeal and voiced attacks with little understanding of the emotional committed by a group of people who may perceive another person to be weaker. In this regard, Kruger (2013) explains that bullying is common in today's ethos in schools, with disturbing consequences which destructively affect not only staff and learners, but the wider neighbourhood community. Gordon (2020) says that learners who are bullied at school suffer both emotionally and socially and normally resort to drugs and alcohol. They also struggle to focus on their schoolwork.

Ford (2013) says that learning and teaching disruption affects learners' academic achievement. Learning and teaching disruption makes it challenging for learners to learn and educators to teach. Learner's disruptive behaviour hurt the learning ability of other learners and decrease educator's effective teaching.

Blank and Shavit (2016) are of the idea that learning and teaching disruption impede the learning process and negatively influences the achievement of the whole class. "Behaviour problems in a classroom increase the stress levels for both teacher and pupils, disrupt the flow of lessons and conflict with both learning objectives and the process of learning" (Parsonson, 2012, p.16).

According to Redempta (2010) the principal must work in liaison with educators in developing learners discipline rules and in enforcing learner's discipline in school. Even if some schools in South Africa battle with learner's absenteeism, bullying and disruption of teaching and learning, the researcher found that the two schools are able to minimize the effects of the afore-mentioned challenges in terms of learner discipline.

### **5.8.2 Theme Two: Challenges encountered**

This theme relates to challenges which are encountered by SMTs when they deal with challenges pertaining to learners' behaviour and discipline in schools. For effective learning and teaching to take place, SMTs must first identify challenges they encounter when they deal with issues such as negative behaviour and discipline. Thereafter, SMTs must develop approaches to deal with recognized challenges to improve the discipline situation in their schools.

Respondents were asked: Which challenges do you encounter when implementing learner's discipline strategies at your school? The challenges school management teams mentioned include learner's attitude, disrespectful learners and parent's attitude.

### **5.8.2.1 Learner's attitude**

According to SMTs, some learners have a undesirable assertiveness towards school rules and regulations because they feel that they have rights and that such rights are being violated by schools. SMTs (DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03) feel that a lack of discipline contributes to learners being more aggressive at times (cf. 2.3.1.11).

DPA01 mentioned:

*Some learners are rebellious and when they are taken by their educators to the principal's office, they create an unnecessary havoc. They want other learners to look at them as heroes who cannot be disciplined by the school management teams.*

DPB01 supported the matter and said:

*Some learners are rebellious, if you explain the discipline process to them, they will tell you that they are used to it. They say that they know that they will be given yellow cards and a hearing will be called in the presence of their parents, but no drastic steps will be taken against them.*

Some learners' attitudes in schools in South Africa make it difficult for school management teams to use discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at their schools (cf. 2.3.1.11). On the other hand, cases of learner's discipline problems are in the increase in schools in South Africa (cf. 2.3.1.11).

Díez-Palomor et al. (2020) are of the idea that for learners learn properly that depends on the attitudes they have towards schoolwork. Learners who clearly show resistance towards schoolwork and school rules, do not perform well academically.

According to Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) in schools in South Africa learner's discipline is a problem. Handling learners discipline problems is the most serious aspect and educators are at a loss for effective methods for maintaining discipline.

O'Brennan et al. (2014) state that learners lack of discipline is the cause of disruptive and aggressive behaviour which interferes with their academic performance. The reduction of learner's discipline problems should be the main concern of the school staff, school leaders, learners, department officials and the broader community. Learner's discipline problems such as aggression, screaming and beating are repeatedly reported by educators to be disturbing to instructional teaching and learning time and seems to be the emphasis of office discipline recommendations and applications for learner support.

It is imperative that the department of education ensures that all learners in schools in South Africa abide by all learner's discipline strategies which are used by school management teams to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. The department of education must come up with strategies to deal with learners who openly challenge school management teams when school management teams use learners discipline strategies to discipline them.

#### **5.8.2.2 Disrespectful learners**

Learners are expected to respect their teachers and abide by the CoC. It is essential for all learners to acknowledge that the rights they have must correspond with particular responsibilities (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). "Students have the right to be free of interference from other students. Students have the responsibility not to interfere with the education of other students" (Frederick County Public Schools, 2020/2021, p.46).

SMTs (DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03) indicated that some learners are disrespectful because they are unable to adequately cope with disciplinary requirements of schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

HODA02 mentioned:

*Learners sometimes argue with the school management team when educators refer them for discipline. They refuse to listen to the instructions of the school management team.*

HODB02 supported the matter and said:

*It is difficult to deal with disrespectful learners because they do not want to be disciplined when they are found guilty. They openly defy instructions of the school management team and try to do as they wish but our school management team deals with disrespectful learners immediately and remedy the situation.*

Many SMTs are at a loss on how to deal with learner discipline problems in schools (cf. 2.3.1.11). The main cause of learner discipline problems in South African schools relate to a possibility that discipline policies might not have been successfully executed because of insufficient resources, absence of obligation of school leaders and lack of proper training (cf. 2.3.1.11).

*“The South African Schools Act, 84 of (1996a) and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 108 of (1996b), have created a new legal context and it is therefore important for SMT members to know the law relating to school discipline and punishment, and to be familiar with legal concepts, principles and procedures to continue building and maintaining effect schools” (Nene 2013, p.17).*

### **5.8.2.3 Parent’s attitude**

According to Kalimuthu and Saravanakumar (2018), parents’ encouraging attitudes towards learners’ education are vital with respect to school presence and educational attainment of learners. A positive attitude is fundamental because it may contribute to good working relationship between parents and SMTs. In this regard, DPA01 mentioned:

*We have some parents who have negative attitude toward school. They do not want to work with the school management team to solve the problems of their children’s misbehaviour instead they always maintain that the school is against their children.*

DPB01 supported the matter and said:

*Our school management team try by all means to involve learner’s parents when dealing with learner’s misbehaviour but there are parents who refuse to cooperate with our school management team. When they called to attend to their children’s discipline consultations or meetings they just don’t come.*

If parents do not support the application of discipline approaches, it may contribute to further problems in schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). It is important for all stakeholders like parents to be part of all the efforts and measures which are put in place to come up with strategies to deal with learner's discipline problems in school (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). Parents have to know that for their children to be academically successful, they have to take responsibility in ensuring that learners attend school, adhere to school rules and portray acceptable behaviour when at school.

Wolhuter and van der Walt (2020) explains that parents are the principal instructors of their children and their illustrations of self-control and ethical qualities will continue to exist in learners for a very long time. Manamela (2015) is of the idea that schools cannot fully educate learners without the cooperation of their parents, for example learners cannot do schoolwork in class if the parents do not provide them with required stationary.

### **5.8.3 Theme Three: Collaborative leadership**

According to Maalouf (2019), "Collaborative leadership entails getting the right mentality, reducing operation charges, viewing beyond the boundaries of the company, developing harmony, and maintaining the capability to connect smoothly with others, and in managing contradictions" (p.140). Common qualities of effective leadership of character, integrity, competence and compassion will always be there (*cf.* 2.5.1.).

Respondents were asked: Did you involve learners, educators, learner's parents and school governing body when you were developing learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at your school, how did you involve them? HODA01 mentioned:

*Yes, we involved educators, parents, learners and school governing body when we developed learner's discipline strategies.*

HODB03 supported the matter and said:

*When learners apply at our school their parents are given a copy of the school code of conduct. The parents will go through it and sign it to say: "We are aware of the code of conduct, we are aware of what our children can and cannot do, and we agree with*

*it and agree to abide by it". Every year we involve parents, learners, educators and school governing body to make some changes where there is a need. During that time all stakeholders are given chance to ask questions, comment and come up with inputs.*

Collaborative leadership strategies school management teams mentioned include detention of learners, suspension of learners and expulsion of learners.

### **5.8.3.1 Detention of learners**

McCann (2017) claims that during detention a learner reports to a particular zone or area for a particular period after school to do assignments or complete responsibilities assigned to them.

The school management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 said they do not use detention as a strategy to maintain learner discipline at their schools. DPA01 mentioned:

*We tried detention, but we realised that it is taxing on educators than on learners. At the end we decided to stop it because it was not working for us.*

HODB02 supported the matter and said:

*We use to have detention at our school about 17 years ago. It was on Saturday morning and on Friday afternoon. However, the school got bigger and 90% of our learners are bused home. When the bell rings at 2o'clock, by 2:15pm everybody must be on the buses because they use interstate buses which leave at 2:30 pm. Another reason for cancelling detention at our school was the fact that it was unfair for teachers who remain behind on Fridays and who come on Saturday mornings sometimes for one or two learners. So, detention was basically taken away from our school not because we did not want it but because of the abovementioned reasons.*

Lapperts (2012) says that detention as learner's disciplinary action is used after school. Mathe (2008) also says that detention sessions last from an hour to four hours after school.

### 5.8.3.2 *Suspension of learners*

Suspension of learners refer to when learners are denied an opportunity to attend school for a specific amount of time or days (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). School management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 regard suspension as a strategy which is used to deal with learners who are troublemakers at school (cf. .2.4.7.6).

The school management teams DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03 feel that suspension of learners helps them to concentrate on academic activities rather than concentrating on solving learner discipline problems (cf. 2.4.7.6). DPA01 mentioned:

*We are guided by the Schools Act a learner is given a verbal warning but if the bad behaviour persist a learner will receive a final written warning. If a learner continues to misbehave a matter will be referred to the school disciplinary committee. Should a learner not stop misbehaving the matter will be referred to the school governing body for suspension.*

HODB03 said that they also use suspension at their school and said:

*A learner must have accumulated a certain number of points to be suspended or must have done something serious to be suspended until the parents come to see the principal. For example, if a learner was found using alcohol, a learner will be suspended for 3 days and the parents will be informed to come and see the principal. A learner must arrange his/her own catch-up plan for the lost days.*

Koon (2013) observes that schools often implement suspension as strategy when learners commit serious disciplinary offenses. In the absence of learners who have been suspended, it seems as if teaching and learning takes place unimpeded, whilst other learners show a change in their behaviour (Adams, 2015).

Notably, when schools would implement suspension, it should be in accordance with the law in that,

*“...the governing body may, on reasonable grounds and as a precautionary measure, suspend a learner who is suspected of serious misconduct from attending school, but may only enforce such suspension after the learner has been granted a reasonable opportunity to make representations to it in relation to such suspension” (RSA, 1996a, Section 9(1)).*

### **5.8.3.3 Expulsion of learners**

Smit (2013) declares that the school management teams after exhausting all school disciplinary actions will organise a meeting with school governing bodies and recommend learner expulsion.

SMTs (DPA01, HODA02, DPB01, HODB02 and HODB03) indicated that learners who continuously disturb learning and teaching have to be expelled from school (cf. 2.4.7.7). SMTs also felt that learners who arrive at the school with dangerous items and prohibited drugs must be expelled from school (cf. 2.4.7.7). HODA02 mentioned:

*The school governing body recommend expulsion of learners who are troublemakers at school if there is a need to do so. The school governing body will then send their recommendation to the department of education for approval or disapproval. The researcher, does the department of education normally approve learner's expulsion at your school? The department of education always sent learners back to our school and refuse to expel them.*

HODB03 supported the matter and said:

*When it comes to expulsion of learners, that's a bit difficult because we have to refer the matter to the school governing body for them to recommend expulsion to the department of education.*

Expelled learners forfeit the opportunity to complete their studies (cf. 2.4.7.7). On the other hand, expelled learners must be given an opportunity to appeal their expulsion (cf. 2.4.7.7).

Allie (2001) feels that learners who are expelled from school embody a high-risk group in terms of their exposure to drug abuse and participation in delinquency. Expulsion of learners is not effective in schools because in most cases the department of education does not approve the expulsion of learners. Instead of approving expulsion of learners the department of education send back learners to schools and order schools to make a plan to assist those learners to behave well and succeed academically instead of recommending expulsion.

## **5.9 DATA GATHERED THROUGH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**

Jamshed (2014) claims that semi-structured interview is the conversation in which the interviewer is cognizant of the respondent and when the respondent tries to deviate from the central issue, the interviewer refocuses the respondent towards the main question that was asked.

### **5.9.1 Theme One: Learners discipline strategies**

Respondents were asked: Did you develop learners' code of conduct to maintain learner's discipline at your school as vested upon you by the South African Schools Act, how did you develop it? The focus was mainly on which learners discipline strategies school governing bodies are using to maintain learner's discipline. The strategies school governing bodies mentioned include learners' code of conduct, corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment, dangerous objects and illegal drugs and learner's absenteeism, learners bullying and learning and teaching disruption.

#### **5.9.1.1 *Learners' code of Conduct***

In terms of South African Schools Act, "the governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for learners of the school" (RSA, 1996a, Section 8). Learner's CoC is the school's authority to discipline learners for all bad behaviours and unacceptable acts which are not wanted by the school. Learner's code of conduct provides positive environment for learning and teaching.

NB: EDA01 and EDA02 participated as both educators and school governing body members (educator's component).

School governing body EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 said that they regard learners' code of conduct as a strategy which assist them to maintain learner's discipline at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

EDA01 mentioned:

*We use FEDSAS to provide us with guidelines on how to develop our school learner's code of conduct. We make sure that our school learner's code of conduct abides by the South African Schools Act.*

SGBB01 supported the matter and said:

*Yes, we developed our schools, learner's code of conduct and there are changes which are made every year when there is a need because learner's code of conduct is not a stagnant document.*

Learner's CoC is applied in schools in South Africa to maintain learner's discipline so that there must be effective teaching and learning. Learner's CoC in all South African schools must be guided by the South African Constitution (*cf.* 2.4.7.5). Learner's code of conduct is used in schools in South Africa as a form of legislation which ensures that learner's discipline is maintained in schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.5). Sebisha (2015) asserts that a CoC is one of the approaches used to make that learner's discipline exists in schools to support learning and teaching environment (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

For school governing bodies to follow the proper procedures to maintain learner's discipline at their schools they must always make sure that they develop their learners' code of conduct guided by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 section 8.

In this case, school governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 are on the right track because they use the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 section 8 to develop their learners' code of conduct.

The South African Schools Act states that,

*"...a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents, educators of the school. A code of conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process"* (RSA, 1996a, Section 8(1-2)).

This is complemented by a section in the Constitution which indicates that,

*"The Bill of Rights does not deny the existence of any rights or freedoms that are recognised or conferred by common law, customary law or legislation, to the extent that they are consistent with the Bill of Rights"* (RSA, 1996b, Section 39(3)).

This implies that all the authorized regulations and values of the South African common law and legislation of the pre-constitutional era continue to be valid and enforceable insofar as it is congruence with the Bill of Rights.

Notably, it is, “a constitutional democracy and that it is inter alia founded on the values of supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law” (RSA, 1996b, Section 1(a)). The sovereignty of the Constitution implies that everyone, including the government, all management organizations, educators, schools, learners and parents subject to the Constitution.

Respondents were also asked: When developing learners’ code of conduct to maintain learner’s discipline at your school did you involve learners, educators, parents and school management teams, can you explain how you involved them? The focus was mainly on the involvement of learners, educators, parents and school management teams when learners was developed.

School Governing Bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 said that they involved learners, educators, parents and school management teams when they developed learner’s code of conduct. EDA02 mentioned:

*Parents are involved, learners’ code of conduct cannot be developed without involving parents. Learners are involved and many times we involve them through the RCL (Representative of Learners Council).*

*Learners and parents are also involved during Grade meetings which are held once a year. A special meeting for educators is held to involve educators in the development of learner’s code of conduct.*

SGBB03 supported the matter and said:

*Educators meet and come up with inputs for learner’s code of conduct, the school management team is also present at the meeting, at the parents meeting parents come up with their inputs and learners are having a meeting where they will come up with their inputs. Thereafter the school governing body which consists of parents, learners, educators and school management team meet and develop learner’s code of conduct based on inputs from all stakeholders. Developed learner’s code of conduct will be tabled to all stakeholders at different meetings to re-check it and approve it. Finally, the school governing body will organise a parent’s meeting to adopt and sign learners’ code of conduct.*

*The researcher, have you ever come across the time whereby when learners' code of conduct is taken to a parent's meeting some parents say that certain parts of learner's code of conduct are not acceptable? It always happened and we open a discussion around that and come up with a solution.*

Learner' CoC is an agreement manuscript and its conscripting procedure should be characterized by the participation of non-educators, educators, learners and parents at school (cf. 2.4.7.5). Du Plessis (2015) confirms that schools have to develop a behaviour code in partnership with its community and have to manage learner's behaviour in partnership between learners, their families and school staff and further claims that schools are a part of the community in which they operate, and have a responsibility to work collaboratively at a local level.

### **5.9.1.2 Corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment**

School Governing Bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01 SGBB02 and SGBB03 made it very clear that they do not use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. In the past corporal punishment was used to discipline unruly learners and was used as a means of disciplining learners in schools. School governing bodies are no more allowed by law to use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner's discipline in schools in South Africa because corporal punishment was banned in 1997 (cf. 2.4.7.1). EDA02 mentioned:

*At our school we do not use corporal punishment to discipline learners.*

In supporting the ban of corporal punishment in schools SGBB03 said:

*Our school always make sure that we all abide by the abolition of corporal punishment and refrain from using corporal punishment to punish learners.*

Notably, the South African Schools Act provides that, "no person may administer corporal punishment at a school against a learner. A person who contravenes this provision is guilty of a criminal offence and that he/she can receive a sentence that can be imposed for assault if he/she is convicted" (RSA, 1996a, Section 10(1)).

Also, it is stated that, "everyone has the right to freedom and security, including the rights: to be free from all forms of violence, not to be tortured, not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way" (Section, 12(1) and that, "every child

should be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation” (Section 12(1)).

School governing bodies must use Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) as their strategy to maintain learner’s discipline at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.2). For Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) to work properly there must be collective leadership in schools by teachers, learners, parents, school management teams and school governing bodies. Schools must have discipline policies which are posted in every classroom and parents, teachers, learners, school management teams and school governing bodies must have copies of school discipline policies (*cf.* 2.4.7.2).

Section 10 of the South African Schools Act states that everyone has inherent human dignity and their right to its protection. Section 7 (1) (h) of the Children’s Act says any behaviour that would inflict injury on a child whether it is physical or emotional is not allowed. The National Education Policy Act of 1996 mandated that the Minister of Education must develop policies about the control and discipline of learners to ensure that no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a learner to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution (Ebrahim, 2017).

Previously corporal punishment was used as the only means of dealing with learner’s discipline problems and it was substituted by a discipline approach called the ATCP in 2000 (Tungat, 2006). The suggested disciplinary procedures are community work, detention, verbal warning, demerits, community work and small tedious physical responsibilities (Chisholm, 2007). The research shows that, since the introduction of the ATCP, learner discipline problems in schools continue to grow (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

For the ATCP to properly work in schools, there must be a collaborative leadership in school, this means that teachers, learners, parents and school management teams must work together in dealing with learner’s discipline problems (Kalipa, 2015).

Respondents of the two interviewed schools clearly understand that they can no longer use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner’s discipline at their schools. They know that the only thing they must use to maintain learner’s discipline at their schools is Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP).

The ATCP aligns with the Constitution in that, “Everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes the right not to be tortured in any way: and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” (RSA, 1996b, Section 12(1)).

### **5.9.1.3 Dangerous objects and illegal drugs**

The school governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 always make sure that they immediately deal with learners who are found in ownership of unsafe objects and prohibited drugs. EDA02 mentioned:

*When the school discipline committee refer the case of a learner who is found in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs to the school governing body a hearing will be organised and internal procedures will be followed before involving the police as guided by our learner’s code of conduct.*

SGBB01 supported the fact that they immediately respond to the matter and said:

*The principal will inform the school governing body about the case of a learner who is found being in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs. The school governing body will organise a hearing and involve the parents of the learner, the school psychologist, the school management team and the police to deal with the matter.*

Joubert et al. (2013) the South African Schools Act declares all schools as drug-free areas and undoubtedly indicates that no individual may be in ownership of unsafe objects or prohibited drugs on school premises. School governing bodies are aware that there is a possibility of learners to come with dangerous objects and illegal drugs to school. They are always alert and ready to deal with any learner/learners found in possession of dangerous objects and illegal drugs.

South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 section 8A subsection (2) states that the principal or his or her delegate may, at random, search any group of learners, or the property of a group of learners, for any dangerous object or illegal drug, if a fair and reasonable suspicion has been established that (a) a dangerous object or an illegal drug may be found on school premises or during a school activity, or (b) one or more learners on school premises or during a school activity are in possession of dangerous

objects or illegal drugs. This implies that learners have a legitimate right to receive education in a harmless school setting.

#### **5.9.1.4 Learner's absenteeism, learners bullying, learning and teaching disruption**

The school governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBBo3 make sure that they follow the guidelines of their school's learners' code of conduct when dealing with learner's absenteeism, learners bullying and learning and teaching disruption. EDA02 mentioned:

*There are cases whereby some learners who are not interested in attending school will absent themselves and come up with invalid excuses. Teenagers like to be seen and heard as a result some bigger learners will try to bully small ones but it is very minimal at our school. We do not experience learning and teaching disruption but it is only when there are learners who are fighting.*

SGBB01 supported the matter and said:

*I can say all of them are minimal. For bullying we introduced a programme called 'Bully Buster'. All teachers are very involved when coming to bullying and they take it very seriously. When we hear that there is bullying which takes place, we deal with it there and then. We have period registers to control absenteeism and those period registers go to the deputy principal to call the parents and hear from them about their children's reasons of absenteeism. In most cases you will find that a child is sick or something wrong happened.*

Coetzee and Venter (2016) assert that in schools in South Africa learner's absenteeism is complemented by multi-societal and personal risk aspects that require exclusive management method.

Coetzee and Venter (2016) further assert that learner's social and economic circumstances result into involuntarily learner's absenteeism. Considering the continuing universal discussion on learner absenteeism, the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) held a Discipline Summit where learner's absenteeism was deliberated.

Kruger (2013) confirms that bullying is rife in today's culture in schools, with devastating consequences which negatively affect not only learners and staff, but the broader neighbourhood community, the general school climate and the overall functioning of the school. Bullying can be a precursor to aggression and if not addressed may lead to serious acts of violence.

Ford (2013) says that learning and teaching disruption affects learner's academic achievement. Learning and teaching disruption makes it difficult for learners to learn and educators to teach. Learner's disruptive behaviour hurt the learning ability of other learners and decrease educator's effective teaching.

Although some schools in South Africa battle with learner's absenteeism, learners bullying and learning and teaching disruption, the researcher found that the two schools the researcher interviewed are able to minimize the level of learner's absenteeism, learners bullying and learning and teaching disruption. South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 section 12 states that a learner is deemed to be absent from school when the learner is not present in class or not participating in a school activity when the register is marked.

### **5.9.2 Theme Two: Challenges encountered**

This theme relates challenges which are encountered by school governing bodies when they deal with learner's behaviour and learner's discipline in schools. It also relates to challenges encountered by school governing bodies when they implement learners' code of conduct to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. For effective learning and teaching to take place school governing bodies must first identify challenges they encounter when they deal with learner's behaviour and learner's discipline. Thereafter school governing bodies must develop learners' code of conduct to deal with identified challenges for them to maintain learner's discipline and to have effective learning and teaching at their schools.

Respondents were asked: Which challenges did you encounter when implementing learners' code of conduct at your school? The challenges school governing bodies mentioned include learner's attitude, disrespectful learners and parent's attitude.

### **5.9.2.1 Learner's attitude**

Some learners have a negative attitude towards school rules and school regulations because they feel that they have rights and learners school rules and regulations violates their rights. They also feel that school rules and regulations restrict their behaviour (Jankauskiene & Sukys, 2012).

The school governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 feel that the learners' lack of discipline contributes to their aggressive (cf. 2.3.1.11). EDA02 mentioned:

*Our school discipline committee immediately deals with learners with negative attitude and refer serious matters of learner's negative attitude to the school governing body. Our school governing body then organise a hearing to deal with cases referred to them and drastically deal with those learners with negative attitude toward school.*

GBB03 supported the matter and said:

*Our school governing body and our school management team immediately deal with learner's negative attitude. A hearing is called on which learner's parents are present and the matter will be dealt with accordingly.*

Some learners' attitude in schools in South Africa make it difficult for school governing bodies to use discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at their schools (cf. 2.3.1.11). On the other hand, cases of learner's discipline are in the increase in schools in South Africa (cf. 2.3.1.11).

According to Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) in schools in South Africa learner's discipline is a problem. Handling learners discipline problems is the most serious aspect and educators are at a loss for effective methods for maintaining discipline. O'Brennan et al. (2014) state that learners lack of discipline is the cause of disruptive and aggressive behaviour which interferes with their academic performance. The reduction of learner's discipline problems should be the main concern of the school staff, school leaders, learners, departmental officials and the broader community. Learner's discipline problems such as fighting, yelling and hitting are often reported by educators to be disruptive to instructional learning time and tend to be the focus of office discipline referrals and requests for learner's support.

It is important for the department of education to make sure that all learners in schools in South Africa abide by learner's code of conduct which is used by school governing bodies to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. The department of education must come up with strategies to deal with learners who openly challenge school governing bodies when school governing bodies use learners' code of conduct to discipline them.

### **5.9.2.2 Disrespectful learners**

Learners are expected to respect their school governing bodies and abide by the learner's code of conduct. It is important for all learners to know that the rights they have must correspond with responsibilities (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). School governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 say that some learners are disrespectful because they are unable to adequately cope to school requirement (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). EDA01 mentioned:

*It is very rare that we have cases which are referred to the school governing body by the school discipline committee. Cases of disrespectful learners are dealt with by the school discipline committee and the school management teams.*

SGBB01 supported the matter and said:

*The school management team through its referral system deals with all cases of disrespectful learners before they could get to the level of referring them to the school governing body.*

Many schools governing bodies are at a loss on how to deal with learner's discipline in schools. On the other hand, learner's discipline problems frustrate school governing bodies (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). The main cause of learner's discipline problems in schools in South Africa is the fact that learners discipline policies might not have been effectively implemented due to inadequate sources, lack of commitment of school leaders and lack of proper training of school leaders (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

According to Kourkoutas and Wolhuter (2013) in schools in South Africa learner's discipline is a problem. Handling learners discipline problems is the most serious aspect and educators are at a loss for effective methods for maintaining discipline.

Wolhuter and Russo (2013) assert that educators battle with learner's discipline problems. Learner's discipline is an ongoing and serious problem in schools. Educators are at a loss on how to deal with learner's discipline problems.

Similarly, Smit (2013) mentions that educators feel disempowered because of the abolition of corporal punishment which was one of the traditional measures to maintain order and discipline. School governing bodies can try all their best to discipline learners but it is always difficult to deal with learners who are unable to cope with school work like reading. If a learner cannot read it is difficult for that learner to study what he/she was taught in the classroom on his/her own.

### **5.9.2.3 Parent's attitude**

According to Kalimuthu and Saravanakumar (2018), parent's positive attitude towards learner's education is important in determining school attendance and academic achievement of learners. Parent's positive attitude is also important to an extent that it is essential that there must be a good relationship between parents and school governing bodies. School governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 feel that it is important for school governing bodies and parents to work together when dealing with learner's discipline problems in schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). EDA02 mentioned:

*We have parents who are having negative attitude toward the school governing body especially when the school governing body have to take action against their misbehaving children.*

SGBB02 supported the matter and said:

*Majority of our parents are supportive to the school governing body but some of them show negative attitude toward the school governing body and challenge all efforts which are implemented by the school governing body to discipline their children.*

Lack of parent's support to school governing bodies is one of the causes of learner's discipline problems in schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). It is important for all stakeholders like parents to be part of all the efforts and measures which are put in place to come with strategies to deal with learner's discipline problems in school (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

Msingi (2017) says that learners discipline problems manifest from variety of reasons such as, peer pressure, overcrowding, lack of parental support, inability to do the work, poverty, lack of motivation to succeed, disrespect, moral decay, not being engaged in the formulation of rules, rules being not enforced, lack of parental care, unmonitored TV viewing, child-headed families, lack of effective disciplinary measures, poor perception of the aims and principles of schooling and poor home upbringing (cf. 2.3.1.11).

### **5.9.3 Theme Three: Collaborative leadership**

According to Kirstin (2018) collaborative leadership is taking a group of individuals, who do not fall within a traditional, hierarchical structure, and make them to work together toward a common goal. Educators battle with learner discipline problems (cf. 2.3.1.9.).

Respondents were asked: When developing learners' code of conduct to maintain learner's discipline at your school did you involve learners, educators, parents and school management teams, can you explain how you involved them? EDA02 mentioned.

*It is developed collectively by teachers, non-teaching staff, learners, parents, school management team and school governing body.*

SGBB02 supported the matter and said:

*Yes, all parties are involved in the development of learner's code of conduct, parents, teachers, learners, school management team and school governing body.*

Collaborative leadership strategies school governing bodies mentioned include detention of learners, suspension of learners and expulsion of learners.

#### **5.9.3.1 Detention of learners**

Serame (2011) says that detention is a type of disciplinary action in which a learner sacrifices his/her free time due to his/her misbehaviour or unruly behaviour. The school governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 said they

do not use detention as a strategy to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. EDA02 mentioned:

*Our school does not use detention because it is not possible for teachers to supervise detained learners.*

SGBB03 supported the matter and said:

*No, our school does not use detention. We used to have detention years ago when our school had few learners.*

Seabe (2012) says that in some cases when learners have to serve detention for their unruly behaviour they just laugh and don't even attend, they don't care. Learners further say NO!!! Definitely NOT the mickey-mouse "DETENTION" tactic after school or on Saturday!

Detention is necessary because it benefits learners academically rather than disadvantaging learners academically. Learners are not taken out of their classrooms during teaching hours, they are detained after school hours, before school hours and during breaks. Detention will benefit learners academically when educators give them classwork activities which must be finished during detention period.

### **5.9.3.2 Suspension of learners**

Suspension of learners refers to when learners are denied an opportunity to attend school for a specific amount of time or days (Noltemeyer et al., 2015). School governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 regard suspension as a strategy which is used to deal with learners who are troublemakers at school (cf. 2.4.7.6). The school governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 feel that suspension of learners helps them to concentrate on academic activities rather than concentrating on solving learner's discipline problems (cf. 2.4.7.6).

EDA01 mentioned:

*The school disciplinary committee refers cases of learners who are very troublesome to the school governing body for suspension.*

SGBB01 said at their school the principal suspends learners.

*The school principal and school management team suspend learners who are troublesome.*

Koon (2013) says that for the past years and presently schools rely on suspension as disciplinary responses to a wide range of learner's infractions of school rules and norms, but the rate of suspension has gone up.

Suspension of learners, benefit school governing bodies in the sense that when learners who misbehave in school are suspended school governing bodies are able to maintain learner's discipline in schools and effective learning and teaching will take place. Both schools prefer to use suspension of learners as a strategy to maintain learner's discipline at their schools.

Adams (2015) feels that suspending disruptive learners will allow the class to settle down and learn. At a school where there is a high level of learner's suspension there is a very negative effect on learners who are abiding to the rules. A low average rate of learner's suspensions appeared to have no academic impact on learners who are not suspended but it becomes harmful when schools are above average on their use of suspensions.

When schools reduce learner's suspensions rates and institute alternative methods of resolving conflict, learner's academic achievement goes up. Learner's suspensions are necessary because when bad learners are removed from good learners, good learners will behave, learn and have a good academic performance. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 subsection (1) states the governing body may, on reasonable grounds and as a precautionary measure, suspend a learner who is suspected of serious misconduct from attending school, but may only enforce such suspension after the learner has been granted a reasonable opportunity to make representations to it in relation to such suspension.

### **5.9.3.3 *Expulsion of learners***

Smith et al. (2015) believe that before the school governing body can recommend learner expulsion to the provincial Head of Department of Education, the school governing must have exhausted all school disciplinary actions. School governing

bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 say that learners who continuously disturb learning and teaching have to be expelled from school (cf. 2.4.7.7). School governing bodies EDA01, EDA02, SGBB01, SGBB02 and SGBB03 also feel that learners who come to school with dangerous weapons and illegal drugs must be expelled from school (cf. 2.4.7.7). EDA01 mentioned:

*A learner must have done something very serious to be expelled. Remember we just recommend expulsion, but the final step lies with the Provincial Head of Department of Education. Then the Provincial Head of Education will sometimes send a learner back to school or recommend that a learner must be kept at our school until the end of the year then a learner must not come back to our school the following year.*

SGBB01 supported the matter and said:

*The school governing body does not expel learners but it recommends expulsion to the Provincial Head of Department of Education. The Provincial Head of Department of Education will then take a decision of either approving expulsion or disapproving expulsion.*

Mofokeng (2015) says that SASA does not afford school governing bodies the right to lodge an appeal against the provincial Head of Department of Education decision pertaining to the recommendation for expulsion, once rejected it is rejected.

## **5.10 SUMMARY**

Participants of the two schools expressed themselves on challenges they encounter when dealing with learner's discipline problems. The discipline strategies they have to deal with learner's discipline problems and also that although there are learner's discipline strategies, learner's discipline problems are at the increase.

More research has to be conducted to find out why learner's discipline problems are at the increase.

Learner's discipline problems do not only exist in schools in South Africa but they exist worldwide. This shows that worldwide there is a need for all stakeholders to come up with a plan on how to get rid of learner's discipline problems in schools.

To achieve the above, all stakeholders worldwide, government, education departments, community, parents and educators, must work together to deal with learner's discipline problems.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The foregoing chapter gave an interpretation of results on responses from SGBs, educators and SMTs. Conclusions and recommendations grounded on the literature and empirical study are deliberated below.

#### **6.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This study focused on guidelines that are suggested to maintain learner discipline in secondary schools. The findings are offered as they recount to the four questions below, specifically:

- collaborative leadership strategies used to improve learner discipline in secondary schools;
- challenges experienced by the schools when implementing learner discipline strategies;
- perceptions of educators, school management teams and school governing bodies regarding collaborative leadership strategies when implementing detention as learner's discipline strategy; and
- recommendations of collaborative leadership strategies for the implementation of detention as learner's discipline strategy in secondary schools.

##### **6.2.1 Which collaborative leadership strategies are used to improve learner, discipline in secondary schools?**

Pertaining to the above research question, findings emanated from the study are categorised and discussed under the ten learner discipline strategies:

### **6.2.1.1 Learner's code of conduct**

- The literature review, coupled with most of the participants' answers indicate that a CoC is implemented as learner discipline strategy because it is a legal document that mirrors the democratic values of the Constitution (RSA, 1996(b)) by supporting the standards of human self-worth, fairness and autonomy (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- Educators, of schools A and B said that they regard learners' code of conduct as a strategy which assist them to maintain learner's discipline in their classrooms. They indicate that they always make sure that copies of learner's code of conduct are available to learners on classrooms walls and learners are able to see and read them (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- The School Management Teams of schools A and B regard learners' code of conduct as a strategy which assist them to maintain learner's discipline at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- The School Governing Body of school A use FEDSAS to provide them with guidelines on how to develop their school learners' code of conduct. They make sure that their school learners' code of conduct abides by the South African Schools Act. The SGB of school B develop their school learners' code of conduct and there are changes which are made every year when there is a need because learners' code of is not a stagnant document (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

### **6.2.1.2 Corporal punishment**

- The literature consulted for this shows that in the past schools were using corporal punishment as a form of learner discipline strategy but corporal punishment was banned in 1996 (*cf.* 2.4.7.1).
- Educators of schools A and B made it very clear that they do not use corporal punishment in their classrooms. They said corporal punishment was used to discipline unruly learners and was used as a means of disciplining learners in schools. They also said that they are no more allowed by law to use corporal punishment as an approach to uphold learner discipline in schools in South Africa because corporal punishment was banned in 1996 (*cf.* 2.4.7.1).

- The School Management Teams of schools A and B made it very clear that they do not use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner's discipline at their schools. They said in the past corporal punishment was used to discipline unruly learners and was used as a means of disciplining learners in schools. They also said that school management teams are no more allowed to use corporal punishment as a strategy to maintain learner discipline in schools in South Africa because corporal punishment was banned in 1996 (*cf.* 2.4.7.1).
- The School Governing Bodies of schools A and B do not use corporal punishment to discipline learners. They make sure that all abide by the abolition of corporal punishment and refrain from using corporal punishment to punish learners (*cf.* 2.4.7.1).

### **6.2.1.3 Alternatives to corporal punishment**

The literature consulted for this study shows that corporal punishment was replaced by Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (ATCP) and schools must use ATCP as their strategy to maintain learner discipline (*cf.* 2.4.7.2).

- Educators of school A said they try many alternatives to corporal punishment like community service because they are not permitted to apply corporal punishment to maintain learner discipline in their classrooms. Educators of school B said sometimes they wish that corporal punishment could be there but unfortunately it is no more, and their principal is totally against it. They just follow alternatives to corporal punishment they have like referral system whereby they involve parents when disciplining learners (*cf.* 2.4.7.2).
- The School Management Team of school A said they use many alternatives to corporal punishment and make sure that nobody uses corporal punishment at their school. The School Management Team of school B said they just use all learner discipline strategies they have at their school to discipline learners (*cf.* 2.4.7.2).
- The School Governing Bodies of schools A and B abide by the South African Schools Act and use alternatives to corporal punishment to discipline learners at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.2).

#### **6.2.1.4 Detention**

The literature consulted for this study shows that detention is a strategy that can be used by schools to sustain learner discipline (*cf.* 2.4.7.3). Participant's responses shows that they tried to use detention as a strategy to maintain learner discipline but it could not work for them.

- Educators of school A used detention after school and it was always difficult for educators to stay behind and supervise detained learners. They ended up stopping detention at their school.
- Educators of school B said detention cannot work at their school because 85% of their learners go home with interstate buses and the buses leave at 14h30. All learners who are using interstate buses buy tickets so they cannot miss the buses (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).
- The School Management Team of school A tried detention, but they realised that it is taxing on educators than on learners. At the end they decided to stop it because it was not working for them. The School Management Team of school B use to have detention about 17 years ago. They cancelled detention because it was unfair for teachers who remain behind on Fridays and who come on Saturday mornings for one or two hours (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).
- The School Governing Body of school A does not use detention because it is not possible for teachers to supervise detained learners. The School Governing Body of school B say their school does not use detention. They use to have detention years ago when their school had few learners (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).

#### **6.2.1.5 Suspension**

The literature consulted for this study shows that suspension of learners is a strategy which is used by schools to maintain learner discipline and schools rely on suspension as disciplinary responses to a variety of learner transgressions of norms and school rules (*cf.* 2.4.7.6). Educators, school management teams and school governing bodies indicated that they use suspension at their schools to maintain learner discipline.

- Educators of schools A and B regard suspension as a strategy which is used to deal with learners who are troublemakers at school. They feel that suspension

of learners helps them to concentrate on academic activities rather than concentrating on solving learner's discipline problems (*cf.* 2.4.7.6).

- The School Management Teams of schools A and B regard suspension as a strategy which is used to deal with learners who are troublemakers at school. They feel that suspension of learners assists them to concentrate on academic activities rather than on solving learner discipline problems (*cf.* 2.4.7.6).
- The School Governing Bodies of schools A and B suspend learners who are troublemakers at their schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.6).

#### **6.2.1.6 Expulsion**

- The literature consulted for this study shows that expulsion of learners is a strategy which is used by schools to maintain learner's discipline and schools recommend expulsion of learners who continually cause disruptions, bring weapons or drugs to school or commit crimes on school grounds (*cf.* 2.4.7.7). Participants indicated that when schools, through their school governing bodies, recommend expulsion of learners to the Provincial Head of Department of Education they are always not succeeding and their recommendation is always rejected.
- Educators of schools A and B say that learners who continuously disturb learning and teaching in the classroom have to be expelled from school. They also feel that learners who come to school with dangerous objects or illegal drugs must be expelled from school (*cf.* 2.4.7.7).
- The School Management Teams of schools A and B say that learners who continually disturb learning and teaching have to be expelled from school. They also feel that learners who come to school with dangerous objects or illegal drugs must be expelled from schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.7).
- The School Governing Bodies of schools A and B recommend expulsion of learners to the Provincial head of Department of Education. The Provincial Head of Department of Education will either approve or disapprove expulsion or recommend that a learner must be kept at school until the end of the year then a learner must not come back to their schools the following year (*cf.* 2.4.7.7).

### **6.2.1.7 Dangerous objects or illegal drugs**

The literature consulted for this study shows that Section 8(A) of South African Schools Act is a law of general applications, in that it applies to all schools and is aimed at protecting the well-being of learners with regard to their right to education (*cf.* 2.4.7.4).

- Educators of school A if they suspect that a learner is in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs, they will immediately report the matter to the principal or immediate supervisor. The principal or immediate supervisor will come and conduct a random search in that classroom.
- Educators of school B immediately call the principal or immediate supervisor when they suspect that there is a learner who is in ownership of dangerous objects or illegal drugs. Once the principal or immediate supervisor starts with the random search and seizure educators leave everything in the hands of the principal or immediate supervisor (*cf.* 2.4.7.4).
- The School Management team of school A suspend a learner who is found in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs. They organise a hearing which includes the parents of a learner, the SMT and the SGB. The SMT of school B involve the police when a learner is found in possession of unsafe objects or prohibited drugs. The police will come and check for dangerous objects or illegal drugs. The School Management Team will hand over the case to the police and leave everything to the police for them to handle the matter according to their expertise (*cf.* 2.4.7.4).
- The School Governing Body of school A organise a hearing to deal with the case of a learner who is found in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs. They will follow internal procedures before they involve the police. The School Governing Body of school B organise a hearing to deal with the case of a learner who is found in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs. They will involve the parents of the learner, the school psychologist, the school management team and the police to deal with the matter (*cf.* 2.4.7.4).

### **6.2.1.8 Learner absenteeism**

The literature consulted for this study shows that the high rate of learner academic failure is caused greatly by learner absenteeism and that learner's absenteeism causes learners drop out (*cf.* 2.3.2.8).

- Educators of school A say sometimes learners absent themselves because of their family problems like having to take the grandmother/ grandfather to the clinic. Educators of school B say it is normally 1% to 2% of learners who absent themselves when they feel that they have something like a running nose (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- The School Management Team of school A say the social environment they are living in creates learner absenteeism. They say sometimes there are learners who are taking care of their grannies and this contributes to their absenteeism.
- The School Management Team of school B say at their school absenteeism is not that much but during examinations learners who are not writing on that day, do not come to school and claim to study at home where there is less distraction (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- The School Governing Body of school A say there are cases whereby some learners who are not interested in attending school will absent themselves and come up with invalid excuses. The School Governing Body of school B say at their school learner absenteeism is minimal (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

### **6.2.1.9 Bullying**

The literature consulted for this study shows that bullying in schools in South Africa is a discipline problem and it may interrupt the teaching and learning process (*cf.* 2.3.3.9).

- Educators of school A say learners are sometimes experiencing bullying but it is not so much at their school. Educators of school B say it is very seldom where you can find that a big boy tries to bully a small boy maybe for money but that is dealt with immediately (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

The School Management Team of school A say bullying is not so much a problem at their school. The School Management Team of school B say on rare occasions

learners write on the walls as a form of bullying other learners but as soon as they are informed about it, they arrange for its cleaning immediately (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

- The School Governing Body of school A say some bigger learners will try to bully small ones but it is very minimal at their school. The School Governing Body of school B say teachers at their school take bullying of learners very seriously and when they hear that there is bullying which is taking place, they deal with it there and then (*cf.* 2.4.5).

#### **6.2.1.10 Learning and teaching disruption**

The literature consulted for this study shows that learning and teaching disruption makes it difficult for learners to learn and educators to teach (*cf.* 2.3.4).

- Educators of school A say learning and teaching disruption occurs only when some learners have an argument about something but when the teacher intervene it immediately come to an end.
- Educators of school B say learning and teaching disruption happens here and there to new teachers especially younger teachers, but they have marshals at their school to assist young teachers to calm down the class so that the younger teachers can teach. Experienced teachers handle learning and teaching disruption on their own (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- The School Management Team of school A say learning and teaching disruption is taking place when there are learners who are fighting. It immediately come to an end when the teachers intervene. The School Management Team of school B say learning and teaching is taking place only when a learner walks out of the classroom during the lesson or not wanting to be taught but rather listen to music in his/her cell phone. They say that behaviour will be dealt with immediately through disciplinary strategies (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).
- The School Governing Body of school A say they do not experience learning and teaching disruption but it is only when there are learners who are fighting. As soon as teachers are notified about the fighting of learners they will immediately deal with those learners and stop the fighting. The School

Governing Body of school B say there is no learning and teaching disruption at their school because they have marshals who make sure that there should not be any type of learning and teaching disruption at their school (*cf.* 2.4.7.5).

## **6.2.2 Which challenges are experienced by schools when implementing learners discipline strategies?**

Pertaining to the above research question, the following findings emanated from the study.

### **6.2.2.1 Learners' attitudes**

The literature consulted for this study shows that learners lack of discipline is a challenge encountered by schools when they implement learner discipline strategies because learners' lack of discipline contributes to learner aggressive behaviour (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). Participants indicated that there are learners who lack discipline and they are behaving badly.

- Educators of school A say that learners who are repeating the grade and who are over age think that they know it all. They come without books to the classroom and they do not do their homework.
- Educators also say that lack of classroom space that means overcrowding cause chaos and learners discipline problems in the classroom.
- Educators of school B say that there are learners who challenge the authority verbally and there some learners who do not want to talk and they challenge the authority by action. They physically challenge teachers and stop their teachers from taking any discipline action against them (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

The School Management Team of school A say that there are rebellious learners and when educators take these rebellious learners to the principal's office, they create an unnecessary havoc. They want to be seen by other learners as heroes who cannot be disciplined by the school management team. The School Management Team of school B also have problems with rebellious learners. When educators explain the discipline process to these rebellious learners, these rebellious learners tell educators that they are used to the discipline process. These rebellious learners say that they know that

they will be given yellow cards and a hearing will be called in the presence of their parents, but no drastic steps will be taken against them (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

- The School Governing Body of school A organise a hearing to deal with cases of learners with bad attitude which are referred to them and drastically deal with those learners. The School Governing Body of school B organise a hearing which will be attended by the school management team and the parents of the learners who have negative attitude and deal with cases of learners' negative attitude (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

### **6.2.2.2 Disrespectful learners**

The literature consulted for this study shows that there are disrespectful learners whereas learners are expected to respect their educators and abide by the school rules and school regulations (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). Participants always try to show disrespectful learners that it is imperative for all learners to know that the rights they have must correspond with responsibilities (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

- Educators of school A say that learners who are unable to read, who are struggling to read or who cannot read, tend to be ill-discipline, they are unruly and they create attention. They also say that learners who do not want to wear school uniform are also ill-discipline.
- Educators of school B say that there are many learners who are disrespectful towards their teachers. These learners are defying classroom rules and learners' code of conduct (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

The SMT of school A say that learners sometimes argue with the school management team when educators refer them for discipline. These learners refuse to listen to the instructions of the school management team. The SMT of school B say that it is difficult to deal with disrespectful learners because they do not want to be disciplined when they are found guilty. Disrespectful learners openly defy instructions of the school management team and try to do as they wish but their school management team deals with disrespectful learners immediately and remedy the situation (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

- The SGB of school A say that cases of disrespectful learners are dealt with by the school management team and it is very rare that cases of disrespectful

learners are referred to them. The SGB of school B say that the school management team deals with all cases of disrespectful learners before they could get to the level of referring them to the school governing body (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

### **6.2.2.3 Parent's attitude**

- The literature consulted for this study shows that schools encounter challenges when parents are having negative attitude towards school rules and school regulations and when parents are not supporting them when they implement discipline strategies. It is important for all stakeholders like parents to be part of all the efforts and measures which are put in place to come up with strategies to deal with learner discipline problems in schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11). Participants indicated that there is a lack of parent's support to schools and lack of parent's support to schools is one of the causes of learner discipline problems in schools (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).
- Educators of school A say that some parents not cooperative, when educators call them and ask them to come to school to discuss the misbehaviour of their children, they just don't care and leave everything in in the hands of educators to struggle with the misbehaviour of their children.
- Educators of school B say that parents when they are called at school to be told about the misbehaviour of their children, they their children and accuse educators by saying that educators hate their children. These parents also challenge the classroom rules and learner CoC when the school take steps against their children (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).
- The SMT of school A say that they have some parents who have negative attitude toward the school. These parents do not want to work with the school management team to solve the problems of their children's misbehaviour, instead they always maintain that the school is against their children. The SMT of school B try by all means to involve learners' parents when dealing with their misbehaviour, but there are parents who refuse to cooperate with the school management team. When these parents are called to attend their children's discipline consultations or meetings these parents just don't come (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

- The SGB of school A say that they have parents who are having negative attitude toward the school governing body especially when the school governing body have to take action against their misbehaving children. The SGB of school B say that majority of their parents are supportive to the school governing body but some of the parents show negative attitude toward the school governing body. These parents challenge all efforts which are implemented by the school governing body to discipline their children (*cf.* 2.3.1.11).

### **6.2.3 What are the perceptions of educators, school governing bodies and school management teams regarding collaborative leadership strategies when implementing detention as learner discipline strategy?**

Pertaining to the above research question, the following findings emanated from the study.

- The literature consulted for this study shows that educators, school governing bodies and school management teams understand that detention can take place before school, during recess, during lunch, after school, Friday evenings and Saturday mornings and detained learners must stay in an isolated classroom for a specified amount of time (*cf.* 2.4.7.3). Participants tried to implement detention as learner discipline strategy at their schools but detention could not work for them.
- Educators of school A feel that it is difficult for their school to use detention as a strategy to discipline learners because it is always difficult for educators to stay behind and supervise detained learners. Educators of school B feel that detention cannot work at their school because 85% of their learners go home with interstate buses and the buses leave at 14h30 (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).
- The SMT of school A feel that detention cannot work at their school because they tried detention and they realised that it is taxing on educators than on learners. The SMT of school B feel that detention cannot work at their school because their school has too many learners and learners go home with buses and buses leave at 14h30 (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).

- The SGB of school A feel that their school does not use detention because it is not possible for teachers to supervise detained learners. The SGB of school B feel that detention was working for them years ago at their school when they had few learners but now detention cannot work at their school because they have many learners (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).

#### **6.2.4 How may collaborative leadership strategies be recommended for the implementation of detention as learner discipline strategy in secondary schools?**

Pertaining to the above research question, the following findings emanated from the study.

- The literature consulted for this study shows that during detention a learner is required to remain in a presumably undesirable place for a specified amount of time outside school hours. Mostly detention is served after school. Instead of a learner going home at the end of the day, the learner reports to a designated classroom where he or she must sit in a desk for an amount of time mostly ranging from ten minutes to two hours (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).
- The researcher realised that educators, SMY and SGB of schools A and B tried to use detention as a strategy to discipline learners but they end up stopping to use detention as a strategy to discipline learners. School A and school B used detention after school, Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. School A and school B then realised that it is difficult to use detention during those times. The researcher suggests that school A and school B should change the times they used to use detention because detention can also be used during school lunch. During that time the learner is required stay in the classroom or report a designated area and eat his or her lunch while other learners are enjoying their lunch outside the classroom. The learner must also be given work to write during detention and the work must be completed before the end of his or her lunch (*cf.* 2.4.7.3).

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

To improve learner discipline in schools there must be collaborative leadership in all schools. Educators, parents, learners, communities, school governing bodies and school management teams must work together to deal with learner discipline problems in schools. There is a need for Department of Education to work together with educators, parents, learners, communities, school governing bodies and school management teams to deal with learner discipline problems in secondary schools. The recommendations proposed below are aimed at assisting all stakeholders to deal with learner discipline problems in schools.

The following are general recommendations made in respect of this study, namely:

#### **6.3.1 Recommendation 1: Corporal Punishment and learners discipline policies**

The researcher recommends that the Department of Education must establish a Task Team at National level, Provincial level and District level to train educators, learners, school governing bodies and school management teams on how to develop policies about the control and discipline of learners to ensure that no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a learner to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution (*cf.* 2.4.7.1).

The established Task Team must train educators, learners, SGBs and SMTs on how to develop and implement a CoC in all schools (*cf.* 2.4.7.5). The established Task Team must also monitor and control the implementation of discipline strategies like verbal warning, detention, demerits, community work, menial physical tasks, random search and seizure, suspension and expulsion (*cf.* 2.4.7.2; 2.4.7.3; 2.4.7.4; 2.4.7.6 and *cf.* 2.4.7.7).

#### **6.3.2 Recommendation 2: Collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools.**

The researcher recommend that the National Department of Education should establish the Task Team to sit around the table and come up with ONE DOCUMENT,

which will be used by all schools to improve learner discipline in all schools. The Task Team should consist of educators, school management team members, school governing body members, social workers, psychologists, legal practitioners, church leaders, community members, health practitioners, drug rehabilitation practitioners and law enforcement practitioners. The Task Team should be given a period of three months to investigate challenges that schools encounter when implementing collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline in schools, a period of three months to sit around the table and thoroughly discuss these challenges and a period of six months to develop ONE DOCUMENT, which will be used by all schools to improve learner discipline in schools.

This recommendation is prompted by the fact that presently each school is trying to come up with collaborative leadership strategies to improve learner discipline. The Task Team should also be given a period of six months to train all schools on how to implement the developed document.

A period of six months is suggested to monitor the implementation of the developed document in all schools. All in all, the Task Team should be given a period of two years to complete its work. The Department in conjunction with the business sector should ensure full support of all resources, which will be needed by the Task Team to complete its work.

### **6.3.3 Recommendation 3: ATCP as a collaborative strategy to improve learner discipline in schools.**

When the Democratic Government abolished corporal punishment in all schools in South Africa in 1996 it introduced ATCP (alternatives to corporal punishment). The researcher recommend that the National Department of Education should revisit the ATCP and thoroughly study its downfalls and its successes. The National Department of Education should find out whether the contents of ATCP are still relevant to deal with the present learner discipline problems in schools. If the ATCP contents are still relevant to deal with the present learner discipline problems in schools, the National Department of Education should retrain all schools to ensure proper implementation of ATCP in all schools. This recommendation is prompted by the fact that there is an

increase of learner discipline problems in schools irrespective of the fact that ATCP was introduced and implemented in all schools.

#### **6.3.4 Recommendation 4: Detention as a collaborative strategy to improve learner discipline in schools.**

The researcher recommend that the National Department of Education should investigate the reason why schools are not successful in implementing detention as a collaborative leadership strategy to improve learner discipline in schools. The National Department of Education should retrain schools on how to implement detention and monitor its implementation.

This recommendation is prompted by the fact that school A tried detention and decided to drop it at a later stage and school B use to have detention and dropped it after a period of 17 years.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In conducting this, the researcher came across some of the limitations for this study. The following are the shortcomings of this study.

- The researcher applied to conduct research at three schools but the researcher could only be accommodated by two schools to conduct research.
- The principal of one of the three schools refused to allow the researcher to conduct research at that school.
- The researcher went back to Motheo Education District Department to request to replace the school which the researcher was refused permission by the principal to conduct the research.
- Motheo Education District Department permitted the researcher to approach another school but unfortunately it was at a bad time because it was in September when Grade 12 learners were writing their trial examination and the other grades namely Grade 8 to 11 where busy with their third term tasks. As a result, teachers were not available at that time for research.

- The researcher applied to interview nine participants per school namely three educators, three management team members and three school governing body members but only one school out of two schools provided the researcher with nine participants.
- At one of the two schools only four participants out of nine participants were available for the interviews. That means two participants who participated as educators and school governing body members, one participant who participated as school management team member and school governing body member and one participant who participated as school management team member.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

This study has revealed that the challenges facing the educators, the school management teams and the school governing bodies, with regard to learner discipline problems in schools, are a lack of support from parents, insufficient training on the implementation of Alternatives to Corporal Punishment and a lack of support from the Provincial Head of Department of Education when they recommend expulsion of learners.

All in all, the researcher has observed that all the participants in this study have realised the importance of collaborative leadership strategies when dealing with learner discipline problems in schools. If all stakeholders, namely educators, learners, school management teams, school governing bodies, communities and the Department of Education can work together when dealing with learner discipline problems, there can be an improvement of learner discipline in schools.

Future research might focus on positive reinforcement of learner discipline and managing potential problems proactively before they arise.

The strengths of this research is that collaborative leadership strategies can be promoted and be beneficial to all stakeholders, namely learners, parents, educators, the school management teams, school governing bodies and the Department of Education. Learners will be disciplined in schools and effective learning and teaching will take place.

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## ANNEXURES

### ANNEXURE A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



#### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

10-Sep-2019

Dear Mr Manamela, Moeti MG

#### Application Approved

Research Project Title:

**COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNERS DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS.**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2019/0296**

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

Yours sincerely

**Prof Derek Litthauer**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Rylaan  
Park West/Parkwes  
Bloemfontein 9301  
South Africa/Suid-Afrika

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F +27(0)51 401 3752  
[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)



## ANNEXURE B: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE

Enquiries: KK Motshumi  
Ref: Research Permission: MG Manamela  
Tel, 051 404 9283 / 9221 / 079 503 4943  
Email: K.Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za



MG MANAMELA  
87 Eufees Avenue  
Lakeview  
BLOEMSPRUIT, 9364

Dear Mr Manamela

### APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

1. **Research Topic:** Collaborative leadership strategies to enhance learners discipline in schools.  
**Schools involved:** Atlegang, Brebner, Dr. Blok Kagisho and Tsoseletso High Schools, Motheo District.  
**Target Population:** 7 educators, 7 members of the School Management Team and 7 members of the School Governing Body.
2. **Period of research:** From the date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2019. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year.
3. 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.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:
  - 4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
  - 4.2 A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 319, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Old CNA Building, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein.
  - 4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
  - 4.4 The attached ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 11/09/2019

RESEARCH APPLICATION MANAMELA MG PERMISSION NEW SCHOOLS AMENDED 9 SEPT 2019  
Strategic Planning, Policy & Research Directorate  
Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Room 318, Old CNA Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Charlotte Maxeke Street, Bloemfontein  
Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

## ANNEXURE C: CONSENT FORMS: EDUCATORS

### CONSENT FORM: EDUCATORS

Research Title: Recommend collaborative leadership strategies to enhance learner discipline in schools

I ..... of ..... School have read the introductory statement and understand that:

- 1) The information collected in the study will be kept confidential at all times. For protection of anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for the participant in the document. Neither the school, nor the participant will be made reference to in the document. The information collected in the study will only be used on what has been stipulated on the invitation letter and on this consent form.
- 2) Privacy and confidentiality of information on the interview is very important. All the instruments like tape, flash drive and written documents that are used for data collection in the research will be kept secure at all times. It will be securely stored and kept for a period of five years then destroyed according to the ethics regulation.
- 3) I will be given opportunity to review a copy of the transcript for confirmation of what have been said in the interview. I have a right to make changes on the transcript within the time frame if it is necessary.
- 4) I have ownership of the raw data of the interview which means, I have copy right on the raw data. The raw data is with the care of the researcher who can use it for her personal publications beside her research thesis in the masters in educational management and leadership.
- 5) I have a right to withdraw from the research up to confirmation of the transcripts. If I decide to withdraw my participation from the study, I must do so in writing or verbally to the researcher. If the reason(s) for my withdrawal is related to the researcher, then I can submit my letter to the researcher's supervisor.

**PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE:**

I am over 18 years old and eligible to participate in this study. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

I agree to be interviewed for this thesis. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

I agree to being audio taped during the interview. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

Venue \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's name printed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **ANNEXURE D: CONSENT FORMS SMT**

### **CONSENT FORM: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Research Title: Recommend collaborative leadership strategies to enhance learner discipline in schools

I ..... of ..... School have read the introductory statement and understand that:

- 1) The information collected in the study will be kept confidential at all times. For protection of anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for the participant in the document. Neither the school, nor the participant will be made reference to in the document. The information collected in the study will only be used on what has been stipulated on the invitation letter and on this consent form.
- 2) Privacy and confidentiality of information on the interview is very important. All the instruments like tape, flash drive and written documents that are used for data collection in the research will be kept secure at all times. It will be securely stored and kept for a period of five years then destroyed according to the ethics regulation.
- 3) I will be given opportunity to review a copy of the transcript for confirmation of what have been said in the interview. I have a right to make changes on the transcript within the time frame if it is necessary.
- 4) I have ownership of the raw data of the interview which means, I have copy right on the raw data. The raw data is with the care of the researcher who can use it for her personal publications beside her research thesis in the masters in educational management and leadership.
- 5) I have a right to withdraw from the research up to confirmation of the transcripts. If I decide to withdraw my participation from the study, I must do so in writing or verbally to the researcher. If the reason(s) for my withdrawal is related to the researcher, then I can submit my letter to the researcher's supervisor.

**PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE:**

I am over 18 years old and eligible to participate in this study. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

I agree to be interviewed for this thesis. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

I agree to being audio taped during the interview. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

Venue \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's name printed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **ANNEXURE E: CONSENT FORM: SGB**

### **CONSENT FORM: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**

Research Title: Recommend collaborative leadership strategies to enhance learner discipline in schools

I ..... of ..... School have read the introductory statement and understand that:

- 1) The information collected in the study will be kept confidential at all times. For protection of anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for the participant in the document. Neither the school, nor the participant will be made reference to in the document. The information collected in the study will only be used on what has been stipulated on the invitation letter and on this consent form.
- 2) Privacy and confidentiality of information on the interview is very important. All the instruments like tape, flash drive and written documents that are used for data collection in the research will be kept secure at all times. It will be securely stored and kept for a period of five years then destroyed according to the ethics regulation.
- 3) I will be given opportunity to review a copy of the transcript for confirmation of what have been said in the interview. I have a right to make changes on the transcript within the time frame if it is necessary.
- 4) I have ownership of the raw data of the interview which means, I have copy right on the raw data. The raw data is with the care of the researcher who can use it for her personal publications beside her research thesis in the masters in educational management and leadership.
- 5) I have a right to withdraw from the research up to confirmation of the transcripts. If I decide to withdraw my participation from the study, I must do so in writing or verbally to the researcher. If the reason(s) for my withdrawal is related to the researcher, then I can submit my letter to the researcher's supervisor.

**PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSE:**

I am over 18 years old and eligible to participate in this study. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

I agree to be interviewed for this thesis. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

I agree to being audio taped during the interview. [Circle your answer]

Yes No

Venue \_\_\_\_\_

Time \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's name printed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



This study aims to contribute to the existent body of knowledge in the leadership field. It will therefore be of great value for educators and SMT'S alike in helping them to create conducive learning environments in the school. The study will focus on recommending strategies to manage learner discipline in secondary schools.

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

There are no risks foreseen to participants.

**WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

The names of participants will not be recorded anywhere in the study. The names of the participants will be kept confidential and this implies that their names will not be recorded anywhere. Code numbers or pseudonyms will be used to refer to the participants in the study. Only the research team will have access to the data. The data provided may be however be used for a journal article. Participants may refuse to take part or may withdraw at any stage of the process.

**HOW WILL THE INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?**

The hard copies of the answers provided will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education. For future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password computer. Further use of the data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. When information is no longer needed, all documents will be shredded.

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

There will be no payment or reward offered to the participants. It is foreseen that there the potential level of inconvenience will be very low.

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

The final research findings will be available from Dr J.M. Palmer, please contact her at 051 5073364 or at e-mail, jpalmer@cut.ac.za. Please contact the researcher for any further information or regarding any aspect of this study at the details mentioned.

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

Yours Faithfully,  
Mr MG Manamela

Signature.....

Date.....

## **ANNEXURE G: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: EDUCATORS**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: EDUCATORS**

1. Which learners discipline strategies do you use in your classroom to maintain learner's discipline?
2. Can you describe learners discipline strategies you use to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom?
3. Do you consider learners discipline strategies you use to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom effective or ineffective, can you describe it?
4. Which challenges do you encounter when using learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom, can you describe them?
5. Can you describe learners discipline strategies, that you are aware of, which are used by other educators at your school to maintain learner's discipline in their classrooms?
6. Which challenges, that you are aware of, do other educators at your school encounter when using learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline in their classrooms?
7. Can you comment on the general feeling of educators at your school about learner's discipline strategies they are using to maintain learner's discipline in their classrooms?
8. Did you involve learners when you were developing learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom, what was the level of learner's involvement?
9. Did all learners understand and accept learners discipline strategies you use in your classroom to maintain learner's discipline?
10. What is the feeling of learners about discipline strategies you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom?
11. Did you involve learner's parents, school management team and school governing body when you were developing learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom, how did you involve them?
12. Are your learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline in your classroom in line with your school's learners discipline strategies, how are they in with the school's learners discipline strategies?
13. Did other educators at your school involve learners, learner's parents, school management team and school governing body when they were developing learners discipline strategies which they are using to maintain learner's discipline in their classrooms, how did they involve them?

14. What is the feeling of learners, learner's parents, school management team and school governing body about learner's discipline strategies which other educators at your school are in their classrooms to maintain learner's discipline?

## **ANNEXURE H: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM (SMT)**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM**

1. Which learners discipline strategies do you use to maintain learner's discipline at your school, can you describe it in detail?
2. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing learner's discipline strategies at your school?
3. Which success stories of implementing learners discipline strategies which you use to maintain learner's discipline at your school do you have?
4. Did you involve learners, educators, learner's parents and school governing body when you were developing learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at your school, how did you involve them?
5. Were learners discipline strategies to maintain learner's discipline at your school thoroughly explained to the abovementioned stakeholders, how were they explained?
6. Did all stakeholders understand and accept learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
7. Did you thoroughly explain steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school to all stakeholders, how did you thoroughly explain these steps to all stakeholders?
8. Did all stakeholders understand and accept steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
9. Were all stakeholders given the opportunity to adopt, sign and receive signed copies of learner's discipline strategies which you are using to maintain learner's discipline at your school, can you elaborate on how this was done?
10. Is detention one of your learner's discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline, if yes, how are you implementing detention to assist you to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
11. Which challenges do you encounter when implementing detention to maintain learner's discipline at your school?
12. How is the level of learner's absenteeism, learners bullying, learning and teaching disruption and vandalism of properties at your school?

13. Which collaborative leadership strategies and learner discipline strategies do you use at your school to maintain learner's, can you describe them in detail?
14. Can you describe the level of disproportional impact of policies on learner's discipline strategies and collaborative leadership strategies at your school?
15. Describe how your school deals with abolition of corporal punishment and alternatives to corporal punishment?
16. Can you elaborate the steps you apply to suspend and expel learners at your school?
17. Which collaborative management strategies do you use to deal with learners who are found with dangerous objects and illegal drugs at your school, can you describe them?
18. Which barriers to collaborative work in learner discipline do you encounter at your school?
19. How do you connect to communities through community-based learning to address learner discipline?
20. Can you describe the importance of policies in addressing/improving learner discipline at your school?
21. Are learners discipline strategies which you are using at your school to maintain learner's discipline in line with the South African Schools Act, the Bill of Rights and the South African Constitution, which section of the Bill of Rights do they address?

## **ANNEXURE I: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY (SGB)**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS: SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY**

1. Did you develop learner's code of conduct to maintain learner's discipline at your school as vested upon you by the South African Schools Act, how did you develop it?
2. When developing learners' code of conduct to maintain learner's discipline at your school did you involve learners, educators, learner's parents and school management team, can you explain how you involved them?
3. Did you thoroughly explain contents of learner's code of conduct to the all the above-mentioned stakeholders and how did you explain it?
4. Did you thoroughly explain steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learners' code of conduct to all stakeholders, how this done?
5. Did all stakeholders understand and accept the contents of learner's code of conduct and steps which will be taken against learners who transgress learner's code of conduct and how did you do it?
6. Is learners' code of conduct in line with the South African Schools Act, the Bill of Rights and the South African Constitution, which section of the Bill of Rights does it address?
7. Was learner's code of conduct accepted, adopted and signed by all stakeholders and how was it done?
8. Did all stakeholders have copies signed copies of learner's code of conduct, how did they receive them?
9. Which challenges did you encounter when implementing learners' code of conduct at your school?
10. Which success stories of the implementation of learner's code of conduct at your school do you have, can you share them?

## ANNEXURE J: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Michelle Woolley

WRITER EDITOR PROOFREADER TRANSLATOR

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

Associate Member of Professional EDITORS' Guild (PEG)

### CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

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

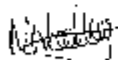
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DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

Author:

Moeti George Manamela

Regards  
Michelle Woolley

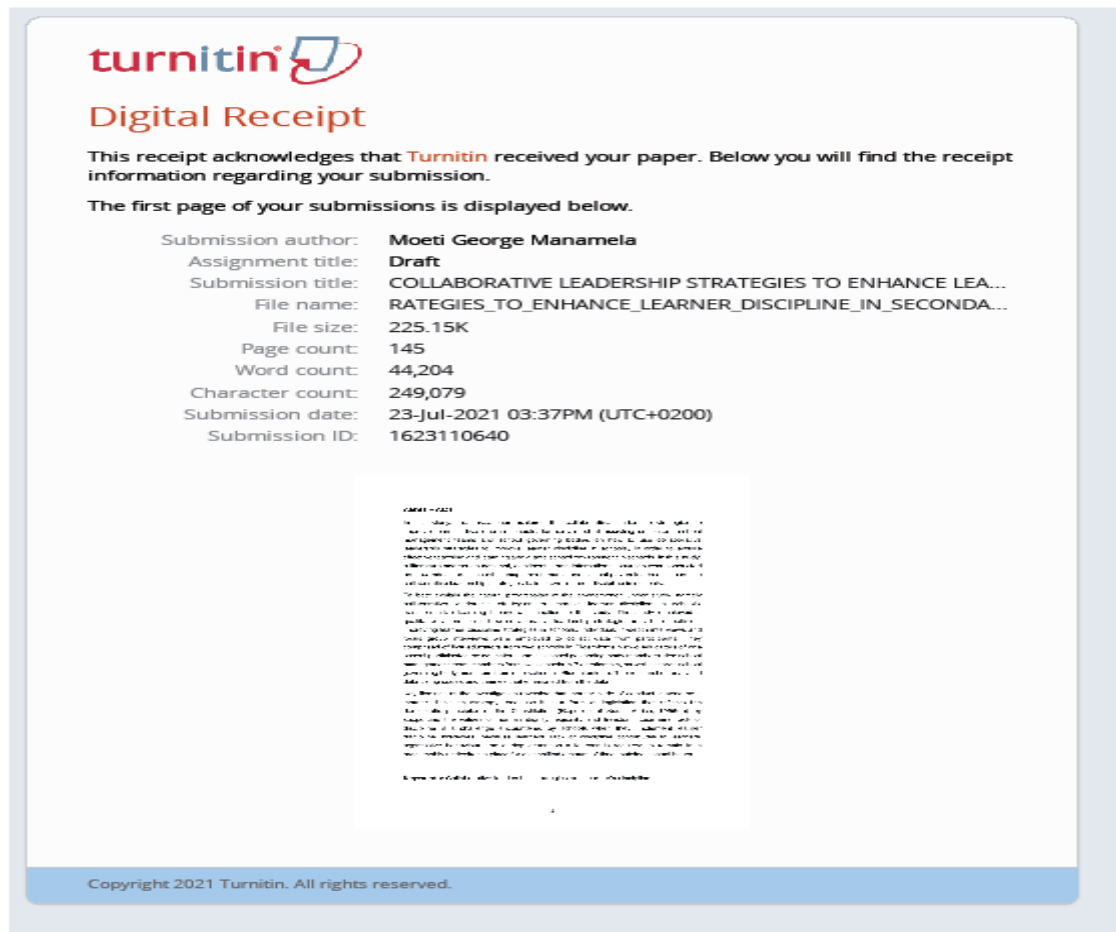


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## ANNEXURE K: TURN IT IN RECEIPT AND REPORT



**turnitin**

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### COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE LEARNER DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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