

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE IN THE INTERMEDIATE  
PHASE SCHOOLS OF THE SIKHULILE CIRCUIT: EHLANZENI REGION IN  
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

by

**PHEPHELAPHI MATILDA MNISI**

**STUDENT NUMBER: [REDACTED]**

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**SUPERVISOR: DR K. S. MILONDZO**

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## DECLARATION

I, declare that the: "TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE IN THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE SCHOOLS OF THE SIKHULILE CIRCUIT: EHLANZENI REGION IN MPUMALANGA PROVINCE" hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Development and Planning, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my own work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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Surname, Initials (title)

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Date

## DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my beloved sisters, my children, especially remembering the late Nelisiwe, for their encouragement and support; my grandchildren, for being my source of inspiration; and my colleagues for motivating me.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for His prolonged mercy throughout my journey. My sincere gratitude also goes to the following people:

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- To my colleagues who showed concern, ensuring that I completed this study, you are much appreciated.

## ABSTRACT

Recent changes in the South African education department have led to many learners' deviant behaviour in the classroom. The abolishing of corporal punishment has accelerated lack of discipline among learners in the Ehlanzeni education region. This challenge has resulted in different perceptions among the teachers. Hence, this study aims at investigating teachers' perceptions of learner discipline in the intermediate phase schools of the Ehlanzeni Region of Mpumalanga province.

In this study, the researcher uses the mixed approach, a method which includes both quantitative and qualitative research. Data is collected through survey and semi-structured interviews with principals, deputy principals, heads of departments (HOD's) and teachers. Stratified and purposive sampling methods were used to facilitate the above process.

The findings show that factors such as abolishing of corporal punishment, lack of parental involvement, lack of extramural activities and lack of clarity on policy have negatively influenced discipline in the intermediate schools. Hence, there is a need for alternative strategies to enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures in the intermediate schools.

These anomalies call for senior management or policy makers in the Department of Education (DoE) to develop relevant alternative strategies and to train teachers on policy implementation before the new disciplinary measures can be employed. This will assist teachers to prevent ill-discipline in Mpumalanga.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DoE	Department of Education
HOD's	Head of Department (s)
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBST	School Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT's	School Management Team (s)

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction

Recent changes in the South African education system have led to the deviant behaviour of many learners in the classroom. The abolishing of corporal punishment accelerated lack of discipline in learners in the Ehlanzeni education region. The above challenge has caused different perceptions among teachers in the Ehlanzeni Region. This has prompted the researcher to embark on studying teachers' perceptions of learner discipline.

#### 1.2 Background

Before 1994, both teachers and members of the School Management Teams (SMT) were mandated to maintain discipline in the classroom, for example, hitting, smacking, slapping and spanking with a hand, whip and stick; and in the school as a whole, such as corporal punishment, community work, detention, and suspension and expulsion. Corporal punishment was allowed to curb behaviour in cases when learners committed serious offences. Teachers were also allowed to administer other forms of disciplinary measures such as assigning of extra work and time-out. According to Leigh, Chenhall and Saunders, 2009; Tozer, 2010, corporal punishment is defined as a kind of discipline that entails direct infliction of pain on the physical body. However, it can also be taken beyond the physical to emotional and psychological domains, for example, verbal abuse and deprivation of basic needs like food and the use of toilet.

The above disciplinary processes used to assist teachers to maintain discipline and order in both the classroom and the school as whole. Extreme deviant and ill-discipline used to be taken to the members of the SMT and School Governing Body (SGB) for further decisions, including expulsion.

After the new democratic dispensation, the disciplinary measures were introduced. Measures such as the Code of Conduct, withdrawal of privileges, suspension and other related disciplinary measures were suggested to curb ill-discipline in schools. Some of the above measures were seen as lenient by some of the teachers. These

opinions created different perceptions among teachers, hence this study. The withdrawal of corporal punishment seems to be the main cause of the lack of discipline in the schools of the Ehlanzeni Region.

It is important for schools to have a common understanding of what discipline really entails. Fredjones.com (undated) divides discipline at a school into two domains namely:

- Classroom discipline management, which relates to managing discipline problems within the classroom where educators can structure the learning environment more or less unaided; and
- School-site discipline management, which relates to managing discipline problems outside the classroom where educators are highly dependent on the collaboration and support of colleagues for success. This includes such issues as noise in the halls, yard supervision, and smoking in lavatories and conduct in assemblies.

Clearly from the foregoing exposition, discipline at schools needs to be approached holistically, that is, on a whole school basis. This requires an all-out effort that involves all school stakeholders. Therefore, discipline is an integral part of the teaching and learning process, which is aimed at helping learners become cooperative persons who can acquire self-discipline themselves (Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1995; Juta, 1999:2B-18).

### 1.3 Statement of the problem

Poor learner discipline in schools has been one of the challenges facing South African education in the past years after independence (Mtsweni, 2008). Schools in South Africa are struggling to provide quality education required for holistic development of the youth because of increasing learner misbehaviour and violence (Department of Education (RSA), 2002a: 6). According to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE, 2002:12), learners disciplinary problems range from truancy, late coming, refusal to attend some lessons, failure to do homework and violation of school rules.

It is argued that beyond the responsibility of teaching and learning, teachers are also responsible for the maintenance of discipline in the classroom and the school as a

whole. As a result, teachers are forced to do policing work, spending a disproportionate amount of time dealing with the disruptive behaviour of learners than teaching in the classroom (Mtsweni, 2008). This has led to the collapse of effective teaching and learning in many schools.

For successful teaching and learning to take place, it is essential that good discipline exists in the classroom (Mtsweni, 2008). Although teachers are responsible for maintaining a culture of teaching and learning, it is not possible for them to do so in the absence of discipline (Digluio, 2005: 5). Mabeba and Prinsloo (2005: 35) maintain that the present situation in South African schools shows that lack of discipline among learners is leading to a continuation of unsuccessful learning and teaching.

Teachers, who for years had the option of resorting to “corporal” punishment as a final means of instilling and maintaining learner discipline, now had very little to fall on, after the ban of corporal punishment (Adams, 2005). The Education Department, 2001, left schools to develop their own innovative disciplinary codes of conduct to satisfy their specific needs. Unfortunately, teachers lack adequate knowledge of and skills in identifying and implementing Positive Alternative Discipline. From my personal experience as a deputy principal, I interact with intermediate phase teachers on a regular basis, at Sikhulile Circuit in the Ehlanzeni Region.

#### 1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers on learner discipline in the intermediate phase in the Ehlanzeni Region of the Mpumalanga province.

#### 1.5 Objectives of the study

In order to achieve the above aim, the following objectives were pursued:

- To determine the perceptions of teachers on learner discipline in the intermediate schools of the Ehlanzeni Region.
- To identify factors that influence lack of discipline in schools.
- To determine new measures that can be used by teachers to prevent ill-discipline in schools.

- To suggest strategies that can be used by senior managers to enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures in the Ehlanzeni Region.

## 1.6 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions guided the study:-

- i) What are the perceptions of learner discipline in schools?
- ii) What factors influence the lack of discipline in schools?
- iii) What programmes are currently used by teachers to prevent ill-discipline in schools?
- iv) What strategies can be used by senior managers to enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures?

## 1.7 Significance of the study

Discipline is the key to effective teaching-learning in schools (Boshoff & Morkel, 2003: 23-24). The lack of discipline is a major cause, among others, of the devastating performance of learners in our schools (Mabeba and Prinsloo, 2000: 35; Songoni, 1997:2). It is important that learners are disciplined in order for learning to run smoothly. Disciplinary actions must be taken at schools, and they must be in line with the government policies and laws set out in the South African Schools Act (SASA) and the Constitution of South Africa.

The study will assist stakeholders to determine perceptions of teachers of learner ill-discipline.

- It will assist stakeholders to identify factors that influence learners' ill-discipline in schools.
- It will assist SMTs to develop disciplinary measures to assist teachers to prevent ill-discipline in schools.
- It will assist senior managers to develop relevant strategies for teachers to curb ill-discipline in schools.
- The study will also contribute to school management as a subject and to education as a field of study.

## 1.8 Outline of the study

### Chapter 1

Chapter 1 presents an orientation to the background of the problem, purpose of the study, significance and plan of the study.

### Chapter 2

This chapter reviews literature pertaining to the perceptions of teachers on learner discipline.

### Chapter 3

The research design and methodology are described and presented.

### Chapter 4

Chapter 4 includes data collection and analysis and a discussion of the results.

### Chapter 5

This chapter gives an overview of the study, findings, recommendations and conclusions.

## 1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the background and an orientation to the problems of the study. The purpose, the statement of the problem, significance and plan of the study are also briefly outlined.

In the next chapter, the literature on school discipline is discussed.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a review of relevant literature on the teachers' perceptions of learner discipline in intermediate schools is reviewed. The main purpose of reviewing literature is to locate the current study within the body of knowledge.

In order to establish the background of the study, this chapter is organised as follows:

- A brief discussion of relevant legislative and policy framework in relation to school discipline in the context of South Africa.
- The international studies dealing with serious disciplinary problems among learners.
- A brief of review of the theoretical framework regarding learner discipline in schools.
- A critical analysis of previous research work and literature to place the present study in an appropriate context in terms of the research questions stated in chapter 1.
- Lastly, the chapter is concluded with a summary of its contents. The conclusion is presented at the end in the form of a summary.

In the next section, the relevant legislative and policy framework in the context of South African school discipline is discussed.

#### 2.2 Relevant Legislative and Policy Framework in South Africa on School Discipline

In this section the legislation is outlined that governs and protects learners' safety and security in schools and in the country. Squelch (2000:8) describes the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) as the supreme law of the country and therefore all law, including education legislation, regulations and school policies may not be in conflict with it.

According to Soneson (2005b:18) and in line with the Constitution, South Africa has prohibited corporal punishment being applied to children in all aspects of public life. This includes the courts, prisons, children's institutions and schools. Therefore, the Constitution abolishes any form of corporal punishment or use of discipline measures which undermine human dignity. What is important in this regard is that discipline measures should not be such that they make a person (learner) uncomfortable, unsafe, frightened or embarrassed. This goes for the physical, verbal or non-verbal forms of discipline.

According to Mgijima (2014: 198) it is a constitutional right to learn in a safe and secured environment. The Bill of Rights, included in the Constitution, assures all South Africans the right to human dignity, equality, freedom and security (Mgijima 2014: 199). The declaration of human rights by South Africa (1996) entitles everybody to the right to be protected against being treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading manner.

The South African schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (SASA) specifically relates to issues pertaining to discipline at schools. According to Department of Education (2000:9), discipline must be maintained in the school and the classroom to ensure that the education of learners proceeds without any disruptive behaviour and as such school authorities are allowed to discipline learners. Furthermore, learners have the responsibility to learn and develop their own full potential and to allow fellow learners, without any hindrance, to reach their full potential. To this end, SASA places the responsibility of ensuring the discipline of learners squarely on the functional competency of the SGB and advocates the establishment of the school code of conduct as a first step in this regard. Section 7 states that:

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



- A code of conduct must contain provisions of due process safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings.

From these provisions of the SASA, it is clear that the approach to discipline at school should aim at improving and maintaining the quality of the learning process and not punishment as such.

In this regard, Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata and Squelch (1997:59) outlines the purpose of the code of conduct and therefore discipline at school as aiming to:

- create a well-organized and a good schooling environment so that effective learning and teaching can take place;
- promote self-discipline;
- encourage good behaviour; and
- regulate conduct

This in essence implies that focus must be on self-discipline, self-motivation and self-respect together with academic and sporting achievements (Department of Education, 2000:20). This also implies that discipline should be approached as a means to encourage the respect of human dignity as enshrined in the Constitution.

The SASA furthermore details procedures for discipline as it pertains to learners at schools and how SGB's should take responsibility in this regard (Sayed & Jansen, 2001:102). Accordingly, Section 9 states:

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

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

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

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

(a) by the Head of Department; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The focus of these provisions relates to what is called the due process, which implies that for any disciplinary measure against a learner, such a learner must be given a proper hearing. This also relates to suspension and expulsion of learners which can only be applied when the learners commit serious offences. The implication is that expulsion is permanent and thus ends a learner's right to attend at a particular school. This is the reason why expulsion is only done by the Head of Department.

From the foregoing exposition, it is clear that discipline aims at building a learner and ensuring that effective learning processes do take place at schools. It is also clear that punishment in the form of suspension and expulsion is used only as a very last resort and only in serious cases of misbehaviour. This leaves the question as to how then should discipline be exercised at schools especially regarding such offences as those that frustrate educators and those that make them perceive corporal punishment as an answer as alluded to in previous sections. The Department of Education, in this regard, provided schools and educators with alternatives to corporal punishment, which are briefly discussed in section 2.8.

### 2.3 School Discipline in South Africa

According to Mabeba & Prinsloo (2000: 34), discipline problems can be defined as “disruptive behaviour that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect and to learn”. Although it is a serious problem in this country, discipline problems are, as can be expected, not limited to the South African school system. “The prevalence and gravity of discipline problems in schools is a universal concern” (Van Wyk, 2001:196). She also states that the worldwide reaction to these problems is the increased use of reactive and punitive strategies.

Maree (2000:1) highlights in his research that South African schools “are increasingly beginning to resemble war zones. The extent of learner ill-discipline in South Africa should not be underestimated. A major problem like ill-discipline in a school system seldom prevails due to one or two reasons only an over emphasis on rights and a negative attitude on the part of learners are not the only causes of current discipline problems. In malfunctioning schools, where a culture of learning - and teaching is absent, educator misconduct may also have a negative effect on learners’ behaviour. Poorly qualified and incompetent teachers and “work-to-rule” attitudes of teachers can exacerbate the problem (Reddy, 1996: 50).

Both the *1996 South African Schools Act* and a 2000 Constitutional Court Ruling have now prohibited corporal punishment even in private schools (Smit & Rossouw). The Constitutional Court found corporal punishment to be a cruel and degrading form of punishment that violates a person’s dignity and consequently declared it illegal.

When facing and dealing with educational matters, internal comparisons could serve as a natural guidance for scholars, teachers, policy-makers and the public at large (Wiseman, 2012: 4-5) in order to put these issues into perspective. Comparative international perspectives serve as an accepted and time-tested method to approach problems in one’s own domestic educational system (Manzon 2011: 207).

International studies dealing with serious disciplinary problems among learners are discussed in the following section.

## 2.4 International Studies Dealing with Serious Disciplinary Problems

### Brazil

The Brazilian education system is said to be fairly decentralised. According to Chamber of Deputies, (2010 article 206 of the Constitution of Brazil) guarantees the right to education for everyone as a human right and the state is obliged to provide education to all. Besides this constitutional protection, Brazil is a signatory to international treaties related to human rights and to education.

Article 53 of the National education Act guarantees children the right to be respected by their educators. People under the age of 18 lack legal capacity under Brazilian law, they cannot be charged with crimes. If they commit wrongs, they are subject to social educational measures (as set out in Article 112, Republica de Brasil 1996), including the duty to repair the damages caused, perform community service, supervised freedom and suchlike, subject to due process.

The National Education Act is protective rather than punitive. In order to avoid criminalising and 'judicialising' interpersonal relations, characterised by inappropriate behaviour and abuse at school, such policies encourage the representatives of all school segments to create school rules that clearly establish the rights and duties of each member of school officials when the previously established and mutually-agreed-to school rules are broken.

### England

In England, there is widespread concern regarding the findings of The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the national government's school inspectorate, that learner conduct is no better than satisfactory in almost a fifth of England's secondary schools. The 2011 Department of Education report noted that Ofsted judged the conduct of learners in 18.4% of secondary schools as being either satisfactory or inadequate (Department of Education England [DfE] 2011: 3).

The minister responsible for schools said that he was 'concerned that almost one in five secondary schools had been rated as no better than satisfactory'. In primary schools, however, the position was better: outstanding in 37.9%, good in 55.8%, below good in 6.2% and inadequate in just 0.1%. During 2009/2010, there were 279

260 cases of expulsion of learners from secondary schools and 37 210 cases of expulsion of learners from primary schools (DfE 2012).

Sections 89–96 of the *Education and Inspections Act* of 2006 require every school to have ‘a behaviour policy’ (National Archives United Kingdom 2013). Schools are managed by governing bodies consisting of the head of the school, parent governors, staff governors, community governors and local authority governors. One of the important duties of governing bodies, in consultation with head teachers, is to determine ‘school behaviour policies’.

For minor transgressions, the articulation of a teacher’s disapproval or disappointment may be all that is required. For behaviour involving the use or possession of banned items, the retention or confiscation of a learner’s property or, in extreme cases, the disposal of it is seen as a reasonable measure. For more serious cases of misconduct the Department for Education (DfE) guidance suggests:

- Referral: Learners remain on school rolls but are educated in another educational setting. In such cases, the learner-referral unit that may be used includes the services of the Common Assessment Framework, the National Health Service and the Special Educational Needs providers.
- Restorative justice: In these cases, learners who have caused loss or suffering to other children are required to compensate for the loss or repair the damage they have caused.
- Mediation: It can involve parents or family members, other children and their families, residents from the community surrounding the school, local priests or imams or elders from temples, churches and mosques.
- Internal exclusion: It allows for disruptive learners to be removed temporarily, to separate them from others, to a quiet room or therapy room, where they can safely express their emotions.
- Managed move to another school: It is a voluntary process where the respective heads of schools can negotiate a move at a time or place that is in the child’s best interests (Teh in press).

When learners are excluded for a fixed term, the parent has the right to challenge the head teacher's decision – either at the Governor's review meeting or via a letter to the governors, depending on the length of the exclusion. Where a learner is excluded permanently, the governors have to meet to review the exclusion – either agreeing with the head teacher's decision and upholding the exclusion or deciding that the learner should be reinstated. Where the governors uphold the exclusion, the parent or care-giver has the right to appeal to an independent panel constituted and clerked by the Local Educational Authority. The decision of independent appeals panels are binding on all parties. Still, parents or governing bodies may appeal to the High Court if they think that the decision was unlawful or that a more reasonable panel would not have arrived at that outcome.

Furthermore, all school staff has the power to use 'reasonable force' to restrain learners and prevent them from doing harm to themselves, other children and staff members or school (or other) property. There is special guidance on using restrictive physical interventions with children and adults who display extreme behaviour – particularly in association with learning disability or autistic spectrum disorder (DfE 2002), but corporal punishment in British state schools was banned by parliament in 1987. In private schools, however, it was not abolished until much later, namely in 1999 in England and Wales, in 2000 in Scotland and in 2003 in Northern Ireland.

## Turkey

As to misbehaviour in schools, Turkey does not seem to have a significant problem. The PISA's 2009 results indicate that 74% of 15-year-old learners reported calm in classrooms whereas most teachers responded with 'never or hardly ever' or 'in some lessons have to wait a long time for learners to calm down' (Lozano in press). The most frequently reported misconduct in Turkish classrooms is learners speaking out of turn, interrupting other children and avoiding responsibilities (such as not doing homework or not bringing stationery, books and scripts to school).

Concerning misbehaviour towards other learners, the most frequently reported actions are verbal aggression, physical aggression, swearing and fighting. Rudeness and other forms of misbehaviour towards teachers are rare (Boyaci 2009; Danaoglu 2009; Ozben 2010; Ozkilinc & Sabanci 2010).

Article 42 of the Constitution of Turkey stipulates that ‘no-one shall be deprived the right of learning and education’ (Baskanlik 2010). The Basic Law of National Education, number 1739, spells out the objectives of Turkish National Education Policy (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] 2007).

Corporal punishment has been banned from Turkish schools since 1923. Yet, it is deeply ingrained in Turkish culture, and it can be traced back to the Ottoman period when *falaka* [foot whipping] – (a practice dramatically presented visually in the popular film *Midnight express*) was a customary practice in the formal education system (Hatipoglu-Sumer & Aydin 1999). It persists in Turkey today – in both homes and schools alike (Turkum 2010). In fact, it is regularly meted out at all grade levels as 50% – 75% of children are reported to be subjected to different forms of physical punishment (Lozano in press). Moreover, the overriding majority of teachers believe it has a place in child development (Gozutuk, Er & Karacaoglu 2006).

Regulation 27090, published in the *Official Gazette* of 24 December 2008, specifies the following disciplinary actions, which could be taken against learners in primary schools:

- Verbal warning: For late-coming, continual absenteeism without excuse and for displaying bad manners.
- Written censure: Arrogant or disrespectful behaviour directed towards administrators, teachers, other school staff or learners, ignoring school rules, and disrupting the learning environment, interrupting school-sponsored activities, continual lying, cheating, falsifying official records, disobeying the dress code, smoking and fighting.
- Expulsion: Actions against the fundamental principles of the Constitution, sexual assault, insulting, slandering, threatening, carrying weapons on the school premises, misusing school materials, acts of discrimination, damaging the belongings of others, attacking administrators or teachers, promoting the use of alcohol or other habit-forming substances (OECD 2008).

Similarly, with regard to secondary school learners, an official directive spells out the following disciplinary actions: written censure, short-term suspension and expulsion from formal education. However, in practice, the following methods of maintaining discipline prevail in schools in Turkey: corporal punishment, verbal approaches (which include harsh scolding as well as talking to the learner and giving verbal warnings) and sending children out of the classroom (Boyaci 2009).

Lozano (in press) concludes that teaching practices in schools in Turkey are still authoritarian and teacher-centred.

## Singapore

Compulsory education was introduced in 2003 but covers only the six years of primary school. Judging from the media, internet resources and informal discussions with teachers, learner misconduct appears to be a growing concern (Teh in press). Whilst the main forms of learner misconduct in the 1980s and 1990s were relatively minor in nature such as inattentiveness, poor concentration, clowning, restlessness, talking out of turn, not doing homework and failing to study for tests, Teh's (in press) interviews with principals, teachers and school counsellors have revealed that, in recent years, more serious forms of misbehaviour have started to appear. These include sexual misconduct, drug abuse and theft as well as new forms of misconduct such as cyber-bullying. All schools in Singapore have their own school rules and regulations.

Inspired by Confucian philosophy, the style of government has been authoritarian, inflexible and paternalistic with freedom of expression, assembly and association limited unashamedly (Lee 1994). Due process is therefore not prescribed for school actions. The belief is that once school rules are broken, school authorities have the prerogative to impose punishment (Teh in press). Common methods used by schools to maintain discipline include:

- counselling by school counsellors or educational psychologists
- reflection whereby learners are made to write down what they did wrong and why it is wrong
- punitive measures such as demerit points, which may result in the deprivation of



school awards

- disqualification from representing the school in competitions
- suspension (rare)
- expulsions (rare)
- caning (rare) (Teh in press).

In the next section, the researcher discusses the concept of discipline and its implications for the academic performance of learners in the selected intermediate schools of the Ehlanzeni Region.

## 2.5 School Discipline as a 'Concept'

It is vital to establish a clear understanding of the concept of “discipline” in the context of education and schooling. From a reformational perspective, “discipline” refers to discipleship. In other words: followership (Wolhuter and Steyn, 2003: 15). A disciple is one who hears and does the will of the leader (saviour or person of role-model). In the context of religion, a true discipleship is equivalent to doing the will of leader (saviour, master). From a Christian point of view, this has a dual purpose of (1) caretaking of creation (including fellow human beings) and (2) healing the wounds inflicted by sin - misconduct (Wolhuter and Steyn, 2003: 16).

Becoming a disciple, therefore, requires that the disciple-learner not only has to learn about the rules of discipline but should also be guided to experientially develop into a doer of the rules in the comforting presence of the leader. In this regard, discipleship as an educational goal requires the creation of conditions in the classroom that give learners the opportunity to actually experience the authoritative, yet comforting presence of the leader – educator (Van Dyk, 2000:65).

In simple terms, discipline can be defined as the process of maintaining order by assisting learners to discover the value, utility and necessity of obeying reasonable rules and procedures and to assume responsibility for their behaviour (Mabebe and Prinsloo, 2000: 34). In the school situation, discipline refers to “the orderliness in the management and control of the education process to ensure that the transfer of knowledge, norms and values progresses towards the desired aim.

Erasmus (2000: 22) defines discipline “as controlling with the intention of avoiding undesirable behaviour to happen”. In addition, Oppelt (2000: 2) sees discipline as creating and maintaining a learning atmosphere in which educators can teach learners in an environment that encourages respect for educators, classroom mates and administrators. In a positive sense, discipline refers to guidance and orderliness (Mabeba and Prinsloo, 2000:34).

To support the following statements, Mabeba and Prinsloo explain discipline as a “training that develops self-control, orderly conduct, character, orderliness and efficiency. It is a strict control to enforce obedience. Discipline is training expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behaviour. It is training that produces a normal or mental improvement. Sustained great results in schools, depend upon building a culture of self-discipline by people who take disciplinary actions” (Heistek, Nieman, Van Rooyen, Masoge and Bipath, 2008: 60).

Discipline is a process of maintaining order by assisting learners to discover the values, utility and necessity of reasonable rules and procedures and to assume responsibility for their behaviour (Motsiri, 2008:23). In the broader sense, discipline implies not only external discipline but a personal or inner discipline prompted by spiritual acceptance of disciplined behaviour. It denotes restraint by means of positive guidance, indicating the correct way. According to Wolhuter (2003: 4), discipline denotes the development within individuals of the necessary controls to train themselves for adult life and develop their personality. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:34) concur, and state that discipline may qualify as an integral part of effective educational effort in which the educators and parents help a child, who is supported and guided, towards a degree of self-actualisation and a responsible, joyful adulthood.

Loock (2006: 6) describes discipline as the shaping of the subordinate’s behaviour to motivate him or her in a particular way. Most of these definitions have something in common, namely, guiding and behaviour. One can define discipline as the act of guiding in the sense that it directs the learner towards responsible behaviour, and correcting because it discourages irresponsible behaviour. Bendix (2000:309) argues that discipline is necessary for order to be maintained, duties to be performed and rules to be obeyed. In the school situation, discipline refers to the orderly

management and control of the educational process to ensure that the transfer of knowledge, norms and values progresses towards the desired end. (Bless and Hugson-Smiths, 2000: 126).

However, discipline is not always linked to punishment. Joubert (2004: 112) describes the word discipline as, 1) the practice of imposing strict rules of behaviorism on other people 2) The ability to behave and work in a controlled manner or 3) a particular area of academic study. The word disciplining means 1) to improve or attempt to improve the behaviour of oneself or someone through training and 2) to push. Furthermore, Joubert (2004: 113) offers the following four definitions to the concept of discipline: 1) the development of mental faculties (i.e. mental discipline) by instruction and exercise 2) training to act in accordance with established rules 3) indoctrination to rules and 4) training through suffering. It is clear from these definitions that various meanings can be associated with the concept of discipline.

Discipline constitutes an important component of the educational environment. It ultimately requires that a person develops a sense of responsibility for his or her own behaviour (Erasmus, 2009: 8). Thus, Du Plessis and Loock (2006: 521) hold that the term discipline refers to a code of conduct prescribed for the well-being of an individual and the society in which he or she lives. They further claim that discipline is a personal system of organised behaviour to promote self-interest, while also contributing to the well-being of the others. Mtsweni (2008: 26) provides a brief description of what a disciplined person should uphold. He argues that disciplined people are regarded as those who have orderly habits, observe rules, regulations and authority so that they can improve their behaviour and exercise both self-direction and self-control. A disciplined person is rarely forced to conform to rules or to complete a required task, but performs willingly.

We live in a world where discipline serves a significant purpose in everything we do. Not only is discipline observed as an essential requisite for effective teaching and learning, but also for various ways in which an organisation, family or government operates. Kruger argues that discipline in schools aids in learners' self-control and self-direction.... Subsequently sharpening their idea of what is right and wrong.

Joubert and Squelch (2005: 2) classify discipline into three categories, namely:

- Preventive discipline which focuses on basic rights, clear rules and consequences. Rules and consequences help in terms of discipline and aim at preventing irresponsible behaviour from taking place.
- Corrective discipline, which concerns educators' actions that are carried out to correct disruptive and deviant behaviour. Educators should model good behaviour. Corrective discipline discourages further transgression of rules.
- Supportive discipline, which refers to corrections received fairly and the re-establishing of positive working relationships with disciplined learners. Good discipline does not happen by chance, it needs to be purposefully managed.

## 2.6 Characteristics of Discipline

Disciplined people are regarded as having orderly habits, observing rules, regulations and authority so that they can improve their behaviour and exercise both self-direction and self-rules to complete required tasks. They exercise discipline willingly, based on this general analysis.

The following characteristics are embedded in discipline:

- Discipline is used to teach learners about self-control and self-direction

According to Ramokgopa (2015: 10), discipline implies the development within individuals of the necessary personal control to train them for adult life and develop their personalities. It is considered to serve a number of particular functions in the growth process of learners on their way towards responsible adulthood. It assists them to acquire the characteristic of persistence. It also helps in securing stability of social order within which the learners may attain security as well as maturity. Squelch (2008: 8) supports this view by stating that discipline is regarded as a means of teaching the appreciation of what is right and wrong. Wolhuter (2003:5) is of the opinion that self-control cannot be learned in a vacuum. Learners should be provided with opportunities to take part in decision-making about those things that control their behaviour.

Wolhuter (2003:5) asserts that, whenever possible, learners should have the opportunity to self-limit and to choose from behavioral alternatives if they are to learn personal control.

The purpose of discipline is the development of self-controlled citizens, which implies that who have never learned to behave themselves can never achieve this objective. Educators who fail to control their learners do not teach self-control and order. In the classroom, discipline should never be regarded as an aim. It is an immediate objective, which must be attained and it is an essential step on the way towards developing self-controlled citizens.

- Discipline is used to establish order

Mare (2007:34) states that, as far as possible, reinforcement should be used to increase the frequency of cooperative and on-task behaviour and promote the development of pro-social behaviour. Good behaviour should be rewarded with praise, in a quick and spontaneous way. Beyond this, it is necessary for maintaining order and harmony in the classroom situation. Disruptive, as well as anti-social behaviour can have a harmful impact upon teaching and learning. Therefore, every school must have a policy on disciplining, which should include details of the school rules, expected behaviour and the consequences of deviating from the school rules. Ideally, the goal of discipline is to reduce the need for educator intervention overtime by assisting learners to learn to control their own behaviour (Matiwane, 2010: 39). Learners learn in an orderly and safe environment. Discipline cannot be promoted if the school has no rules and regulations or code of conduct that the learners must conform to. All learners' school activities should be regulated by such rules, and the behaviour of learners should be checked against them. The rules should assist learners to develop self-control, self-direction social responsibility.

- Discipline is used to teach learners about reasonable degrees of social conformity

Discipline is necessary and indispensable to maintain a certain standard of social conformity so that the community can function in an orderly and fearless manner. Learners do not grow up spontaneously, they must be brought up. In this respect, educators should help learners to be self-reliant, free and responsible - that is

adulthood in the true sense. Discipline leads to good order and well-rounded and restrained behaviour. The main aim of discipline is to teach learners a reasonable degree of social conformity, and it must be truthfully and judiciously handled, keeping in mind the individuality of the learners, as well as the severity of any misdemeanour (Niewenhous, 2003: 33). In the opinion of Chuenyane (2008: 16), discipline should aim at mental and moral training. It must strive towards the restructuring of behaviour in accordance with the established rules and norms.

Learners should be brought up to accept responsibility for themselves and for their judgments, decisions and actions. Their degree of acceptance or responsibility automatically determines their view of freedom. Van Niekerk (2003:32) is of the opinion that educators should act as representatives of society, especially adult members of the community. They should ensure that moral values that are deemed highly by the different societies-, from which learners come, are passed on to learners. In this sense, they are expected to be transmitters and upholders of those moral values that are regarded as important and necessary in building the character of learners. In short, as responsible adults, educators should ensure that they present themselves as people of values who have reasons for their convictions. Through discipline, learners will realise the necessity for order in the world and, that to maintain order, some types of behaviour are abhorred, while other types of behaviour are praised. If there is discipline, a culture of teaching and learning in the classrooms will be successfully established and maintained.

- Discipline is used to protect learners

According to Oosthuizen (2009:149), much misbehaviour is fuelled by learners' lack of ability to choose personal values within a moral context. It is therefore educators' and parents' role to facilitate the behaviour and morality of learners through skilled exercises and dialogue in a supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere so that learners are protected from insecure situations and are able to distinguish between right and wrong. In the school situation, learners come with diverse value systems from diverse family backgrounds, some of which are dissimilar to the particular school's value systems. It is thus the educators' responsibility to orient those value systems into a singular code of conduct acceptable to all. In this fashion, the learners will be protected from unacceptable values and as a result become safe in the school

environment. Oosthuizen (2009: 59) states that in an orderly environment governed by law, discipline protects learners against deviant and ill-disciplined behaviour of educators. It also protects them against their own behaviour.

Cohen (2007: 40) claims that managing discipline is one of the most crucial tasks of management in a school. Educators, learners and parents have to collaborate in ensuring that discipline is created and maintained in their schools so that the schools are manageable and operate successfully. This is the main aim of schools and will be attained when the environment of the school is conducive to teaching and learning. Learners' deviant behaviour, lack of interest and attention, disrespect for authority and anti-social behaviour cause management problems. These have to be curbed so that schools can be viewed as safe and disciplined. Discipline and management are central to effective teaching and learning (Cohen, 2007:7). Educators are responsible for the educational impact they have on learners. They need to understand the process of education in order to be able to function in an effective way. Schools should provide a stable, caring environment for all learners, irrespective of whether a learner's family is supportive of or indifferent to the school. The role of the school in relation to the learners' cultural and social differences should be supportive.

Discipline in a school is an indication of learner safety and effectiveness. Thus, the presence of discipline and safety can be regarded as the primary effectiveness of educators towards the performance and achievements of learners. A disciplined school will also be regarded as a safe school because the learners can learn without fear of assault and educators can teach without fear of threats of violence. Educators and learners should have common objectives namely, good performance and attainment of objectives.

Erasmus (2009: 43) states that learners behave well when they value education and when the institution which they attend is concerned about their safety and well-being. Learners are happy to learn both basic and social skills, which promote both their discipline and their safety in the school. The social skills are, for example: an ability to assess differences of opinion and of personality and to use them constructively;; an ability to hold different opinions from others person without disturbing personal relationships, an ability to arrive at a consensus on a controversial matter and the

ability to play the role either of leader or follower. Lemmer (2002:20) asserts that a successful school has a safe and orderly environment which is evidenced by learners abiding by the rules, their regular attendance and punctuality, respect for educators and academic duty and their completion of school work. They dress in a relevant manner and their behaviour is acceptable, in and out of the school or classroom situation.

According to Cohen (2007: 52-53), discipline is linked with cleanliness, freedom and flexibility in dress and the personal and social happiness of the learners. This implies that learners have to attend a school where they feel free and happy, a safe and orderly school which provides an environment where they can learn without disruption or disturbance. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2008: 35) suggest that a safe and orderly school is important before learning can take place and are of the opinion that effective educators are able to create a classroom climate that is conducive to learning and is characterised by mutual trust and respect. Mare (2007: 1) endorses this view by stating that because a disciplined classroom is enjoyable and stimulating for learning, steps should be taken to establish and maintain such an environment. Educators should strive towards the establishment of an environment that will prevent disciplinary problems from arising.

- Discipline ensures fairness

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996: 8), everyone has the right, (a), to be free from all forms of violence, from either public or private sources, (b), not to be tortured in any way and, (c), not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. Educators should therefore not exercise coercive power over learners because that may have a detrimental effect. Coercive power usually leads to power struggles between educators and learners. Joubert (2004: 10) explains that the concept of fairness means treating people equally, justly or appropriately. Joubert (2004: 59) further explains fairness as “the moral value that serves as a norm to ensure impartiality when dealing with competing interests of various subjects”. This suggests that the interests of both educators and learners must be protected. Charles (2002: 34) supports this view by stating that once an educator acts from a basis of overview power, teaching effectiveness stops and educator-learner power struggles become common place.



Such power struggles fuel and increase disruptive behaviour and place the educator in a no-win situation. Educators should therefore develop authority and power in the school by demonstrating expertise and concern for the needs of learners. They should ensure that learners are treated with respect and should demonstrate fairness and consistency at all times. One way of demonstrating recognition and respect for learners, and fairness in exercising discipline is, for example, by involving learners in the drawing up of school or class rules. Clarke (2007: 35) and Charles (2002: 38) endorse these views by stating that educators should ensure that they involve their learners when drawing up the rules (and related consequences) for governing learners' behaviour in classroom situations. They should ensure that learners understand the agreements made between educators and learners. These democratic approaches will give the learners some ownership of the rules and commitment to follow them willingly. Learners will consider the rules to be fair if the agreements were reached amicably. A positive and harmonious rapport will thus result between educators and learners and a safe school environment will be created.

The basis of these characteristics lies in the safe environment that is created while the school activities are regulated and managed in an orderly fashion for educators to be able to exercise discipline, to maintain order and to guarantee the safety of all involved in a school. They should use the code of conduct and the school policy and regulations effectively and efficiently.

One of the challenges faced by school management teams is to use punishment as mechanisms to put enforce discipline in primary schools. This is the result of a lack of understanding of the concept of discipline.

In the next section causes of lack of discipline are discussed.

## 2.7 Causes of Lack of Discipline in Intermediate Schools

Learner ill-discipline is a very serious problem. Many complementary factors may explain why youngsters of school going age become undisciplined, and even violent. Therefore, there is no one factor that can be regarded as the cause of ill-discipline. However, one can point out factors that seem to be related to a lack of discipline and violent behaviour. Different authors have proposed different hypotheses on the

possible sources of ill-discipline and violence in schools. These can be categorised as discussed below:

- Peer group pressure

Peer groups can become a breeding ground for violence. An individual's peer group may place him or her at risk. Van den Aardweg (1987:179) maintains that the major part of school learning takes place within the context of the peer group. The peer group commands allegiance and individuals tend to follow the trend of the groups. For instance, participating in physical fighting, bullying and carrying of weapons by peers are vital risks for violence in schools. According to Currie (1998), involvement in physical fighting is very common among school age children in many parts of the world. Around one third of students risk becoming involved in fighting with peers – this includes aggressive bullying and physical fighting which leads to more serious forms of violence (Lobber et al. 1993).

The carrying of weapons by peers, which contributes to high-risk behaviour and is a predominantly male activity, illustrates ill-discipline among young people of school-going age (Bemark and Keys, 2000:16). According to Van den Aardweg (1987:179), group norms and values are critical to the shaping of perceptions, cognition and action. Similarly, Bemark and Keys (2000:16) argue that the principles of modelling and social learning are at work when youngsters socialise with others who use violence and aggression to achieve desired outcomes. Gable & Manning (1996) maintain that some learners commit violent acts because they believe these choices in dealing with aggression are a viable tool for coping with conflict.

- Lack of parental involvement

In South Africa, parents are expected to be involved in their children's school matters. The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a: 2) states clearly that all learners, parents and educators should collaboratively accept responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools, in partnership with the state. This implies that parents are by law compelled to participate in school activities. This means that parents have the capacity and the right to determine what is in the best educational interests of their children.

Bissety (2000:5) and Oppelt (2000:16) state that in many schools in South Africa ill-discipline is rife and parental involvement is lacking. According to Van Wyk (2001:198), many parents are reluctant to co-operate with educators in disciplining their children. Many parents seem to transfer their obligations to the schools, with the result that the schools have to handle all the disciplinary problems. However, children would feel more secure, and perform and behave better if their parents were involved in school activities. Chuenyane (2008:17) supports this view by stating that if children with behavioral problems realised that their parents and educators were collaborating to manage difficulties, they would experience more consistency and feel more contained. Parents can have a great impact on their children's behaviour by ensuring that they arrive at school on time, behave correctly, wear relevant uniform and are in possession of the required books and equipment to complete their tasks in time. For educators to maintain discipline in schools, they need support from parents to promote discipline and to take responsibility for their children's' behaviour.

Various researchers emphasise the importance of parental involvement in school activities. Cohen (2007:32) attests that an active relationship between parents and educators has great benefits. Parents can have a great impact in ensuring that learners behave appropriately. According to Kruger (2003:156), "if parents and educators possess a mutual appreciation of the role each has to play in the education of the children, opportunities for development are increased." He further states that when parents become more involved in the teaching programme of the school, they are more likely to make school a priority for their children and their children are more likely to achieve better results. Lemmer (2002:5) concurs by stating that the benefits of parental involvement in education for learners, regardless of cultural background, are well documented: higher scholastic achievement, reduced-dropout rate and reduced absenteeism. Kruger (2000:159) states that, without cooperation between the educators and parents, the child cannot be sufficiently educated. The parents have a special and important role in the education of the child.

- Bullying

The report on the state of bullying in South African schools (Department of Education 2013) suggests that:

Bullying can take many forms such as physical violence, threats, name calling, sarcasm, rumour-spreading, persistent teasing, exclusion from a group, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation and abusive comments. The report further suggests that bullying can be direct or indirect. Direct bullying involves physical contact or verbal abuse whereas indirect bullying involves subtle social manipulations such as gossiping, spreading rumours and exclusion.

According to Tintswalo (2014:55), bullying is categorised into two types, namely, learner-to-learner bullying and teacher-to-learner bullying. Tintswalo reports that learners were bullied by other learners in schools. It seemed to occur especially when teachers were not in the classroom, during breaks and in toilets. He argues that both boys and girls are bullied at schools, but that the rate at which girls are bullied is higher than that of boys. Girls, are bullied by both boys and fellow female learners (Tintswalo, 2014:55). He further argues that teacher-to-learner bullying also takes place and that teachers, as authority figures in schools, are also perpetrators of violence. Le Roux and Makhele (2011: 318) state that most of the teachers in township schools are less qualified than their suburban counterparts and therefore are unable to teach effectively. This situation is exacerbated by overcrowded classrooms and the lack of a good work ethic on their part. This can result in teachers' over-reliance on physical abuse through, but not limited to, corporal punishment (Tintswalo, 2014:55).

The Department of Education (2013: 14) suggests that bullies often influence their peers to become active participants alongside them. In studies of school bullying (Ncontsa and Shumba, 2013:4) attest that it was found that on the playground bullies demanded money or food from other learners and would beat learners up if they did not have money or lunch.

Smith (2014:98) states that it is likely that most learners will become involved in bullying one way or another within a school system. There are a number of roles that learners can adopt within bullying interactions, including those of ringleader, follower or reinforcer, as well as outsider or defender.

- The influence of drugs and alcohol

Communities with high levels of exposure to violence often have access to drugs and alcohol. According to Burton (2008:21), those children whose family members use illegal drugs or had been incarcerated were twice as likely as other children to experience school-based violence. He further indicates that there is a strong connection between substance abuse and crime. For example, high levels of alcohol consumption and the use of drugs increase levels of aggression and therefore, the levels of violence in community crime.

It is becoming evident that the availability of drugs and alcohol among school learners is increasing in the school context. Learners are not the only ones bringing these substances onto the school premises, t some teachers are using children to get alcohol from the shebeens or are missing classes to go and drink. The National Schools Violence study found that 34.5% of secondary school children and 3.1% of primary school children knew learners who had come to school drunk, and a similar percentage knew of fellow learners who had come to school high on drugs (Burton, 2008:22).

The School Based Report states that many studies show that the age at which learners start drinking is getting younger and younger. Hence, it is common for school learners to bunk classes or to be seen drinking alcohol on their way to school.

- Educators as poor role models

According to Mlamleli, Mabelane, Napo & Sibiya (2004:4), educators should act as role models for their learners. If they behave unethically, they will damage themselves and will lose the trust and respect of both their learners and the community. Educators should therefore behave the same way that they want their learners to behave. Educators are expected to set an example of consistent ethical, just and acceptable behaviour if they want learners to become well-behaved and disciplined.

Summer (2002:46) states that learners can learn a great deal by watching adults. Therefore, for educators to manage their classes effectively and for them to exercise discipline over learners, they themselves must be disciplined. As disciplinarians, they are the most potent force in the character formation of learners.

Liamputtong & Lizzy (2005:95) are of the opinion that a role models generally live in such a manner that their way is worthy of imitation in both lifestyle and the underlying value system. They further state that when they think back to the great educators they had, it is not so much the skills that these educators taught that were cherished, but their whole mode of living. It was worthy of following and be used as the foundation on which to structure their own lives. In contrast, those who behaved badly have a negative impact on managing discipline in schools (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:40).

Presently in South Africa, there is great concern about what seems to be the collapse of moral values at personal, community and national levels. This has a great impact on learner discipline on the school premises (Thompson, 2002:6). Among other factors that cause problems in the schools, is the erosion of moral standards. According to Bissety (2001:3), this is evident from the increasing number of sexual relationships between educators and learners and also from the collapse of mutual respect and dedication. Masitsa (2208:5) highlights the fact that there are a number of educators whose professional conduct is cause for concern. Examples of defiant behaviour reported include late coming and early departure, long absences from school with or without permission, dodging classes, lack of commitment to work and insubordination.

- Lack of motivation by educators

Educators should ensure that learners are motivated to learn and behave appropriately because unmotivated learners become demoralised and do not behave appropriately. Educators should adopt a behaviorist model whereby desirable behaviour is reinforced. Some form of reward like merit awards or slips or some form of approval usually reinforces good behaviour and increases learner motivation.

The word “motivation” is derived from the word “movere”, meaning to move (Mclay, 2003:7). Therefore motivation is the sum of all that moves a person to action. To motivate denotes that one person provides another person with a motive to do something. Motivation can be regarded as a key aspect of emotional intelligence and persistence. According to Mclay (2003:5), the concept “motivate” means to give a person a motive or incentive to do something. Motivation has two main tasks first it has a directional task: choosing among options and maintaining the action as

desired. Secondly, it has an intensifying task, for example, maintaining a level of enthusiasm (2003:7). Burden (1995:146) indicates that most educators use the concept of motivation to describe those processes which arouse and initiate behaviour, give direction and purpose to behaviour, enable the behaviour to persist, and lead to choosing or preferring a specific behaviour. Educators are interested in a particular sort of learner motivation, which is to motivate to learn.

According to De Klerk (2003:70), some learners have negative attitudes towards learning and doing school work in general. Their behaviour is evident in their laziness, indifference, persistent carelessness, cheating, restlessness and untidiness. For this reason, educators should ensure that learners are motivated to learn and behave appropriately.

- Discrimination

Discrimination in schools serves no legitimate educational purpose as it is clearly contrary to the principles of administrative justice. Male students are discriminated against and there is somewhat stronger discrimination in favour of the upper-middle class students. High grade; high- achieving students are treated much more lightly when they do break school rules than others. Students who are involved in extra-mural curricular activities enjoy favourable discrimination. However, there is no reason to exempt good students from punishment they deserve, hence the response of low-achieving students to the discrimination with subsequent retaliatory rule breaking (Oosthuizen; 2000:281).

- Poverty

At the community level, powerlessness, isolation and dissatisfaction with treatment by those in authority were found to be vital factors contributing to school violence (Van Den Aardweg 2010: 175). Van Den Aardweg further argues that prolonged exclusion from a nation's economic and social life is the primary cause of unrest. Hence, poverty is another factor linked to violent behaviour in the community which filters down to schools. Inadequate housing and high unemployment rates are related to high rates of crime and violence in the community. Absence of basic services such as job training, public transport, recreation and day-care facilities are identified as contributory factors to school violence (Bemak and Keys, 2010:70).

Poverty and high population density communities are linked to high rates of school violence. According to Bannette-Johnson (2011: 29), rural communities tend to have higher poverty rates with the level of poverty being great, which results in both community and school violence.

- Classroom management

Classroom management is the democratic process through which rules are made with special emphasis on the importance of participating and involvement in the thinking and decision-making process within a classroom (Savage, 2001:59). The establishment of the rules and consequences of the good or bad behaviour of learners or parents should be participative process facilitated by educators.

Charles (2002:13) reminds teachers that they are important transmitters of value. They transmit values through their own words and actions during interactions with their learners. According to Prinsloo (2008:60), children are more likely to understand, respect and follow principles that they have helped to create. Through this participation process, learners build their own capacity for decision-making, community-building and responsibility. Therefore, the management of discipline requires that educators make learners feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe so that they can develop intrinsic discipline and accountability for their actions.

Overcrowded classrooms also have a huge effect upon the behaviour and achievement of learners. Savage (2012: 12) states that the density of the individual in space is an important factor of the physical environment which can influence: behaviour. He further pointed out that it is difficult to teach and manage the classroom when it is overcrowded. This is regarded as one of the factors that hampers the creation of a favourable environment in which the educators can teach successfully. A favourable classroom climate is related to learner achievement. It promotes learners' self-esteem, positive interactions and develops a non-threatening comfortable environment.

- Humiliation and undermining

Porteus, Vally & Ruth (2001:27) state that some educators who pride themselves on moving away from corporal punishment have replaced it with humiliation, sarcasm and neglect. To support this issue of humiliation, City Press (2006:8) reported the



case of one educator who expressed her pride when she came up with an "alternative" to corporal punishment. She forced some learners to strip naked as a form of disciplining them, and teenage girls were beaten up and ordered to remove their menstrual pads and model on the school grounds. The girls were being punished because they were ill-disciplined. Clearly this is the worst case of humiliation and undermining of the learners' human dignity.

## 2.8 Types of Discipline

There are different types of punishment which teachers might utilise to maintain discipline and to enforce school and classroom rules. They range from detention to corporal punishment and expulsion.

### 2.8.1 Corporal punishment

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child defines corporal punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain and discomfort, however light. The committee gives some examples of different types of corporal punishment: hitting-with a hand or an object, for example a whip, stick, belt or pipe; kicking, grabbing or throwing; scratching, pinching, biting, pulling or boxing ears; forcing children to stay in an uncomfortable positions; throwing objects at a learner; burning with hot water or cigarettes. According to the Basic Rights Handbook: Chapter 19, corporal punishment prior 1994 was frequently relied on: to ensure discipline in South African schools and was acknowledged as an essential part of the schooling system. It was employed to discipline unruly children, and was also used to 'toughen up boys' and 'turn them into men'. To support the above view, the Western Cape Provincial government validates corporal punishment as any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish or contain him or her. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, pinching, paddling or hitting a child with a hand or with an object; denying or restricting a child's use of toilet; denying meals, drink, heat or shelter; pushing or pulling a child with force or forcing a child to do exercise.

There have been debates and controversies surrounding the use of corporal punishment such as spare the rod and spoil the child. The Basic Education Rights Handbook argues for the use of corporal punishment, saying that learners who

receive corporal punishment are more hard working; a lack of consequences or punishment can increase violent behaviour by students; banning of corporal punishment has resulted in reduced levels of discipline; different methods of discipline are not as effective as corporal punishment; learners are behaving poorly and are ill-disciplined.

Contrary to this, arguments against the use of corporal punishment say that it perpetuates the acceptance of violent behaviour in society; it doesn't encourage learners to behave appropriately; it has the potential to weaken the relationship between the learner and the educator, which is crucial for the development of the learner; it causes psychological harm, including emotional damage; a negative impact on self-esteem; negative feelings about going to school; and negative outcomes for academic performance.

The European Commission of Human Rights holds that: corporal punishment amounts to a total lack of respect for the human being and that it does not depend on the age of the human being. The sum total of adverse effects, whether actual or potential, produced by corporal punishment on the mental or moral development of a child is enough to describe it as degrading.

## 2.8.2 Suspension and expulsion

According to Oosthuizen (2000: 66), suspension and expulsion are aimed at correction, not at retribution, as in the case of corporal punishment. He argues that discipline should be administered in a prospective way, directed at the development of the adult of the future. Suspension can be defined as 'the temporary refusal by a school or school governing body (SGB) to admit a learner to the school act' (Oosthuizen, 2000:82). According to the South African Schools Act of 1996 section 9 (b), a learner may be suspended for a maximum period of one week, after a fair hearing. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a learner from a school or hostel. Usually suspension precedes expulsion. Expulsion may be executed by the HOD in question and then, only if the learner is found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing. Two types of expulsion are distinguished: class expulsion, where a learner is expelled from a specific class only, owing to his or her misconduct or complete expulsion from school.

Behaviour might improve after learners have reflected on their behaviour during the time of suspension and decided to change their behaviour. However, Klump (2007: 2) points out that the effectiveness of punishment does little to change learner behaviour. Oosthuizen (2000: 68) concludes that, when considering suspension and expulsion, it is important for educators to be reminded that the security of the group should be weighed against the security of the individual offending learner. Therefore, one should agree with Oosthuizen that the role of discipline is to protect other learners against his unruly behaviour as well as to protect the learner himself.

### 2.8.3 Detention

Dekker and Lemmer (1998:242) define detention as the punishment of being kept in school after hours. It is employed as an alternative to corporal punishment. This type of punishment may take the form of isolation during class, during break or after school.

According to the Collins English Dictionary (2004:186), detention is the detaining of a person (i.e. the learner) in order to punish him or her. In essence, detention can be seen as a system through which learners have to sacrifice their free time due to their misconduct or unruly behaviour. Imposing detention must be done in a fair and reasonable way.

### 2.8.4 Assigning extra work

Assigning extra work involves giving learners supplementary written school work, such as writing lines, writing an essay, copying sections from a text book or doing extra mathematics, as a form of punishment. However, educators also need to be careful when assigning extra school work. Although this is not unlawful, additional work should have the value and purpose of school work and may also be counterproductive in motivating learners to work diligently. Furthermore, educators must be careful not to punish learners for poor work performance. For example, for not completing work their where it may be because of lack of understanding and ability.

### 2.8.5 Time-out

Another common method of punishing learners is time-out. Learners can be removed from the classroom and isolated from other learners to cool off if they are very disruptive or violent, to reflect on their misbehaviour. However, when learners are required to stand or sit in the corner, possibly with their back to the class or stand next to the educator's desk or sit at desks that have been isolated from others, it is likely to humiliate them and to provoke resentment rather than to correct behaviour positively.

#### 2.8.6 Behaviour management contract

Written contracts may be drawn up between the educators, learners and the parent, if need be, that sets out specific goals for the learner with appropriate conditions and consequences. The contract implies a two way process, the school should undertake to provide the necessary counselling and a behaviour management support programme.

#### 2.8.7 Withdrawal from privileges

Several privileges may be withdrawn to punish a learner. For example, a learner may be prevented from participating in sports or cultural activities. If a privilege is withdrawn, caution must be taken to follow due process and to ensure that the learner's school work is not compromised.

#### 2.8.8 Community work

Community work may be given to learners as a measure of punishment. This may include cleaning toilets and classrooms. This cleaning of toilets and classrooms can be to instil responsibility and consideration of others. Community work must be supervised and should not be done during class time.

The School Management Teams (SMTs), who are appointed as leaders, need to be aware of the difference between discipline and punishment. Moreover, they are also expected to know the reasons for discipline in intermediate schools

## 2.9 The Difference between Punishment and Discipline

The South African Basic Education: Positive Discipline and Classroom (2012:4) refers to discipline as the practice of teaching or training a person to obey rules or a code of behaviour in the short- and long-term. While punishment is meant to control children's behaviour, discipline is meant to develop their behaviour. It is meant to teach children self-control and confidence by focusing on what they are capable of learning.

Discipline focused and punishment focused approaches can be summarised as follows:

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Punishment</b>
Gives children positive alternatives.	Tells them what not to do without explaining why.
Acknowledges and rewards effort and good behaviour.	Only reacts harshly to misbehaviour.
A regular, continuous, consistent and determined process. It should be instruction-oriented.	Happens only when a child is caught making mistake or having a problem. It is a premeditated action that aims at humiliating or shaming children.
Takes the child's view into account; children follow rules because they are discussed and agreed upon.	Never or rarely listens to children; children follow rules because of threats or bribes.
Consistent, firm guidance.	Controlling, shaming, ridiculing.
Positive, respects the child.	Negative and disrespectful of the child.
Physically and verbally non-violent.	Physically and verbally violent and aggressive.
Logical consequences that are directly related to and in proportion to the misbehaviour.	Consequences those are unrelated.
Teaches children to understand the reason for rules and discipline so that they internalise them and follow them	Teaches the child to passively follow the rules for fear of being punished; there is no real understanding of why one

subconsciously.	behaviour is permitted, and another is not.
Understands children's capacity, needs and developmental stages.	Inappropriate to the child's developmental stage of life; does not take into account children's capacity and needs.
Teaches children self-discipline.	Requires adults to enforce discipline. Teaches children to behave well only when they risk getting caught doing otherwise.
Emphasises listening and modelling.	Involves constantly reprimanding children for minor infractions causing them to tune adults out (ignore adults; not listen to adults)
Accepts mistakes as normal and uses them as learning opportunities.	Mistakes viewed as unacceptable. Forces the child to be obedient because adults say so, rather than through understanding the right and wrong of the situation.
Focuses on the behaviour of the child rather than the child's personality.	Criticises the child's personality rather than commenting on their behaviour.

Source: Durrant. (2010); Plan Vietnam (2009)

## 2.10 New Disciplinary Measures

The Department of Education has done away with most types of punishment used in the past. This was done to adhere to the principles of Human Rights and the Constitution of the New Democratic South Africa. According to the South African Schools Act 84 Of 1996 section 10, corporal punishment is prohibited and is illegal, one can be found guilty of using it by a court of law. Discipline should be explained and understood, then dealt with as soon as possible. Lumbly (2007: 43-45) attests that punishment should not be given in anger and hatred. Furthermore, once the

punishment has been administered, the situation should start with a clean slate, discouraging the educator or learners from holding a grudge.

Punishment should be used as follows:

- Educators may use reasonable measures to prevent a learner from harming him/herself or others or violating the rights of others or educators;
- Every educator is responsible for discipline and should refer serious misconduct to the school manager and school governing body;
- Any corrective measures must be commensurate with the offence;
- The disciplinary process must be expeditious, fair and just, corrective and consistent and
- It should involve parents or guardians in case of serious offences.

Responsibility for learners' behaviour rests with their parents or guardians. The committee members who suspend should not conduct the hearing which should take place within seven days (Naidu, 2008: 3).

To reduce ill-discipline in schools, there must be formal parent and teacher meetings organised by the school manager, where parents are invited to come for a discussion about the progress of their children. Educators should treat children with respect and equality and employ the following strategies to help in maintaining discipline:

#### 2.10.1 Suspension and expulsion

Oosthuizen (2000: 66) argues that discipline should be administered in a prospective way, directed at the development of the adult of the future. Suspension can be defined as 'the temporary refusal by a school or school governing body (SGB) to admit a learner to the school act (Oosthuizen, 2000:82)'. According to the South African Schools Act of 1996 section 9 (b), a learner may be suspended for a maximum period of one week after a fair hearing. Expulsion is the permanent removal of a learner from a school or hostel. Usually suspension precedes expulsion. Expulsion may be executed by the HOD in question and only if the learner found guilty of serious misconduct at a fair hearing. Two types of expulsion are

distinguished: class expulsion, where a learner is expelled from a specific class only owing to his or her misconduct.

Behaviour might improve after learners have reflected on their behaviour during the time of suspension and decided to change their behaviour. However Klump (2007: 2), points out that the effectiveness of punishment does little to change a learner's behaviour. Oosthuizen (2000: 68) concludes that, when considering suspension and expulsion, it is important for educators to be reminded that the security of the group is weighed against the security of the individual offending learner. Therefore one should agree with Oosthuizen that the role of discipline is to protect the learner against the unruly behaviour of his fellow learners as well as against his own behaviour.

#### 2.10.2 Behaviour and management contract

Individual behaviour contracts are useful for changing specific behaviours. They can be drawn up as an agreement between the learner and educator or may involve both the learner and the parent with the educator. The contract includes the names of the educator and the learner, what the learner agrees to by what date, what the educator agrees to if the learner follows what is in the contract; the learner's and educator's signatures and lastly, the date (Department of Basic Education, 2012:37)

#### 2.10.3 Community work

Community work may be given to learners as a measure of punishment and may include cleaning toilets and classrooms. This cleaning of toilets and classrooms may develop a sense of responsibility and consideration for others. Community work must be supervised and should not be done during class time.

The School Management Teams (SMTs), who are appointed as leaders, need to be aware of the difference between discipline and punishment. Moreover, they are also expected to know the reasons for discipline in intermediate schools.



#### 2.10.4 Withdrawal of privileges

Privileges may be withdrawn to punish learners. For example, learners may be prevented from participating in sports or cultural activities. If a privilege is withdrawn, caution must be taken to follow due process and to ensure that learners' school work is not compromised.

#### 2.10.5 Detention

Dekker and Lemmer (1998:242) define detention as the punishment of being kept in school after hours. It is employed as an alternative to corporal punishment. This type of punishment may take the form of isolation during class, during break or after school.

According to the Collins English Dictionary (2004:186), detention is the detaining of a person (i.e. the learner) in order to punish him or her. In essence, detention can be seen as a system in terms of which learners have to sacrifice their free time as a result of their misconduct or unruly behaviour. Imposing detention must be done in a fair and reasonable way.

#### 2.10.6 Time-out

Another common method of punishing learners is time-out. A learner may be removed from the classroom and isolated from other learners to cool off and to reflect on his or her misbehaviour if he or she is very disruptive or violent.

#### 2.10.7 Search and seizure

With the growing concern about illegal drugs and weapons in schools, school officials have implemented more extensive safeguards to promote safety. These measures include searches of students and their property. Principals and educators are faced with the dilemma of whether or not to search learners and their property and, when conducting searches, it is important that they take cognizance of the Bill of Rights, specifically the child's rights to privacy (514) and to respect and protect his or her dignity (10). School officials may conduct searches without warrants based on reasonable suspicion that the student possesses contraband - either illegal or in violation of school policy.

### 2.10.8 Daily reports

Disruptive learners may be required to report to the principal or another senior educator on a daily basis for a specified period of time. This should make learners realise that they are being closely watched. Alternatively, a learner may be required to carry a report sheet that is completed by each of the learner's educators and then handed to the principal or deputy principal at the end of the day.

In the next section, alternative approaches to school discipline are discussed.

### 2.11 Alternative Approaches to School Discipline

As pointed out earlier, corporal punishment is viewed differently by different people. It is also clear that its prohibition was a result of, among other issues, views about its abuse and negative consequences. It is also clear that educators largely do not feel comfortable with discipline without the use of corporal punishment. Although outlawed, corporal punishment remains controversial, with educators still using it because they see it as: "the only thing that works" (Sapa, 2006:8). This feeling is also expressed by many parents.

In 2000, the Department of Education launched a manual which details alternatives to corporal punishment (Department of Education, 2000) as a way of assisting educators to deal with discipline problems in schools. The manual asserts that discipline requires creating a climate based on mutual respect within which learners feel safe and affirmed thus decreasing the need for disciplinary action as it helps in encouraging learners to practise self-discipline (Department of Education, 2000:12). In essence, this implies, as outlined in the manual, creating a positive culture of teaching and learning which involves adopting a whole school approach and making sure that classroom discipline reflects the school's policies.

The manual suggests the following advice for educators:

- a) Establishing ground rules;

Class rules with the learners should be set at the beginning of the year. These can be re-evaluated at the beginning of each new term. The educator should ensure that

everybody understands the logic behind each rule and they should be placed where they can be seen, or each learner could be given a copy. The rules could further be turned into an agreement, by asking each learner to sign a copy.

- b) Being serious and consistent about the implementation of the rules; knowing learners and focusing on relationship building;

The rules should apply equally to everybody in the class. Be fair. This is critical in creating a relationship of trust between educators and learners. Make sure that any disciplinary action is carried out firmly and consistently, and fairly.

- c) Managing the learning process and the learning environment enthusiastically and professionally;

Be on time. Arrive 10 minutes early for classes so that you have time to make sure everything is as you want it to be. Prepare thoroughly for each class. Anticipate that some learners will finish before others and have something for them to do. Be self-critical: if something does not work, consider all the reasons why not - including that you may be at fault, and identify how to do better next time.

- d) Learning materials and approach;

It provides the opportunity for learners to practise their skills in areas such as conflict-management, problem-solving, tolerance, anti-racism and gender sensitivity, in order to build a co-operative learning environment in which learners understand the dynamics of working together and are able to give and take in a group situation.

- e) Being inclusive;

Talk to and involve every child. Use materials, pictures, language, music, posters and magazines that reflect the diversity of the class so that no learner feels left out. Create opportunities to discuss, acknowledge and value the differences among learners including their culture, language, religion, gender and age. Encourage them to listen to and respect other points of view.

- f) Giving learners the opportunity to succeed;

Learners who feel positive about themselves and their ability to succeed learn and behave better. Schools sometimes do things that discourage children without

realizing it. For example, only acknowledging those learners who get very high marks can discourage less academically successful learners who try hard but do not achieve top marks. It is important to reward children when they have worked to the best of their ability, rather than focusing on their success relative to others. Take steps to avoid favouritism and celebrate a broad range of student achievement.

g) Allowing learners to take responsibility;

Involve children. When children are involved in making the rules, they are more likely to follow them and to take responsibility for their actions. Provide space for learners to be responsible. Make student responsibility charts and make each learner responsible for something, such as running a community project, taking care of a class pet or filling in class lists for the educator. Being responsible for day-to-day class events will develop their sense of self-worth as well as their ability to take responsibility for themselves and their communities.

h) Giving attention seekers what they want;

Create opportunities to talk and listen, so that you get to know each child. Children who feel valued will not need to seek attention as often. Build relationships in which learners feel respected, understood and recognised for who they are. Lay the foundation for open communication channels.

i) Identifying and tapping into sources of information and support;

There are many websites, for example, that provide detailed information on positive discipline. Discuss concerns, ideas and strategies with colleagues and share stories. Use professional assistance like social workers, psychologists or counsellors, for learners who display particular difficulties in the classroom, for example, issues of socialisation, learning barriers, emotional difficulty, distress, aggressive behaviour and bullying.

In addition, Rossouw (2003:429) states that a commonly used disciplinary method is a system according to which learners may gain credit points or lose points on a discipline scale. Every learner receives a number of points at the beginning of each term, and more serious disciplinary action is taken when the points drop down below a certain level. Offences are recorded cumulatively, filed and are used to determine

a proper sanction when there is either a serious offence or too many minor offences. Although this may be regarded as a positive, fair way of disciplining learners, educators at various schools complain about the amount of paper work it involves.

Rossouw (2003:430) further suggests that offering rewards, like free refreshments at the school tuck shop, discount vouchers from certain shops or parts of the school day free, especially at primary schools, is an effective way of encouraging disciplined behaviour..

The Department of Education manual further outlines disciplinary measures and procedures which include the development of a code of conduct which details actions and procedures to be taken for serious misconduct. While the afore-detailed alternatives to corporal punishment offer useful guidelines in dealing with discipline issues at schools, this research suggests that these are ready-made and reactionary solutions to discipline issues at schools. They seem to address discipline problems in a form of punishing or assigning some form of reaction. While this is sometimes necessary, it is argued that schools need to deal with discipline problems from a holistic framework that considers the root causes of learner discipline problems.

The effectiveness of the implementation of disciplinary measures depends on the delegation of authority in the intermediate schools.

## 2.12 Delegation and Learner Discipline in Intermediate Schools

Cassidy and Kreitner (2008:136) define delegation as a process of assigning various degrees of decision-making authority to lower level employees. In support of this view, Mullins (2011: 691) defines delegation as part of the managerial function that involves some element of risk. At a school level, this process implies that a principal may distribute a portion of his or her workload to others at a lower level. For example, deputy principal(s), heads of departments (HOD's), senior teachers and even administrative officers.

By distributing these tasks to other staff members, accountability is created in the staff member to complete tasks delegated effectively, and then to report progress to the person who delegated the tasks. Nyathi (2015: 7) warns that HODs should be

delegated authority, and not responsibility. Therefore, delegating is the sharing of authority, and it should not be confused with the abdication of responsibility.

### 2.12.1 Benefits of delegation

Nyathi (2015:7) and Cassidy and Kreitner (2008:188) agree on the following benefits of delegation:

- **Strength of the force:** Delegation is a form of participation and can lead to the following: improved morale of learner discipline committee, increased levels of motivation and job satisfaction for discipline managers, reduction of possibilities of conflict among the community members, creation of a healthy environment conducive for subordinates to become involved in planning and decision-making processes. If the School Based Support Team (SBST) and other stakeholders want to implement the School Based Support Programme successfully, conflict among them should be avoided.
- **Best use of time:** Positively done, delegation leaves the manager with more time to consult and to improve the process of communication.
- **Training and development:** Delegation offers a means of training and developing subordinates for promotion. Some school managers use this process when they are about to leave the schools, to train someone who will take over from them (succession management).

Apart from this process, stakeholders need to be aware of various types of delegation.

### 2.12.2 Types of delegation and their implications for learner discipline in intermediate schools in the Ehlanzeni Region.

There are normally two ways of delegating tasks, with the accompanying responsibility and authority, employed by principals in school discipline, namely:

- **Linearly**, in which delegation takes place according to seniority and hierarchical structure.
- **Linearly concentric**, which means that the principal delegates tasks directly to various staff members.

Figure 2.1 below show examples of various ways of delegating tasks:

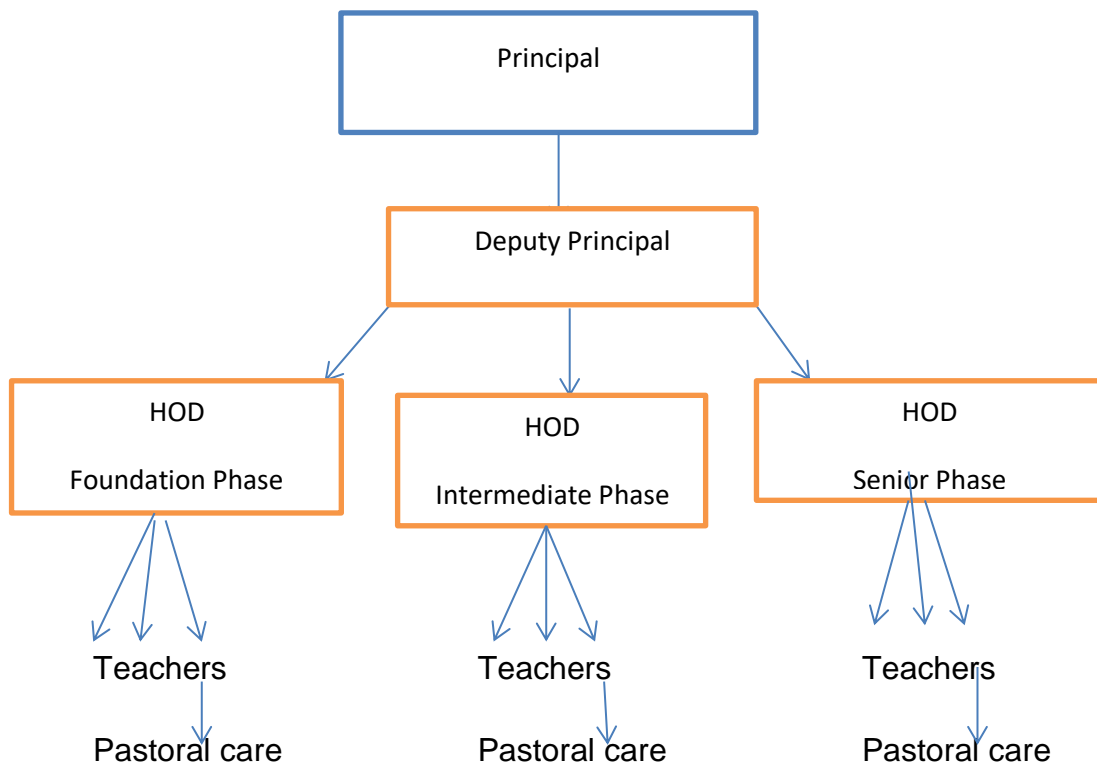


Figure 2.1 School Based Support Team Organisational Structure

From figure 2.1 above, it is clear that the principal can delegate tasks to the deputy principal, HODs and the SBST coordinator. Milondzo (2003: 117) suggests that every person who delegates tasks must bear the following in mind in order to delegate effectively:

- Authority and responsibility should be delegated with specific tasks;
- The correct discipline manager should be selected and the delegator must have confidence in the other person's ability to execute the tasks;
- The task must be clearly outlined; sufficient information given and guidance and assistance provided if necessary.

The most important value of delegating lies in the fact that School Management Teams (SMT) is freed from most routine tasks. They are then able to spend time on management tasks, which are the most important part of their functions as managers

of their programmes. The intermediate schools have objectives, as should every unit, every section, and so on. Moreover, objectives should be clearly stated so that they are of some practical value to learner discipline programmes.

One of the key responsibilities of SMT's is to help their SBST to clarify their duties pertaining to the implementation of the SBST in order to function well; there should be a clear working relationship in all spheres of operation. To achieve the intended goal of the SBST Programme, there should be a clear delegation of powers and clarity on the duties of SBST committee members in the Sikhulile Circuit.

### 2.13 Different Measures that can be used to Enhance Learner Discipline at Schools

According to the South African Schools Act 84 Of 1996 section 10, corporal punishment in schools is prohibited and is illegal. Anyone, using it can be found guilty by a court of law. Discipline should be explained and understood, then dealt with as soon as possible. Lumbly (2007: 43-45) attests that punishment should not be given in anger and hatred. Furthermore, once the punishment has been administered, the slate should be wiped clean, discouraging the educator or learners from holding a grudge.

Due to lack of discipline in schools, the Department of Education, and schools themselves, have introduced different remedial strategies to enhance discipline in schools. According to Nkuna (2016:8), the following disciplinary measures can be used to maintain discipline in schools.

#### 2.13.1 Code of Conduct

A Code of conduct is a written statement of rules and principles that apply to a specific group of people like professionals, or learners within a school. The Code of Conduct establishes rules for consistency, order and interpersonal relationships in the school (SASA, 1997:60). SASA (Act No84, 1996b) states that the governing body of the public school must draw up the Code of Conduct after an open and democratic process of constitution and negotiations with learners, teachers and parents. The code of conduct must aim at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning at the school (Boshoff &



Morkel, 2003: 18). The Code of Conduct must be subject to the constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1996a) and provincial legislation. According to the Department of Education (2000:20), the Code of Conduct must embrace the school's values, ethos and mission and not compromise rules and regulations. It should therefore be a positive and inspirational document. All members of the school community should feel ownership of the Code of Conduct by playing a role in putting it together and contributing to its success (RSA, 1998:88).

According to Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2001:99), the purpose of the Code of Conduct is to promote positive discipline, self-discipline and exemplary conduct. Rules reduce conflict by minimising ambiguities so that members know what to expect from each other. Moreover, the Code of Conduct helps educators and learners to know the expected behaviour at school.

The South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996, section 8(1) empowers the governing body of a school to maintain discipline in the school. The Code of Conduct must prescribe behaviour that respects the rights of both learners and educators. The Act further states that the Code of Conduct of a public school must be displayed at the school and as far as possible given to each learner in the official language of teaching when she/he enrolls at a school. As learners are compelled to comply with the Code of Conduct of the school they attend, they must be informed of its contents, which must list, in positive terms, the things learners may not do, as well as communication channels, grievance procedures and due process in conducting a fair hearing. Furthermore, the Code of Conduct states that nothing exempts a learner from complying with the Code of Conduct.

Moreover, educators has the same rights as parents to control and discipline learners according to the Code of Conduct during the time they are at school, in the classroom, at school functions or school excursions or any school-related activities. Also, the principal or an educator, upon reasonable suspicion (sufficient information), has the legal authority to conduct a search of any learner or property in the possession of the learner for dangerous weapons, firearms, drugs or harmful dangerous substances, stolen property, or pornographic material brought on to the school property. During the search human dignity should be respected and learners should be searched in private by persons of their own gender, preferably in the

presence of at least one other person. A record must be kept of the search proceedings and outcome.

### 2.13.2 Expulsion and suspension

Oosthuizen (2003: 82) defines suspension as the temporary refusal by the School Governing Body to admit a learner to a school or hostel, a child may be suspended for a period of one week after a fair hearing, while expulsion is the permanent removal of a learner from a school or hostel. Usually suspension precedes expulsion.

### 2.13.3 Detention

Dekker and Lemmer (1998:242) define detention as being punished by being kept in school after hours. It is employed as an alternative to corporal punishment. This type of punishment may also take the form of isolation during class, during break or after school.

Imposing detention must be done in a fair and reasonable way and should also be guided by common sense. Before detaining a learner, it is important to consider a few legal implications:

- The seriousness of the offence,
- The age of the learner,
- The distance the learner has to travel home and
- The availability of transport

When arranging detention, educators should give the learners and parents fair warning in writing. The use of detention in a school should be included in the school rules and brochures and made known to all learners and parents. The detention room must also be a place where learners are required to do serious work. Educators who send learners for detention should set work for them

### 2.13.4 Time-out

Another common method of punishing learners is time-out. Learners may be removed from the classroom and isolated from other learners to cool off if they are very disruptive or violent, abusive, refuse to settle down or are preventing educators

from teaching. However, when learners are required to stand or sit in a corner, possibly with their backs to the class, or to stand next to the educator's desk or sit at a desk that has been isolated from the others, it may humiliate them or provoke resentment, rather than correct their behaviour positively. Educators then run the risk of restricting the child's right to dignity (Section 10 of the Bill of Rights) and the right "not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman and degrading way (Section 12(1) of the Bill of Rights). Alternatively, learners are often instructed to stand outside the classroom until the beginning of the next lesson or until the educator decides to call them back into the classroom.

This may result in the learner's wandering off and getting up to even more mischief or standing at the window trying to attract the attention of classmates. If educators are going to use time-out so that learners can cool off and reflect on their misbehaviour, there should be a time-out room where learners are sent and can be supervised. This may, for example, be an office next to the secretary or principal's office. Educators should avoid sending learners out the classroom too often and for long periods at a time, as this would be unlawful. By placing a learner outside the classroom the learner is being deprived of his or her right to education.

#### 2.13.5 Withdrawal of privileges

Several privileges may be withdrawn to punish learners. For example, they may be preventing a learner from participating in sport or cultural activities, going on a school journey or being a class representative. If a privilege is withdrawn, caution must be taken into consideration to follow due process and to ensure that learners' school work is not compromised.

#### 2.13.6 Assigning extra work

According to Mawila (2015:9), assigning extra work involves giving learners supplementary written school work, such as writing lines, writing an essay, copying sections from a text book or doing extra mathematics as a form of punishment. Additional work should have value and purpose. However, it may be counterproductive to motivating learners to work diligently. Educators need to be careful when assigning extra school work. Although this is not unlawful, it may detract from the value and purpose of school work and result in learners developing

negative attitudes towards the particular subjects. Moreover, educators must be careful not to punish learners for poor work performance, for example, for not completing work where it may be because of a lack of understanding or ability.

#### 2.13.7 Behaviour management contracts

Written contracts may be drawn up between educators, learners and parents if need be. They should set out specific goals for the learner with appropriate conditions. The contract implies a two way process, the school should undertake to provide the necessary counselling and behaviour management support programmes. Should the contract not be adhered to, the normal procedure for suspension should be followed.

#### 2.13.8 A values-driven strategy

Absence of respect is regarded as a crucial element in most disciplinary cases. This is the main reason for the degeneration of previously well-disciplined individuals, schools and communities. Certain learners and many educators are of the idea that this deterioration stems from values at home where parents do not display respect towards people in authority in the wider community.

An extremely important element of any values-driven educational approach is that learners should also experience that the values are demonstrated in the lives and attitudes of their educators and in the approach of the school, especially as regards discipline. Consistency is very important.

The development of learner self-discipline stands out as the single most prominent ideal amongst educators. Lack of self-discipline manifests in poor class attendance: especially, in the early mornings with learners only turning up after one or two periods have passed. As part of the ideal of self-discipline, the value of responsibility can be added, according to which learners are encouraged to act responsibly in their relationships and school activities.

#### 2.14 Conclusion

The chapter reviews relevant literature on teachers' perceptions of learner discipline. The chapter looks at theoretical frameworks and the challenges faced by teachers in

intermediate schools through the lack of learner discipline. Furthermore, international studies dealing with serious discipline problems among learners are discussed. Factors that influence learners' lack of discipline are deliberated in this chapter. Types of discipline and new disciplinary measures are also discussed.

In order for teachers to change their negative perceptions towards ill-discipline, they should strive to change their attitudes so as to assist the members of the SMT to create an environment conducive to learning. This process could be achieved if teachers were to work harmoniously with both the members of the SMT and the SGB. Teachers should have positive attitudes towards the implementation of the new disciplinary measures introduced by the Department of Education in the new democratic South Africa.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher discusses the perceptions of teachers of learner discipline. This chapter focuses on the rationale for the methodology, research design, research paradigms, approaches and research instruments used to collect, analyse and interpret data. The validity and the reliability of the research instruments used to collect and analyse data are presented. Trustworthiness, elimination of bias and ethical considerations are also outlined.

#### 3.2 The Rationale for Research Methodology

According to Leedy and Ormord (2015:12), research methodology is the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project. To support the above definition, Moody (2011:30) defines research methodology as the “systematic process of collecting and logically analysing information for some purpose”.

In order to perform the above process, the researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting data.

#### 3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Research design is a blue print of how one intends to conduct research (Barbie and Moutton, 2014:74). According to Klopper (2016:61), a research design is a plan that provides guidelines or instructions which will be used in the study to address the problem.

3.3.2 For the purpose of this study, the researcher uses both a qualitative and a quantitative approach - that is, a mixed design. The research processes should be based on appropriate research paradigms, so as to achieve the intended objective of the study.

#### 3.4 Research Paradigms

There are many research paradigms that can be used, but for the purpose of this study, the researcher describes three of them, namely, positivism, phenomenology and combined paradigms.

#### 3.4.1 Positivism

Qhosola (2011:44) explains that a positivist researcher prefers precise quantitative data and uses experiments, surveys and statistics. It is clear that the nature of this paradigm is quantitative. To support this view, Collins (2011:35) attests that positivism stems from human experience and is comprised of discrete observance of elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner.

#### 3.4.2 Phenomenology

According to Mawila (2014:18), the purpose of the phenomenological approach is to establish the essential attributes of a given phenomenology, idea or object without which, in the eyes of the beholder, such phenomenon, idea or object ceases to be known. The view in phenomenology is from what the researcher observes which not reality is as such, but an interpreted reality (Milondzo, 2013:42).

#### 3.4.3 Combined Paradigms

Some researchers prefer the combination of the two philosophies since there is no research philosophy that is without weakness. Hence, it is called the combined research approach. Nyathi (2014: 9) states that this is where the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative research strategies. Due to the nature of the current study, the researcher uses combined paradigms to achieve her intended objectives.

In the next section, the researcher describes the importance of the two approaches.

### 3.5 Research Design Approaches

There are various research approaches. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher has only discussed two - qualitative and quantitative approaches.

#### 3.5.1 Qualitative Research Design

Partington (2013: 109) describes the qualitative method as the design where data is collected in the form of words and observations as opposed to statistical analysis. This method gives the researcher an in-depth understanding of first-hand information and phenomena. Imenda and Muyangwa (2013:3) state that the qualitative approach can be applied to the study of current and past events. When applied to the past it is called historical research and when applied to current events it is qualitative research. The qualitative method is a method of data collection in which the procedures are not strictly formalised.

### 3.5.2 Quantitative Research Design

Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen and Walker (2015: 565) define the quantitative method as “inquiries that use operational definitions to generate numerical data to answer a set of question of the study”. Hair, Bush & Ortinau (2010:216) support the above definition that quantitative research design places heavy emphasis on using formalised standard questions and predetermined response options in questionnaires or surveys administered to a large number of respondents. The quantitative research design also enables the researcher to carry out a value-free investigation.

In order to achieve her objectives, the researcher uses both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. This process is called mixed research approach. Tshakkori and Creswell (2017: 4) regard the mixed method as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or programme of inquiry. For researchers to choose the appropriate design, they need to know the area of the study, population and the sample size.

### 3.6 Area of the study

Mpumalanga province is divided into three main political regions, namely, Nkangala, Gert Sibande and Ehlanzeni. The geographic area of the study is in the Ehlanzeni Region of the Mpumalanga province. The study focuses on the Ehlanzeni Region. The Region consists of 14 Circuits and 280 primary schools. Most of the schools are in rural areas. Due to the vastness of the area, the researcher has only collected data from the Sikhulile Circuit.



### 3.7 Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2016: 169) define population as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events, that conform to specific criteria to which the research results are applied or generalised According to Hair, Bush and Ortinau (2011:328), population is the identifiable total set of elements of interest being investigated by a researcher. The target population of this study is all the teachers and SMT's working in intermediate schools in the Ehlanzeni region.

Due to the vastness of the region, the researcher has focused the research on the intermediate schools in the Sikhulile Circuit.

Sampling is considered in the next section

### 3.8 Sampling

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher collected data from fifty teachers and twenty members of SMTs who had five years' experience in intermediate schools in the Sikhulile Circuit within the Ehlanzeni Region.

According to Gay and Airasia (2011: 121), sampling as the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that they represent the large group from which they were selected. To support the above definition, Malatji (2015: 39) attests that sampling is the process of selecting the aggregate or totality of the objects or individuals regarding which inference are to be made, based on the study.

Due to the large number of teachers and members of the SMT in the Sikhulile Circuit, the researcher has employed a purposive sampling technique, with fifty teachers (twenty-five males and twenty-five females) together with twenty members of the SMT; these were teachers and SMT members who had five years of experience in teaching and the administration of discipline

There are two types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling.

#### 3.8.1 Probability Sampling

According to Cooper and Schindler (2016:198), probability sampling is based on the concept of the random selection of respondents. It is a controlled procedure that assures that each element is given a known non-zero chance of selection.

There are various techniques for probability sampling, namely, simple random sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified random sampling.

- Simple Random Sampling

This refers to a sample drawn from the population in such a way that each element of that population has the same chance of being drawn during the first and each successive draw. Since it is not always a good reflection of the population as a whole, it is not always the best sampling technique to use (Qhosola, 2011:48).

- Stratified Random Sampling

Cooper and Schindler (2016:416) refer to this method as a process by which the sample includes elements from each segment of the population. In this study, school management teams and teachers are considered. The researcher used the stratified sampling procedure to ensure that these segments of the population were represented in the sample.

- Cluster Sampling

This is a system where the population is divided into groups of elements with some groups randomly selected for the study. The sampling procedure could not be used as the population consists of segments which do not form clusters. Systematic Sampling

In this approach, every  $z^{\text{th}}$  element in the population is sampled; starting randomly with an element in the range of 1 to  $z$ . The  $z^{\text{th}}$  element is determined by dividing the population by the sample size to obtain a skip pattern applied to the sampling frame (Cooper and Schindler, 2016: 416).

### 3.8.2 Non probability Sampling

Non probability sampling indicates that selections for the sample are not made at random. Parkington (2013: 58) explains that in non-probability sampling, the each element of analysis in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. The following are types of non-probability sampling:

- Haphazard Sampling

Gay and Airasia, 2010 in (Mashangoane, 2013:65) state that “haphazard samples are cheap and quick”. An example of such is interviews with people in the street.

- Accidental Sampling

According to Nyathi (2015: 07), accidental sampling is the most convenient type of sampling of members of the population that are readily available for research purpose can become participants. For example, if the research is about learners in general, then the sample will comprise those learners who happen to show up in class.

- Snowball Sampling

This method is based on the analogy of a snowball that starts small but becomes larger as it rolls and picks up additional snow. According to Gay and Airasia (2010: 597), snowball sampling refers to when few individuals from the relevant population are approached; these individuals then act as informants and identify people from the same population for inclusion in the sample.

- Purposive Sampling

This method is used when researchers rely on their experience or previous research findings to deliberately obtain analysis in such a manner that the sample that they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population (Welman et al., 2015: 69). Due to the nature of the research, purposive sampling was employed in this study to achieve its intended objectives.

### 3.9 Research Instruments

(Nyathi, 2016:9) describes the research instrument as a tool that the researcher can use to collect data from the participants. These may include research instruments such as questionnaires and interviews. Due to the qualitative and quantitative nature of the current study, the researcher has used both questionnaires and interviews.

In the next section, the researcher describes the importance of the above mentioned instruments.

### 3.9.1 Structured Questionnaires

Bryman (2011:698) indicates that “a questionnaire is a collection of questions administered to respondents”. He explains further that when used on its own, the term usually denotes a self-complete questionnaire.

The questionnaire is populated with both open- and closed-ended questions. In the open- ended questions respondents are not given the option to choose from a fixed set of answers, while in the closed-ended questionnaire, respondents were limited to fixed sets of responses. According to Nkatini (2012:71), “if we want to know how people feel, what they experience and what they remember, what their emotions and motives are like and reasons for acting as they do, why can’t we ask them?”

The questionnaire employed in this study was designed in such a way that each major section corresponds to one of the research questions or objectives in chapter one. This assisted the researcher to get an overview of the problems or challenges experienced by respondents.

Hadebe (2011: 54) says that the advantage of using questionnaires is that they can cover most of the areas the researcher wants to investigate. Interviews were also conducted to supplement the information obtained by means of questionnaires.

### 3.9.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

According to de Vos (2010: 287), “interviews are regarded as the predominant method of data collection in a qualitative research to establish meanings that ostensibly reside with the participants”. Nkatini (2012:13) states that some people refer to an interview as an oral questionnaire but indeed it is much more than that. The interview is generally adopted as a method to offset the limitations of the questionnaire. Interviews give information in a face-to-face interaction with the researcher rather than through written responses. The method allows the exchange of ideas and information between the researcher and respondents.

The combined design approach to research was employed to collect data from the respondents of which 20 semi-structured interviews were designed to collect data.

The advantage is that interviews do not require large samples. The subjects are often deliberately selected for their experience and specialist background and thus constitute a purposive sample.

### 3.9.3 Administration of Research Instruments

#### 3.9.3.1 Administration of Semi-Structured Interviews

Malatjie (2015: 45) states that writing in relation to response rates of the interviews, indicates that a response rate of the percent and more is very good. In order to obtain a good response rate in the current study, the researcher employed the following strategies:

A covering letter with clear instructions and a thank you note attached to the consent letter before the actual interview was conducted.

The researcher set easy questions, and the same questions were asked of all interviewees to ensure trustworthiness of the data. Open-ended questions were put to the interviewees for responses. The researcher walked around for while respondents were completing the questionnaires in case any interviewee wanted clarification. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked every interviewee for their participation.

#### 3.9.3.2 Administration of Questionnaires

The researcher used a face-to-face method to administer 50 questionnaires in order to achieve a high response rate. Questionnaires with clear instructions as to how they should be completed were distributed.

The researcher invited the participants to a particular classroom where she administered the questionnaires. After completion, she collected all the forms from the participants for further analysis. The researcher followed this process to maintain the validity and reliability of the information.

### 3.10 Data Collection

Studying the phenomenon from more than one view point enhances the validity of the research study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2013: 84). Hence, the information discussed in chapter one, chapter two and chapter three was applied to the area of study. The researcher used questionnaires and one-on-one interviews to gather data. The relevance of the information was determined by the reliability of the participants and the accuracy of the data collected. The data in this chapter is derived from 50 structured questionnaires completed by 25 male and 25 female teachers in the Ehlanzeni Region. Following that, interviews were conducted with 20 School Management Teams, that is, ten(10) Heads of Departments and ten(10) principals.

### 3.11 Data Analysis

Steyn, Smith, Du Toit and Stracheim (2015: 6) state that “at this stage of the investigation, statistical techniques are used to analyse the data that has been collected”. In concurrence with the above statement, Mawila (2015: 8) states that data analysis is “a process of unpacking an object, phenomenon, entity, process or event that the researcher is investigating”.

The researcher analysed both the qualitative and quantitative data in order to enact the above process. For the qualitative data, the researcher classified the information according to themes and codes. Recorded interviews were transcribed, translated and interpreted. To support this process, the researcher also retrieves information from the notes taken during the interviews. Furthermore, for quantitative data, the researcher employed the 5 Likert Scales which comprises: Strongly Agree, Agree, Uncertain, Disagree and Strongly Disagree levels. These processes were completed by means of statistical analysis.

### 3.12 Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the data depends on the quality of information collected. Reliability of the data also depends on the honesty of the respondents in responding to questions.

### 3.12.1 Validity

According to Mavuso (2015: 7), validity is the judgment of the appropriateness of a measure of specific inferences, decisions consequences or uses that result from scores that are generated. Additionally, Kumar (2011:184) postulates that validity, in the broader sense, refers to the ability of a research instrument to demonstrate that it carries out what it is designed for.

In this study, the questionnaires employed were valid as all participants were exposed to written questionnaires with the same content and structure. There was no name required in the questionnaires so that fear of being identified could not influence the respondents, hence the validity of instruments.

### 3.12.2 Reliability

Mashele (2013:11) states that reliability is established when the first test and the re-test get the same result when the same respondents are given the tests under similar conditions. Further, Mavundza (2016: 63) points out that the reliability of an instrument that yields quantitative data is a measure of the criterion for assessing its quality and adequacy.

To maintain reliability in this study, the researcher called the participants to a particular place at a specific time to complete the questionnaires. Through this process, the researcher received reliable information from each participant. Furthermore, the participants were prepared for the interviews in order to establish the credibility of the information collected.

### 3.13 Trustworthiness

According to Sandelowski, 1993 in (Gunawan, 2015:4) trustworthiness is established when the scientist is viewed as having made practices visible and therefore, auditable. A study is trustworthy, if and only if, the reader of the research report judges it to be so. Trustworthiness can be divided into: credibility, which corresponds roughly with the positivist concept of internal validity; dependability, which relates

more to reliability; transferability, which is a form of external validity; and conformability, which is largely an issue of presentation.

Trustworthiness was ensured throughout the study through all the participants in the individual interviews. Botma et al, (2010:232) identify trustworthiness as answering four epistemological standards, namely truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

### 3.14 Elimination of Bias

The researcher did not ask the participants about issues of race, culture, gender, age and religion. These issues were avoided to eliminate prejudice and bias. The study accommodated all teachers and school managers who were randomly selected, irrespective of their backgrounds.

### 3.15 Ethical Considerations

Cooper and Schindler (2013: 117) claim that the goal of ethics in research is to ensure that no one suffers adverse consequences from the research activities. To support this statement the researcher has complied with the following considerations and requirements:

- Ensure that the permission is obtained

According to Mawila (2016: 15), the researcher must obtain permission from the organisation before the research is conducted. The researcher obtained permission from the Department of Education and the University of Limpopo to conduct this study before it was conducted.

- Ensure that there is consent and voluntary participation

Mavuso (2015: 11) states that interviews should be voluntary and participants must be requested to give their consent before the collection of data. To achieve this, the researcher gave participants consent forms before the questionnaire was completed and they were made aware that participation was not compulsory but voluntary.



- Ensure that there is safety

The researcher called all participants to a school classroom to ensure that participants were safe from politics and prejudice.

- Ensure confidentiality and anonymity

The names of their organisations will never be mentioned and everything said by the participants will not be disclosed to any third party.

### 3.16 Conclusion

In this chapter various research paradigms, research approaches, methods and techniques are described. The relevance, reliability, validity and ethical considerations are also presented. The choice of the research design and its applicability to the area of the study is discussed in full.

From the above information, it is clear that there is no single research approach, paradigm or method that can be regarded as the best to investigate the research problem. All the research methods, paradigms and approaches may be relevant, as long as they can be applied appropriately.

In chapter 4, data collection, analysis and discussion of results are presented.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the collection and analysis of data, derived from the structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The analysis and interpretation of results assisted the researcher to understand the perceptions of teachers of learner discipline. Due to the number of teachers in the area of the study, random sampling was used to select the participants.

The objective of data analysis was to check the perceptions of teachers of learner discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region in Mpumalanga. Data analysis and interpretation of results enabled the researcher to arrive at suitable conclusions and recommendations with regard to the research questions stated in chapter one.

#### 4.2 Data analysis and discussion of results

The data in this chapter is derived from 50 structured questionnaires completed by 25 male and 25 female teachers in the Ehlanzeni Region. The responses from the participants were analysed and tabulated using the 5 Likert Scale. Due to the number of teachers in the region, the decision was taken to use random sampling method to select participants to be investigated in the area of the study.

The objective of the study was to identify and examine the factors that influence learner ill-discipline. The respondents gave a clear picture of the perception of teachers of learner discipline. The following analysis could be made from the tables:

#### 4.3 Data obtained from the Structured Questionnaires

The analysis of data was performed by means of tables and graphs. The analysis was tabled by means of the finding (F), percentage (%), and total frequencing (FX). Total frequencing reflects the total number of respondents in the table. The analysis is clearly indicated and tabulated in table 4.3.1.

**TABLE 4.3.1 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Items	FREQUENCY (FX)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Gender:		
1 Female	25	50
2.Male	25	50
Age:		
50-59	17	34
40-49	19	38
30-39	11	22
20-29	3	6
Qualification:		
M.Ed.	2	4
B.A	17	34
B.Ed.(Hons)/ Post graduate	16	32
PTD	12	24
NPDE	1	2
Teaching experience:		
26-35	27	54
16-25	11	22
6-15	9	18
0-5	3	6

The questionnaires were completed by 50 respondents with 25 female and 25 male teachers who participated in the study. The equal distribution of gender was selected in order to avoid bias in the study. This is in line with the gender equity and equality policy in South Africa. Their qualifications are also indicated in the biographical data together with their teaching experience.

**Table: 4.3.2 Teachers' perceptions of their role and discipline**

Items	F	%
Question 2: Do the teachers have a role to play in learner ill-discipline?		
Agree	5	10
Strongly Agree	3	7
Disagree	30	60
Strongly Disagree	9	18
Uncertain	3	5
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 2, 78% respondents disagreed with the statement. Seventeen percent respondents agreed. Only 5% were recorded as uncertain.

From the above finding, it is evident that most of the respondents did not believe that teachers have a role to play in learner ill-discipline. The reluctance of teachers to be involved in learner discipline makes it difficult for SMT members to curb ill-discipline in schools (Nyathi, 2016:8). From the above statement, it is clear that lack of teacher involvement can result in learner ill-discipline.

**Table: 4.3.3 Teachers' perceptions of clarity of policy and discipline**

Items	F	%
Question 3: Does lack of clarity of policies cause learner ill-discipline?		
Agree	30	60
Strongly Agree	10	20
Disagree	3	6
Strongly Disagree	5	10
Uncertain	2	4
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 3, 80% respondents agreed that lack of clarity of policies causes learner ill-discipline. Only 16% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 4% were recorded as uncertain.

From the above information, it is clear that majority of the respondents perceived that lack of clarity of policy causes ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region. According to Mavuso (2015:9), ill-discipline is always caused by a lack of clarity of policy issues. Lack of clarity of policy can lead to distorted information as to how ill-discipline should be curbed.

**Table: 4.3.4 Teachers' perceptions of teaching methods and discipline**

Items	F	%
Question 4: Does lack of a relevant teaching method contribute to learner ill-discipline?		
Agree	6	12
Strongly Agree	35	70
Disagree	5	10
Strongly Disagree	2	5
Uncertain	2	3
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 4, 82% respondents agreed with the statement. Fifteen percent disagreed and only 3% of the respondents were recorded as uncertain.

From the above analysis, it is evident that majority of the respondents believed that lack of relevant teaching methods contributes to ill-discipline in the area of the study. Mawila (2015:15) states that irrelevance of the teaching method always contributes to learner ill-discipline in schools. From the above finding, it is clear that lack of relevant teaching methods contributes to learner ill-discipline.

**Table: 4.3.5 Teachers' perceptions of lack of qualifications and discipline**

Items	F	%
Question 5: Does the lack of qualified teachers cause learner ill-discipline?		
Agree	1	2
Strongly Agree	3	6
Disagree	35	70
Strongly Disagree	10	20
Uncertain	1	2
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 5, 90% respondents disagreed with the statement. Only 8% agreed, while 2% were recorded as uncertain.

From the above finding, it is clear that most of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The curbing of ill-discipline in schools depends on the character and nature of the individual (Nkuna, 2014:9). From this finding, it is clear that curbing of ill-discipline does not depend on the qualification, but on the character or nature of the educator.

**Table: 4.3.6 Teachers' perceptions of overcrowding and discipline**

Items	F	%
Question 6: Does overcrowding of learners cause ill-discipline?		
Agree	32	64
Strongly Agree	10	20
Disagree	3	6
Strongly Disagree	4	8
Uncertain	1	2
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 6, 84% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 14% of them disagreed. Only 2% were recorded as uncertain.

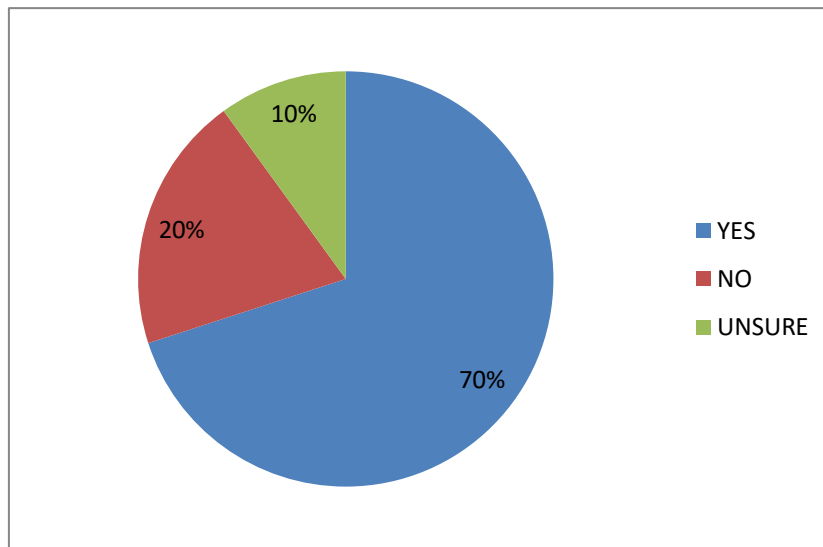
From the above analysis, it is evident that majority of the respondents thought that overcrowding of learners causes ill-discipline. Crowding of learners in the rural schools is the main cause of ill-discipline (Nyathi, 2016:9). From this finding, it is evident that overcrowding of learners in the class causes ill-discipline.



**FIGURE 4.1 Teachers' perceptions of School Governing Bodies (SGB) and learner discipline**

Question 7: Do you think School Governing Bodies can assist teachers with learner discipline

Yes	No	Unsure
70%	20%	10%



In question 7, 70% respondents agreed that School Governing Bodies can help with discipline, while 20% disagreed with the statement. 10% were recorded as unsure.

From the above finding, it is evident that majority of the respondents felt that members of School Governing Bodies can assist teachers to curb learner ill-discipline in the area of the study. Members of School Governing Bodies could assist teachers to curb learner ill-discipline, if they were requested to do so. (Mavuso, 2015: 11). From this statement, it is clear that involvement of the SGB can assist teachers to curb ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region.

**Table: 4.3.8 Teachers' perceptions of absenteeism and learner discipline**

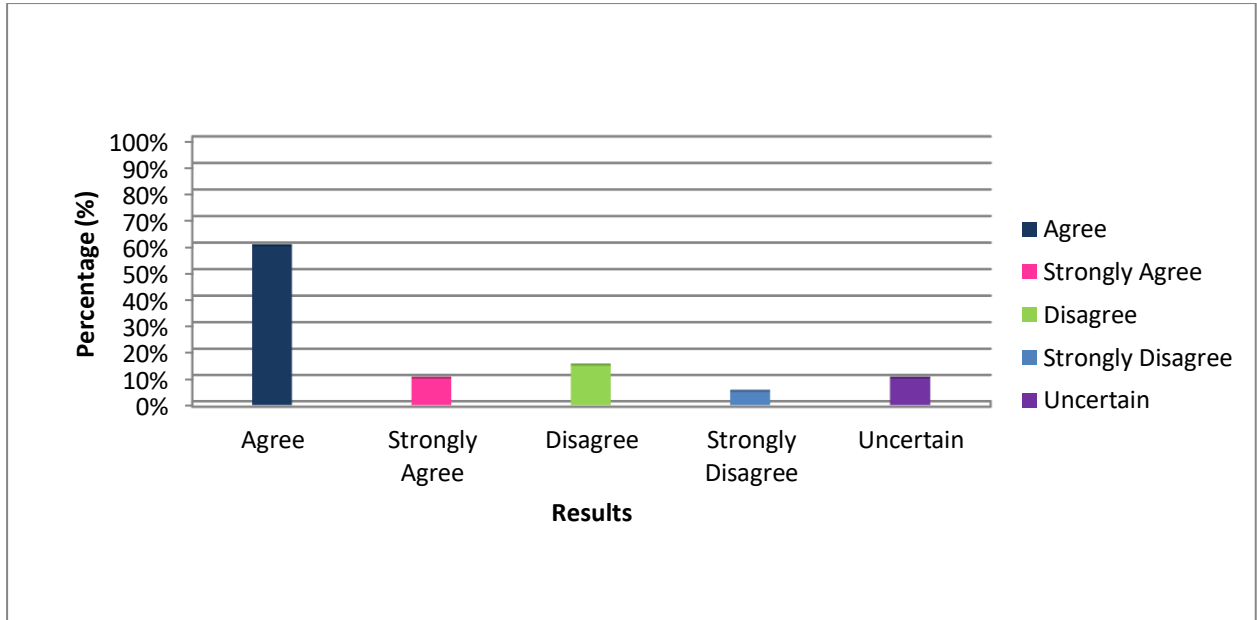
Items	F	%
Question 8: Does teacher absenteeism cause learner ill-discipline in schools?		
Agree	36	72
Strongly Agree	5	10
Disagree	4	8
Strongly Disagree	3	6
Uncertain	2	4
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 8, 82% of the respondents agreed that teacher absenteeism may cause learner ill-discipline in schools; 14% disagreed with the statement and only 4% were recorded as unsure.

From the above information, it is clear that most of the respondents were of the opinion that teacher absenteeism causes ill-discipline in schools. According to Mawila (2015:9) teacher absenteeism is the main cause of ill-discipline in schools. From this question it is clear that teacher absenteeism frequently is the main cause learner ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region.

**FIGURE 4.2 Teachers' perceptions of corporal punishment and discipline**

Question 9: Has the abolishing of corporal punishment contributed to ill-discipline of learners in schools?



In question 9, 70% of the respondents agreed with the statement. Twenty of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Only 10% of the respondents were recorded as uncertain.

From the above analysis, it is evident that most of the respondents perceived that the abolishing of corporal punishment is one of the contributing factors towards learner ill-discipline. To support this statement: Nkuna (2014; 12) states that the abolishing of corporal punishment is seen by many educators as the main cause of ill-discipline in schools. From this finding, it is clear that the abolishing of corporal punishment may be one of the contributors to learner ill-discipline in the area of the study.

**Table: 4.3.10 Teachers' perceptions of, new disciplinary measures and deviant behaviour**

Items	F	%
Question 10: Do you think the new disciplinary measures assist teachers to curb deviant behaviour in schools?		
Agree	3	6
Strongly Agree	3	5
Disagree	37	74
Strongly Disagree	5	10
Uncertain	2	5
Total	F <sub>x</sub> =50	100

In question 10, 84% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Eleven (11%) respondents agreed and only 5% of the respondents were recorded as uncertain.

From the above finding, it is evident that majority of the respondents felt that the new disciplinary measures did not assist teachers to curb deviant behaviour in schools in the area of the study. Khosa (2016; 9) attests that lack of training in the administration of new disciplinary measures prevented many teachers from implementing the new policy. From this statement, it is evident that the new disciplinary measures do not assist teachers in curbing deviant behaviour and suggest that this is because they have not been trained in how to administer them.

To supplement the above data, discussed below, are results derived from the responses obtained through the interviews.

#### **4.4 Data obtained from semi-structured interviews**

In the next section, data obtained through interviews with 20 respondents, members of the School Management Teams (SMTs), (10 principals and 10 Heads of Department (HODs)) in the Sikhulile Circuit is presented. The responses from respondents gave the researcher a clear picture of general conditions and the challenges that influence ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region.

##### **4.4.1 Do you think abolishing of corporal punishment is the main cause of learner ill-discipline in schools?**

Of the 20 respondents interviewed, eighteen believed that abolishing of corporal punishment is the main cause of learner ill-discipline in schools.

Some of their comments are as follows:

*'How can you expect the students to behave well without corporal punishment? You spare the rod and spoil the child.'*

*'Most of the families believed that the only way of correcting learner ill-discipline is to use corporal punishment from grade R to grade 12.'*

However, two of the respondents believed that teachers could use other corrective measures to curb ill-discipline in schools.

They remarked as follows to support their views:

*'Teachers can use alternative discipline to curb learner ill-discipline in schools.'*

*'Teachers must use appropriate new disciplinary measures to curb deviant behaviour. This process can assist teachers to maintain learner discipline in their schools.'*

##### **4.4.2 Can parental involvement assist the teachers to curb learner ill-discipline in schools?**

Out of 20 respondents, 16 confirmed that parental involvement can assist teachers to curb ill-discipline in schools.

Some of the respondents stated that:

*'I feel strongly that parents can curb ill-discipline in schools, if they are involved in a proper way.'*

*'I think parental involvement is the only way to maintain discipline in our schools.'*

Some of the respondents had different views:

*'I think members of the School Governing Body (SGB) were elected to represent the parents on issues related to ill-discipline.'*

*'Although the parents have a role to play in education, School Management Teams (SMTs) are given authority to curb ill-discipline in their sphere of operation'*

**4.4.3** Does a lack of extra-mural activities contribute to learner ill-discipline in schools?

Seventeen out of twenty respondents interviewed indicated that lack of extra-mural activities may contribute to ill-discipline in schools.

Three of the respondents replied as follows:

*'Learners who are not taking part in extra-mural activities always play truancy, hence ill-discipline in schools.'*

*'Most of the learners who do not want sports and recreations are always involved on issues related to ill-discipline in schools.'*

By contrast, three other respondents believed that learners who do not take part in extra-mural activities are not necessarily badly behaved.

*'It doesn't mean that learners who are not taking part in extra-mural activities are ill-disciplined. Some of them are behaving well than those who are involved in the extra-mural activities.'*

*'How can you expect all the learners to take part in extra-mural activities, while we don't have sufficient equipment and resources to accommodate all the extra-mural activities?'*

#### **4.4.4 Do class teachers have a role to play in learner discipline?**

Of the twenty respondents interviewed, sixteen indicated that classroom teachers play a minimal role in curbing ill-discipline in schools:

*'I don't want to be implicated by parents after I have administered some punishment to curb learner ill-discipline in the school.'*

*'I think members of the SMT are the only ones who can administer forms of punishment to curb learner ill-discipline not teachers.'*

Some of the respondents had an opposite view:

*'I think class teachers are also given powers by the SMT to curb ill-discipline in schools.'*

*'Class teachers were selected to assist the members of SMT on issues related to academic administration and to curb ill-discipline in schools.'*

#### **4.4.5 Do you think that the new disciplinary measures can curb learner ill-disciplines in schools?**

Of the twenty respondents interviewed, nineteen claimed that the new disciplinary measures do not assist teachers in curbing ill-discipline in the intermediate schools.

Some commented that:

*'The new disciplinary measures are not assisting the teachers to curb ill-discipline in school; hence most of the learners are behaving worse than before.'*

*‘Some of these disciplinary measures are meant to encourage learners to stay away from their class rooms, for example, suspending a learner for five days not to come to school.’*

One of the respondents had the following to say:

*‘I believe that some of the new disciplinary measures can enable a teacher to curb ill-discipline, if they are appropriately used in schools.’*

The final question was:

**4.4.6** Do you think alternative strategies can enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures?

Eighteen of the twenty confirmed that there is a need for alternative strategies to enhance implementation of the new disciplinary measures in the intermediate schools.

Two commented that:

*‘I cannot implement new disciplinary measures, if there are no alternative strategies in place to support me’.*

*‘How can you expect me to implement new disciplinary measures, if there are no clear alternative strategies from the department?’*

Two other participants had an opposite view:

*‘I cannot wait for the department to provide me with alternative strategies; hence I have already started with the implementation of new disciplinary measures.’*

*‘My school has already started with the implementation of new disciplinary measures; hence I don’t need new alternative strategies to enhance my work.’*

4.5 Discussion of the results on quantitative data analysis



#### 4.5.1 Biographical data

The biographical data is evident that the majority of the teachers are middle-aged and older to be parents and grandparents who have dealt with ill-discipline during their parenting. The circuits' profession is in best hands of matured teachers since there is 38% in the age range of 40-49 years and more than 30% in the age range of more than 50 years. There are 22% of teachers who are in the age range of 30-39 years while the remaining age range is 6% in the age range of 20-29 years.

The majority of teachers have enough teaching experience, hence 54% of them have 26-35 years teaching experience. The next biggest percentage of teachers with 22% falls in the group of 16-25 years teaching experience. Then the last 21% of teachers have less than 15 years teaching experience. Therefore, all the teachers who participated in this study can relate to ill-discipline and the administering part.

Most of these participants are adequately qualified to relate to ill-discipline and the unrest in South Africa since the political situation in South Africa is also blamed for children's behaviour by Moloi (in: Rossouw, 2003: 416) where she points out that the involvement of the youth in the liberation struggle which ended in 1994 caused them to develop "...arrogance towards adults, that is, both educators and parents". Maree (in Rossouw, 2003:416) also blames the political situation of the nineties in South Africa where the causes of violence in schools were politically motivated. It is evident that 70% of teachers have the highest qualification that is, B.A; B.Ed. (Hons) or Post-Graduate; and Masters Degrees while the remaining 30% have PTC; NPDE; and PTD diplomas in education. Therefore, this finding indicates that the majority of teachers' views in this study are valid.

#### 4.5.2 Teachers' perceptions of their: role and discipline

According to Table 4.3.2, a large percentage of the respondents disagreed with the statement that teachers have a role to play on learner ill-discipline. The reluctance of teachers to be involved in learner discipline makes it difficult for SMT members to curb ill-discipline in schools (Nyathi, 2016:8). From the above statement, it is clear that lack of teacher involvement can result in learner ill-discipline. The Department of Education (2000:12) suggests that educators should adopt a proactive approach by preparing for lessons; exercising self-discipline; having extension work available;

ensuring that teaching and learning take place consistently; making space for timeout or a conflict resolution corner; affirming learners and building positive relationships with learners. Moreover, it is required that every classroom manager should adopt classroom rules. From the above finding, it is clear that lack of teacher involvement can result in learner ill-discipline.

#### 4.5.3 Teachers' perceptions of clarity of policy

In Table 4.3.3 most educators agreed that lack of clarity of policies cause learner ill-discipline, that is, 80%. From the above information, it is clear that majority of the respondents perceived that lack of clarity of policy causes ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region. According to Mavuso (2015:9), ill-discipline is always caused by a lack of clarity of policy issues. Lack of clarity of policy can lead to distorted information as to how ill-discipline should be curbed.

#### 4.5.4 Teachers' perceptions of teaching methods

According to Table 4.3.4, 82% respondents believed that lack of relevant teaching methods contributes to ill-discipline in the area of study. Mabeba and Prinsloo (1999:37) indicated that educators who do not prepare their lessons thoroughly promote a negative self-esteem in learners, and this promotes ill-discipline. In support, Mawila (2015:15) states that irrelevance of the teaching method always contributes to learner ill-discipline in schools. According to Doveton (1991: 131), deviant behaviour is always experienced if the curriculum that is offered to learners is irrelevant to their interests and their needs of their communities. He further emphasises the importance of linking the curriculum to the philosophy and customs of a particular society. From the above finding, it is clear that lack of relevant teaching methods contributes to learner ill-discipline.

#### 4.5.5 Teachers' perceptions of lack of qualifications

In Table 4.3.5, 90% respondents did not believe that lack of qualifications cause learner ill-discipline. It is clear from the finding that most of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The curbing of ill-discipline in schools depends on the character and nature of the individual (Nkuna, 2014:9). From this finding, it is clear that curbing of ill-discipline does not depend on the qualification, but on the character or nature of the educator.

#### 4.5.6 Teachers' perceptions of overcrowding

According to Table 4.3.6, 84% of respondents agreed with the statement. From the above analysis, it is evident that majority of the respondents thought that overcrowding of learners causes ill-discipline. Crowding of learners in the rural schools is the main cause of ill-discipline (Nyathi, 2016:9). From this finding, it is evident that overcrowding of learners in the class causes ill-discipline since all the Sikhulile Circuit schools in Ehlanzeni are situated in the rural areas.

#### 4.5.7 Teachers' perceptions of School Governing Body

In Figure 4.1, 70% of respondents agreed that School Governing Bodies can help with discipline. From the above finding, it is evident that majority of the respondents felt that members of School Governing Bodies can assist teachers to curb learner ill-discipline in the area of the study. Members of School Governing Bodies could assist teachers to curb learner ill-discipline, if they were requested to do so. (Mavuso, 2015: 11). From this statement, it is clear that involvement of the SGB can assist teachers to curb ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region.

#### 4.5.8 Teachers' perceptions of absenteeism

According to Table 4.3.8, most of the respondents, almost 82%, agreed that teacher absenteeism may cause learner ill-discipline in schools. From the above information, it is clear that most of the respondents were of the opinion that teacher absenteeism causes ill-discipline in schools. According to Mawila (2015:9) teacher absenteeism is the main cause of ill-discipline in schools. From this question it is clear that teacher absenteeism frequently is the main cause learner ill-discipline in the Ehlanzeni Region.

#### 4.5.9 Teachers' perceptions of corporal punishment

In Figure 4.2, 70% of respondents agreed with the statement. From the above analysis, it is evident that most of the respondents perceived that the abolishing of corporal punishment is one of the contributing factors towards learner ill-discipline. To support this statement: Nkuna (2014; 12) states that the abolishing of corporal punishment is seen by many educators as the main cause of ill-discipline in schools.

From this finding, it is clear that the abolishing of corporal punishment may be one of the contributors to learner ill-discipline in the area of the study.

#### 4.5.10 Teachers' perceptions of new disciplinary measures

According to Table 4.3.10, 84% of respondents disagreed with the statement. From the above finding, it is evident that majority of the respondents felt that the new disciplinary measures did not assist teachers to curb deviant behaviour in schools in the area of the study. Khosa (2016; 9) attests that lack of training in the administration of new disciplinary measures prevented many teachers from implementing the new policy. Belvel and Jordan (2002) points out that there's increasing need for teachers to be aware of effective alternative measures and embrace them. From this statement, it is evident that the new disciplinary measures do not assist teachers in curbing deviant behaviour and suggest that this is because they have not been trained in how to administer them.

In the next section, qualitative data analysis results are discussed.

### 4.6 Discussion of the results on qualitative data analysis

#### 4.6.1: Do you think abolishing of corporal punishment is the main cause of ill-discipline?

Respondents believed that the abolishing of corporal punishment is the main cause of ill-discipline since corporal punishment was historically accepted as one of the disciplinary methods used by South Africans (Heyman & Perone, 1998). Although outlawed in South Africa, corporal punishment remains controversial, with educators still using it because they see it as "the only thing that works"(Sapa, 2008:8). So, educators and parents express themselves on the same sentiment. The Basic Rights Handbook: Chapter 19 supports the statement that corporal punishment prior 1994 was frequently relied on to ensure that discipline in South African schools was acknowledged as an essential part of the schooling system.

Tleane (2002, 12) also confirms that in spite this, research shows that many South African teachers still resort to corporal punishment when dealing with misconduct in the classroom or school. Even the states through Solomon: 'He that spareth the rod

hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes”(Proverbs 13:24) and “Thou shall beat [your son] with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell”. Therefore the SMT of Sikhulile Circuit believed that you cannot spare the rod and spoil the child, hence they used corporal punishment.

#### 4.6.2: Can parental involvement assist the teachers to curb ill-discipline in schools?

The responses from the SMT have strong emphasis that parental involvement can assist teachers to curb ill-discipline in schools. Parental involvement at school may include parents volunteering in the classroom, attending workshops, or attending school plays and sporting events. Dishion, French and Patterson 1995 and Loeber and Farrington 1998 have found that poor parental discipline and monitoring, among other factors, have been responsible for the occurrence and persistence of conduct problem during middle childhood and adolescence.

Wendy S. Grolnick and her colleagues, in articles published in 1994 and 1997 conceptualized 3 distinctions of parental involvement based on how parent-child interactions affect learner’s schooling and motivation.

- (1) Behavioural involvement refers to parents’ public actions representing their interest in their child’s education, such as attending an open house or volunteering at the school.
- (2) Personal involvement includes child interactions that communicate positive attitudes about school and the importance of education to the child.
- (3) Cognitive/ intellectual involvement refers to behaviours that promote children’s skill development and knowledge, such as reading books and going to museums.

According to this theory, parental involvement affects learner achievement because these interactions affect learners’ motivation, their sense of competence, and the belief that they have control over their success in school. Nevertheless, it appears that when schools reach out, understand the needs of all families, and create parental involvement, children are more likely to experience success in school.

Ngcobo (1988: 27) concludes that if parents do not involve themselves in disciplining their children, any programme related to behaviour change that the school may initiate will not be effective. Parents should take responsibility for the discipline of

their children at home, as well as becoming involved in the activities of both the child and the school (The Department of Education).

4.6.3: Does a lack of extramural-activities contribute to learner ill-discipline in schools?

The SMT indicated that lack of extra-mural activities contribute to ill-discipline. Penny and Harris (1997: 41) defines extra-mural activities as the establishment as the activities outside of the school curriculum, most often after school. Extra-curricular activities provide a channel for reinforcing the lessons learned in the classroom, applying academic skills learned in the real world context and many be considered as a necessary component of a well-rounded education. In a research paper published by united state Department of Education which analysed the links between extra-curricular participation and student's success at school, they found that extra-mural participation was positively associated with constant attendance, academic achievement and aspirations of continuing education beyond high school.

Mahoney, Larson, Eccles and Lord (2005: 57) point out that these activities are considered to be organised activities with structure and adult supervision as well as an emphasis on skill building and the promotion of positive development for learners. Pitts (2007:145) supports the above stamen that such opportunities may include sport, drama, music, language clubs, debating societies and other interest clubs. According to Fredericks and Eccles (2006: 698) found that activity participation can be linked to positive academic outcomes, including improved grades, test scores, more school engagement, and increased educational aspirations.

Gardner, Roth and Brooks-Gun (2008: 814) theory and research on positive youth development emphasizes the transition of human development, and suggest that cultivating positive, supportive relationships with people and social institutions encourages healthy development because of the support and the opportunities that are present compared to less positive afterschool options for teens considering this perspective. Therefore, all the authors and the theory support that if learners can take part in sport their minds will be off the negatives.

4.6.4: Do class teachers have a role to play in learner discipline?

From the school management teams interviewed, there is evidence that teachers have a role to play in learner discipline. According to our common law, a parent or one placed in loco parentis such as a principal is only entitled to inflict on children the moderate and reasonable chastisement necessary for purposes of correction and discipline. Moreover, the Department of Education (2000: 12) suggests that educators should adopt a proactive approach by preparing for lessons; exercising self-discipline; having extension work available; ensuring that teaching and learning take place consistently; making space for timeout or a conflict resolution corner; affirming learners; and building positive relationships with learners. Furthermore, it is required that every classroom manager should adopt classroom rules. According to the terms of Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners (1986: par.5.1):

- Learners must be involved in the formulation of classroom rules and must conform to such rules.
- Classroom rules must be consistent with the school's Code of Conduct.
- Classroom rules must be clear and understandable and must make provision for fair warning.
- Classroom rules should be posted in the classroom.
- The consequences of breaking a specific rule should be indicated in the Classroom rules.
- Punishment must fit the offence and must be graded to make provision for repeated offences.

In addition classroom rules should meet various legal requirements such as rules must not inflict injustice; rules must be drafted by authorised persons- that is an educator in consultation with the learners; classroom rules must not conflict with school policy, and Constitutional requirements must be taken into account. Classroom managers must consider the implications for the learners. This implies that class teachers do have a role to play in learner discipline.

4.6.5: Do you think that the new disciplinary measures can curb learner ill-discipline?

According to school managers interviewed, their responses claim that the new disciplinary measures are not assisting to curb ill-discipline. Belvel and Jordan (2002:

6) point out that there is increasing need for teachers to be aware of effective alternative measures and embrace them. Punitive measures may not always achieve the intended objectives, but educators can make use of co-operative disciplinary measures as compared to punitive and harsh disciplinary measures. Co-operative discipline is a theory of discipline that seems to work for children today because it offers corrective, supportive and most important, preventive strategies (Canter and Canter (2001: 119). To support Canter and Canter, Scharle and Szabo (2000: 11) state that to deal with learner ill-discipline, preventive measures are more proactive and useful than reactive ones that may not repair the damage caused.

Canter (2007: 7) asserts that the ultimate goal of co-operative discipline is to inspire children to make smart choices and develop positive behaviour. It is a collaborative effort on the part of the learner, teacher, administration, and parent (Mtsweni: 6). Child development research indicates that self-esteem is critical for successful growth and emotional development (Gwirayi and Shumba, 2007: 119). Learners with positive self-esteem feel valued and independent in school and this helps to foster co-operation and responsibility.

Therefore teachers and school management teams must follow the set out code of conduct drawn by the school governing body in order to curb ill-discipline in Sikhulile Circuit schools. The school governing bodies must draw up the code of conduct after consultations with educators, learners and parents. The document should be displayed at the school so that all learners familiarise themselves with it and comply with it. Hence learners will know the school disciplinary measures and what disciplinary procedures will be applied for that offence.

4.6.6: Do you think alternative strategies can enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures?

School managers have a strong emphasis that there is a need for alternative strategies to enhance implementation of the new disciplinary measures in the intermediate schools. According to the Department of Education (2009: 9) educators are urged to discipline and to punish proactively and constructively. Learners are expected to experience an educative, corrective approach where they will learn to exercise self-control, to respect others, and to accept consequences of their own actions. According to the South African Schools Act, "the main focus of the Code of



Conduct must be positive discipline; it must not be punitive and punishment-oriented but should facilitate constructive learning". Hence the Department advises educators to adopt alternatives to corporal punishment for effective discipline, such as:

- Discuss rules with learners and reach an agreement on these rules, learners will attempt to keep these rules because they have been consulted in their design;
- The behaviour, not the learner must be the focus;
- Use time-out that is open-ended and managed by the learner, who determines his readiness to gain self-control;
- Recognise that children have an innate sense of self-discipline, and can be self-regulatory;
- Focus on rewarding learners for their effort as well as for good behaviour;
- Make use of measures that are respectful and dignified as physically and verbally non-violent;
- Implement measures that are based on empathy and an understanding of an individual and his needs, abilities, circumstances and developmental stage;
- Resent possible alternatives that focuses on positive behaviour;
- Implement rules that selectively ignore minor misbehaviour, using reflection on an incident through give and take discussions;
- Use measures that regard mistakes as an opportunity to learn-treat the learners with empathy, and give them the chance to express healthy remorse; and
- Use disciplinary measures in such a way that the consequences of breaking the rules are directly related to the learner' behaviour.

In concluding these results, educators are not expected to be psychologists. However, they are in a position where they work most directly with learners and should therefore in touch with their behavioural problems. Furthermore, educators' role is to understand the nature of the problem and to be able to identify appropriate help. The Department of Education (2000: 9) points out that in communities where support services are not available, a suggestion is that the educator has an "even deeper responsibility to access the best programme forward in the face of scarce resources".

#### 4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, data collected in the study was presented, analysed, discussed and interpreted. Some of the factors and challenges that cause learner ill-discipline in the intermediate phase in the Ehlanzeni Region were revealed and analysed. The chapter reveals that challenges concerning learner discipline call for the teachers and members of the SMT to use new measures to curb ill-discipline in the region.

From the findings, it is evident that there is a need for training of teachers on issues related to the management and the implementation of new disciplinary measures in the area of the study.

In the next chapter, an overview of the findings, recommendations and general conclusion of the study are presented.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter includes an overview of the study, findings, recommendations, limitations of the study, and the conclusion. The recommendations derived from the findings are briefly discussed in relation to the objectives and the research questions stated in chapter one. The following objectives are addressed in this study:

- To determine the perceptions of teachers of learner discipline in the intermediate school phase in the Ehlanzeni Region.
- To identify factors that influence lack of discipline in the area of study.
- To determine new measures that can be used by learners to prevent ill-discipline in the intermediate schools.
- To suggest strategies that can be used by senior managers to enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures in the Ehlanzeni Region.

The next section presents an overview of the study, based on the factors that prevent r teachers from curbing ill-discipline in their sphere of operations. The researcher also reviews important issues covered in the different chapters.

#### 5.2 Overview of the study

The negative perceptions by teachers of issues related to ill-discipline necessitated the researcher to investigate the challenges in intermediate schools in Ehlanzeni Region. To understand the nature of the problem, the researcher discusses how these factors hamper the teachers' administering correct new disciplinary measures.

The purpose, statement of the problem, research questions and significance of the study are presented in chapter 1. Literature relevant to school discipline is discussed and analysed in chapter 2. The research methodology used to collect data is described in chapter 3. The researcher collected, analysed, interpreted and presents the study results in chapter 4. The findings, recommendations, and the general conclusion of the study are presented in chapter 5.

### 5.3 Summary of and Conclusions from the Findings

The analysis of data and interpretation of results assisted the researcher to draw conclusions from the findings. Discussion of the findings is based on the four objectives stated in chapter one. The recommendations based on the findings are deliberated from the results derived from the outcome of the empirical investigation and the structured questionnaire. In the next section, the researcher discusses how the study objectives have been achieved.

**Objective 1:** To determine the perceptions of teachers of learner discipline in intermediate phase schools in the Ehlanzeni Region.

5.3.1 Teachers were consulted to check their perceptions on lack of discipline in the intermediate schools in Ehlanzeni Region. According to the findings, the majority of participants believed that teachers have a role to play in discipline. Reluctance and lack of participation by teachers cause a negative perception of learner ill-discipline. Mawila (2015:8) writes that the negative perception of teachers of learner discipline can only be changed if teachers are allowed to participate in the process. This statement was supported by 75% of the respondents who did not see their role in the curbing of ill-discipline in schools.

**Objective 2:** To identify factors that influence lack of discipline in schools.

5.3.2 The researcher sought to check whether teachers were aware of the factors that influence lack of discipline in schools. The above objective was achieved through the analysis of responses from the empirical investigations and structured interviews. The findings show that factors such as abolishing of corporal punishment, lack of parental involvement, lack of mural activities, and lack of clarity on policy had a negative influence on discipline in the intermediate schools. Eighty percent of the respondents (80 %+) believed that the above factors had a negative influence on learner disciplines in the intermediate schools of Ehlanzeni Region. According to Nyathi (2016: 11), ill-discipline in the primary schools is influenced by various factors such as the teaching methodology, clarity on policies, inadequate school leadership and lack of parental involvement. From this statement, it is clear that there are many different factors that impact negatively on discipline.

**Objective 3:** To determine new measures that can be used by teachers to prevent ill-discipline in schools.

5.3.3 To check whether new disciplinary measures assist teachers in curbing ill-discipline in the intermediate schools. To achieve the objective, the researcher asked the participants if the new disciplinary measures could assist them to curb ill-discipline. The majority of respondents, 19 out of 20, believed that new disciplinary measures did not assist them to curb ill-discipline in schools. To support this statement, Nkuna (2015: 9) indicates that some of the new disciplinary measures influence learners to be badly behaved in schools. From this statement, it is evident that some of the new disciplinary measures, for example, withdrawal of learners' privileges, may cause a high failure rate instead of reducing ill-discipline.

**Objective 4:** To check whether teachers need alternative strategies to enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures.

5.3.4 The above objective was achieved through the analysis of responses derived from the interviewees. According to the findings, 18 out of 20 confirmed that there is a need for alternative strategies to enhance the implementation of new disciplinary measures in the intermediate schools. Mawila (2015: 11) found that lack of alternative strategies in the Department of Education can result in teachers' preventing ill-discipline in schools. To support this process, senior managers in the Department of Education should be encouraged to develop relevant alternative strategies to assist teachers in enhancing the implementation of new disciplinary measures in the Ehlanzeni Region.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

On the basis of findings from both the empirical investigation and the structured interviews, the following recommendations are made:

5.4.1 Teachers should be encouraged to participate in all processes related to the management of ill-discipline in schools. This process may assist teachers to know their roles and to become aware of their negative perceptions of curbing of ill-discipline in schools in the Ehlanzeni Region.

5.4.2 Teachers of the intermediate schools should be empowered to manage factors that influence the lack of discipline in area of study. They should also be encouraged to work with the School Management Teams and the School Governing Bodies to avoid issues that impact negatively on school discipline.

5.4.3 The policy makers should be encouraged to train teachers on policy implementation so that the new disciplinary measures can be effectively employed. This process could assist the SMTs to change the negative perceptions of teachers of learner discipline.

5.4.4 Senior managers should be encouraged to develop relevant alternative strategies to assist teachers in preventing ill-discipline. This can only be achieved if there is a harmonious relationship between teachers and other stakeholders in the schools of the Ehlanzeni Region.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Further Research**

Every research study is expected to suggest further studies because no research can claim to be complete on its own. The following topics are therefore suggested for further research:

- Exploring the role of the School Governing Body in learner discipline.
- The impact of the School Management Team on learner discipline.
- The effect of parental involvement on learner discipline at school.
- Exploring the impact of the new disciplinary measures on maintaining school discipline.
- The effect of ill-discipline on learner performance in rural schools.

## **5.6 Limitations of the Study**

The current study of teachers' perceptions of learner discipline cannot claim to have revealed all the challenges faced by stakeholders in the intermediate schools in the Ehlanzeni Region. This would be impossible since problems are not static but are dynamic and situational.

Due to the vastness of the area, the researcher was unable to obtain data from all the teachers in the Ehlanzeni Region. However, the researcher used random sampling to get relevant data from the target population.

Due to the nature of the study and financial constraints, the researcher only interviewed twenty participants to achieve the intended objectives of the study. Despite all the limitations encountered, , all the relevant information was obtained to satisfy the requirements of the study.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers of learner discipline in the intermediate phase schools of the Ehlanzeni Region. From the findings, it is evident that teachers are reluctant to be involved in learner discipline because of challenges such as lack of clarity on policies, irrelevant teaching methods, inadequate qualifications, and teacher absenteeism.

The study further reveals that the overcrowding of learners, abolishing of corporal punishment, lack of extra-mural activities, inadequate School Governing Body support, ineffectiveness of the implementation of new disciplinary measures and lack of alternative strategies add to the anomalies that hamper teachers in their efforts to curb ill-discipline in the intermediate phase schools in the Ehlanzeni Region.

For teachers to change their negative impressions towards ill-discipline, all stakeholders need to support, encourage and involve themselves in taking part in all the processes related to learner deviant behaviour in area of the study.

To enhance the above process, senior managers should also be encouraged to develop alternative strategies to accelerate the effective implementation of new disciplinary measures in the intermediate schools of the Ehlanzeni Region.



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