

**THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF
SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE NKANGALA REGION OF
MPUMALANGA**

by

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DECLARATION

“I declare that: THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE NKANGALA REGION OF MPUMALANGA is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references”.

JIM MTSWENI

DATE

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the role of educators in the establishment and maintenance of effective discipline in the school and classroom.

In a mainly qualitative investigation, empirical data from three secondary schools in the Nkangala region of the Mpumalanga Province were collected by means of focus group and individual interviews as well as observation. These data were analysed in accordance with accepted procedures for qualitative data processing.

The study confirmed most of the views found in the existing body of knowledge on school discipline. In the dissertation, detailed attention is paid to the disciplinary problems those educators who were interviewed, experienced, the perceived origin of those problems and suggested solutions. The rights and duties of educators in regard to the management of discipline were also considered. To conclude the study, eight strategies to promote the establishment and maintenance of discipline in secondary schools were proposed.

KEY CONCEPTS

Discipline

School

Educator

Learner

Management

Classroom management

Corporal punishment

School discipline policy

Stakeholder involvement

Educators' conduct

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sound discipline and safety underpins every aspect of the school life. For successful teaching and learning to take place it is essential that good discipline exist in every classroom in particular and in the school as a whole in general. According to Hill and Hill (1994:16) learners learn to the best of their abilities in an orderly and safe environment. Researchers like Potgieter, Visser, Van der Bank, Mothata and Squelch (1997:59) state that if discipline is not taken into consideration, the school environment will be dangerous and the educational process may be disrupted. This may also affect the educational attainment of the learners. In this regard Levin and Nalon (1991:30) state that, in addition to the obvious impact on the teaching and learning environment, disruptive behaviour can also affect the learners' safety, readiness to learn as well as future behaviour. In the opinion of Hill and Hill (1994:6) ill-discipline can destroy the possibility of a safe and orderly environment and thereby hamper the core purpose of the school. It is therefore necessary that discipline is maintained in a school for the welfare and safety of learners and educators and for the success of the educational process.

Learners in the further education and training colleges are working hard to form their own identities, asserting power through rebellion by opposing the educators. Coetzer and Le Roux (1996:84) endorse this view when they state that modern children and youth want to establish their own way of life, and by doing so they rebel against discipline and authority. They sum up by stating that "the youth have been emancipated to live their life styles as they see it fit and accept values different from their society". Consequently, the educators experience difficulties, feeling that they are challenged, and might lose control. The stress which they experience is enhanced by the abolishment of corporal punishment (RSA, 1996a:10). Without this disciplinary measure which they relied on and which was overtly sanctioned by the law in South Africa, educators feel powerless and lack the

means to enforce discipline (Cohen, 1996:1-2, Joubert & Prinsloo, 1999:55).

Though corporal punishment has been abolished, Section 8(1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:8), states that discipline must be maintained in classroom situations so that the education of the learners flourishes, without disruptive behaviour and offences. Section 7(5) of the Guidelines for the consideration of Governing Bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Guidelines) (RSA, 1996b:10), also states that educators have the responsibility of maintaining discipline in schools. Joubert and Prinsloo (1999:89) support this view when they write that it is the responsibility of the educators to maintain discipline at all times. This discipline contributes to the safety of learners, which is what the parents want for their children. Parents also need to support educators in promoting discipline in schools. However, learners' discipline is ranked as one of the major concerns in the education process expressed by all stakeholders about public schools and the education system in South Africa (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:34, Van Wyk, 2001:196). Thompson (2002:7), who conducted comprehensive research into discipline in primary and secondary education in South Africa, confirms that there is a breakdown in discipline in schools and suggests that this must be rectified as soon as possible.

The purpose of this research is, therefore, to examine the role of educators in the management of discipline in the absence of corporal punishment. It is assumed that school managers will not be able to manage and maintain discipline in schools without the educators' and parents' support. The researcher also seeks to develop strategies that can be used to inculcate the educators' willingness to contribute constructively to the promotion of school discipline. It will assist educators to find ways to accept and accommodate learners so that they can learn in a physically safe and orderly environment which should contribute to academic improvement.

Having introduced the research study, it is now important to discuss the background to the problem.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Lack of discipline and safety in schools has been one of the challenges facing South African education during the past number of years. According to the National Department of Education (RSA, 2002a:6), despite the commitment of the government to provide resources and improve school conditions, current reports show that many schools are still not working very well. Not only are schools themselves finding it difficult to keep order and control, but the delivery of state services in support of schools, learners and educators has to improve in order to attain the national vision of equality, quality education and justice in schools. Schools in South Africa are struggling to provide the quality education required for the holistic and healthy development of the youth. The Department of Education (RSA, 2002a:6), further states that many schools are unable to provide a nurturing environment to counteract or deal with violence within the community and family. Consequently, discipline is crumbling and the relationship between the learners and educators is deteriorating. Moreover, the learners are losing their respect for and trust of educators. Such youth behaviour causes the school effectiveness to break down in many schools and the culture of teaching and learning to collapse. These problems are contributing a lot to the lack of teaching and learning. Violence is for example prevailing in many schools. In this regard Mabebe and Prinsloo (2000:34) as well as Van Wyk (2001:196) state that the learners' disciplinary problems in South Africa range from the rejection of reasoning, late coming, truancy, neglecting to do homework, noisiness, physical violence, theft, threats, graffiti, vandalism, verbal abuse, lack of concentration, criminality, gangsterism, rape, constant violation of the schools' code of conduct and substance abuse within and around the schools' premises. These problems make it difficult and often impossible for the educators to manage their classes effectively. Ngcayi (1997:17) corroborates this view by stating that in South African schools many educators find it difficult to enforce discipline, particularly after the abolishment of corporal punishment (since discipline is often equated with corporal punishment).

A lack of learner discipline in public schools is experienced throughout the world. The lack of learner discipline in many public schools throughout the world has been a matter

of great concern for school management and educators and to a lesser extent for learners themselves, parents and the general public (Wayson and Pinnell, 1994:1534). According to Charles (1996:3), numerous studies that were conducted by researchers in the United States of America in 1992, have listed discipline as a major problem with which educators must contend and a significant factor in educators' leaving the profession. Apparently it is responsible for 40 percent or more of departures during the educators' first three years. Adding to the problem is the fact that experienced educators try to transfer away from the schools that have high levels of misbehaviour, leaving such schools in the hands of educators not yet skilled in exerting or maintaining discipline (Charles 1996:3).

From personal observation and informal interviews with educators, the researcher, as a secondary school principal, has concluded that ill-discipline is rife in secondary schools in the Nkangala region of the Mpumalanga Province. The majority of educators seem to believe that learners should be left to their own devices without being controlled and supervised. These learners are left to behave in whatever way they wish. The educators in this area are complaining over and over again that they are forced to do more policing work than teaching in the classroom situation. They are spending a disproportionate amount of time dealing with the disruptive behaviour of learners and the consequences of their actions. Unacceptable behaviour, like laughing at the educators, acts of violence against the educators' authority and discipline are prevailing. According to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12) disruptions by ill-disciplined learners, such as late coming in the morning and during the school day, truancy, refusal to attend certain lessons, failure to do homework, failure to adhere to the school policies and the flouting of authority are some of the unacceptable forms of behaviour of the learners that are cited by educators. These types of behaviour seem to have a negative effect on educators' maintenance of discipline. The Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12-14) further states that bullying and arguing with the educators as well as drug and alcohol abuse are detrimental to the upbringing of learners in the KwaNdebele enclave of the Nkangala region. It has been found that a large number of learners are abusing alcohol during school hours and weekends. This does not influence them alone

but it affects the whole school population. These learners do not have proper role models as some parents are reported to share this life style with their children.

The challenge lies upon educators and parents to equip learners with a positive view on education. They need guidance to channel their perceptions in such a way that they look positively towards the benefits of education. Proper guidance will assist the learners to see the need to establish or re-establish good rapport with educators and parents. It is the responsibility of educators to maintain a culture of teaching and learning in schools. But, it is not possible to do this if discipline and safety are not considered in the school environment. Disintegrated discipline causes difficulty in the attainment of school objectives. Schools become dysfunctional because both educators and learners cannot work effectively and efficiently under unconducive conditions. Learners cannot learn and educators cannot teach in an unsafe environment. A safe and orderly school environment is a prerequisite for learning and teaching to take place. Thus educators can only perform their professional duties if there is order and discipline in both the classroom and the school as a whole (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1992:24, Mtshali, 1993:2, Squelch & Lemmer, 1994:61, Mokwana, 1994:17, Tauber, 1995:259, Watson, 1996:1). Digulio (2000:5) also supports this view by stating that learners learn more efficiently in smooth running classrooms. According to Section 4(6) of the Guidelines (RSA, 1996b:6), the learners have a right to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education. Security of property, well-cared for school facilities, school furniture and equipment, a lack of harassment when attending classes or writing examinations, all create an atmosphere which is conducive to education and training. Similarly, educators cannot provide an effective and rigorous education for all the learners if they are not secured and safe. Educators are also in dire need of safe and conducive school conditions for them to be able to perform their professional duties.

From personal observation, the researcher has learnt that educators seem to be reluctant to co-operate with the school managers in disciplining learners. Many seem to have shed their obligations and let the school managers handle all the disciplinary problems affecting the learners. The issue of discipline in schools has required urgent attention to

the extent that the previous Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, has called for a joint activity and attempt entitled “Tirisano 2002”, to establish a safe and secure school environment and to resuscitate a culture of teaching and learning (RSA, 2002a:i). “Tirisano” means “working together” (RSA, 2002b:126). This denotes that the parents, educators, the community and the learners are called upon to involve themselves in the day-to-day issues that relate to keeping order in schools. The educators and parents are responsible to make every attempt to see that the schools are safe and attractive places for learners to learn and educators to complete their duties effectively (Decker 1997:85, Savage, 1991:6). The educators and parents are challenged to help the learners to focus their perceptions on the educational benefits of schooling rather than on deviant behaviour that might ruin their whole educational and social life.

According to DiGiulio (2005:5) a chaotic classroom distracts the learners, preventing them from attending, focusing and concentrating, wastes time and hinders the learners from achieving their educational potential. In the disruptive classroom environment, it is unlikely that the learners can learn much about how to treat others respectfully. DiGiulio (2005:5) argues that educators are also responsible for the establishment of discipline in schools rather than being reluctant to co-operate with school managers in disciplining the learners.

Having provided the background to the problem of the research, it is now important to state the problem in a more accurate way by outlining the research question as well as the aims of the study.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS

Establishing and maintaining discipline in schools is an important task, not only of school managers, parents and learners, but also of educators (Joubert & Prinsloo, 1999:89, Grey, 2000:3, Geyer, 2000:4). However, educators seem to neglect their responsibility in this regard. They often hand over the responsibility for the maintenance of discipline to the school managers. This lack of educators’ support seems to have contributed to a lack of

both discipline and a culture of teaching and learning in most of the schools in the Nkangala region of the Mpumalanga Province.

Against this background, the main research question is as follows:

What is the role of educators in the establishment and maintenance of effective discipline in the school and classroom?

Sub-questions to the key research question are:

- i. How should educators manage their classes in order to maintain discipline?
- ii. How can educators contribute to the maintenance of discipline in the school in general?
- iii. What are the perceptions of educators in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga with regard to a safe school environment, characterized by sound discipline amongst learners?
- iv. What are the rights and duties of educators with regard to discipline in schools?

1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

This research comprises an investigation into the way in which educators contribute to the establishment and maintenance of discipline in schools. In the light of the research questions, the aims of the research are to:

- i. determine what the experiences of educators from three selected schools regarding learner discipline in the school and classroom environment are,
- ii. analyze and discuss the rights and duties of educators with regard to discipline in schools,
- iii. examine the perceptions of educators with regard to a disciplined school environment,
- iv. provide guidelines and recommendations pertaining to the effective involvement

of educators in school discipline.

A brief discussion on the research design and methodology that was used now follows.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The nature of this study was qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual (Berg, 1995:24, Merriam, 1998:85-89, Mouton & Marais, 1992:43-49, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1995:4-7). In the following paragraphs, the researcher will discuss the nature of the research design and methodology used in the present study.

1.5.1 Research design

Qualitative research that is explorative, descriptive and contextual (Berg, 1995:24, Merriam, 1998:85-89, Mouton & Marais, 1992:43-49, Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1995:4-7) will be conducted. Qualitative research is based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed in making sense of the world and experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 1998:6). In this investigation the focus was, amongst other things, on the meaning the educators attach to their experiences of learner discipline.

1.5.1.1 Qualitative research

Maykut and Morehouse (1992:43-45) state that qualitative approaches are useful when the researcher intends to have an understanding of a human phenomenon as well as to discover the meaning given to events that subjects experience. It involves a naturalistic enquiry that aims at understanding phenomena as they occur naturally (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45). This study was concerned with an understanding of how educators manage and maintain discipline in schools and classrooms in the absence of corporal punishment. According to McCracken (1988:17) qualitative research is more intensive

than extensive in its objectives. Hoberg (1999:51) states that qualitative approaches share “a holistic view” as one of their assumptions. This study examined educators’ methods of dealing with discipline in a way that is holistic in nature.

1.5.1.2 Exploratory approach

According to Mouton and Marais (1992:43), the aim with exploratory research is “the exploration of a relatively unknown research area”. This study was exploratory in that it attempted to understand how educators manage discipline in the school and classroom at a time when corporal punishment had been abolished. In addition, Berg (1995:7) indicates that a qualitative exploratory approach enables the researcher to share in the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give answers to their daily lives. This study was exploratory in that it attempted to understand how educators manage discipline in the school and classroom.

1.5.1.3 Descriptive approach

Qualitative research aims at providing descriptions of the phenomena that occur naturally, without the intervention of experiments or artificially designed treatment (Merriam, 1998:7-8). This study can therefore also be regarded as descriptive in nature.

1.5.1.4 Contextual approach

According to Mouton (1996:133) contextual research comprises a study of phenomena because of their intrinsic and immediate contextual significance. Mouton and Marais (1992:49) state that contextual research focuses on participants within a particular context, so as to gain an understanding of the participants within that context. Since individuals take much of their meaning from their context, a phenomenon should be studied in its natural setting (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:189).

This study was contextual in nature because it was concerned with the unique context of

the classroom and school situation of senior secondary schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga. Educators were expected to provide an extensive description of their experiences in their specific context. In this way the researcher had hoped to uncover the true behaviour shown by people when observed in their own real life context (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45).

1.5.2 Data collection

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:106) the term data refers to the rough materials researchers gather from the world they are studying. Data form the basis of an analysis and include materials that the researchers conducting the study actively record, such as interview transcripts and participant observation field notes. Other forms of data include media such as diaries, photographs, official documents and newspaper articles (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:106). Data involves the particulars one needs to think soundly and deeply about the aspects of life one wishes to explore. Richards (2005:34) states that data are the “stuff” one works with, the records of what one is studying. Richards (2005:34) further states that the researcher creates this data by selecting and using it as evidence in an analysis.

The phrase “data collection” has a bearing on the way in which information and knowledge about the topic of research is obtained. A researcher has to choose data sources and set boundaries for generating the data in question. In this study data were collected by means of semi-structured, open-ended, focus group and individual interviews, literature study and observation.

1.5.2.1 Focus group interviews

According to Stewart and Cash (1985:3) interviewing is “a process of dyadic, relational communication with a predetermined and serious purpose designed to interchange behaviour and involving the asking and answering of questions”. The word dyadic means that the interview is a person-to-person interaction between the interviewer and interviewees (Stewart & Cash, 1985:3). Stewart and Cash (1985:3) also state that the concept relational suggests an interpersonal connection between the interviewer and interviewees. According to Chirban (1996:11) an interview, in the true sense of the word, gives the “inner view” of the interviewed person. Comprehending the essence of an individual, his or her emotions and needs, is the central task.

According to Gloria, Bader and Cathrine (2002:2) a focus group interview “is a special type of group interview that is structured to gather detailed opinions and knowledge about a particular topic from selected participants”. According to Khan Manderson (as cited by Liamputtong & Lizzy, 2005:76) a focus group interview is a qualitative method with the primary objective of describing and gaining insight into the perceptions, interpretations and beliefs of a selected population to gain an understanding of a particular issue from the perspective of the group’s participants. Maykut and Morehouse (1994;104) state that in a qualitative study, the researcher brings together a relatively small group of people, typically six to eight, to find out what they think, feel, or know about the researcher’s focus of inquiry. In this research study, focus group interviews were conducted as an open conversation in which each participant commented, asked questions from other participants or responded to comments by other participants or the interviewer. Open-ended questions which were carefully structured were used (Seidman, 1998:9). Interviews were conducted over a period of one to two hours, during which very detailed questions were asked to guide the interview process. Three focus group interviews from three selected schools were conducted. Each group consisted of six educators under the guidance of an interviewer and topics were discussed that were regarded as relevant to the investigation. The interviewer introduced and directed the discussion and encouraged participants to take part in the conversation without being biased. The way in which

participants were selected, will be explained to some extent in section 1.5.2.5.

1.5.2.2 Individual interviews

According to Kvale (1996:30) an individual interview seeks to interpret the meaning of the central themes in the life world of the subject. The interviewer registers and interprets the meaning of what is said as well as how it is said. Seidman (1998:11) corroborates by stating that behaviour becomes meaningful and understandable when placed in the context of the subjects' lives and the lives of those around them. Without context there is little possibility of exploring the meaning of an experience. Seidman (1998:9) states that the interviewers primarily use open-ended questions. Their major task is to build upon and explore their subjects' responses to those questions. The aim is to have the subject reconstruct his or her experience about the topic being studied. According to Patton (as cited by Best & Kahn, 1993:184) the data from the interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge.

In this study, six individual interviews were conducted. These six educators were selected from the three selected schools. Two respondents from each of the schools were selected. Open-ended questions were used (Seidman, 1988:9). Interviews lasted between one and two hours. The individual participants were interviewed because they could possibly supply information that is relevant in answering the research question. They were expected to share their experiences and perceptions with the researcher on the role of educators in school discipline. This is the type of interview that the researcher used to elicit information in order to achieve an understanding of the participant's point of view or situation. It helped the researcher to understand the closed world of individuals, families, organizations, institutions and communities. It is focused, discursive and allows the researcher to explore an issue. It is used to determine individual's perceptions, opinions, facts, forecasts and their reactions to initial findings and potential solutions (Greeff, 1998:298, Schurink, 1998d:297).

1.5.2.3 Literature study

Documents are written records. Documents (especially primary sources) provide first hand information based on direct experiences with the phenomena, usually obtained through interviews or observations (McMillan, 2000:263).

Documents regarded as secondary sources also provide additional “second hand” information based on information obtained as a result of a literature study relevant to the particular problem under investigation. These documents can be virtually anything written or printed such as letters, articles, photographs, files, minutes and other official documents produced by research participants or others and which are readily available in many field settings, newsletters, diaries and books. Non-print materials such as pictures, videos, tapes and films can also be used (Schurink, 1998c:284, McMillan,2000:263).

In this investigation documentation such as books, dissertations, articles, newspapers and letters that are related to the topic of this research were studied. These documents were studied in order to establish what other researchers and authors have already established with regard to the study. The documentary sources were compared with data already gathered, and then added as new information to the present study where they proved to be of use. The data from all the available sources that were utilized during the research study were integrated and collated (Cresswell, 1994:54, Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126).

1.5.2.4 Observation

According to Schurink (1998c:279) researchers who make use of participant observation are interested in “participant perspectives” or the ways in which people usually make sense of or attach meaning to the world around them. According to McBurney (1994:169), in observations, the researcher observes and records ongoing behaviour and does not attempt to change it. Since the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in the research process in qualitative research, it usually involves fieldwork (Merriam, 1998:7). It is vital that the researcher enters the study with little or no biases, motivations or perspectives that could influence the research procedures and

findings (Krefting, 1991:216-217).

Field notes are not merely summaries of events but rather detailed written descriptions of what was observed as well as the researcher's interpretations (McMillan,2000:260, Schurink, 1998c: 285). The researcher must physically go to the people, setting, site and institution in order to observe behaviour in its natural setting (Cresswell, 1994:154). The researcher has to record field notes of the interview situation as well as his impressions.

In this study the researcher observed how educators managed their classes in order to maintain discipline and how they reacted and felt in the classroom. The researcher refrained from changing the natural behaviour. Three weeks were spent with the educators from the three selected schools, to gain first hand experience on how educators experienced learner discipline in the school and classroom. Comprehensive field notes were documented throughout the period.

1.5.2.5 Sampling

Purposive sampling (Schurink, 1998b:253) was used. A purposive sample is one that is selected non-randomly but for some particular reason (McBurney, 1994:203). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:378) in purposive sampling the researcher identifies information rich participants for the reason that they are possibly knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. Participants were selected on the basis that they could supply information relevant to the problem in question. The target group from which the participants were selected consisted of educators who were teaching in public senior secondary schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga.

Three focus group interviews with respondents from three selected schools were conducted. Each focus group consisted of six educators. Six individual interviews were also conducted. These six educators were selected from the three selected schools. Participants were selected on the basis that they could possibly supply relevant information. Purposive sampling entails that the researcher selects particular elements

from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:175). On the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, a decision was made about which participants should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research.

1.5.2.6 Triangulation

According to De Vos (1998b:359) the concept triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods of data collection. Richards (2005:140) states that triangulation is the term widely used for research designs where different sorts of data or methods of handling data are brought to bear on the research question. In this research study triangulation was achieved through focus group interviews, individual interviews, literature study and observation on how educators managed their classes in order to maintain discipline (McMillan, 2000:165, McBurney, 1994:169).

1.5.3 Data processing

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:127) data analysis goes hand in hand with data collection so that the researcher focuses on and shapes the research as it continues. An inductive approach to data analysis commences with data collection that relates to a focus of inquiry. What is analyzed emerges from the data itself.

Initially, a literature study was conducted to find existing knowledge and information with regard to the research topic. This was done because all types of research needs to be theoretically sound and grounded in terms of existing theory (RAU, n.d.:3, De Vos & Fouche, 1998b:104). The researcher also used the literature study for the clarification of operational concepts of the research and to find existing information on the role played by educators in school activities in general and their rights and duties in the maintenance of discipline specifically. After the fieldwork was completed, the researcher carefully read through the information or data gathered by means of observation, document analysis, focus group interviews, individual interviews and literature study. The data was

analyzed according to generally accepted methods of analysis. Thereafter, the researcher continued with a more detailed and fine-grained analysis of what the participants conveyed. During this analysis, the researcher discovered additional topics, themes and categories which all contributed to an overall explanation of the data. The topics, themes and categories identified through data analysis were compared with relevant literature in order to highlight similarities and differences between the present research and other studies on the topic (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126-127, Cresswell, 1994:20-24). This provided the basis for comparing and contrasting data (Simelane, 1998:28).

During the final phase of data analysis, the researcher compared the materials within the categories to look for variations as well as nuances in the meanings. He also compared the data across categories to discover connections between the themes. The goal was to integrate the themes and concepts into a theory that offers an accurate, detailed interpretation of the data.

After the interpretation of the data was completed, results were presented. This also facilitated the process of describing principles and guidelines for educators to effectively manage and maintain discipline (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:226-227).

1.5.4 Ethical considerations

The researcher undertook to comply with the requirements of all ethical principles. This included the researcher's competency (Strydom, 1998:30), the relationship with the participants (Simelane, 1998:14), informed consent (McBurney, 1994:374, Strydom, 1998:25), anonymity and confidentiality (Saslow, 1992:392, Wallen & Fraenkel, 1991:40), no deception of the subjects (McBurney, 1994:377, Strydom, 1998:27, Wallen & Fraenkel, 1991:41) and debriefing (where necessary) (Strydom, 1998:27, McBurney, 1994:379).

In particular, the researcher undertook to comply with the requirements of confidentiality.

Confidentiality in research has a bearing on the handling of the information in a confidential way (Strydom, 1998:28). The anonymity of the participants was maintained and all the participants were given the assurance that the data collected from them will be treated as confidential (Wallen & Fraenkel, 1991:40). According to Schurink (1998d:306) interviewees should be satisfied that their identity and information that they have provided will, under all circumstances be treated as confidential. A pseudonym should be used if preferred by the interviewees. Schurink (1998d:306) further states that it is obvious that the interviewees, particularly “deviants”, will not provide confidential information if they suspect that such information might be revealed to third parties like the police, relatives or even fellow interviewees. The principle of confidentiality denotes that the dignity of interviewees should be respected. Therefore, none of the identities of the educators who participated in the study were disclosed. The schools that were selected were not identified by names but were referred to as school A, school B and school C. These will be explained in more detail in Chapter three.

1.5.5 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

It was the researcher’s responsibility to ensure that measures of trustworthiness are observed throughout this study. Simelane (1998:9) states that trustworthiness must be considered at all times. This includes truth value (using the strategy of credibility), consistency (using the strategy of dependability) and applicability (using the strategy of transferability) (Krefting, 1991:215, Poggenpoel, 1998:348-350, Hoberg, 1999:105). These issues will be explained in more detail in Chapter three.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF RESEARCH

Mpumalanga, one of the nine provinces in South Africa, consists of three Education and Culture regions, namely the Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala regions. The Nkangala region is further divided into districts namely the Middelburg 1, Middelburg 2, Witbank 1, Witbank 2 and the KwaMhlanga regions. All districts are further divided into education circuits.

According to statistics obtained in 2007 from the planning section of the Mpumalanga Department of Education (2007:1), there are 75 public senior secondary schools in the KwaMhlanga district. These senior secondary schools are distributed over nine education circuits, namely: Kwaggafontein East, Kwaggafontein West, KwaMhlanga South West, KwaMhlanga North East, Tweefontein North, Tweefontein South, Libangeni, Siyabuswa and Weltevrede.

The research was conducted in three senior secondary schools which constitute a part of the Siyabuswa circuit. A purposive selection of the three senior secondary schools was made based on their grade 12 results for the previous six years. One school which has obtained a 100% pass rate over the selected period was selected because the researcher felt that this school probably maintained good discipline and because effective teaching and learning was taking place. Two schools which have obtained less than a 20% pass rate over the past six years were selected because the researcher held the opinion that these schools have probably been the subject of poor discipline and because it appears as though effective teaching and learning have not taken place in these schools. Although the objective of the study was not to generalize, these schools were regarded to respectively represent schools with effective discipline, as well as schools with poor discipline and disciplinary problems.

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This investigation will hopefully provide a framework for the management of discipline in schools that recognizes both learners' and educators' needs. The school management will hopefully be provided with strategies so that in its implementation of the school disciplinary policy, it reflects the needs of learners, educators, parents, support agencies and the community. The management and maintenance of discipline in schools will involve all members of the school and wider educational community. The school management will focus on all aspects of the school environment.

The real essence of education is helping learners to exercise self-discipline and move towards a happy and fulfilled life and future. Educators will hopefully be provided with a framework to deal with parents in a professional and positive way in order to be able to develop partnership and alliance in promoting discipline in schools. Also, instead of stressing punishment and encouraging conformity, schools will recognize the individuality of learners and make the school and classroom community places where educators are happy to teach and learners are happy to learn.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In this section the concepts discipline, school, educator, learner, management, classroom management and corporal punishment will be explained briefly.

1.8.1 Discipline

The term “discipline” is derived from the Latin terms “disco” and “discipline”, which mean “to learn” and “instruction, knowledge and learning communicated to the disciples or learners” respectively (Van Rensburg, Landman, Bodenstein, 1994:361). Van Rensburg et al (1994:361) further contend that in the broader sense discipline applies not only to external discipline but also to personal or inner discipline prompted by spiritual acceptance of disciplined behaviour. It also denotes restraint by means of positive guidance, by indicating the correct way and by ensuring adherence to the correct way. In the opinion of Treffry, Summers, O’Neil, Hasset and Todd (1997:211) the concept discipline can be defined as a “practice of imposing strict rules of behaviour on the people” and also as an “ability to work in a controlled manner”. In this regard, Burden (1995:12) states that discipline involve the actions that the educators take to restore order.

In this study discipline will refer to what the educators do to assist the learners to behave acceptably in classroom situations. It will be regarded to be tied directly to misbehaviour because where there is no misbehaviour, no discipline is required. Discipline is intended to suppress and redirect learners’ misbehaviour. When educators teach this concept to learners they are educating them to behave in ways that are acceptable to the community

and the society at large.

1.8.2 School

According to the Employment of Educators Act (RSA, 1998), the concept “school” refers to an educational institution or such an institution at which education as well as training, including pre-primary education, is catered for and which is sustained, managed and controlled or subsidized by a provincial department. In terms of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:4), “school” means a public school or an independent school which enrolls learners in one or more grades between grade zero and grade twelve. The universities and technikons are not included under the concept. According to Waller (as cited by Sieber & Wilder, 1973:34) a school exists whenever educators and learners meet for the purpose of giving and receiving instruction.

1.8.3 Educator

According to the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996c:1), the concept “educator” refers to any person who educates, teaches or trains other persons in an institution or assists in providing education services, or education auxiliary or support services catered for by or in an education institution. According to the Department of Education (RSA, 1997:vi) an “educator” is a person whose task involves educating others at all levels of education, in any sort of education or training context, including formal and informal, for example, teacher, lecturer, parent and youth counselor. In this study the term educator will, amongst other things refer to a person who has been trained in teaching methodology and whose duty it is to facilitate the learning of learners.

1.8.4 Learner

According to the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:4), the term “learner” refers to any person receiving tuition or who is obliged to receive education. According to the Department of Education (RSA, 1997:vii) the term “learner” refers to all learners, ranging from early childhood education through to adult education. The term “pupils” or “students” at school and higher education levels are therefore superseded by the term “learners”. In this study the term “learner” will refer to a person at a secondary school who is being taught by the educators.

1.8.5 Management

Management in education is a specific type of work which comprises regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation in order to allow formative education to take place (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:55). According to Van Schalkwyk (1986:4) managing includes organizing, leading, motivating, planning, controlling and determining programmes, procedures and methods. According to Piek (1991:1) the term “management” is derived from the Latin-English word “manage” meaning to “control and direct a horse”. Smith and Laslett (1993:viii) define management as the skills that are applied by individuals in an organization, also in the presentation of lessons, in such a way that all the learners are actively involved in learning. Management takes place at all levels of an institution like a school. In this study management refers to the task of the school management team (i.e. principal, deputy principal and heads of departments) as well as that of school educators, who are also managers, as they have to manage learners and a classroom so that there can be discipline in the school.

1.8.6 Classroom management

McQueen (1992:6) contends that classroom management can be regarded as directing and orchestrating all the elements of a classroom. According to Kruger (1997:3) the term classroom management encompasses all the activities that are required to support and fulfill the main purpose of the teaching and learning situation. Good classroom

management entails that the educators have elicited the cooperation of the learners in minimizing misconduct and that they can intervene effectively when misconduct happens. Furthermore, in a well managed classroom the relevant academic activities are occurring more or less incessantly (Jones & Jones, 1998:18-19). The classroom management system as a whole is planned to maximize learner engagement in learning activities and not merely to minimize misconduct.

In this study classroom management will refer to actions and strategies educators use to establish order in their classroom situations. It will, in fact, be regarded as all the things educators must do to foster learner involvement and cooperation in classroom activities and to establish a productive environment. It is also a means by which educational goals can be attained in the most effective and efficient way.

1.8.7 Corporal punishment

The South African Pocket Oxford Dictionary (1994:202) defines the concept “corporal punishment” as physical punishment. According to the Collins South African New School Dictionary (1999:161) corporal punishment is the punishing of people by beating them. According to the Department of Education (RSA, 2000:6) corporal punishment refers to “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 the toilet, denying meals, drink, heat and shelter, pushing or pulling a child with force, forcing the child to exercise”. In this study the term corporal punishment will be considered as physical punishment as defined by the Department of Education. It refers to any form of punishment directed at the body (e.g. slapping, spanking, caning, hitting the learner with a ruler or any other object).

1.9 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter 1 is a general introduction. It provides an orientation to the research. It includes the background to the research problem, statement of the problem, aims of the research, research methodology and organization of the study. It also clarifies major concepts.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter provides a theoretical background to the research. It explores what literature exposes about educators' involvement in learners' education, with specific reference to the maintenance of discipline in schools.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three describes the research design and methodology and how data were collected and analyzed. Aspects such as sampling, triangulation, ethical considerations and measures to ensure trustworthiness are dealt with in detail.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four discusses the findings of the study, with particular focus on the perceptions which educators have on their role in school discipline.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter summarizes and concludes the research. It contains conclusions and recommendations on the way educators and learners can collaborate with school managers in managing discipline in schools in the Nkangala region of the Mpumalanga Province.

1.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the background to the problem was described, the research questions formulated, and the aims of the research stated. The research design and methodology were also explained, the field of study was demarcated and relevant concepts used in the research were clarified. Finally, an outline of the research was given.

The following chapter investigates what literature reveals about the role played by educators in the establishment and maintenance of discipline in schools.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INVOLVEMENT OF EDUCATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Various researchers hold the opinion that educators are responsible to maintain discipline within the school. According to Joubert and Prinsloo (1999:55), educators are responsible to maintain discipline at all times. Varma (1993:31) states that beyond their responsibility for teaching, educators are also responsible for the moral development of learners and to ensure that they become law-abiding citizens. This implies that, within the school community, educators are expected to respond in a controlling fashion to violations of the institutional rules of the school and forms of behaviour such as theft, bullying and vandalism that has a direct bearing on the moral domain. The Department of Education also demands that discipline be maintained in schools so that a culture of teaching and learning is realized. According to Section 8 (1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:8), discipline must be maintained in the school and classroom situations so that the education of learners flourish, without disruptive behaviour and offences. Educators are in fact expected to handle disruptive learners in their classes so that all learners can focus on their schoolwork. Butchart and McEwan (1998:177) support this view by stating that in a quality school, educators must learn how to handle a disruptive learner in a way that is not punitive, yet gets the situation under control and, at the same time, opens the learners' minds to work in class.

This chapter will examine the issue of discipline in schools and the rights and duties of educators in promoting discipline amongst learners. Amongst other things the sources of disciplinary problems will be dealt with. This chapter will serve as the theoretical framework for all other aspects of the research and will be considered in the recommendations on how school managers can involve educators in school discipline.

2.2 AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT DISCIPLINE

Raffini (1980:23) defines discipline 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. In the broader sense, discipline implies not only external discipline but a personal or inner discipline prompted by spiritual acceptance of disciplined behaviour (Van Rensburg, Kilian & Landman, 1994:361). It denotes restraint by means of positive guidance, by indicating the correct way and ensuring adherence to the correct way. According to Webster (1968:4) discipline denotes the development within individuals of the necessary personal 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-actualization and a responsible, joyful adulthood.

According to Rich (1982:171) and Savage (1991:7) disciplined people have orderly habits, are able to observe the rules of conduct and can exert self-control in learning duties. They show relevant, intellectual, worthwhile standards. Burgan and Rubel (1980:17) posit that children should be instilled with concern for the rights of others, with respect for peace and order and with an understanding that law enforcement officers are friends, not enemies. Too many children today are not being taught these values at home, so educators should make an effort to reach them with the message at school and in classroom situations. To maintain good discipline, educators should know and understand the characteristics of discipline.

2.2.1 Characteristics of discipline

A disciplined person is regarded as one who has orderly habits, is observing rules, regulations and authority so that (s)he can improve 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 perform it willingly. Based on this general analysis, the

characteristics of discipline are now described.

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

According to Webster (1968:4) discipline implies the development within individuals of the necessary personal controls to train themselves for adult life and develop their personalities. It is considered as serving a number of particular functions in the growth process of learners on their way towards responsible adulthood. It assists them to acquire characteristics of a positive nature such as self-control, self-discipline and persistence. It also helps in securing stability of the social order within which the learners may attain security as well as maturity. Kruger (1974:328) supports this view by stating that discipline is regarded as a means of teaching the learners self-control and self-direction, thus sharpening their appreciation of what is right and wrong. Webster (1968:5) 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. Webster (1968:5) asserts that wherever possible, learners must have the opportunity to self-limits and to choose from behavioural alternatives if they are to learn personal control.

Although the purpose of discipline is the development of self-controlled citizens, citizens who have never learned to behave themselves can never achieve this objective. Educators who fail to control learners can never teach self-control. Order in the classroom situations should not be rejected as an aim. It is an immediate objective, which must be attained and is an essential step on the way towards developing self-controlled citizens (Tauber, 1995:256). Thus, discipline includes a person's will to be independent. It finds its expression in relationships with fellow human beings and the self. It also includes components like understanding other's feelings and resistance to temptations. Discipline is important if learners are to behave in a socially acceptable manner.

2.2.1.2 Discipline is used to establish order

According to Raffini (1980:106) the purpose of discipline is to maintain a sense of order in the learning environment. Ferreira (1994:6) supports this view by stating that discipline makes learners aware that there is order in the world and that certain behaviours are controlled through rules and regulations. Varma (1993:34) 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 to be both analytical and practical about the selection of re-inforcers. Discipline 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 discipline, which includes 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 over time by assisting the learners to learn to control their own behaviour (Squelch, 1993:239). Learners learn best in an orderly and safe environment. A school will function effectively if it is disciplined. Discipline cannot be promoted if the school has no rules and regulations or a code of conduct that the learners must conform to. All the learners' school activities will be regulated by such rules and the behaviour of learners will be checked against them. The rules may assist the learners to develop self-control, self-direction and social responsibility.

2.2.1.3 Discipline is used to teach learners about a reasonable degree 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, adults in the true sense. Discipline leads to good order and also to correct, 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 (Hamacheck, 1975:440). In the opinion of Reeler (1983:10) 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 determine their view of freedom (Landman & Van der Merwe, 1990:15). Ngoepe (1997:32) is of the opinion that educators should act as the 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 act as 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 the learner will realize 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 will be successfully established and maintained in the classroom.

2.2.1.4 Discipline ensures fairness

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1999:510) the concept fairness means treating people equally, just or appropriately. Hosten et al (as cited by Oosthuizen, 1995:59) explain fairness as “the moral value that serves as a norm to ensure impartiality when dealing with competing interest of various subjects”. This denotes that the interests of both educators and learners must be protected. The learners are legal subjects and have legal rights that should be protected. Section 12(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (RSA, 1996c:8) provides that 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 a power struggle between educators and learners. Dreikus (as cited by Levin & Nalon, 1991:34) supports this view by stating that once an educator operates from a basis of coercive power, teaching effectiveness stops and educator-learner power struggles become commonplace. Such power struggles often fuels and increases 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. Murphy (1995:35) and Charles (1996:229) endorse these views by stating that educators should ensure that they involve their learners when they are drawing up the rules (and related consequences) for governing the learners' behaviour in classroom situations. They should ensure that learners understand the agreements made between educators and learners. Learners will consider the rules to be fair if the agreements were reached amicably. This is a democratic approach that will give the learners some ownership of the rules and commitment on their part to follow the rules willingly. A positive and harmonious rapport will thus result between educators and learners and a safe school environment will be created.

2.2.1.5 Discipline is used to protect learners

Oosthuizen (1995:59) 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. According to Stradley and Aspinall (1975:149) much misbehaviour is fueled 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 the 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 all 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 such become safe in the school environment.

Discipline and management are central to effective teaching and learning (Blandford, 1998:7-9). Blandford (1998:7) further states that educators are responsible for the impact they have, educationally, on the learners. Educators 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 learner's cultural and social differences should be supportive. According to Elliot, Ebbutt, Bridge, Gibson and Nias (1991:40) 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 school so that the school is manageable and operational. Success, which is the main aim of the school, will be attained because the environment of the school is conducive to teaching and learning. Learners' deviant behaviour, lack of interest and attention, disrespect for authority and antisocial behaviour cause management problems. These have to be curbed so that the school can be viewed as safe and disciplined. Discipline in a school is a token of learner safety and effectiveness. Thus, discipline and safety can be regarded as the primary factors for establishing quality instructional effectiveness of educators and for 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 and violence. Educators and learners should have one common objective, namely good performance and attainment.

According to Elliot et al (1991:52-53), discipline is linked with cleanliness, freedom and

flexibility in dress, personal and social happiness of the learners in a school. This implies that learners have to attend a school where they feel free and happy; a safe and orderly school, providing an environment where learners can learn without disruption and disturbances. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:35) posit that a safe and orderly school is important before learning can take place. Hoberg (1994:12) is of the opinion that effective educators are able to create a classroom climate that is conducive to learning and characterized by mutual trust and respect. McLemore (1994:1) 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 environments that will prevent disciplinary problems from arising. Carrasquillo and London (1993:143) posit that a successful school has a safe and orderly environment displayed by the learners abiding by the rules already drawn up, regular attendance, punctuality at school, respect for educators and academic duty, completion of school work, relevant dress for school and acceptable behaviour in and out of the school or classroom situation. Elliot et al (1991:43) state that learners show good behaviour when they value education, and when the institution which they attend has a concern for the safety and well-being of its learners. Learners are delighted because they learn both basic and social skills, which promote their discipline as well as safety in schools. Such social skills are, for example: abilities to assess and to use constructively the difference of opinion and of personality shown by different groups, an ability to differ from the opinions of another person without disturbing personal relationships, an ability to arrive at consensus on a controversial matter and the ability to play the role either of leader or follower (Venkateswaran, 1993:43).

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

Having defined discipline and discussed its characteristics, the next section will identify

disciplinary problems commonly experienced by educators in schools and which contribute to an unsafe school environment.

2.3 SOURCES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

There are many reasons for a lack of discipline in schools. According to Varma (1993:31) disciplinary problems arise when learners, apparently deliberately, set about frustrating educators from attaining the task for which they have been employed. They do this by being inattentive, covertly or overtly disruptive, disobedient, rude and threatening to push the situation out of the educator's control. Before educators assume the challenge to maintain discipline in schools and in the classroom situation it is imperative for them to consider the factors that contribute to the misbehaviour of learners. This will assist educators to be able to take proactive steps to curb disciplinary problems. Lemmer (1998:46) states that when one attempts to face the challenges of discipline maintenance on the school premises, one should look at what is best and practicable for learners. Educators have to take into account the factors that might be the sources of misbehaviour amongst learners. The following are some of the sources as revealed by researchers.

2.3.1 Lack of parental involvement

According to Serfontein (as cited by Bissety (2000:5) and Oppelt (2000:16) in many schools in South Africa, ill-discipline is rife and parental involvement is lacking. According to Van Wyk (2001:198) and Ramsey (1994:16) many parents are reluctant to co-operate with the educators in disciplining their children. Many seem to transfer their obligations to the schools, with the result that the schools have to handle all the disciplinary problems. The children will feel more secure and perform and behave better if their parents are involved in school activities. Dowling and Osbourne (1985:164) support this view by stating that if children with behavioural problems realize that their parents and educators are collaborating to manage difficulties, they experience more consistency and feel more contained. In the opinion of Blandford (1998:32) an active relationship between parents and educators has great benefits. Parents can have a great

impact on their children's behaviour by ensuring that they arrive at school on time, behave correctly, wear relevant clothing, are in possession of required books and equipment and complete tasks on time. For educators to maintain discipline in schools they need support from parents to promote discipline. Parents also have to take responsibility for their children's behaviour.

2.3.2 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms have a huge effect upon the behaviour and achievement of learners. According to Savage (1999:74) the density of the individuals in space is an important factor of the physical environment which influences behaviour. Savage (1999:74–75) further posits that it is too difficult to teach and manage the classroom when it is overcrowded. In fact, overcrowded classrooms are regarded as one of the factors that hamper the creation of a favourable classroom environment in which educators can teach successfully (Kruger, 1997:65).

According to Burden (1995:223) a number of researchers have indicated that a favourable classroom climate is related to learner achievement. It was found that the organizational patterns which result in the learners feeling not only more capable, but also included and secured, seem to result in higher achievement. To develop a cooperative, responsible classroom, educators can take actions that promote the learner's self-esteem, promote positive interactions and develop non-threatening, comfortable environments.

2.3.3 Lack of discipline management strategies among educators

According to Blandford (1998:9) the management of discipline is central to effective teaching and learning. If educators are unable to manage classes, they will be unable to teach. Van Wyk (2001:198) posits that many educators in South Africa have limited knowledge of disciplinary strategies and as such most disciplinary measures are reactive, punitive, humiliating and punishing instead of being corrective and nurturing. Morrell (2001:292) corroborates and states that the use of corporal punishment in South Africa

was banned in 1996, but many educators are using corporal punishment as a strategy to discipline learners.

Guidelines on alternatives to corporal punishment as well as guidelines for the development of a code of conduct were introduced by the National Department of Education in 2000 (RSA, 2000:9). Despite the fact that the above-mentioned documents were introduced, educators are facing a high rate of learner disciplinary problems. Van Wyk (2001:200) is of the opinion that educators need to be taught disciplinary strategies proactively and constructively as an alternative to punitive measures like corporal punishment. Ramsey (1994:6) recommends that innovative approaches should be used to manage learner discipline.

In a study conducted by Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:40) it was suggested that in-service training programmes should devote modules to discipline management because educators very often get into classroom situations lacking relevant strategies to handle behavioural problems. Blandford (1998:60) points out that educators should have the necessary knowledge and understanding of managing learner behaviour before they enter the profession. Blandford (1998:60) further states that when educators require expert support and service, this should be provided by a highly qualified and effective team of professional agencies. Thus, educators need to be trained so that they can know what is available to help them to manage their classrooms effectively and efficiently.

2.3.4 Poor relationship between educators and learners

In the classroom situation there must be a positive rapport between educators and learners so that effective teaching and learning can take place. According to Kruger and Steinman (2003:15) a positive school climate is one in which learners are assisted along a number of developmental pathways. Educator-learner relationships should be characterized by caring and a positive school climate should manifest listening, critical questioning, openness and a feeling of being cared for. In such a caring environment, learners will be more willing to take risks. If there is a positive rapport between educators and learners,

learners will achieve good results in their studies and they will also behave correctly. A positive school climate will have the following impact on the teaching and learning situation and the achievement of learners: a reduction of absenteeism and drop-out rates because learners want to be at school, the promotion of motivation and learners' will to learn (Kruger and Steinman, 2003:15-16). Kruger and Steinman (2003:15-16) further state that a positive school climate will also have the following impact on the teaching and learning situation and the achievement of learners: increased willingness on the part of educators to take risks, to step outside the defined boundaries, and to make the classroom more exciting and challenging for learners as well as the encouragement of learners to continue with confidence in their efforts even if they failed to succeed the first time.

A number of researchers have indicated that academic achievement and learners' behaviour are influenced by the quality of the educator-learner relationship (Burden, 1995:228, Cangelosi, 1997:152, Kruger, 1997:58). These researchers posit that if educators are treating their learners correctly, learners are likely to co-operate with them, behave correctly and perform successfully in their studies. Cangelosi (1997:152) supports this view by stating that learners are likely to co-operate with educators if they consistently communicate in an assertive manner rather than either a hostile or passive manner. Educators should be patient, polite and civilized. They must not shout at learners because educators who shout across the classroom to offend learners may create a poor educator-learner relationship.

School or classroom disturbances may be brought about by unsound relationships between educators and learners (Lemmer, 1998:39). Learners may deliberately frustrate educators from achieving the tasks for which they were employed. Smith and Laslett (1993:9) state that "a persistent frown of intimidating scowl is likely to convey anxiety as much as displeasure and an angry shout can awkwardly modulate into a shriek more suggestive of hysteria than confident control". Sometimes a long-term rivalry from the community may spill into the school or classroom where the learners may wish to make a school a place of rebellion and revenge against educators.

2.3.5 Educators as poor role models

For educators to manage their classes effectively and for them to exercise discipline over learners, they must themselves be disciplined. Their examples as disciplinarians are the most potent force in the character formation of learners. Hunter (1990:121) as well as Jones and Jones (1990:65) state that learners learn a great deal by watching adults. Badenhorst and Scheepers (1995:35) hold the opinion that a role model generally lives in such a manner that his or her way is worthy of imitation in both lifestyles 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 these educators taught that were cherished, but their whole mode of living. It was worthy of following and often used as the foundation on which to structure their own lives. In contrast, educators who are behaving wrongly have a negative impact upon managing discipline in schools (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:40).

In South Africa there is a great concern at the moment at 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 (Summers, 2002:6). Among the factors that are causing problems in the school is the erosion of moral standards. According to Bisetty (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. Hlatshwayo (2005:5) provides examples of these views by stating that a Limpopo educator has been arrested for allegedly sodomizing a 15 year old learner and then “buying the boy’s silence” by giving him the answers to an Afrikaans examination paper. Another educator, from Bolobedu South High, was allegedly caught having sex with a young female learner in the school’s science laboratory. In a third incident, a Jopi Village primary school educator was arrested after allegedly raping a 15-year old learner in his class. In yet another incident of this type a Limpopo principal was accused of sexual harassment and accepting bribes to renew the contracts of temporary educators (Hlatshwayo, 2006:15).

The Daily Sun of 5 December 2005 noted that the National Minister of Education, Mrs Naledi Pandour, is deeply worried about the sexual abuse that is taking place in schools. She said “in instances where the abuse had been brought to the department’s attention, stern measures have been taken”. Pandour cautioned that educators should do more to ensure that learners do not only learn how to read and write but also learn about values and the need to treat others with respect and dignity (Daily Sun, 2005:4). According to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12) in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga there are also a number of educators whose professional conduct is a cause for concern. Examples of deviant behaviour that were reported in these particular schools included: late coming and early departure, long absence from school with or without permission, dodging classes, lack of commitment to their work and insubordination.

2.3.6 Unjustified school rules

According to Rich (1982:169) school rules may be breached when learners feel that they are unjustified. This will undoubtedly happen if learners were not allowed to take part in the formulation of those rules. It is therefore necessary that learners must understand why the rules have been formulated and why they should comply with them. Murphy (1995:33), Charles (1996:229) and Msomi (1999:12) support this view by stating that educators should ensure that they involve their learners when they are formulating school rules. Learners will consider rules to be fair if they are allowed to partake when the rules are drawn up. It is important that every school should have an effective discipline policy since a school may become dysfunctional if such a policy does not exist. According to Blandford (1998:39), a school without an effective discipline policy that encompasses strategies and mechanisms that are available to all the members of the school community, cannot function as a centre for teaching and learning. The process of developing and implementing a discipline policy involves collaborative decision-making. Therefore all the members of the school community should have the opportunity to partake in the decision making.

The Sunday Times of 12 January 1992 noted that Grade 12 learners in black townships in South Africa, were continuously failing because of the conspicuous lack of discipline among them. It is important that discipline should be maintained at all times in schools and that each and every school must have a code of conduct. Educators should also avoid making irrelevant rules because this will create serious disciplinary problems in the school and classroom. McQueen (1992:56) supports this view and states that irrelevant rules are useless and disastrous because poorly chosen rules will create serious management and disciplinary problems in the classroom situation. According to Burden (1995:111) a rule that has several conditions and qualifiers in its wording may be confusing. It is therefore better to keep the wording simple and short so that the meaning is clear and recognizable. Consequently, for learners not to breach the school rules, they must know the rules as well as the meaning of the rules (McPhillimy, 1996:40).

2.3.7 An authoritarian leadership style

In the opinion of Beck (1990:150) educator-learner relationships in the school situation should be warm and cordial. In a similar vein, Pretorius (as cited by Louw, 1993:107) states that a warm democratic learner-rearing style in the classroom situation is more important in terms of influencing the learners than an autocratic or permissive attitude. According to McKay and Romm (1995:113–114) an authoritarian style of leadership may cause learners to burst into violence because they do not have a say in what concerns their welfare and well-being at school. Such a style becomes offensive and dangerous to their rights and to the welfare of the school. In this regard Pretorius (as cited by Louw, 1993:107) posits that the educators should avoid autocratic communication, excessive control, domination and an unpedagogic and compulsive exercising of power that undermine the learners' feelings of freedom and security.

In the school, and particularly in the classroom situations, educators are expected to communicate effectively with their learners so that behavioural problems can be prevented. Froyen and Evertson (1999:83) endorse this by stating that effective communication in the school prevents problems from occurring. When educators are

unable to communicate effectively with their learners, the learners will ignore their instructions and they will ultimately misbehave in their classes. De Kock (as cited by Louw,1993:71) states that education demands that educators confidently disclose themselves through open communication styles. If confidence or assertiveness is lacking, educators will protect themselves by using certain communication styles that will result in learners ignoring the instructions or behaving in a provocative or defiant way. According to De Kock (as cited by Louw, 1993:71) serious conflicts may arise if educators simply try to handle the situation autocratically. In such situations learners are often accused of rudeness, when in reality, the problem is the educator's inability to communicate effectively. Relevant discipline techniques are important because confronting misbehaviour without a plan will yield unsatisfactory results. Having a well thought-out discipline plan will produce both the desired results and a feeling of confidence.

2.3.8 Inefficient presentation of lessons

According to Bennett (1992:6) a boring, lifeless or irrelevant lesson or educator might cause learners to be frustrated and may lead to them acting disruptively during class. Naidoo and Potterton (1994:7) add to this view by stating that in a classroom situation, where the educator is doing all the talking and not allowing learners to explore and discover themselves, learners are forced into a passive listening role. Out of boredom, some learners will then look for ways to entertain themselves at the expense of the educator. This may be a way for learners to assert themselves and challenge the school system because the lessons are boring and not challenging. Educators should therefore ensure that they are able to attain the necessary skills to perform their duties successfully. Kruger (1996:1) also indicates that, because educators are accountable for learner competency, the educational process must involve goal-setting, selection of objectives for individual learners and groups of learners, pre- and post-testing and evaluations of educators' effectiveness. According to Kruger (1996:1) an educator who lacks these skills will experience enormous frustration on the job.

2.3.9 Lack of motivation of learners

The word “motivation” is derived from the Latin word “movere”, meaning to move (McLean, 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 covering the marshalling of feelings of enthusiasm, confidence and persistence. According to the South African Oxford School Dictionary (1998:285) 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 intensity task, for example, maintaining a level of enthusiasm (McLean, 2003:7). According to Burden (1995:146) most educators use the concept motivation to describe those processes which can arouse and initiate behaviour, give direction and purpose to behaviour, proceed to allow the behaviour to persist, and lead to choosing or preferring a specific behaviour. Educators are therefore interested in a particular sort of learner motivation, which is to motivate learners to learn. Educators should ensure that learners are motivated to learn and behave appropriately because unmotivated learners will be demoralized and not behave appropriately. Educators should adopt a behaviouristic model whereby desirable behaviour is reinforced while undesirable behaviour is ignored. Some form of reward like merit awards/ slips or some form of approval usually reinforces good behaviour.

Du Preez (1998:70) posits that some learners may have a negative attitude towards learning and doing school work in general. Their behaviour is usually evident in their laziness, indifference, persistent carelessness, cheating, restlessness or untidiness. Educators should ensure that learners are motivated to learn and behave appropriately because unmotivated learners will be demoralized and not behave appropriately.

2.4 DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF EDUCATORS WITH REGARD TO DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

In the opinion of Carrasquillo and London (1993:142) the idea of parents and educators as partners in children's' education and care is not new and it is now generally accepted that schools and parents cannot work in isolation without having a detrimental impact upon the children. From personal observation and experience as a secondary school principal, the researcher knows that some educators seem to be reluctant to co-operate with the school managers in disciplining learners. They seem to have shirked their responsibilities and expect the school managers to handle all disciplinary problems affecting the learners. However, educators always have an obligation to maintain discipline in their schools. Joubert and Prinsloo (1999:89) support this view when they state that it is the responsibility of educators to maintain discipline at all times.

2.4.1 The educator and discipline

Discipline is fundamental to education as learners' moral becoming demand discipline (Reeler, 1985:44). Blandford (1998:93) posits that if learners are to develop academically, they also need to develop socially. Learners need self-esteem and self-confidence in order to reach their potential as members of the school community. Discipline implies an act of assistance by educators. Educators should also ensure that they control their learners, so that learning can take place. In this regard Raffini (as cited by Reeler, 1983:111) states that in the classroom climate educators should maintain order so that learners can be educated. When educators are controlling their learners they will be exercising their authority over the learners. Without authority effective control is impossible (Badenhorst, Calitz, Van Schalkwyk and Van Wyk, 1987:52)

Learners should know that good behaviour is expected of them whether they like it or not. This will help them to learn that certain types of behaviour are permitted in one situation but not in another. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:62) one of the requirements for children is that they learn to behave at home, in the

school situation and in the community. They state that whether these children like it or not, they have to adhere to the family's or school's code of conduct which should always be spelled out clearly, consistently and be upheld in a fair manner.

Enforcing discipline and providing for children's safety should be the shared responsibilities of parents and educators.

2.4.2 Duties of educators in school discipline

All educators are responsible, as professionals, for managing discipline in schools. Self-esteem and self-confidence are central to the management of discipline. Educators need to have a sense of self-worth in order to recognize and meet learner needs (Blanford, 1998:7). The duties of educators in school discipline will be discussed in the following sections.

2.4.2.1 Educators have a duty to maintain discipline

It is important that discipline is maintained in the school for the welfare of the learners and educators and for the success of the educational process. It is also the duty of educators to restore a culture of teaching and learning in schools, where applicable. Disintegrated discipline cause difficulty in the attainment of the school's objectives, vision and mission. According to Section 8(1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:8) discipline must be maintained in the classroom situation so that the education of the learners flourishes without any disruptive behaviour. Section 7(5) of the Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Guidelines), (RSA, 1996b: 10) endorses this and states that educators have a responsibility to maintain discipline and they cannot do this alone. Importantly, they need parents to support the promotion of discipline and to take responsibility for their children's behaviour (RSA, 1996b:9, Friedman, 1998:9). Parental support will contribute to the safety of learners and that is what parents desire for their children.

2.4.2.2 Educators have a duty to initiate and enforce individual classroom rules consistently

For discipline to be maintained in the classroom situation educators should ensure that they establish and maintain certain classroom rules. These will assist them to do their professional work effectively and manage their classes properly. Fontana (1994:122) corroborates and states that it does not matter whether one is dealing with young or more mature learners, straight and forward rules of classroom management are of great importance if good classroom control is to be maintained. Those rules will help learners to get a clear understanding of what is expected of them as well as allow them to understand the consequences of their behaviour that could be either desirable or undesirable. When classroom rules are drawn up, the learners should be involved in the process. This is of utmost importance because if they are involved in the formulation of the rules they will realize that they are partners in the management of classroom situations and not the subjects that are to be managed. Lehman (1992:119) supports this view by stating that many authorities suggest that learners should be allowed to take part in the formulation of classroom rules. In doing so, the educators show confidence in the learners' abilities to cooperate and it also increases the likelihood that learners will adhere to the rules because they assisted in the formulation of them. Msomi (1999:12) also supports this view by stating that learners should have a say in school affairs including the disciplinary matters of the school.

Educators should strive not to make irrelevant rules because these will create serious management and disciplinary problems in the classroom situation. McQueen (1992:56) is of the opinion that inappropriate rules are useless and perhaps disastrous because poorly chosen rules create serious management and disciplinary problems. According to Lehman (1992:19) the rules should be written so that the educators and learners know when the rules have been breached. In this regard Burden (1995:111) posits that the rules can be written in broad, adequate language that encompasses the related behaviour. Classroom rules must be clearly displayed on the notice board (Kruger & Van Schalkwyk, 1993:64).

According to Burden (1995:110) rules should focus on desired conduct. Learners will respond better when the rules are stated in a way that expresses the desired behaviour. Educators should also try to state rules in a positive fashion. Classroom rules should be positive statements of how the learners will behave rather than how they should not behave (Zabel & Zabel, 1996:169).

2.4.2.3 Educators have a duty to equip each learner with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required for successful living

Learners are expected to move into the world skilled and fully prepared for meeting the demands of life. Parents and educators have a duty to prepare them to perform excellently in the community as well as in the world of work. They must have an impact upon the learners' behaviour by teaching them about the decisions and choices the learners have to make each day and how such decisions and choices influence their lives both in school and thereafter. For example, a disciplinary measure against a learner who comes to school late will assist to encourage him/her to be on time and be more responsible and accountable in future (Lemmer, 1998:47). Discipline challenges the learners to do introspection about their goals and purpose in life. Discipline should stress success and not failure. It should also assist learners to develop their individual abilities in order to meet the challenges of life safely and with confidence. If this has occurred the learners would have gained a sense of security and meaning in life through discipline learnt at school.

2.4.2.4 Educators have a duty to display good work ethics

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1999:490) the concept "ethics" refers to the moral principles governing or influencing the branch of knowledge concerned with moral principles. In this study the concept "ethics" refer to educators' standards and values, i.e. the basic principles they live by. Educators' concept of what is right or moral and what is not, affect their conduct at work, at home and in the community. Their ethics determine

how they behave in different situations. It helps them to decide what is right and wrong. To act ethically is to choose what is right. People who stick to their personal standards have integrity. If they choose to do what they know is wrong, they are behaving in an unethical way. They must be willing to accept the responsibility for their choices. This is true at work and in other aspects of their lives (Smith, 1992:29; Venkateswaran, 1993:164).

In light of the preceding information it can be posited that educators are expected to act ethically in their work place. However, some educators appear to be acting in an unethical way. Van Wyk (2001:198) states that an investigation exploring the perceptions and practices of discipline in black urban schools found that the conduct of certain educators was unprofessional. Examples of educators' misconduct included: being unprepared for lessons, neglecting their teaching tasks, not coming to class, neglecting the learners while furthering their own studies and being absent without reason. According to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12) deviant behaviour of educators such as dodging classes, lack of commitment to their work, late coming and early departure, long absence from school with or without permission and insubordination were reported in a large number of schools. Educators should not regard their work as trivial or insignificant which can conveniently be passed on to others. (Venkateswaran, 1993: 164). The work must be done with meticulous care as if it were a religious act. Venkateswaran (1993:165) further states that an educator would do well to complete his/her preliminary preparation. Attempts should be made to ensure that all work done is neat and clean, systematic and on time.

Educators are expected to set an example of consistent ethical, just, kind and acceptable behaviour if they want learners to become well behaved and disciplined (Mlamleli, Mabelane, Napo, Free & Sibiyi, 2000:4). If educators are ill-disciplined learners will copy them and also be ill-disciplined. Jones and Jones (1990:65) concur and state that most of learners' behaviour is developed by emulating the behaviour of those adults who play important roles in their lives. Learners should therefore be assisted to learn, distinguish and make their own specific values and norms about true and false, good and

bad, right and wrong, proper and improper, worthy and unworthy (Munnik, 1993:135).

2.4.2.5 Educators have a duty to handle disruptive learners attending their classes

According to Blandford (1998:61) the problem of ill-discipline in schools can be caused by the educators' lack of training. Rogers (as cited by Blandford (1998:61) found that a large degree of educators' stress is caused by learners: resistance to educators' direction, argumentativeness or procrastination, defiance and disregard of the educator's role as well as frequent lower-level behaviour like shouting and talking. Because educators are accountable for the success of learners' conduct and the results of teaching and learning activities, they must be trained to do their work effectively. Kruger (1997:5-6) supports this view and states that discipline has to receive greater attention in the new educational system. Some present-day learners have little experience of a learning culture. Educators have to help learners to obtain the relevant skills that will help them understand the importance of learning.

It is important and necessary that educators should be empowered for implementing authority and discipline so as to be able to manage their classes effectively. They should therefore be empowered to work productively in the classrooms where conditions are not always optimal. Fennimore (1994:223) is of the opinion that school restructuring at any level needs sensitivity to the feelings of educators and willingness to empower their personal and professional vision of what it will take to improve their schools. If educators are not empowered for implementing authority and discipline in order to manage their classes effectively, they will become discouraged and feel that they are entirely powerless with respect to control over the educational results of their learners. According to Carter (1997:49) losing the capacity to control the terms of work causes one to disassociate oneself from the products of the work. Carter (1997:49) further states that this disassociation influences the performance of educators. Rosenholtz (as cited by Carter, 1997:50) asserts that uncertainty causes many to lower their professional aspirations, become less involved with the learners, absent themselves more frequently and defect more often from the workforce.

2.4.3 Rights of educators in school discipline

Just as educators have duties to perform in school discipline, they also have the right to see that learners are disciplined and safe in the school situation. They have the right to have parental backing (RSA, 1996b:9, Friedman, 1998:9). They have the right to enjoy the same level of respect accorded to the members of the class individually and collectively, the right to teach with minimal interruptions and the right to expect and receive the attention of learners attending their classes (Freiberg & Driscoll, 1992:24). The above-mentioned rights of educators will be discussed in the following sections.

2.4.3.1 Educators have a right to parental backing when disciplining learners in schools

To be able to maintain order in schools, educators need the support and partnership of the parents. Educators cannot successfully correct learners' behaviour alone. Parents and the communities also have a duty to support the educators in disciplining learners (Moloko, 2000:3; Wolfendale, 1989:63; Mabelane, 2000:2). Stacey (1991:17) and Katz (n.d:17) corroborate and state that when the learners with behavioural problems see that their parents and educators are working together to manage difficulties, they experience more consistency and feel more contained. The learners will feel secure, perform and behave better. Other learners will also not be affected by the misbehaviour or ill-discipline of one learner. The parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their children behave well at schools.

2.4.3.2 Educators have a right to enjoy the same level of respect accorded to the members of the class individually and collectively

According to Lemmer (1998:39) lack of discipline and safety in schools has been one of the challenges facing South African education during the past number of years. The problem seems to have been inherited from the 1976 uprisings when the South African youth began to partake actively in the liberation struggle against apartheid and the then dehumanizing education system. The youth used violent means to effect educational change. Because of their involvement in the liberation struggle, the youth developed pride and arrogance towards parents and educators. Naidoo (1990:128) states that as a result of the above-mentioned factors, discipline crumbled and the relationship between educators and learners collapsed. Consequently, learners lost a culture of respect and trust towards educators. Such youth behaviour caused school effectiveness and efficiency to break down in many schools and the culture of teaching and learning deteriorated and collapsed. According to Naidoo (1990:148) politics in schools have produced demotivated and ill-disciplined youth.

In the classroom situation respect and a high standard of behaviour are expected from all learners. They must be encouraged to adopt a caring attitude towards one another and towards educators. They should also be encouraged to treat all the adults in the school and community courteously. However, according to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12) the learners have lost a culture of respect and trust towards educators. The Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12) states that this is reflected in unacceptable conduct such as bullying and arguing with educators as well as displaying disrespectful behaviour. In a report in the Sowetan, Ngema (2005:12) states that an 11-year-old schoolboy who enrolled at Merry Hill School in Chatsworth shot an educator when the educator was complaining about his lack of interest in his school work. Currently, it is also regularly reported over the radio and television that learners of primary and secondary schools are ill-disciplined, disrespectful towards educators, irresponsible and they are no longer prepared to adhere to school rules and codes of conduct.

If educators want to be respected by learners, they should also respect themselves. They should respect the learners as human beings (Tauber, 1995:259, McQueen, 1992:113).

2.4.3.3 Educators have a right to teach with interruptions held to an absolute minimum regardless of the cause or source

An orderly and disciplined classroom environment is essential if teaching and learning are to occur. Any disruption will be stress-inducing for educators and learners alike. The daily demands on educators are potential sources of stress (Blandford, 1998:61). Blandford (1998:74) further states that the school environment needs careful planning and nurturing. Poor working conditions contribute to poor behaviour and both these situations cause stress. The classroom situation must be a safe place in which the learners can learn, work, play and show respect for others, an environment in which the educators can teach without fear and disruptions. Freiberg and Driscoll (1992:24) support this view by stating that the learning activity flourishes in a climate of order. Asied-Akrofi (as cited by Rajkaran, 1992:12) states that in a suitable climate the learners not only work well but also enjoy the work and so benefit from what they are doing. Such a conducive classroom climate does not exist when disruption is high and the educators spend too much of their time and effort in attending to problems. According to Maag (1999:257) a disorganized classroom environment is one of the major factors giving rise to learner disruptions. Conversely, a well-organized classroom environment can exert a powerful influence on the learner's behaviour and lead to high levels of academic engagement. Academic engagement, in turn, is an antecedent of proper learner behaviour.

Educators have a right to teach with disruptions held to an absolute minimum. They should be capable to deal with disruptive behaviour of learners effectively. Blandford (1998:61) is of the opinion that an educator's capacity to address the challenges of disruptive behaviour will depend on his or her self-esteem, training, knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities. The level of support available from peers and other agencies will lessen stress and improve an educator's ability to overcome the problem.

Senior managers have a central role in the management of discipline and the management of stress. Blanford (1998:70) further posits that the senior management team, in consultation with educators, should create a positive environment conducive to good practice. Display boards and reception areas should reflect the quality of work and variety of accomplishments within the school. All open areas and classrooms should be a celebration of success. A positive environment that is clean and healthy will contribute to a positive atmosphere throughout the school.

2.4.3.4 Educators have a right to expect and receive the attention of learners attending their classes

A disruptive class or learner will create stress for educators, school managers and other learners. Events such as talking out of turn and general inattentiveness can create just as much stress in an educator's life as isolated incidents of violence and verbal abuse. A disruptive learner is a reality that needs to be recognized by educators within the context of teaching and learning. If an educator's energy in the classroom is focused on a learner's or group of learners' ill-discipline, effective teaching and learning will not occur. Thus, learners whose behaviour is continually disruptive need to be managed properly (Blanford, 1998:60-61). When a learner is displaying deviant behaviour in the classroom situation, action needs to be taken to stop that behaviour because allowing it to continue would interfere with the educators' ability to teach, with the opportunities to learn and with the learners' long-term functioning in the educators' classes. According to Waterhouse (1990:97) when there is an openly defiant learner in the class, that learner should be removed from the classroom situation. After that the educator will then have a chance to deal with the problem privately and more calmly.

Hoppenstedt (1991:36) states that it is important to remove the learner from the classroom situation because the longer (s)he remains in the classroom, the more heated the situation will become and the more likely it is that a physical confrontation will take place between the educator and the learner. If the learner refuses to leave the class, the educator should immediately send another learner to the school principal's office to get

assistance. If the misbehaving learner is defying the educator's instructions, instead of shouting at that learner the educator should be calm, patient and not lose his or her temper. According to Hoppenstedt (1991:36) the educator must remain cool and collected. (S)he must react to the situation in a mature, adult manner. According to Dean (1995:125), learners who continue to pose problems in the school must be suspended. There are three types of exclusions namely: fixed term, indefinite and permanent. A learner who is excluded for more than three days must be reported to the governors. In case of permanent exclusion, the parents can launch a formal appeal to the governors who must hold a formal meeting to hear such an appeal (RSA, 1996a:8).

Class members should be encouraged to offer good suggestions about teaching methods that would involve learners in the learning process (Smith, 1984:13). Learners should also be held responsible for the content of the lesson so that they can work hard and avoid deviant behaviour. Charles (1996:51) states that when the learners see that the educators intend to hold them responsible for the content of the lesson, they pay better attention and involve themselves in the activities and find few reasons to misbehave.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this section the importance of discipline in a school has been discussed. Discipline and safety are related to schools' success and they cannot be separated. A school's positive climate and success are derived from the good behaviour of the learners. The educators in a disciplined school are free and happy to teach without being preoccupied with stress management caused by ill-disciplined learners.

The disciplinary problems that are common and often contributing to unsafe schools and their sources were identified. These factors should to be identified in practice and discussed so that proactive steps by educators are taken to promote discipline in schools. The rights and duties of educators and their contribution in maintaining discipline were also mentioned. Educators should support school principals by ensuring that the learners observe the school rules and regulations and be held responsible for any misbehaviour.

There should be no doubt about the important role that the parent-educator relationship plays in the maintenance of discipline in schools. Educators cannot work single handedly in eliminating and overcoming ill-disciplined behaviour in a school. It takes an effort from all, including the school, parents and learners, to reduce ill-disciplined behaviour.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two constitutes the theoretical framework for the research on the role of educators in the management of discipline. In this chapter the researcher will describe the research aims, the research design and methods applicable to this investigation.

3.2 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

A researcher has to clearly indicate what (s)he intends achieving with a research project. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (cf section 1.4), the aims of this study are:

- (i) to determine what the experiences of educators from three selected schools regarding learner discipline in the schools and classroom environment are,
- (ii) to analyze and discuss the rights and duties of educators with regard to discipline in schools,
- (iii) to examine the perceptions of educators with regard to a disciplined school environment,
- (iv) to provide guidelines and recommendations pertaining to the effective involvement of educators in school discipline.

A detailed discussion of the research design and methodology that were used in this study is presented in the following section.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Research design

According to Fouche and De Vos (1998:123-124), a research design is a detailed plan of how a research project will be undertaken. It provides the basis according to which the data are to be collected to investigate the research question. In the opinion of Hopkins (1976:237) the collection and analysis technique that best suits the problem and is expected to provide the most reliable and valid data should be employed. The researcher should select the research approach after considering the aim of the research, the nature of the research question and the resources (informative subjects) available to him or her (Schurink, 1998b:253). In this study the researcher used a qualitative research design, because he wanted to obtain insights into the perceptions and views of educators with regard to a safe school environment, characterized by sound discipline amongst the learners. The participants were directly involved in the educational context and were able to provide valid information which the researcher was able to use for the final suggestions and recommendations on the role educators should play in the establishment and maintenance of discipline amongst learners at schools.

According to Rubin and Babbie (as cited by De Vos, 1998a: 46) the researcher should commence with examining the relevant literature, filing his or her knowledge of the subject, and learning what others say about it, when (s)he intends compiling a research design.

3.3.1.1 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is one of the approaches that researchers use when they want to expose information and knowledge and analyze data about the nature of reality or the world. According to Kvale (1996:31) the qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life-world of the participants. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say.

According to Mouton and Marais (1996:205) a qualitative approach requires that the researcher interprets the real world from the perspective of the participants in his or her investigation. Mason (1997:4) supports this view by stating that qualitative research is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood or produced. This is a naturalistic or interpretative enquiry undertaken within the habitat of the subjects so that meanings and intentions that underlie human actions are understood and interpreted in relation to their context (Schurink, 1998a:240).

According to Hittleman (1997:43) the issue of context is at the core of qualitative research. The researcher collects the data within the natural setting of the informants. He is concerned with understanding people's experiences in context. The natural setting is where the researcher is likely to reveal what is known about the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of those studied. In this study the context was a number of senior secondary schools and the informative participants were the educators employed at these secondary schools. The researcher was the main data collecting instrument (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996:478). He engaged in different types of interviews with carefully selected subjects, whom he believed would provide "rich, contextual and detailed data" (Mason, 1997:4), based on their experiences of and opinions related to the phenomenon being studied. The setting and the people to be studied was anticipated, planned and carefully selected. Educators of secondary schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga were interviewed. Sampling was purposive.

According to Hittleman (1997:42) the main purpose of qualitative research is to describe, interpret, verify and assess. In this study the researcher collected the data in an attempt to understand the subjects' experiences and insights about the phenomenon, that is, the involvement of educators in school discipline. He described topics, themes and categories that emanated from words and meanings that form the data and then reported the findings in a descriptive way. This will be discussed to some extent in Chapter four.

This research is also interpretative in nature. According to Hittleman (1997:43) the term interpretative analysis denotes that from the insights given, the researcher develops new

concepts or elaborates on existing ones. It can also be utilized to develop new theories. Here, the insights provided were used to formulate a number of guidelines and recommendations on how educators can establish and maintain discipline in the school and classroom situation.

The researcher entered the world of the participants, analyzed the conversations and interactions he had with the participants so that he understood and interpreted their experiences and perspectives about the phenomenon. The data was systematically collected and analyzed within a particular context (De Vos & Fouche: 1998a:80). Educators shared how they maintained discipline in schools and within the classroom with the researcher by means of interviews. The researcher studied their perceptions, gained deep insight and knowledge and finally described the participants' understanding of the role of educators in the maintenance of school discipline.

3.3.1.2 Descriptive approach to the research

The descriptive research method deals with the questions based in the current state of affairs (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:226). According to Allison, Owel, Rothwell, O'Sullivan, Saunders and Rice (1996:14) a descriptive approach sets out to seek precise and adequate descriptions of the activities, objects, processes and persons involved in the study. Simelane (1998:13) supports this view by stating that a descriptive approach provides a detailed description of the phenomenon. Kvale (1996:32) corroborates by stating that in a descriptive approach the subjects describe as precisely as possible what they experience and feel, and how they act. In view of this claim, a descriptive method was used to address the fundamental research question that was posed (cf section 1.3). This study seeks to provide an accurate description of how the educators experience learner discipline in the Nkangala region, in order to develop and describe principles and guidelines for educators to effectively establish and maintain discipline in schools and classrooms. The researcher expected to facilitate this process by following an open and flexible research strategy (Mouton & Marais, 1992:43). According to Mouton (1996:102) the researcher should be aware of the idea that to describe accurately would vary with the

context.

3.3.1.3 Explorative approach to the research

According to Mouton and Marais (1992:43) an explorative approach to the research helps to lead to the insight and comprehension of the phenomenon. A qualitative exploratory approach enables the researcher to share in the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give answers to their daily lives (Berg, 1995:7). This implies that the researcher has to be willing to discover new ideas and suggestions and not permit pre-conceived ideas or hypotheses to influence the research (Mouton & Marais, 1992:43). This study is explorative in that it attempts to understand how educators establish and maintain discipline in the school and in the classroom at a time when corporal punishment has been abolished. In this study, the researcher was able to hear from educators how they maintained and experienced learner discipline in their schools and in particular in their classrooms.

3.3.1.4 Contextual approach to the research

Contextual research focuses on participants within a particular context so as to gain an understanding of the participants within that context (Mouton & Marais, 1992:49). This study was contextual in nature because it was concerned with the unique context of the classroom and school situation of senior secondary schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga. Educators provided an extensive description of their experiences in their specific context. In this way, the researcher most likely uncovered the true behaviour shown by people when observed in their own real life context (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45).

Having discussed the research design it is necessary to give an exposition of the research method that was employed.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the method of collecting/generating data in a study (Mason, 1997:35). Schurink (1998b:252) states that choosing a research methodology includes identifying and setting the boundaries for gathering information as well as identifying subjects who could provide relevant and valid information. The researcher and the informative participants interact so that the researcher gains deeper insight, knowledge and understanding of their experiences about a phenomenon.

The strategies selected for gathering data in this research were focus group interviews, individual interviews, literature study and observation.

3.4.1 Focus group interviews

According to Schurink, Schurink and Poggenpoel (1998:314) the focus group interview is an open, purposive conversation where the researcher asks questions on a particular topic and where each subject may answer and make comments either on the questions or views of other subjects or the interviewer. The researcher introduces the topic and then guides the discussion by means of general yet probing questions. (S)he records the verbal and non-verbal communication of subjects. According to Holstein and Gubrium (1997:113), the focus group interview is a qualitative interview which aims at finding out what other people feel and think about the phenomenon under investigation. What the interviewees say essentially constitutes the data. The interviewees are experts on the topic under discussion because they have first hand experience about it.

The researcher usually chooses the focus group interview as a data collection method because it is flexible and open in form. The subjects are free to answer in their own words; briefly or at length (Ary et al, 1996:487). It involves a homogenous group of people engaged in social interaction (Molukanele, 1998:31). It should be non-threatening and data collected will in most cases be valid. According to Robson and Foster (1989:51) steps need to be taken to reduce threatening and intimidating

inferences in the interview situation. Furthermore, it is essential to select the right people for focus group sessions. Participants need to be carefully recruited so that the research question(s) are answered (Liamputtong & Lizzy, 2005:95).

In this study a group of educators who are teaching at senior secondary schools were involved in a discussion of the involvement of educators in school discipline. The researcher participated as a guide: posing questions, clarifying them where necessary and using probing follow-up questions. Because the discussion was in a natural format, it was flexible and thus gave the participants confidence to share their feelings, even on sensitive topics. The educators were given the opportunity to describe their experiences of learner discipline in the school and classroom situations. The researcher only guided the participants in expressing their opinions about the themes (Kvale, 1983:176; Mabena, 1999:139). The researcher ensured that a relationship of trust and confidence with the educators existed by being open-minded and assuring them that they do not necessarily have to agree on the issue under discussion. The researcher controlled the discussion and problems during the interview so that the interview did not regress or deviate from the main theme under discussion (Wilson, 1989:437). The responses were recorded on audio-tape as well as by taking notes (Wilson, 1989:434; Rubin & Rubin, 1995:6).

3.4.2 Individual interviews

Merriam (1998:23) points out that the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is on someone else's mind and since this cannot be directly observed or measured, the researcher has to ask questions in such a way as to obtain meaningful information. According to Seidman (1998:3) the purpose of interviewing is to understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. The primary way a researcher can investigate an educational institution, or process, through the experience of individual people, is to interview the "others" who make up the organization or carry out the projects (Seidman, 1998:4). Social abstractions like education are best understood through the experiences of the individuals whose work

and lives contribute to the formation of the abstraction. According to Walsh (2001:65), interviews are similar to questionnaires in that they are organized around a series of questions and rely on interviewees being able to answer and tell the “truth” as they see it. Individual interviews were conducted with educators in order to establish how discipline is maintained in schools and in the classroom in the absence of corporal punishment.

The focus was on describing and understanding experiences as lived by the educators (Simelane, 1998:24). The educators were met at their level and accepted in their own life world (Schurink, 1998d: 307). The educators of the sampled schools were interviewed in order to discuss how discipline is managed at school. An interview schedule was prepared. Probing questions followed, emanating from the answers given by the educators. The interview process was audio-taped and thereafter transcribed.

3.4.3 Literature study

In order to establish what other researchers have already established with regard to the problem being investigated in this study, an extensive literature study was conducted. This included books, articles, dissertations, magazines, letters, newspapers et cetera, all of which were related to the topic of this investigation. The researcher used the literature study for the clarification of operational concepts of the research and to find the existing information on the role of the educators in school activities in general and their rights and duties in the establishment and maintenance of school discipline specifically.

3.4.4 Observation

According to McBurney (1994: 169) observation comprises the researcher observing and recording behaviour without attempting to change the observed behaviour. Walsh (2001:67) states that in a participant observation study, the researcher enters the group or the situation that he or she is studying. Participant observers try to “get to know” the group or the situation from “the inside”. They need to try to understand the motives and

the meanings of the people whom they are studying from the point of view of those people. The objective of this is for the researcher to gain deeper insight into the real way of life, beliefs and activities of the group in their “natural setting” (Walsh, 2001:67). It is also believed that the researcher’s own experience of the group will give him or her access to data that might not be drawn out from a questionnaire or interview. Kvale (1983:175) states that during the course of an interview the researcher must also be observant of and be able to interpret vocalization, facial expressions and other bodily gestures. In this research the researcher observed how the educators established and maintained discipline in the school and classroom situations. He also observed how learners were punished as well as how they are rewarded and motivated to behave correctly in the classroom without any attempt to interfere.

In total, three weeks were spent with the educators from the three selected schools, (one week with each school) to gain first hand experience on how these educators manage learner discipline in the school and classroom. Comprehensive field notes were made throughout the study. LeCompte and Preissle (1993:195-196) state that participant observers live as much as possible with the individuals they are investigating, trying to blend in and taking part in their daily activities. Participant observers look at what people do, listen to what people say, and interact with the interviewees. According to Best and Kahn (1993:184) the data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people’s activities, actions, and the full range of interpretational interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience. A relationship of trust with the researcher usually develops and this encourages participants to expose what they may regard as confidential. By establishing a proper rapport with participants, a skilled interviewer can enhance motivation and thereby obtain information that might not otherwise have been offered (McMillan, 2000:166). More accurate responses can be obtained as the interviewer clarifies questions that the respondent may have and follow up leads through probing.

3.4.5 Sampling

According to Mulder (1989:55) a sample consists of a group of respondents selected from the population and thus smaller in number than the population. This is done to give the researcher a more manageable group for purposes of research. Henry (1990:11) states that the concept sample means a subset of the population that is used to gain information about the entire population. A sample in this sense is a model of the population. A good sample will represent the population well. The sample often does not have intrinsic interest to the scientist, but rather is a tool to find out more about the population (Henry, 1990:11). Sampling is done through various methods, for instance random, systematic, stratified, or cluster sampling (Mulder, 1989:58-59). Sampling is thus a scheme of action or procedure that clarifies how subjects are to be selected for research. Simelane (1998:21) posits that it involves the selection of a group of participants with which the researcher is to conduct the study.

3.4.5.1 Population

According to Seaberg (as cited by Strydom & De Vos, 1998:190) a population is the total set from which the individuals or units of the study are chosen. It is the totality of persons, events or organization units with which the real research problem is concerned. The individuals or units possess specific characteristics. There is a target population and accessible population. The portion of the target population to which a researcher has reasonable access is known as the accessible population (Simelane, 1998:24). The target population in this research was the senior secondary schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga Province, while the accessible population was the educators of the secondary schools where the research was conducted.

3.4.5.2 Sampling method

A purposive sampling method was used in this research. This type of sample is based entirely on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample consists of elements which

contain the most characteristic, representative or typical attributes of the population (Strydom & De Vos, 1998:198). In this study the participants were chosen from a specific target group whose opinions are of specific interest to this study. The method was purposive because the population in this investigation consisted of secondary school educators in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga. The educators were chosen for the reason that they are qualified secondary educators and they are possibly knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation (Cresswell, 1994:14).

3.4.5.3 Sample criteria

According to Simelane (1998:22) certain characteristics for inclusion in the accessible population should be taken into consideration. The criteria for the selection of participants for inclusion in this investigation were as follows:

- The respondents had to be qualified secondary school educators, with five years or more experience in teaching secondary school learners.
- The gender and ages of the educators were also considered when participants were selected for this study. Although the sample was not intended to be fully representative of the population, the researcher was still interested in the views of as representative a sample of the population as possible.

3.4.5.4 Sample size

Hoberg (1999:61) states that the first question that a researcher should ask himself / herself concerns the number of participants to be included in the sample. In this study, there were three focus group interviews from three selected schools. In the focus group interviews, 15 respondents were interviewed. Individual interviews were conducted with 6 respondents

3.4.5.5 Pilot study

Strydom (1998:179) states that a pilot study can be viewed as a “dress rehearsal” of the main investigation. It is similar to the researcher’s planned investigation but is conducted on a smaller scale. A pilot study is indispensable for the correct administering of the data. It provides evidence of possible ambiguities or inappropriate questions (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1970:43). It also helps the researcher to get an overview of time management during the actual research. It helps the researcher to think well in advance about the analysis of the results. The researcher is also able to identify confusing and ambiguous language, and to obtain information about possible results (Oppenheim, 1992:64). A pilot study using one focus group interview was conducted with educators in one school in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga to determine if the desired information would be gained by the questions posed and whether the method of questioning would be suitable to attain in-depth information. Five participants were included in this interview. The pilot study helped the researcher to correct mistakes that occurred during the interviews with regard to the interview itself, the environmental setting and the recording. At the end of this exercise, the researcher took note of the time required to conduct the various interviews. The results were discussed with the participants involved to evaluate whether the conclusion arrived at by the researcher are in accordance with the observations and knowledge of the educators.

3.4.6 Triangulation and structural coherence

According to Mouton and Marais (1992:91) triangulation denotes “the use of multiple methods of data collection”. According to Richards (2005:140) triangulation is the term widely used for research designs where different sorts of data or methods of handling data are brought to bear on the research question. It refers mainly to the use of multiple methods of data collection. In this study, triangulation was achieved through focus group interviews, individual interviews, literature study as well as observation. The topics, themes and categories extracted through the data analysis were confirmed with the participants to ascertain that it reflected their intent. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 305-306)

maintain that the validity of the information will be exposed by the similarity in the information gathered by each method.

According to Krefting (1991: 220) structural coherence implies the assurance that there are no unexplained inconsistencies between the data and their interpretations. In this study structural coherence was enhanced by consistently focusing on the educators' experience of learner discipline in the school- and classroom environments.

3.4.7 Construction of the interview schedule for this study

The interview schedule for this study consisted of a list of questions that are related to the way in which the educators are able to establish and manage discipline in the school and classroom situations.

The following were central questions in the interviews:

- What type of disciplinary problems do you experience?
- How do you deal with each of these problems?
- What type of assistance do you need to deal with each of these problems?
- To what extent do you receive support from the stakeholders for your actions?
- What is the relationship between the educators' conduct in your school and the manner in which you attempt to maintain discipline?

3.4.8 The procedure followed during the investigation

A written request in a form of a letter (See Appendix A), was sent to the Mpumalanga Department of Education, asking for permission to conduct this study. The Mpumalanga

Department of Education granted the researcher permission to undertake the study (See Appendix C). After the permission was granted by the Mpumalanga Department of Education, letters were written to the principals of the schools which had been selected for focus group interviews, requesting permission to conduct focus group interviews with the educators of their schools. The goal of these letters was to indirectly involve the principals in the study. This was followed by personal visits by the researcher to each of the selected schools to make preliminary, practical arrangements with the principals. Each participating school was given a code number for identification purposes.

3.4.9 Field notes

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:107) the term field notes refers to a written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:107) further state that in participant observation studies, all the data are considered to be field notes. The term field notes refers collectively to all the data collected in the course of a study, including the field notes, interview transcripts, official documents, official statistics, pictures, and other materials. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:73) state that field notes are records of what has been seen and heard by the researcher without interpretation during the interview. In this study the researcher jotted down bits of information he wanted to recall later, such as interesting terms or ideas he heard, and behaviour he observed as unusual in the setting.

For the purpose of this research the researcher used field notes to record events, behaviour that occurred and words that were heard during the focus group interviews and individual interviews. The researcher used brackets to indicate his own commentary. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:183-185) field notes are usually divided into four categories, namely:

- Observation notes in which the researcher recorded what he saw and heard during the interview.

- Theoretical notes, which refer to deliberate, controlled efforts to extract meaning from observation notes.
- Methodological notes which includes notes on operational practices such as the time schedule, the sequence and the physical setup.
- Personal notes such as the researcher's feelings and experiences during the interview.

These categories were also used during the course of the current study.

3.4.10 Data processing

According to Booyse, Lemmer and Smit (1996:146), data processing or data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process which integrates into every phase of qualitative research. It is a systematic process whereby data is selected, categorized, compared, synthesized and interpreted in order to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest. Data analysis is the final stage of listening to hear the meaning of what is said and it is concerned with making sense and interpreting the data collected so that it is stored and accessible for later use (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:226); Poggenpoel, 1998:334-335). The data analysis enables the researcher to discover themes and concepts embedded throughout the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:226). The data collection and data analysis in qualitative research go hand in hand and should be done simultaneously in order for the researcher to focus and shape the study as it proceeds. According to Simelane (1998:27) the analysis in qualitative research is inseparable from data collection. As data was collected from educators, a consistent review of how educators established and maintained discipline in the school and classroom was done.

According to Best and Kahn (1993:203) the first step in analyzing qualitative research involves organizing the data. The method of organizing the data will differ depending upon the research strategy and collection technique(s) used. Interview data, for instance

may be organized according to individual respondents, or if a standard interview format is used with a number of individuals, by grouping answers together across respondents. Observations may be considered individually or by grouping similar types of occurrences together while also looking for differences among individuals, settings or times. Once the data have been organized, the researcher can move to the second stage in the data analysis, namely description. The researcher describes the various relevant aspects of the research including: the setting, both temporally and physically, the individuals being studied, the object of any activities examined, the viewpoints of the interviewees, and the impact of any activities on the interviewees. Only after the data have been organized and described does the researcher begin the final process which comprises interpretation (Best & Kahn, 1993:203).

In this study, after completing phase one, which was to collect firsthand information from the educators themselves regarding their experiences, the researcher continued with phase two of the research study. This included the exposition of guidelines on the effective involvement of educators in school discipline based on the research results, drawing of conclusions, making recommendations and pointing out possible limitations of the investigation. To accomplish this phase of the research study the data collected was analyzed with a view to identifying topics, themes and categories.

To prepare for the data analysis the researcher first listened to the audio-tapes and transcribed each interview verbatim. The researcher read and re-read the verbatim transcriptions and also played the audiotape in order to establish themes. He wrote down how educators established and maintained discipline in the school and classroom situations. Comparing, contrasting, aggregating and ordering were applied in the analysis of the data (Booyse et al, 1996:155-156).

- Categorizing

The researcher described what he had observed and divided the observed data into units/categories.

- Contrasting

The researcher indicated how units are similar or dissimilar to one another.

- Aggregating

The researcher determined which items are associated with each other and might be aggregated into groups.

- Ordering.

Through divergent thinking, patterns and themes were refined.

The data analysis and interpretation were also done according to Marshall and Rossman's approach. Marshall and Rossman's approach (as cited by Poggenpoel, 1998:342) involves the following five stages:

- Ordering the data.
- Generating categories, themes and topics.
- Testing the emerging hypotheses against the data.
- Searching for alternative explanations of the data.
- Writing a report.

Each stage of the data analysis involved data reduction and the large volume of collected data was reduced into manageable parts. It also involved interpretation, as the researcher brought meaning and insight into the words and actions of the respondents in the research

(Poggenpoel, 1998:342). According to McCracken (1988:50) the qualitative data must exhibit the following conditions:

- It must be exact, so that no unnecessary ambiguity exists.
- It must be economical, so that it forces the researcher to make the minimum number of assumptions and still explain the data.
- It must be mutually consistent, so that no assertion contradicts another.
- It must be externally consistent, so that it conforms to what we independently know about the subject matter.
- It must be unified, so that assertions are organized in a manner that subsumes the specific within the general, unifying where possible, discriminating where necessary.
- It must be powerful, so that it explains as much of the data as possible without sacrificing accuracy.
- It must be fertile, so that it suggests new ideas and opportunities for insight.

In this study a deliberate attempt was made to meet all these considerations.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Strydom (1998:24) ethics is a set of moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently ideally accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural explanations about the most correct conduct towards the experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students. Ethical guidelines serve as standards about the foundation upon which each researcher

ought to assess his or her own conduct.

The researcher minded ethical considerations throughout this study as they are principles which guide the research from the beginning. The following illustrates some of the ethical considerations which were complied with.

3.5.1 Researcher's competency

Strydom (1998:31) maintains that researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and skilled to undertake the study they have proposed. The researcher has completed a BA Degree and BEd (Honours), a Higher Diploma in Education and a Certificate in School Management. The researcher has been teaching for the past sixteen years and currently holds a principal post at Mloyisani Secondary School in Kwaggafontein West Circuit Office in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga. Extensive literature on the research methodology as well as the topics related to the study have been studied. The study was also supervised by a university expert experienced in supervising qualitative research projects.

3.5.2 Relationships with the participants

Throughout the study, the researcher ensured that a healthy relationship with the participants was maintained. The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the research so as to allow them the opportunity to decide whether to participate or not to participate. The potential risks that they might be subjected to were also explained (Strydom, 1998:25) (See Appendix D).

3.5.3 Anonymity and confidentiality

According to Wallen and Fraenkel (1991:40) the anonymity of the participants must be maintained and all the participants must be given the assurance that the data collected from them will be treated as confidential. In the opinion of Strydom (1998:28)

confidentiality entails that the information is handled in a confidential way. Research records that may indicate the participants' identities must be removed as a means of ensuring that confidentiality is maintained throughout the investigation (Wallen & Fraenkel 1991:40, Simelane 1998:14-15). Care has been taken that none of the schools and educators who participated in this research, were revealed.

3.5.4 Informed consent

Informed consent denotes that sufficient information on the goals of the research as well as procedures that were followed in the study are provided to the participants (Strydom 1998:24).

McBurney (1994:374) maintains that researchers should use a language that is best understood by the participants so as to obtain their relevant informed consent. Throughout the use of such language, the participants are informed of the nature of the research, the freedom they have to participate, and the freedom to withdraw from the research (Strydom, 1998:25, McBurney 1994:374).

The researcher adhered to the above-mentioned requirements. The researcher used the language that the sampled participants understood so as to explain the purpose, advantages and disadvantages; as well as to obtain their informed consent (See Appendix D). The researcher explained to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from participating. After this explanation the participants were requested to take part in the study. The researcher informed the respondents that they were selected because they met the criteria set for the research study.

3.5.5 Privacy

Strydom (1998:27) maintains that privacy is that which is not intended for others to observe or analyze. The researcher took the necessary precautionary measures by giving all the participants the right to decide for themselves to what extent their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour would be exposed (Strydom, 1998:28).

3.5.6 Deception of the participants

According to Talbot (as cited by De Beer (2001:13) the researcher has an obligation to tell the truth and not to lie or deceive others. Strydom (1998:27) views deception as either withholding information or giving information which is incorrect so that the participants who could have opted not to participate, are lured into participating. The researcher should clarify and rectify the misconceptions that may have arisen in the participants' mind (Strydom, 1998:34, McBurney, 1994:379). The participants should also be informed of the purpose of and the results that will be obtained from the study. This will ensure that the study is of educational and personal value to the researcher and the participants (Strydom, 1998:34, McBurney, 1994:379). In this study the researcher did not deceive the participants. They were informed about the methods that will be used, namely, focus group interviews, individual interviews, literature study and observation.

3.6 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness of the research outcomes denotes that readers of the research believe what the researcher has reported. Readers should have so much confidence in the researcher's conduct of the investigation and in the results of the research that they consider it to be reliable. According to Poggenpoel (1998:352) verification of the results of data analysis is a key issue in ensuring the trustworthiness of qualitative research. The researcher has an obligation to maintain trustworthiness throughout the research study (Simelane, 1998:17-21). Four aspects of trustworthiness that were applied in this study

will now be addressed.

3.6.1 Truth value

The concept “truth value” has a bearing on whether “the researcher has established confidence in the truth of findings” supplied by the participants in the study undertaken (Poggenpoel, 1998:349). In this regard Krefting (1991:215) states that the truth value indicates how confident the researcher is with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants and context. This is obtained from the findings of human experiences as lived and perceived by the participants. In this study the truth value was enhanced by employing the techniques of prolonged engagement, triangulation and structural coherence.

- Prolonged engagement

In an attempt to establish a positive relationship with the participants, the researcher spent a reasonable time with the participants, speaking the language they preferred in order to ensure that they felt free to participate. This helped them to increase their trust in the researcher and even exposed any hidden facts regarding the investigation (Simelane 1998:18). It also gave the researcher time to make observations. Through observation, the researcher learned firsthand how other subjects communicated and observed behavioural patterns. Furthermore, a rapport of trust with the researcher was developed and this motivated the participants to expose what they may have regarded as confidential.

- Triangulation

The researcher used focus group interviews, individual interviews, literature study and observation.

- Structural coherence

In order to enhance structural coherence, the researcher focused on the educators' experience of learner discipline in the school and classroom.

3.6.2 Applicability ensured by the strategy of transferability

Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied or transferred to other similar contexts and settings or some other groups (Krefting, 1991:216; Poggenpoel, 1998:349). According to Krefting (1991:216), research meets the transferability criterion “when the findings fit into contexts outside the study situations that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of fit between the two contexts”. Guba (in Krefting 1991:216) maintains that the responsibility for applicability lies with the person who wants to transfer the results. The researcher has to present adequate descriptive data to allow comparison. The researcher relied on the available data from this study so as to ensure transferability. Strategies that were employed in this study to ensure transferability are as follows:

- Nominate sample

Purposive sampling was used in this research study. That means those participants who met the criteria were selected.

- Dense description

In this study sufficient background information with regard to participants and the context of the research is provided to enable other researchers to decide how transferable the findings will be to their settings.

3.6.3 Consistency ensured by the strategy of dependability

Consistency refers to the degree to which the findings of the research will remain consistent if the inquiry is replicated with the same participants or in a similar context (Krefting, 1991:216; Poggenpoel, 1998:350). The focus then not only shifts to the research design, but also to the research methods already discussed. As far as the auditability is concerned, which is the situation whereby a subsequent researcher can follow the decision trail clearly as used by the original researcher, in this study the original data was kept safely for the purposes of an audit trail. According to Merriam (1998:172) the researcher will therefore need to present an audit trail including decisions made and themes derived.

In this research study the audit trail was compiled as follows:

- A detailed description was given of the way data was collected and how it was analyzed.
- Written permission was obtained from the Mpumalanga Department of Education to conduct the research in the schools (See Appendixes A and C).
- Written permission was obtained from the school principals where the research will be conducted (See Appendix B).
- The researcher explained to each participant what was expected of him/her and the central request was presented to each subject in exactly the same words.
- An expert with extensive experience in the field of qualitative research assisted the researcher. The study was supervised by a university expert experienced in supervising qualitative projects.

- After the data analysis was undertaken, the documentation (transcripts and field notes) were filed in a safe place. These can be provided on request.

3.6.4 Neutrality

Neutrality refers to the freedom of biasness in the research procedures and the results (Poggenpoel, 1998:350; Simelane, 1998:21). It refers to the degree in which the findings are a function solely of informants as well as the conditions of the research study and not of other biases, motivation and perspectives of the research (Poggenpoel, 1998:350). In the opinion of Krefiting (1991:217), objectivity is the criterion of neutrality that is achieved through the rigor of methodology, through which reliability and validity (trustworthiness) are established. To ensure that the data reflects the involvement of the educators in school discipline and their perceptions with regard to a safe and disciplined school environment, the researcher employed prolonged engagement, structural coherence and a conformability audit (Simelane, 1998:21).

3.7 LITERATURE CONTROL

Literature control is done to identify similarities and differences that occur in identified topics, themes and categories from the findings of a study and those that are not found in the literature. Some themes may exist in the literature that do not appear in the findings of the current research (Cresswell, 1994:20-24).

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research design, methods of data collection and procedures for data analysis have been described. The participants in the data collection were identified to some extent. The measures implemented in ensuring the trustworthiness of the research were discussed. Ethical considerations were also explained. The following chapter will present and interpret the qualitative data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter three, the research design and methodology, strategies for data collection and analysis, trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations were discussed. In this chapter the results of the data analysis will be discussed. This chapter carries a relatively detailed discussion of the perceptions which educators who formed part of the study have on the role of educators in the management of discipline in schools. The data obtained from the focus group and individual interviews have been analyzed and are now presented and interpreted. Deliberate attempts are made to connect the findings to existing literature on the theme under discussion.

4.2 TOPICS, THEMES AND CATEGORIES

The following topics, themes and categories which have a bearing on the role of educators in the management of discipline were identified through data analysis:

Table 4.1 TOPICS, THEMES AND CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES	CLUSTERED TOPICS (THEMES)	TOPICS
Problems	Flouting of authority	Disobedience Disorderliness Lack of cooperation Misbehaviour Refusal to wear a school uniform Openly defying the teacher's instruction
	Absenteeism	Truancy Lengthy periods of absence from school
	Late coming	Late coming at school Late coming at classes
	Neglect of school work	Failure to submit work Late submission of work Incomplete work Dishonesty
	More serious problems	Substance abuse Endangering the lives of others Teenage pregnancy
Origin of problems	HIV/Aids	
	Abolishment of corporal punishment	
	Leadership style of the educator	
	Stakeholder involvement	Parental involvement Involvement of stakeholders such as the SGB, SMT, Principal, Community, District Office, Dept of Education
	Overcrowded classrooms	
	General conduct of the educator	Educator inconsistency Failure to take responsibility Certain educators regarded as poor role model Poor relationships between learners and educators Lack of discipline management strategies
Suggested solutions	Positive attitude	Oral and written praise Professional conduct of the educator (role model, teamwork, avoidance of negative example) The educator's leadership style
	Stakeholder collaboration	Parental involvement Role of various stakeholders
	Involving learners in decision-making	
	Clarity of policies, rules and regulations	

In the following sections, each category, theme and topic will be discussed and augmented by examples (quotations) from the text of the interview transcriptions. Where applicable, reference will be made to the literature that has been reviewed, i.e. to the existing body of knowledge, during and after the discussion of each theme. This literature control is intended to explain, support and extend the theory generated in this research. It is hoped that this strategy will provide the reader with a basic understanding of the research problem, as well as the evidence that the study yielded and its relationship with current knowledge of the problem (cf Burns & Grove, 1995:108). This will also facilitate the researcher's attempt to eventually formulate guidelines for educators to effectively manage and maintain discipline in schools.

In this chapter the codes R1 to R6 are used to identify respondents one to six with whom the researcher had individual interviews. P1 to P6 represent respondents one to six in focus group one, P7 to P11 represent respondents seven to eleven in focus group two and P12 to P15 represent respondents twelve to fifteen in focus group three.

A special note concerning the use of quotations in this chapter seems to be necessary: as can be expected from respondents who were required to conduct the interviews in their second or third language, the language usage and choice of words are, from a language perspective, not always perfect. As a result, some of the quotations used in this chapter to substantiate pronouncements, contain grammatical errors. The respective messages the respondents attempted to convey, are nevertheless clear. The standard practice in research reports is to point out these errors by inserting the Latin adjective, *sic*, directly after the error, the intention being to guarantee that a word or expression in the quoted passage has been quoted exactly, though its incorrectness or absurdity would suggest that it was not. However, after consultations with experts in this regard as well as with the supervisor of the study, it was decided not to use *sic*. The word *sic* would need to be inserted so many times that it would undoubtedly deform the quotations and distract the attention of the reader. In view of this decision, the researcher has taken special care to ensure that

quotations used in this chapter, are an accurate reflection of the *verbatim* transcriptions which were made of the interviews.

4.2.1 PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY EDUCATORS IN EXERCISING AND MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE

4.2.1.1 Flouting of authority

According to Squelch (1993:235) an important task of an educator is to maintain discipline. As a result, educators are empowered with special authority to implement a wide variety of disciplinary measures. In this regard, Gunter (1988:37) maintains that in order to grow up properly and to become self-reliant, a child has to be subjected to the authority of the person who brings him up, amongst other things, because (s)he has an existential need of authority. According to him, children have the urge to become adults themselves and must therefore be taught not only how to exert authority, but also how to obey and follow authority.

This study revealed that learners in the selected sample of schools often disregard the authority of educators. The learners seem to lack respect for educators. The disciplinary problems in schools ranged from learners' refusal to wear school uniforms (P9, P10, R5), a refusal to accept and acknowledge the educators' authority and defying them when they are giving the learners instructions (R1, R2).

Educator R2 remarked that they are “also experiencing some problems whereby we find learners making noise in the presence of the teachers and also some defiance of the authority of the teacher”.

The educators also indicated that misbehaviour and disobedience were contributing factors to the problem of learner discipline (R3, R6). Educator R6 specifically referred to these problems. Disruptive behaviour, disorderliness and a lack of cooperation from the learners were also identified as contributing factors to the perceived general lack of

learner discipline (P2, R4, R2).

Educator P2 remarked that they “usually have problems with learners who don’t complete their work on time and don’t submit their work on time, and (who) are disrupting in the classroom”.

Yet another educator, P4, explained that “learners don’t cooperate”. Such learner behaviour often results in ineffective learning and teaching in schools, as well as a lack of both discipline and a culture of learning and teaching.

4.2.1.2 Absenteeism

The Mpumalanga Department of Education (2005:12) maintains that educators often complain about unacceptable forms of behaviour such as disruption of schools by ill-disciplined learners, late coming in the morning and during the school day, truancy, a refusal to attend certain lessons, failure to do homework, failure to adhere to school policies and the flouting of authority. These forms of behaviour eventually seem to have a negative influence on the educators’ discipline too.

This empirical investigation revealed that disciplinary problems amongst learners such as lengthy periods of absence from school and truancy are also reported by educators in their respective schools (P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P10, P12, R1, R3, R4). Educator P3, for example, remarked: “The main problem I discovered at my school is the high rate of absenteeism”. With regard to truancy, educator P10 explained that “learners always dodge from school during school hours and they don’t wear uniforms”. These problems contribute to the lack of teaching and learning because the educators’ programmes are disturbed and the learners’ work is submitted late to the educators.

In this regard educator R1, pointed out that, “if the learner is not present definitely the work is not done. That work must still be done, and you have to keep them in the afternoon and say they must go on and catch up and write that work in any way, such

work needs to be attended”.

4.2.1.3 Late coming

This study revealed that disciplinary problems amongst learners such as late coming at school in the morning and late coming at the classes are also experienced by the educators and seem to have a negative influence on educators’ discipline (P1, P2, P5, P7, P12, R2, R4, R5). Such learner behaviour disturbs the educators and to some extent prevents learners from learning effectively.

According to educator R2 “late coming causes disciplinary problems, especially in the morning. During the first period learners will knock on the door time and again and come in, in drips and drops”.

In most cases this type of late coming results in educators having to repeat certain instructions or start the lesson all over again, which frustrates those learners who did not shirk their responsibilities and arrived in time for their classes.

4.2.1.4 Neglect of school work

The majority of respondents complained about the fact that some learners either fail to submit their school work, submit their work late or submit incomplete work (P2, P5, P6, P8, P9, P12, P13, P14, P15, R1, R2, R4, R5). Educator P15, for example, remarked that of “all the problems that we encountered ... the main one (is) that learners don’t do their work”. In addition, it sometimes happens that learners copy each others’ work (P14) or that they are being dishonest (P4). According to educator P14 the “copying (of) ... work (is) even ... done in a group form”; i.e. one learner does the work and a whole group of others then copy it. These types of ill-disciplined behaviour seem to have a negative influence on the educators’ work and discipline and causes difficulties in the achievement of school objectives. Schools become dysfunctional because, as educator P2 explained, both educators and learners are unable to work effectively under conditions of ill-

discipline.

4.2.1.5 More serious problems

Three more serious problems related to the exercise and maintenance of discipline in the schools involved in the study were identified, namely, substance abuse, endangering the lives of others and teenage pregnancy.

4.2.1.5.1 Substance abuse

According to the respondents, substance abuse by learners during school hours is another factor that is contributing to the general lack of learner discipline (P7, P11). Educator P11 made it quite clear that “disciplinary problems that we experience in our schools, can be classified under serious offences, which are carrying of dangerous weapons and the abuse of substances”. He emphasized that learners who use drugs or abuse similar substances are a real threat to both learners and educators because they usually tend to become violent. According to Cheunyane (2008:5), 64,6% of the learners in the Mpumalanga Province use drugs on the school premises while 58,5% of the learners use alcohol on the school premises. Cheunyane (2008:5) further states that 58,5% of the learners in this province arrive at schools under the influence of alcohol. This perception is supported by Mabelane (2000:3) who has indicated that drug and substance abuse contribute to the lack of discipline in schools and has become a major cause of unsafe schools.

4.2.1.5.2 Endangering the lives of others

According to Cross (1999:4), learners cannot learn and educators cannot teach in an unsafe place. A safe and orderly situation is crucial for learning and teaching to take place (Hill & Hill, 1994:16). In line with these views, the researcher found it alarming to be informed by the respondents that learners often carry dangerous weapons on the school premises (P9, P11). It is only natural to assume that neither educators nor learners can work effectively under such unsafe conditions.

According to educator P15 “nothing works because ... nowadays ... there is nothing that scares learners. You try to rebuke them, (but) you waste your time and the time of those who are doing their work. You call the parents, (but) they never come. You try to threaten them (the learners), but they know their rights ... so nothing works”.

4.2.1.5.3 Teenage pregnancy

This empirical investigation revealed that many young girls fall pregnant when they are still at school. Although pregnancy in itself is not necessarily an indication of indiscipline, the fact that so many young girls fall pregnant may be a symptom of a promiscuous lifestyle which undoubtedly has a bearing on school discipline. Amongst other things, this also has an influence on their ability to attend school, submit their school work timeously and to learn effectively. Educator P13 expressed the view that “teenage pregnancy is prevalent, (as is) late coming ... and not submitting one work”. Even though the pregnancy of certain learners and the ill-disciplined behaviour that results from it may affect other learners, such learners may not be prevented from attending school. According to the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b:5) they have to be allowed to attend school as usual until they are referred to a hospital school for pregnant girls. According to the National Department of Education (RSA, 2007:5) whenever possible, and as soon as possible, pregnant learners should be referred by the schools to health clinics or centres, and these clinics and centres should provide to the schools, on a regular basis, records of attendance. Health professionals should provide advice to the learners regarding termination of pregnancy options, and any other necessary information.

4.3 RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

The respondents held strong views regarding the origin of the disciplinary problems mentioned above. The following were identified: the effect of HIV/AIDS, the role of corporal punishment, the educator's leadership style, stakeholder involvement, overcrowded classrooms, the general conduct of educators and a lack of discipline management strategies amongst the educators.

4.3.1 The effect of HIV/AIDS

According to the respondents, many learners are infected with HIV/AIDS. As a result they are absent from school for lengthy periods of time due to illness. According to the National Department of Education (RSA, 2003:3), AIDS is causing a lot of pain and trauma in the lives of learners. Many of them are struggling to do well at school. In many schools learning is disrupted when learners get ill. As indicated earlier, absenteeism is a contributing factor to the general lack of learner discipline in certain schools. Educator P3 tried to explain this relationship between HIV/AIDS and ill-discipline as follows: "The main problem that I have discovered at my school is the high rate of absenteeism, (which were) caused bysicknesses, for example HIV/AIDS ...".

4.3.2 The role of corporal punishment

There seemed to be consensus amongst the respondents that the abolishment of corporal punishment has resulted in a collapse of discipline in schools. The educators experienced difficulties in maintaining discipline without the use of corporal punishment, felt that they were consistently challenged and that they have lost control. According to educator P12 they "have introduced period registers and with the question of not doing their work, we give the punishment like picking up papers and so on. But it doesn't work because the question of corporal punishment is no longer in place. Learners take advantage of that". He was supported by educator P2 who indicated that "in summarizing everything (he

would like to say that) educators find it difficult to discipline learners since corporal punishment has been abolished”.

However, the responses of the participants in the study also contained indications that corporal punishment is still being applied by educators at some schools. They regard it as a waste of time to punish the learners in any way other than using corporal punishment (P15).

Educator R2, for example, stated that “if you report a learner to the principal ... well I don’t know what the principal does to him. He will take the learner and lock him into his office (and) never tell exactly what he did to the learner. But the learner is going to change completely from the wrongs that he has been doing”.

The Daily Sun of 30 January 2006, also noted that corporal punishment is still meted out to learners in every grade. Joan Van Niekerk of Childline South Africa said that this happens in public as well as private schools. The organization has reports of broken arms, serious wounds that required stitching, burst eardrums and severe beatings. Some educators are aware that they may no longer beat learners, yet they resort to ear twisting and other forms of physical hurting. Van Niekerk said that not enough was being done to train educators in alternative methods of discipline, with educators “floundering” to find alternatives that enabled them to feel in control of the learners they taught. All these things are happening despite the fact that corporal punishment was banned from South African schools in the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:10).

4.3.3 The educator’s leadership style

The educators that took part in the study were unanimous in their belief that an orderly, high performing school requires sound leadership. They expressed the view that a strong leader will ensure that all the activities of the school are completed optimally, that the educators and learners are committed to their various tasks, and that their performance lead towards the goals the school wants to attain. According to them a leader must build

and nurture leadership amongst the learners. They also expressed the view that where leadership style provides for participative decision-making, the stakeholder involvement is high and that helps with the maintenance of discipline (P12). They further expressed the view that democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire styles (sic) should be integrated, one style alone cannot promote discipline (P11). According to them “being too democratic or too autocratic is disruptive. The combination of both styles in most instance is a success” (R3). The autocratic and democratic leadership styles should work together because they supplement each other (P4) and this will depend on the situation (P1). According to educator P2 an autocratic leadership style is the most effective style that one can follow.

Viewed from another perspective, these views imply that poor leadership by the educator can contribute much to the lack of discipline and teaching and learning in the schools.

Educator P13, for example, indicated that “learners emulate what their educators are, in other words the learners see educators as their role models. Good behaviour on the part of the educator simply translates into good behaviour in the learners as well. The negative behaviour on the part of the educator simply translates into negative behaviour in the learners as well”.

4.3.4 Stakeholder involvement

During the interviews the respondents often referred to the role of stakeholder involvement in the exercising and maintenance of discipline. Two aspects, in particular, were emphasized, namely, a lack of parental support and what the respondents regarded as minimal support received from the Department of Education.

4.3.4.1 Lack of parental support

The transcripts of the interviews contain unmistakable evidence that educators are receiving minimal support from the parents and this has allegedly contributed to the lack of learner discipline. According to the respondents they receive minimal support from

parents mainly because a large number of learners are staying with their grandparents and do not have regular contact with their parents (P13), parents seem to be reluctant to come to school to discuss the academic or behavioural problems their children experience (R4), parents are full time employed and find it difficult to obtain leave at work to attend to so-called “private matters” (R3) and some of the parents are afraid of their children (P14). Educator P4 accurately summarized the situation when he stated that they (the educators) “don’t get enough support from the parents”.

4.3.4.2 Minimal support from the Department of Education

The educators involved in the study also believed that they are receiving minimal support from the Mpumalanga Department of Education and that this has also contributed to disciplinary problems in their schools. They, for example, explicitly mentioned that when they experience learner disciplinary problems and seek help from the Department, they receive little support in this regard (P9, P15). Educators are purportedly also not receiving moral support from the Department if they are experiencing learner disciplinary problems.

In this regard educator P13 proclaimed as follows: “To cite an example, our Department of Education ... when you are subjected to or experiencing problems (and) when you phone to get clarity on certain matters, they would send you from pillar to post”.

4.3.5 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms are another aspect which was regarded by the respondents as contributing to a lack of learner discipline in schools. Respondents P12 - P15 reported that they had an average of 37 learners in each of their classes; P7 - P11 estimated that on average 45 learners attended each of their classes; P1-P6: reported on average of 37 per class and R1-R6 estimated that on average of 66 learners attended each of their classes. Respondents R1 and R3 reported that they have extremely high number of learners in their classes (R1:95, R3:105). However, the researcher has his doubts concerning the

level of honesty with which the two educators answered the question on overcrowded classes. These numbers could not be verified.

Table 4.2 NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN CLASSES

RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN CLASS
P1	40
P2	37
P3	37
P4	38
P5	35
P6	37
P7	38
P8	45
P9	48
P10	46
P11	45
P12	40
P13	40
P14	36
P15	31
R1	95
R2	50
R3	105
R4	50
R5	40
R6	54
TOTAL: 21	987
Overall average (per teacher/class)	47

Seven of the 21 educators (P6, P11, R1, R2, R3, R4 and R5) regarded overcrowded classrooms as problematic and said that they find it impossible to teach and maintain discipline in such large classes.

Educator R1, for example, explained that “definitely it is quite difficult for most of the educators to deal with such large numbers, hence I indicated the issue of noise making and absenteeism. I think the learners take advantage of the number so that at the end they misbehave, they make noise. If they don’t make noise, they will absent themselves normally, so I think most of the educators definitely it gives them a problem”.

According to educator P6 “it has been difficult to teach them unless at least you want to attend to 1:25” (i.e. he regards a teacher-learner ratio of 1:25 as the ideal and finds it difficult if more learners than that attend a specific class). Educator R3 summarized it effectively when he indicated that “the manner of maintaining discipline is very strenuous and exhaustive because (the) more learners (there are in a class, the) more problems (one experiences)”.

However, the majority of the educators interviewed (14 out of 21) regarded the maintenance of discipline in large classes (comprising 40 or more learners) as “easy”. With great confidence educator P12, for example, declared: “okay, (any) number is manageable. I am able to maintain discipline in the class. I have no problem with the numbers”.

4.3.6 GENERAL CONDUCT OF THE EDUCATOR

At least three factors regarding the relationship between the general conduct of the educator and problems concerning the maintenance of discipline were identified during the analysis of the transcriptions, namely, an inconsistency in the application of disciplinary measures, poor examples set by educators and poor relationships between learners and educators.

4.3.6.1 Inconsistency in the application of disciplinary measures

It seems as though inconsistent actions on the side of the educator in the application of disciplinary measures can be regarded as a contributing factor to the problem of learner indiscipline. Whilst some educators are attempting to discipline the learners, others are reluctant to be involved in this issue (R6, P4). Educator R6's comment, "(there is) no cohesion. Everyone applies it (disciplinary measures) in his own way". The truth is that discipline is maintained more successfully in situations where disciplinary actions are applied consistently (Kokot, Lessing, Prinsloo, Van den Aardweg & Oosthuizen, 1982:220). According to these researchers, learners lose respect for the disciplinarian if they are punished today for an act which yesterday went unpunished. Kokot et al (1982:220) further maintain that learners want to know exactly what they can do and cannot do, both inside and outside the classroom. Inconsistency teaches inconsistency.

4.3.6.2 Certain educators regarded as poor role models

The study revealed that the respondents regarded some of their colleagues as poor role models for learners which, according to them, also contribute to a lack of learner discipline and especially to disruptive behaviour in schools. Learners tend to follow the example of adults with whom they come into contact in the area in which they live (P13, R4).

Educator R4 remarked, "educators (make a) very huge impact on the manner in which one can maintain discipline at school. Sometimes it makes it difficult for one to maintain discipline (if you object to and would like to act against), for example, late coming, (whilst) some of the teachers come late to school ... then it is not easy for one to say learners must be punished, because other teachers do that (i.e. set such an example)".

A recent study into learner absenteeism commissioned by the National Department of Education also found that in South African schools, learner absenteeism is not as great a

problem as educator absenteeism (Daily Sun, 2008:4).

4.3.6.3 Poor relationships between learners and educators

Yet another contributing factor to learner indiscipline in the school situation is poor relationships between learners and educators.

Educator P15 explained that “if one has to be honest, to my observation, educators want to be liked by the learners and as such we find that some of them are popular and if you check, they are popular in the classes (because) they don’t insist on discipline. That is why you find that learners like them much. Thus you, who wants to insist on discipline, find yourself being alone somewhere because nowadays people strive to be liked by the learners”.

In the school situation there must be a positive rapport between educators and learners so that effective learning and teaching can take place. According to Kruger and Steinman (2003:15-16), if there is a positive rapport between the learners and educators, learners will achieve good results in their studies and they will also behave correctly.

4.3.7 Lack of discipline management strategies among educators

The respondents held strong views with regard to training in the area of discipline and classroom management strategies. According to them their training has not been adequate and they would like further training in these areas (R1, R2). Educator R2 recommended that “the district or region must arrange staff development workshops to empower teachers, especially around discipline and classroom management”. Educators need to be taught proactive and constructive disciplinary strategies as an alternative to punitive measures such as corporal punishment. They must be taught approaches that are relevant in managing learner discipline.

4.4 SOLUTIONS TO DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS SUGGESTED BY RESPONDENTS

During the interviews the respondents were also questioned about possible solutions to what they regarded as disciplinary problems. Seven solutions were identified, namely, the maintenance of a positive attitude by the educator, increased stakeholder collaboration and parental involvement, a reconsideration of the educator's leadership style, ensuring the clarity of policies, rules and regulations, an emphasis on the professional conduct of the educator and involving learners in decision-making.

4.4.1 A positive attitude

The study revealed that educators felt that the most important factor that contributes to effective classroom discipline is an educator's ability to maintain a positive attitude and the quality of the educator's interpersonal relationships with the learners. Educator P3 thought that "educators should change their attitude and discipline learners with love". In general, the respondents felt that a successful disciplinarian is one who models caring and committed behaviour and who takes time to reason and communicate with learners (P3, P15, R2).

Educator P15, for example, said that "we (need to) praise improvement. If the learner has been constantly absent and now he comes to school regularly, we (have to) praise them. Learners who come late ... the time they change, we acknowledge them. So we are trying to praise them as much as we can so that we can motivate them to do work and come to school".

4.4.2 Stakeholder collaboration

With regard to stakeholder collaboration, the respondents mentioned three important matters, namely, the involvement of the communities and other stakeholders, the involvement of the Department of Education and the collaboration between the School

Management Team, educators and other stakeholders. Each of these will now be briefly discussed.

4.4.2.1 Involvement of the communities and other stakeholders

The educators involved in the study seemed to feel that, for discipline to be maintained in the classroom and in the school in general, the relevant communities and other stakeholders such as NGOs, correctional service workers, social workers (P11), parents, health sector workers (P13, P14, P15, R1), educational psychologists and the media (R3), should be involved in all school activities. According to them, all these parties should share the responsibility of creating and maintaining an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. Therefore they should all be automatically involved in the maintenance of discipline too. These views correspond with those of McLaughlin (2000:89) who argues that the parents should, together with other stakeholders, the community and the church, be responsible for the personal, social, moral and spiritual education of their children.

4.4.2.2 Involvement of the Department of Education

According to the respondents, for discipline to be maintained in the school situation, the Department of Education should be intimately involved in all activities of the school. The Department should also provide clear guidelines concerning, for example, the suspension of learners and procedures that has to be followed in cases of gross misconduct (R1). The Department should not only provide advice on how to deal with ill-disciplined learners (P7), but should also arrange workshops to empower the educators on the general nature of discipline and classroom management strategies (R2).

4.4.2.3 Collaboration between the School Management Team, educators and other stakeholders

The study revealed that educators are of the opinion that for discipline to be maintained in the school, the School Management Team, educators, learners and the SGB should collaborate (P1, P2, P3, P7, P9, P12). These groups should all be involved in dealing with aspects such as absenteeism, late coming and the maintenance of discipline in general.

According to educator P9 “there (may be) little support from the Department of Education, but on the case of the management of the school, I get the higher respond and also the support. So, also the community is not so much involved, except the SGB (who) is always at school. When I’ve got a learner that has maybe misbehaved, then the SGB is always at school”.

This respondent’s comments indicates that the groups mentioned should be involved in the maintenance of discipline and that he appreciates the support that he gets from, for example, the members of the School Management Team and SGB. He finds it regrettable that the Department of Education and the community at large are not as involved as he had expected.

4.4.3 Parental involvement

The respondents left little doubt as to their views concerning the involvement of parents in the exercise and maintenance of discipline: parents must definitely be involved in all their children’s affairs. “We need parental assistance in this problem” (P4). Parents should be intimately involved in school activities because when they are involved, the children will feel secure and consequently perform better (P1, P2, P3, P4).

In South Africa parents are obliged to be involved in their children’s school affairs. The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996a:2) states clearly that all learners, parents and educators should collaboratively accept responsibility for the organization, governance

and funding of schools, in partnership with the state. This implies that parents are by law compelled to participate in school activities. They have the capacity and the right to determine what is in the best educational interest of their children.

The importance of parental involvement in the school activities is also emphasized by various researchers. According to Blandford (1998:32) an active relationship between parents and educators have great benefits. Parents can have a great impact on their children's behaviour by ensuring that the learners arrive at school on time, behave correctly, wear relevant clothing, are in possession of required books and complete tasks on time. Kelly (in Dekker, 1993:156) asserts that if parents and educators possess a mutual appreciation of the role each has to play in the education of their children, opportunities for development are increased. Dekker (1993:58) 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. Lemmer (2002:56) corroborates 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 as well as reduced absenteeism. Kruger (2003:9) states that, without the cooperation between the parent and educator, the child cannot be sufficiently educated. The parent and the educator have a special and important role to play in the education of the child.

4.4.4 The educator's leadership style

One of the solutions to disciplinary problems which the respondents suggested, was a reconsideration of the educator's leadership style. They expressed the view that a successful leader and disciplinarian is one who models effective instructional leadership and do not allow him-/herself to be looked down upon by the learners (R2). A successful leader is also one who collectively creates clear rules, maintains order and discipline in the school and in the classroom situation (R1). A strong leader should build and nurture leadership among the learners and always act in an exemplary fashion (R1, P13).

In this regard educator R1 remarked: “One thing that I know as an educator is that a good leader will also be strict (and this is one) of the strategies that one need to have. And one also need to be exactly in terms. If you saw this must not be done; one must practice what you preach ... because I am also responsible for my class. For a school to be disciplined, a leader need to practice things that are actually realistic and according to policies; not practice things that are out of policies”.

A call to always act in a disciplined way requires learners to become “little educators” and educators to evolve into positive, caring role models. According to Mtshali (1993:2) those who are old should be role models to the youth. The youth should emerge as the envy of the world; as monuments of order and discipline. Mtshali (1993:2) further maintains that educators must not simply be guardians and custodians of order and discipline, but importantly be exemplary, that is, people whose personality is the very essence of order and discipline.

4.4.5 Clarity of policies, rules and regulations

According to Kruger (1997:37) a policy can be regarded as a general statement that permits a person to make decisions within certain rigid boundaries. A policy cannot be equated with rules and procedures, but these three things are related because a policy inevitably leads to rules and regulations that ensure that the policy is executed. According to Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1993:63) policy formulation is regarded as that management task by means of which guidelines for behaviour are set up, and according to which objectives are attained. Squelch (1993:239) also expressed the view that in order to promote good behaviour, it is necessary for schools to have policies on the issue of discipline which would include the details of school rules and expected behaviour, as well as the consequence of deviant behaviour. McPhillimy (1996:40) and Burden (1995:111) explain that for learners not to breach the rules, they must obviously learn what the rules are. They also need to know what will happen if they breach the rules.

In line with all these pronouncements, the educators that were interviewed held the

opinion that schools must have classroom and school discipline policies that will enable learners to behave appropriately. Since “the school policy serves as the guidelines and directs the school in the proper direction” (P13), expected behaviour in the school and in classes, and the consequences of not behaving, should be clearly laid out (P12, P15, R2). Educator R2 regarded “the school policy as the heart of the school, or the engine of the school, because the discipline of the school is centered around the school policy”

When this study commenced, the researcher observed and noted that some of the schools in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga do not have school discipline policies, written rules or codes of conduct. It was also observed that some of the educators did not have classroom rules in their classes. Smit’s (2007:27) observation that many schools in South Africa have no written rules or codes of conduct, and that learners take advantage of this seems to be also true for the present sample. In such situations innocent learners become victims of sexual abuse and bullying and often no disciplinary action is taken against the perpetrators. As a result children feel that they need to protect themselves by bringing weapons to school.

4.4.6 The professional conduct of the educator

An interesting theme which emerged from the analysis of the transcripts is the respondents’ insistence that, in order to avoid ill-disciplined behaviour amongst learners, educators must act ethically in their work places. According to respondents P13 and R2 educators should act as the representatives of society in general and of the adult members of the community in particular. They “need to know that they are representations of the parents at school and they must not allow themselves to be looked down upon by learners”. These views correspond with that of Van Wyk (1983:76) who maintains that the educator’s conduct should at all times be such that it promotes the regard for and the status of the teaching profession. Ngoepe (1997:32) also argues that educators should act as the representatives of the society, especially of the adult members of the community. They should ensure that the moral values that are deemed highly by the different communities from which the learners come, are passed on to the learners.

4.4.7 Involving learners in decision-making

In the last instance the study revealed that, according to the respondents, educators should ensure that they involve their learners when they are formulating school rules and taking decisions that directly affect the learners. After all, the learners will only consider the agreements to be fair if such agreements are reached amicably. In addition, educators should ensure that the learners understand the agreements made between them and the educators. If both parties are involved in the decision-making process, then they share the responsibility and a climate of self-discipline is created and maintained (P12, R3, R5). Especially educator R3 held a firm view in this regard: “Learners have to be involved to a greater extent. This will make them to feel valued, recognized, and allow them to take more responsibility and ownership of these classroom rules”.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the findings of the research. The objective was to explore and describe the experiences of educators concerning learner discipline in the school and the classroom situation. The categories, themes and topics extracted from the study were presented. Simultaneously a brief literature check was undertaken in order to contextualize the findings of the study.

Chapter five will focus on the conclusions emanating from the findings and the formulation of guidelines for educators to effectively and efficiently implement and maintain discipline in the school and classroom situation. This chapter will also contain recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter four the researcher undertook a data analysis and interpretation of the research results. This chapter will conclude the study by focusing on a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the investigation and related recommendations. Themes for further research will also be identified.

5.2 THE PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION: A REMINDER

As indicated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this investigation was to examine the role of educators in the management of discipline in the absence of corporal punishment. It was assumed that school managers are not able to manage and maintain discipline in schools without the support of educators and parents.

The research also sought to identify strategies that can be used to inculcate educators' willingness and need to contribute constructively to the promotion of school discipline. The researcher envisaged providing assistance to educators to accept and accommodate learners in such a way that they can learn in a physically safe and orderly environment which should contribute to overall academic improvement in schools.

Against this background the investigation was guided by the following main research question: What is the role of educators in the establishment and maintenance of effective discipline in the school and classroom? Additional questions that were posed, were the following:

- How should educators manage their classes in order to maintain discipline?

- How can educators contribute to discipline in the school in general?
- What are the perceptions of educators in the Nkangala region of Mpumalanga with regard to a safe school environment characterized by sound discipline amongst learners?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of educators with regard to discipline in schools?

Therefore the general aim of this study was to investigate how educators contribute to discipline in their particular schools. In order to attain the general aim of the investigation, a number of more specific objectives were formulated, namely to:

- determine what the experiences of educators from the selected schools were regarding learner discipline in the school and classroom.
- analyse and discuss the rights and duties of educators with regard to discipline in schools.
- examine the perceptions of educators with regard to a disciplined school environment.
- provide guidelines and recommendations pertaining to the effective involvement of educators in school discipline.

5.3 THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE

In the following sections conclusions regarding the role of educators in the establishment and maintenance of discipline will be discussed.

5.3.1 The (theoretical) perceptions of educators in Nkangala concerning discipline

Educators expected their learners to respect them and not to disregard their authority, to wear school uniforms, not to make undue noise, to complete their work on time and to cooperate with educators in whatever they are doing (cf section 4.2.1.2). Learners were also expected to attend school regularly and not to absent themselves from school without good reasons (cf section 4.2.1.2). Educators expected learners to arrive at school and in class on time (cf section 4.2.1.3) and not to neglect their schoolwork (cf section 4.2.1.4). They also expected learners not to bring drugs to school or abuse harmful substances on the school premises (cf section 4.2.1.5.1) and not to endanger the lives of others (cf section 4.2.1.5.2), because this will lead learners into a life of misery and crime. Learners were also expected not to engage in promiscuity at school, the inevitable result of which may be untimely and unwanted pregnancy (cf section 4.2.1.5.3).

Educators felt that the presence of a positive attitude between the learners and educators is a characteristic of a disciplined school (cf section 4.4.1). They also felt that a disciplined school is characterised by the support of parents when activities and functions are performed related to the maintenance of school discipline (cf section 4.4.4). The educators involved in the study seemed to feel that for discipline to be maintained in the classroom and in the school in general, the relevant communities and other stakeholders such as NGOs, correctional service workers, social workers, parents, health sector workers, educational psychologists, media, the Department of Education, SGBs, School Management teams and learners should be involved in all school activities. According to them all these parties should share the responsibility of creating and maintaining an environment which is conducive to teaching and learning (cf sections 4.2.2.1, 4.2.2.2 and 4.4.3). They also expressed the view that an orderly school requires sound leadership. The successful leader is someone who sets the tone for a purposeful school climate and someone who generates the creativity and participation of educators in sharing their requirements with others (cf section 4.4.5). They also held the opinion that schools must have classroom and school discipline policies that will enable learners to behave appropriately (cf section 4.4.6). They further believed that all

educators need to set an example in terms of their own punctuality, in the way that they deal with people, in their expectations of learner behaviour and in the support that they give to one another. They should also ensure that they act ethically in their work places (cf sections 4.3.6.2 and 4.4.7). Educators further held strong views with regard to training in the areas of discipline and classroom management strategies (cf section 4.3.7). The provincial department of education should be requested to offer seminars, workshops and conferences on suitable discipline management strategies which would enable educators to discipline learners. The study also revealed that educators expected learners to be involved when school rules had to be formulated and decisions had to be taken which would directly affect learners. Only if agreements are reached amicably would learners consider agreements to be fair. (cf section 4.4.8).

5.3.2 The actual role / experiences of educators in the maintenance of discipline in the Nkangala region

From the interviews with educators it became evident that overcrowded classrooms are regarded as one of the most important factors that hamper the creation of a favourable classroom environment in which educators can teach successfully. Some of the educators stated that they were teaching more than 60 learners in one classroom and found it difficult to identify and assist learners with reading, writing and other learning problems. As far as discipline is concerned, there appears to be little doubt that overcrowded classrooms are fertile breeding grounds for demonstrating different types of deviant behaviour (cf section 4.3.5).

Interviews with educators indicated that even though the use of corporal punishment is illegal, many educators persisted in using it as a strategy to discipline learners (cf section 4.3.2). The study also revealed that educators were not consistent when they applied disciplinary measures against learners (cf section 4.3.6.1).

Educators regarded some of their colleagues as poor role models for learners which, according to them, is also a contributing factor to learner indiscipline that causes

disruptive behaviour in schools (cf section 4.3.6.2). For example, some of the educators were coming late to school. Respondents also complained about poor relationships between learners and educators (cf section 4.3.6.3). For example, some of the educators don't insist on discipline while others do insist on discipline. The latter type of educator is often disliked by learners.

The respondents also experienced a lack of training in the area of discipline and classroom management strategies. They felt that they needed further training in these areas (cf section 4.3.7) and expected the provincial department of education to offer seminars, workshops and conferences on suitable management strategies which would enable them to discipline learners successfully.

5.3.2.1 The role of educators in individual classes

A possibility exists that many educators have limited knowledge of disciplinary strategies and therefore most disciplinary measures tend to be reactive, punitive, humiliating and punishing rather than corrective and nurturing. However, more research is required to determine whether this possibility can be regarded as reality. It appears as though educators often find themselves in classroom situations where they are confronted with a lack of suitable strategies to handle behavioural problems.

The ability to maintain an orderly, disciplined classroom environment is essential if teaching and learning are to occur. Educators must be able to seek guidance and support when faced with the intolerable problem of disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. As professionals, educators need to discuss such problems with their colleagues and managers in an open, confident way. Classroom educators need to manage discipline in a caring, confident manner. They also need to be managed in a caring and confident manner. Judging from the results of this study, these aspects are to a large extent lacking in the schools that were involved in the research (cf sections 4.3.6.1 and 4.3.7).

5.3.2.2 The role of educators in the school in general

Beyond their responsibility for educating, educators are also held responsible for the moral development of learners in order for them to become law-abiding citizens. This means that within the school community educators are expected to respond in a controlling fashion to violations of the institutional rules of the school. Such violations include theft, bullying, vandalism, arguing with educators and flouting of educators' authority. This study indicated that a school will function effectively if there is discipline in it. Discipline cannot be promoted if the school has no rules and regulations or a code of conduct that the learners must conform to (cf sections 2.2.1.2 and 4.2.1).

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that they provide an effective curriculum delivered in a safe and secure environment. Any behaviour that challenges a learner's ability to learn should be managed. Educators and learners need support systems to deal with difficulties concerning discipline. Equally, all educators and learners need to recognize the significance of their role within the school community. All members of the school community should feel respected, safe and be able to participate in the daily routine of the school life. Communication is critical, as educators need to know what is available to help them manage their classroom effectively. They are also required to develop good relationships with all learners in order to enhance their learning. This study indicated that there must be collaboration between educators, community members, other stakeholders and learners (cf sections 2.2.1.4, 4.4.2.1, 4.4.2.3 and 4.4.5).

Educators must help learners to develop social skills which are: the ability to evaluate and to use constructively the difference of opinions, abilities and personalities shown by any group, the ability to differ from the opinions of another person without the disturbance of a friendly personal relationship, the ability to arrive at a consensus on a controversial matter, and the ability to play the role either of leader or follower. Such social skills are of great value in dealing with the misunderstandings which arise between different cultures. It is the greatest responsibility of the educator to inculcate among learners acceptable values of life, like co-operation, friendliness, love of justice,

love of truth and an appreciation of the contributions of others. This study also indicated that educators should have the ability to inculcate among learners acceptable values of life, like cooperation, friendliness, love of justice and an appreciation of the contribution of others (cf sections 2.3.9 and 4.4.1).

5.3.3 The expected role of educators in the maintenance of discipline

Effective and efficient teaching and learning cannot take place if there is no discipline, order and control in the classroom situation. Educators have the responsibility to maintain discipline at all times in schools and classrooms so that the education of learners flourishes without disruptive behaviour and offences (cf sections 1.1, 2.1 and 4.2.1.1). Discipline make learners aware that there is order in the world and that certain types of behaviour are punished while others types of behaviour are rewarded to maintain this order. For this reason the learners are controlled through rules and regulations. When these rules and regulations are formulated, learners should be involved so that they can get a clear understanding of what is expected of them as well as the consequences of both desirable and undesirable behaviour. Learners are also expected to obey and follow the authority of the educators and not to disregard their authority (cf section 4.2.1.1). The results from this study confirmed the view that educators are responsible to maintain discipline at all times in the school and classroom situation so that learning and teaching can take place (cf sections 4.3.3 and 4.4.4).

5.3.4 The rights and responsibilities of educators with regard to the maintenance of discipline

Educators have a right to parental backing when maintaining and disciplining learners in the schools. The parent community, learners and educators should promote the acceptance and responsibility for the organization and governance of schools in partnership with the state. This denotes that parents are by law compelled to participate in school activities (cf section 4.4.3). Active parent involvement is essential in running a successful school. The parent community should actively participate and be drawn into

school activities and not only in auxiliary services, but also in areas of planning and financing. Educators have a right to be respected by learners (cf section 2.4.3.2). Educators have a right to teach in a safe environment in which learners can learn, work and play and gain respect for others; an environment in which they can teach without fear and disruptions. Their authority and instructions must be obeyed and followed by all learners (cf section 4.2.1.1). The results from this study also indicated that educators have a right to parental backing and to be respected by learners when they are maintaining discipline in the school and classroom situation (cf sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.6).

An important responsibility of an educator is to maintain discipline. (cf section 1.3). For discipline to be maintained in the classroom situations, educators should ensure that they establish and maintain certain classroom rules. These will assist them to do their professional work effectively and their classes will be managed properly.

Learners are expected to move into the world skilled and fully prepared for meeting the demands of life. Educators have a responsibility to prepare them to perform excellently in the community as well as in the corporate world (cf section 2.4.3.3).

In order to avoid ill-disciplined behaviour amongst learners, educators must act ethically in their work places. They should act as representatives of the society in general and of adult members of the community in particular. They should also ensure that the moral values deemed high by the different communities from which learners come, are passed on to the learners (cf section 2.2.1.3). The results from this study also indicated that educators should act ethically in their work places. Educators should ensure that they are always exemplary to their learners (cf sections 4.4.4 and 4.4.6).

5.4 THE RESEARCHER'S ASSUMPTIONS CONCERNING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGERS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the role of educators in the management of discipline in the absence of corporal punishment. It was assumed that school managers are not able to manage and maintain discipline in schools without the support of educators and parents (cf section 1.2). It seems as if this assumption corresponds with the findings of the present study as the transcripts of the interviews contain unmistakable evidence that the school managers (similar to the educators) are receiving minimal support from the parents and this has allegedly contributed to the general lack of learner discipline. According to the respondents (and by implication also the school managers), they receive minimal support from the parents mainly because a large number of learners are staying with their grandparents and do not have regular contact with their parents. Parents seem to be reluctant to come to school to discuss the academic and behavioural problems of their children (cf section 4.3.4.1).

According to the respondents parents should be intimately involved in school activities because when they are involved, their children will feel secure and consequently perform better (cf section 4.4.4). The study also revealed that school managers should not be regarded as poor role models for learners because that can contribute to a lack of learner discipline and especially to disruptive behaviour in schools (cf section 4.3.6.2). According to the respondents, in order to avoid ill-disciplined behaviour amongst the learners, school managers must act professionally in their work places (cf section 4.4.7). The process of establishing and implementing discipline should involve collaborative decision-making. Therefore the school managers should ensure that the educators and parents have the opportunity to participate in decision-making as appropriate. The support of these stakeholders is important for discipline to be maintained in the school situations.

5.5 STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED FOR THE PROMOTION OF DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOLS IN THE NKANGALA REGION

Interviews with educators have indicated that educators do experience problems with learner discipline in schools. The following points will possibly assist educators to alleviate the problems in the school and classroom situations:

5.5.1 Educators should provide educational assistance to learners

Educators should guide learners towards judging their own behaviour. Instead of passing judgment on violators' actions, educators should ask questions that encourage learners to judge their own behaviour. They should stay focused and, if necessary, help the learners to accept ownership for their problems.

Educators should guide learners to create plans for improving future behaviour. They should ask the learners to formulate alternative ways of behaving the next time they are confronted with similar situations. They must monitor learners' plans to help ensure success. Educators should build learners' commitment to their plans by giving them feedback and reinforcement. Learners will feel more committed if educators acknowledge the validity of their plans. Doing this could be as simple as eye contact and a smile, or a pat on the back, or as complex as a scheduled meeting to discuss their plans and requirements for success.

Educators should deal with the present (not the past). The purpose of a responsibility plan is to teach learners new behaviour for the future. Past mistakes should not be relived or thrown up on learners.

Educators should not allow excuses. Excuses serve only to pass on or avoid responsibility. They must not even entertain a discussion about excuses. Instead, they must ask learners what they could do the next time they are confronted with similar situations.

5.5.2 Educators should work as a team when they are executing their professional duties

Educators should never underestimate the value of teamwork in their profession. They should not be expected to work only on their own. The following points will possibly assist educators in dealing with their professional duties:

If educators have difficulties or problems of any kind they should ask other colleagues in their schools for advice. They can learn a great deal from one another. A group of staff could meet once a week for 30 minutes. Each week, an educator should take a turn to briefly summarize a specific problem: this could be about, for example, finding an appropriate method to a teaching task or managing behaviour. The other educators can brainstorm possible ways of dealing with this problem. The educator should then select theories, which seem to offer promising explanations. Head educators have an important role to play in developing initiatives such as these. Educators can also form teams that deal with various aspects such as late coming, bunking classes and discipline in general. Learners will eventually become aware that educators work as a team and they will know that they will not receive sympathy from any educator if they misbehave.

An educator must also take time to observe how other educators manage their classes and invite colleagues to watch him/her teaching. Together they can discuss which teaching methods /disciplinary actions worked well and they can identify areas that are in need of improvement.

In addition, schools can send educators on training courses. Afterwards, educators who attended a course should be encouraged to give presentations to their colleagues and share any resources they obtained.

Amongst other things, this study revealed that educators are not consistent in applying disciplinary measures against learners. All the educators and others involved with the

learners at schools should agree on a common approach to responding to learners' behaviour, especially in the use of rewards and punishments. Educators should apply disciplinary measures consistently so that learners will understand school and classroom rules and stick to them.

5.5.3 Educators must adopt various strategies to motivate and encourage learners to learn

Educators should reward learners when they are behaving appropriately and have successfully completed their work. They should do this through praise and class recognition. Any plan for dealing with inappropriate behaviour must include the encouragement of positive behaviour. Otherwise the learners learn what they are not to do, but they have not learnt what they should do.

5.5.4 Schools should have discipline policies

Observations by the researcher indicated that some of the schools are operating without discipline policies. It is imperative that all schools must have discipline policies in order to function successfully. The schools' discipline policies must specify clearly consequences for misbehaviour. Schools need to work out policies on suspending and expelling learners from schools because of their behaviour. This means that all educators have to follow the same procedures at a particular school in order to ensure that all learners are treated fairly. The policies should describe what unacceptable behaviour is, the actions that will be taken by class educators and the schools when rules are breached, the contact with families and the length of time learners can be suspended. Schools have to follow the correct administrative procedures when disciplining learners as prescribed in Section 8-10 of the South African Schools Act and Section 33 of the Constitution.

5.5.5 Learners must be informed as to what is expected of them in the school and classroom situations

Educators should ensure that learners are informed as to what is expected of them and

what action will be taken against them if they breach school rules and regulations or behave in an unacceptable manner. Parents need to be constantly informed of these expectations while educators need to work together and be consistent when disciplining learners.

5.5.6 Educators must have classroom rules

Classroom rules are regarded to be the general behaviour standards or expectations that are to be followed. They comprise a code of conduct intended to regulate individual behaviour in an attempt to avoid disruptive behaviour. Rules guide the way that learners interact with each other, prepare for class and conduct themselves during the classes. Classroom rules ensure that the classroom policy is carried out.

When this study was undertaken, the researcher observed and noted that many educators did not have classroom rules in their classes. Educators should ensure that learners contribute in the drawing up of classroom rules. It is important to involve the learners when the rules are formulated because it shows confidence in their ability to cooperate by setting reasonable rules and it also increases the likelihood that the learners will adhere to the rules because they assisted in formulating them. They should ensure that the learners understand the agreements made between them and the learners and they will consider them to be fair if agreements were reached amicably. The rules should be consistent with the discipline policy of the school.

Educators should also ensure that their classroom rules are presented clearly and concisely. Classroom rules should include the following three parts:

- Rules that the learners should follow.
- Consequences of breaching the rules.
- Rewards when learners follow the rules.

Rewards and incentives should be available to influence the learners to follow the rules and the classroom rules must be clearly displayed on the notice board.

5.5.7 Educators must be regarded as good role models

Educators should act as role models for their learners. If they behave unethically, they will damage their own self and they will lose the trust and respect of both their learners and the community. Educators therefore must behave the same way they want their learners to behave (cf section 4.3.6.2).

5.5.8 There must be positive relationships between learners and educators

The presence of positive relationships and attitudes between educators, learners and parents is perceived as a characteristic of a functional and disciplined school. There must be positive relationships between these stakeholders.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Much has been written on the topic of school discipline. However, in the course of this investigation, the researcher has come to the conclusion that even more research is required. Future researchers may wish to consider conducting research on the following:

The relationships between the leadership style of both school principals and educators and effective school discipline.

Innovative ways in which the community can assist educators and parents to promote discipline in schools.

Reasons for a lack of work ethics amongst educators and the extent to which educators' involvement in various forms of misconduct precipitates a culture of ill-discipline in schools.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research study does have certain limitations, inter alia:

- Some educators were reluctant to be interviewed especially when they realized that the researcher was using a tape- recorder.
- It was very difficult to assess the level of honesty with which the educators answered the questions. For example, seven of the 21 educators regarded overcrowded classroom as problematic and said that they find it impossible to teach and maintain discipline in such large classes. However, the majority of the educators interviewed (14 out of 21) regarded the maintenance of discipline in large classes (comprising 40 or more learners) as “easy” (cf section 4.3.5).

5.8 FINAL WORD

Discipline is important for the smooth functioning of any school. While the lack of learner discipline at schools is emerging as a serious problem, educators should see this as an opportunity to introduce innovative approaches to managing learner behaviour. The issue of discipline in schools needs urgent attention. Discipline develops self-discipline in the learners, which will lead to the improvement of the society in its entirety. Unmotivated and ill-disciplined learners have a serious effect on the instructional effectiveness of educators. Educators lose joy in teaching. They have a feeling of anger and frustration that ends up affecting both learning and teaching negatively. Effective and efficient teaching and learning will not take place if there is no discipline.

The real essence of education is assisting learners to learn to exercise self-discipline, self-control, self-direction, teach them about a reasonable degree of social conformity and move towards a happy fulfilled life. A lack of parental support in schools is also a contributory factor to a lack of learner discipline

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APPENDIX A

J. Mtsweni
P.O. Box 1562
KWANHLANGA
1022
18 - 07 - 2007

The Regional Director of the Nkangala Region
Mpumalanga Department of Education
Private Bag X4021
KWAMHLANGA
1022

Dear Sir

RE: RESEARCH WORK

As a Master of Education candidate at the University of South Africa working with Prof JJ Booysse, I am engaged in a research study entitled: **‘THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE NKANGALA REGION OF MPUMALANGA’**.

The Senior Secondary School educators will form part of the study and their participation is highly important.

I am therefore requesting your permission to conduct this study and involve the educators in this study

Your permission to secure data for this study will be deeply appreciated.

J. MTSWENI (MED STUDENT)

PROF J.J BOOYSE
SUPERVISOR

Ref: 570 – 867 – 2

Principal: Mloyisani Sec School (Kwaggafontein West Circuit)

NB: URGENT REPLY PLEASE.

APPENDIX B

P.O. Box 1562
KWAMHLANGA
1022
DATE:

To: The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: RESEARCH WORK

Your school has been selected to take part in a research study entitled: **‘THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE NKANGALA REGION OF MPUMALANGA’**.

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has approved this research to proceed. Your educators will form part of the study.

It is envisaged that the results of this study could assist in the successful improvement in the management of school discipline in future.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

J MTSWENI (MED STUDENT)
Ref: 570 - 867 – 2

PROF J J BOOYSE
SUPERVISOR

APPENDIX C

MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Building No.5
Government Complex
KWAMHLANGA
1022
Republic of South Africa



Private Bag X 4021
KWAMHLANGA
1022
South Africa
Tel (013) 9471500
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EMAIL - jjmbena@wif.mpu.gov.za
pdebeer@wif.mpu.gov.za

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NKANGALA REGION

Litiko leTemfundvo umNyango weFundo Departement van Onderwys Department of Education

ENQ: S.M KABINI
013 947 3738

**TO: MR. J MTSWENI
 P.O.BOX 1562
 KWAMHLANGA
 1022**

RE: RESEARCH WORK

1. We are hereby acknowledge receipt of your letter on the above matter dated 18 July 2007.
2. Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct the research on the topic mentioned in your letter.
3. Thank you.


REGIONAL DIRECTOR

2007.07.20
DATE

APPENDIX D

STANDARD ETHICS PROTOCOL

My name is Jim Mtsweni. I am a researcher on a project entitled: **‘THE ROLE OF EDUCATORS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE IN THE NKANGALA REGION OF MPUMALANGA’**. This study is supervised by Prof J J Booysse of the University of South Africa. He may be contacted at these phone numbers: 012 429 4353/082 2808 663 should you have any questions.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. Your participation is very much appreciated. Just before we start the interview, I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this project you have several very definite rights.

First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.

You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

This interview will be kept strictly confidential and will be available only to members of the research team.

Excepts of this interview may be made part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in the report.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that I have read you its contents.

_____ (Signed)

_____ (Printed)

_____ (Dated)

J MTSWENI (MED STUDENT)
Ref: 570 – 867 - 2

PROF J J BOOYSE
SUPERVISOR