

**DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING  
LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR  
RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO  
MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

by  
**MOSHE MOSES MABEA**

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## DECLARATION

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, declare that: *Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province* 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.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originally checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or any other higher education institution”.

Signature



08767963

**Moshe Moses Mabea**

**Student number**

28 February 2021

**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my dear departed mother, Anna Motshidisi Mabea, whom I miss every day. To her, I am forever grateful for having brought me up to become what I am today.

My heartfelt gratitude is due to my family:

- My wife Berlina Mabea, for her understanding heart and support.
- My son Tshepo Mabea and my daughter, Itumeleng Mabea, you guys are special.

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## **ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS (ENGLISH)**

The recognition and promotion of children's rights has brought about many changes that impact learners' status and their education. Recognising learners' rights has always been and still is, a controversial issue. The aim of this study was to research learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop management strategies for promoting learner commitment. The researcher conducted a qualitative, multiple case study research, employing multiple data-collection methods, such as, a literature study, in-depth interviews and qualitative questionnaires. Using multiple data-collection methods enabled me to ensure validity of the data through triangulation. To secure information-rich participants, the researcher used criterion-based purposive sampling. Common indicators of learners' non-commitment that were found to be present in all four participating schools were: absenteeism, failure to do homework, bunking of classes, boys belonging to gangs and teenage pregnancy. Factors such as lack of parental involvement, unmotivated learners, educators as poor role models and poor relationships between educators and learners were found to hamper learner commitment in the selected schools. The researcher developed a guide with generic guidelines that the schools could use to formulate a mission, vision and development goal that will sufficiently emphasise the importance of learners' own commitment to the realisation of their right to education. He also used the threats and weaknesses identified in relation to (1) learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy and their perspectives on those rights and responsibilities, (2) factors hampering learners' commitment, (3) strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education, to inform recommendations. Thereafter, strategies were suggested on how these schools could give effect to the recommendations.

**Key words:** learner commitment, management strategies, learners' responsibilities, learners' rights, realisation of rights, right to education.

## **ABSTRAK EN SLEUTELWOORDE (AFRIKAANS)**

Die erkenning en bevordering van kinderregte het baie veranderinge tot gevolg gehad wat 'n impak op leerders se status en hulle onderrig het. Die erkenning van leerders se regte was nog altyd en is steeds 'n kontroversiële kwessie. Die doel van hierdie studie was om leerders se toewyding aan die vervulling van hul reg op onderrig in sekondêre skole in die Thabo Mofutsanyana distrik in die Vrystaat na te vors, en om die bevindinge te gebruik om bestuurstrategieë vir die bevordering van leerdertoewyding te ontwikkel. Kwalitatiewe veelvuldige gevallestudienavorsing is onderneem en veelvuldige data-inwinmetodes is gebruik, byvoorbeeld 'n literatuurstudie, diepte-onderhoude en kwalitatiewe vraelyste. Die gebruik van veelvuldige dataversamelingsmetodes het die navorser in staat gestel om die geldigheid van die data deur triangulasie moontlik te maak. Ten einde te verseker dat inligtingryke deelnemers uitgesoek is, is kriteriagebaseerde doelbewuste steekproefneming gebruik. Die teenwoordigheid van gemeenskaplike aanwysers van leerders se nie-toewyding in al vier deelnemende skole sluit in: afwesigheid, versuiming om tuiswerk te doen, nie-bywoning van klasse, seuns wat aan bendes behoort en tienerswangerskappe. Daar is bevind dat faktore soos die gebrek aan ouerbetrokkenheid, ongemotiveerde leerders, opvoeders wat swak rolmodelle is, en swak verhoudings tussen opvoeders en leerders die toewyding van leerders in die betrokke skole belemmer. 'n Gids met generiese riglyne is ontwikkel wat skole kan gebruik om 'n missie, visie en ontwikkelingsdoelwit te formuleer wat op doeltreffende wyse die belangrikheid van leerders se eie toewyding tot hul reg op onderrig sal beklemtoon. Die bedreiging en swakpunte wat identifiseer is met betrekking tot (1) leerders se regte en verantwoordelikhede teenoor hul reg op onderrig in terme van die reg en beleid en hulle perspektiewe op daardie regte en verantwoordelikhede, (2) faktore wat leerders se toewyding belemmer, (3) strategieë wat skoolbestuurders en opvoeders tans gebruik om leerders se toewyding tot die besef van hul reg op onderrig te bevorder is gebruik om aanbevelings te maak. Vervolgens is strategieë voorgestel oor hoe hierdie skole uitdrukking aan sodanige aanbevelings kan gee.

**Sleutelwoorde:** leerdertoewyding, bestuurstrategieë, leerders se verantwoordelikhede, leerders se regte, vervulling van regte, die reg op onderrig.

## **KAKARETSO LE MANTSWE A SEHLOOHO (SESOTHO)**

Ho lemohuwa le ho phahamiswa ha ditokelo tsa bana ho tlisitse diphetho tse ngata tse amang maemo a baithuti le thuto ya bona. Ho lemoha ditokelo tsa baithuti esale e le taba e bakang kgang ebile ho ntse ho le jwalo. Morero wa phuputso ke ho etsa dipatlisiso tsa boitlamo ba baithuti ho phethahatseng tokelo ya bona ya thuto dikolong tse mahareng Seterekeng sa Thabo Mofutsanyana, Porofensing ya Foreisitata le ho sebedisa diphetho ho ntlafatsa maano a taolo bakeng sa ho phahamisa boitlamo ba baithuti. Ke ile ka etsa dipatlisiso tsa maemo a mangata tsa boleng, ka sebedisa mekgwa e mengata ya ho bokella lesedi, jwalo ka phuputso ya dingolweng, dipuisano tse tebileng le mathathamo a dipotso a boleng. Ho sebedisa mekgwa e mengata ya ho bokella lesedi ho ile ha nthusa hore ke netefatse ho nepahala ha lesedi ka mokgwa wa ho hokanya ka ho nepahala. Ho etsa bonnete bah ore ke lekola bankakarolo ba ruileng tlhahisoleseding, ke sebedisitse mehlala e ipapisang le sepheo. Dipontsho tse tlwaelehileng tsa ho se itlame ha baithuti tse fumanweng di le teng dikolong tse nne tse nkang karolo ke: ho lofa, ho hloleha ho etsa mosebetsi wa sekolo, ho se ye diphaposing, bashanyana ba kenang dikenkeng, le ho ima ha batjha. Mabaka a jwalo ka kgaello ya ho nka karolo ha batswadi, baithuti ba se nang boikemisetso, matitjhere e le mehlala e mebe, le dikamano tse mpe dipakeng tsa matitjhere le baithuti di fumanwe di sitisa boitlamo ba baithuti dikolong tse kgethilweng. Ke ntlafaditse tataiso e nang le ditataiso tse akaretsang tseo dikolo di ka di sebedisang ho theha sepheo, pono le sepheo sa ntlafatso se tla hatisa ka ho lekana bohlokwa ba boitlamo ba baithuti ho phethahatseng tokelo ya bona ya thuto. Ke boetse ke sebedisitse dikotsi le bofokodi tse hlwauweng mabapi le (1) ditokelo le boikarabello ba baithuti mabapi le tokelo ya bona ya thuto ho latela molao le leano le maikutlo a bona mabapi le ditokelo le boikarabello tseo, (2) mabaka a sitisang boitlamo ba baithuti, (3) maano ao batsamaisi ba dikolo le matitjhere ba a sebedisang hajwale ho kgothaletsa boitlamo ba baithuti ho phethahatseng tokelo ya bona ya thuto, ho fana ka ditlhahiso. Kamora moo ho ile ha hlahiswa maano a hore na ditokelo tsena di ka etsa jwang ho fihlela dikgothaletso tse jwalo.

**Mantswe a sehlooho:** boitlamo ba baithuti, maano a tsamaiso, boikarabello ba baithuti, litokelo tsa baithuti, , phethahatso ea litokelo, tokelo ya thuto.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT AND KEY WORDS (ENGLISH)</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRAK EN SLEUTELWOORDE (AFRIKAANS)</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>KAKARETSO LE MANTSWE A SEHLOOHO (SESOTHO)</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>xiii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>TITLES OF LAWS AND POLICIES</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY .....	2
1.3 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY .....	4
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	5
1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY .....	8
1.5.1 Aim .....	8
1.5.2 Research objectives .....	8
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	8
1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	9
1.8 CONCEPTUALISATION AND OPERATIONALISATION OF KEY CONCEPTS .....	11
1.8.1 Right to education.....	11
1.8.2 Learner.....	12
1.8.3 Public school .....	12
1.8.4 Commitment .....	12
1.8.5 Learner responsibilities.....	13
1.8.6 Management strategies .....	13
1.9 Theoretical framework .....	14
1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	15
1.10.1 Literature review.....	15



1.10.2	Research paradigm .....	16
1.10.3	Research approach.....	19
1.10.3.1	The role of the researcher .....	20
1.10.4	Research design .....	21
1.10.5	Population and sampling .....	22
1.10.6	Data collection methods .....	24
1.10.7	Data analysis and interpretation methods.....	30
1.11	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	31
1.12	CHAPTER DIVISION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT .....	35
1.13	CONCLUSION.....	36
<b>CHAPTER 2.....</b>		<b>37</b>
<b>LITERATURE STUDY AND REVIEW: LEARNER COMMITMENT .....</b>		<b>37</b>
2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	37
2.2	AN OVERVIEW OF WHO A LEARNER IS IN TERMS OF THE LAW .....	38
2.2.1	Learners as legal subjects and rights holders .....	38
2.2.2	Learners as children.....	39
2.2.3	Learner as partners and members of the school population .....	40
2.3	CHILDREN’S RIGHTS .....	40
2.3.1	Conceptualisation of children’s rights.....	41
2.3.2	Theories, origin and development of children’s rights.....	42
2.3.3	Rights to, in and through education as described in the Constitution .....	45
2.4	LEARNERS’ DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION .....	49
2.4.1	The responsibility to attend school.....	50
2.4.2	The responsibility to learn .....	52
2.4.3	The responsibility to abide by the school rules .....	55
2.4.4	Learners’ responsibility to behave well.....	56
2.4.5	Responsibilities with regard to personal well-being.....	56
2.5	LEARNER COMMITMENT .....	58
2.5.1	Learner commitment conceptualised.....	58
2.5.2	Learner ethics .....	62
2.5.3	Factors that prompt learners not to be committed to their education .....	63
2.6	CONCLUSION.....	69

<b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING LEARNER COMMITMENT</b>	<b>71</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION .....	71
3.2 MANAGING LEARNER COMMITMENT .....	71
3.3 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE LEARNER COMMITMENT ..	74
3.3.2. Leadership theories promoting learner commitment.....	81
3.3.3 Adopting a leadership style to promote learner commitment.....	86
3.3.4 Adopt a disciplinary model to promote learner commitment.....	88
3.3.5 Establish a Culture of Learning to promote Learner Commitment.....	93
3.3.6 Promoting learner accountability.....	96
3.3.7 Using learner motivation to promote learner commitment .....	97
3.3.8 Creating a supportive relationship framework .....	99
3.4 CONCLUSION.....	101
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>102</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	102
4.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH .....	102
4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	103
4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING .....	104
4.4.1 Population.....	104
4.4.2 Sampling.....	104
4.5 DATA COLLECTION .....	106
4.5.1 Data collection procedure.....	106
4.5.2 Data collection methods .....	107
4.6 DATA ANALYSIS.....	120
4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS .....	122
4.7.1 Transferability .....	122
4.7.2 Credibility.....	123
4.7.3 Dependability .....	123
4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	125
4.8.1 Voluntary participation.....	126
4.8.2 Violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.....	126
4.8.3 Deception of the participants.....	127

4.8.4	Plagiarism .....	127
4.9	CONCLUSION.....	127
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>		<b>128</b>
<b>DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....</b>		<b>128</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION .....	128
5.2	THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS.....	128
5.3	FINDINGS EMERGING FROM THE DATA .....	133
5.3.1	Theme 1: Learners’ rights and responsibilities.....	134
5.3.2	Theme 2: Learners not committed to their own education.....	147
5.3.3	Theme 3: Management of learner commitment .....	184
5.3	CONCLUSION.....	195
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>		<b>196</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>		<b>196</b>
6.1	INTRODUCTION .....	196
6.2	SUMMARY OF THE STUDY.....	196
6.3	SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS .....	198
6.3.1	Summary of the findings from the literature study.....	198
6.3.2	Summary of the findings from the case studies.....	199
6.4	CONCLUSIONS .....	204
6.5	RECOMMENDATIONS .....	206
6.5.1	Learner commitment management strategies .....	206
6.6	SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	234
6.6.1	Training in managing learner commitment .....	234
6.6.2	Participants involved in the research.....	234
6.7	ASSUMPTIONS.....	235
6.8	CHAPTER CONCLUSION .....	235
6.9	A FINAL WORD.....	235
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>		<b>236</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>		<b>259</b>
	APPENDIX A: Contribution to the Education Charter .....	259
	APPENDIX B: Response .....	260
	APPENDIX C: Permission letter (notification) from Free State Department of Basic Education.....	261

APPENDIX D: Permission letter (approval) from Free State Department Of Basic Education.....	262
APPENDIX E: Ethical clearance certificate .....	263
APPENDIX F: Letter to schools requesting permission to conduct research.....	265
APPENDIX G: Letter requesting principal to participate in an interview.....	266
APPENDIX H: Consent form for the principal .....	267
APPENDIX I: Letter requesting deputy principal to participate in an interview .....	268
APPENDIX J: Consent form for the deputy principal.....	269
APPENDIX K: Consent form for the grade heads.....	273
APPENDIX L: Letter requesting participation from members of disciplinary committee .....	274
APPENDIX M: Consent form for the disciplinary committee .....	275
APPENDIX N: Letter requesting participation from TLO members .....	276
APPENDIX O: Consent form for the TLO member.....	277
APPENDIX P: Letter requesting participation from RCL members and learners.....	278
APPENDIX Q: Assent form for learners .....	279
APPENDIX S: Turnitin report .....	281
APPENDIX T: Proof of editing .....	282

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Types of commitment represented in the literature .....	60
Figure 2: Four distinct types of learner commitment .....	61
Figure 3: Positive learner management and motivation .....	72
Figure 4: Learner commitment styles.....	73
Figure 5: Strategies of learner commitment .....	77
Figure 6: The continuum of control.....	80
Figure 7: The relationship of antecedents to behaviour in the classroom .....	82
Figure 8: Flow diagram of data collection procedure.....	107
Figure 9: Guide used to develop management strategies to promote learner commitment .....	206

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Characteristics of interpretivism .....	18
Table 2: Linking the objectives of the study with the data-collection methods/instruments and the participants .....	25
Table 3: Summary table on ethical considerations: obtaining permission .....	33
Table 4: Summary table on ethical considerations: Obtaining consent and assent .....	34
Table 5: “4-A scheme” .....	47
Table 6: The rights to education, rights in education and rights through education as protected in the Constitution .....	49
Table 7: Characteristics of dependent and independent learners .....	54
Table 8: The eight C’s of learner commitment.....	79
Table 9: Learner-centred learning .....	97
Table 10: Theories of human motivation .....	99
Table 11: Relationship framework .....	100
Table 12: Profiles of the participating schools .....	105
Table 13: Number of participants.....	105
Table 14: Pseudonyms.....	106
Table 15: Amendments to the interview guide for the principal.....	108
Table 16: Amendments to the questionnaire for the grade heads, TLOs and members of the disciplinary committee .....	109
Table 17: Amendments to the questionnaire for the learners.....	109
Table 18: Demographic data for the participants of School A .....	128
Table 19: Demographic data for participants from School B.....	130
Table 20: Demographic data for participants from School C.....	131
Table 21: Demographic data for participants from School D .....	132
Table 22: Summary of themes and sub-themes emerging from the qualitative data .....	133
Table 23: School A learners’ views on their responsibilities .....	135
Table 24: School B learners’ views on their responsibilities .....	138
Table 25: School C learners’ views on their responsibilities .....	141
Table 26: School D learners’ views on their responsibilities .....	144
Table 27: Comparison table on rights identified by learner participants from all four schools .....	146
Table 28: School A learners’ perspectives on factors hampering their commitment.....	173
Table 29: School B learners’ perspectives on factors hampering their commitment.....	176
Table 30: School C learners’ perspectives on factors hampering their commitment.....	180
Table 31: School D learners’ perspectives on factors hampering their commitment.....	183
Table 32: Learner commitment management strategy for School A.....	209
Table 33: Learner commitment management strategy for School B.....	217

Table 34: Learner commitment management strategy for School C.....	223
Table 35: Learner commitment management strategy for School D.....	228

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
FSDoE	Free State Department of Education
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOD	Head of Department (at school)
OAU	Organisation for African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAM	Personal Administrative Measures
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SBST	School-based Support Team
SIAS	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SMT	School Management Team
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TB	Tuberculosis
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
SACE	South African Council of Educators
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



## TITLES OF LAWS AND POLICIES

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People’s Rights
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
Constitution	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996
Guidelines for a Code of conduct for learners	Guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a Code of conduct for learners
National Education Policy Act	National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996
National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB	National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners, educators, school support staff and officials in primary and secondary schools in the Basic Education Sector in 2017
National Policy on drug abuse	National Policy on the management of drug abuse by learners in public and independent schools and further education and training institutions
SIAS	Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
Schools Act	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

With the acceptance, in 1996, of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (hereafter referred to as the Constitution) which contains the Bill of Rights, the rights of all people but especially those of children, were brought to the fore (Boezaart 2017:3). In the new constitutional dispensation, children are acknowledged as rights bearers who could enforce their rights against anyone, including the state (Boezaart 2017:3). As children became aware of their rights and started to claim their rights, there became a noticeable imbalance between rights and responsibilities. This imbalance culminated in less commitment to learning, ill-discipline on the part of learners and arguments on the part of educators that learners' rights have reduced their own rights and made it difficult to teach and facilitate learning (Mavimbela 2005:1). Joubert (2009:126) ascribes the fact that learners neglect their responsibilities and do not show commitment to their education, to the overemphasis of their rights. Thus, instead of embracing the new human rights culture, educators felt threatened by learners' rights and learners felt overly empowered by their rights.

The Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to education for all children (RSA 1996a, s 29). Section 28 of the Constitution protects the fundamental rights of children because of their youth and immaturity. Understandably, the introduction of learner rights in the previous Black South African schools posed major challenges to educators who were mainly emotionally involved in the hierarchical mode of social organisation in which power and authority had become a selective entity of those who were holding specific selected positions (Mohapi 2007:23). South African education is described as 'bad' and in a state of disrepair. Reasons proffered for this state are mostly linked to poor management, uncommitted educators or lack of parents' participation when assisting in educating their children. (Holborn 2013:1). The researcher is, however, of the opinion that part of the problem is that the most important stakeholders in education, the learners, were and still are, left out of the equation. In fact, the Department of Basic Education itself did not include any problems relating to learners' own commitment or input in its list of key factors contributing to the failure of the education system (DoBE 2011:18). Reports are silent on learners' lack of commitment to their education, thereby negating learners of their responsibilities.

How can we expect learners to be committed to their own education if we do not consider them as the main role players in the realisation of their own right to education? The focal point of this study was on seeking solutions to this problem. The aim of this study was to research learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop management strategies for promoting learner commitment. This study was designed as a multiple case study within the ambit of the interpretive paradigm and in keeping with the qualitative phenomenology approach.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

To investigate and understand learners' obligations about the realisation of their right to education, is essential to understand the legal foundations of this right. The following section provides a brief background to the international and regional instruments that guarantee learners' right to education as well as promoting respect for human rights and freedoms.

The first international document to recognise the right to education is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights implemented in 1948 (Devenish 1999:397). Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN 1948), adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948, reads:

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which member states must accept, protects political and moral human rights. This declaration forms the foundation for moral and legal principles in education (Chúrr 2012:14). Education is of fundamental importance for children as it supports them in understanding the value of reaching their full potential. In terms of Article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, children are the chief benefactors of education. The International Covenant on Economic and Cultural Rights (UN 1989) covers the right to education and in particular the aims of education systems and the content of education, in articles 13 and 14. Its standing as most important international instrument relating to socio-economic rights is confirmed by the effect it has had on the Constitutional Court's interpretation of the right to education in *Governing Body of the Juma Masjid Primary School v Essay NO 2011 (8) BCLR 761* (Currie & De Waal 2013:570).

According to Todres, Wojcik and Revaz (2006:89), the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child is acknowledged as the most important treaty for children's rights. The convention contains several requirements with regard to education. Article 29(1)(a) provides for the aims and purposes of education and declares that education is for the advancement of "the child's personality, talents and physical and mental ability" (UN 1989). In relation to the right to education, regional human rights instruments are an important component of the international legal framework. According to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) (OAU 1981, a 17(1)), each individual has the right to education. This is confirmed by Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) of 1990, where the content of education, non-discrimination, parental choice and school attendance, as well as the reduction of dropout rates (OAU 1990, a 11) is specified. Article 11(2) (b) of the ACRWC (OAU, 1990) states the following:

Education should be directed towards the fostering of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms with particular reference to those set out in the provisions of various African instruments on human and peoples' rights and international human rights declarations and conventions.

The Preamble to the Charter acknowledges the importance of family background for the development and growth of the child's personality. Time, attention and support forms the essentials of care of a developing child and this sustains the physical, mental and social needs of a child. The above further applies to foster care, kinship care and various forms of instructional arrangements which form part of attentive care for children.

The focus is on securing the best interests of the child with regard to the full and harmonious development of his or her personality (OAU 2017). As already mentioned, in the South African context, the right to education is preserved in the Bill of Rights (RSA 1996a). In terms of Section 7(2) of the Constitution, it is the duty of the state to respect, protect, promote and fulfil all the rights, as identified in the Bill of Rights, which includes the right to education. The aforementioned section (that is, Section 7(2)) directs the state to provide the necessary facilities and must do away with factors inhibiting the pleasure to that right (Chúrr 2012:145). Section 3 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996<sup>1</sup> (hereafter referred to as the Schools Act) provides that education is compulsory for children from the year in which they reach the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which they turn fifteen years or have completed the ninth grade, whichever occurs first. The right to an education includes the right

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, the amended South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (hereinafter referred to as the Schools Act) as consolidated and reproduced in Merabe (2020:2-i-2A-42), was used.

to be accommodated in a school, to be allowed to use all facilities, to be instructed in approved subjects and to receive regular updates on his or her progress (RSA 1996b, s3). The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s9) provides that learners may temporarily (suspension) or permanently be excluded from a specific school (expulsion) when their conduct disrupts the functioning of the school. Learners whose conduct is regarded as disruptive include learners who regularly transgress school rules, who are a danger to themselves, other learners or educators, and whose conduct is deliberately defiant. Suspension and expulsion are however, reserved for serious offences and misdemeanours that demonstrate persistence and wilfulness in pursuing the offending behaviour (RSA 1996b s9(2)).

According to Coetzee (2010:482), educators have the responsibility to foster respect for human rights and freedoms, but also to make learners alert to their responsibilities in this regard. Learners' responsibilities are set out in or can be deduced from the Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s3), the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the National Education Policy Act) (RSA 1996c), and policies such as the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (RSA DoBE 2007), the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE 1998, par 5), the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners, educators, school support staff and officials in primary and secondary schools in the Basic Education Sector (hereafter National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB) (RSA DoBE 2017), the Policy on Learner Attendance (RSA DoBE 2011) and the National Policy on Drug Abuse (RSA DoBE 2002).

Learner responsibilities include attending school, learning, completing homework, adhering to the school's Code of Conduct for Learners and behaving well, avoiding behaviour that puts them at risk and not to fully enjoying an education such as using drugs and being sexually promiscuous, and doing their part to protect school infrastructure (DBE 2010; RSA DoBE 1998, par 8).

### **1.3 MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY**

In this section, the main factors that motivated the researcher to choose this specific topic as the focus for a doctoral study are spelled out. Firstly, the researcher's personal interest and empathy motivated him to undertake this study. Secondly, his involvement in working with the RCL at the school where he teaches, has motivated him to undertake this specific study.

The researcher is a Head of Department (HOD) at a secondary school heading the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) as well as the Teacher Liaison officers (TLOs).

TLOs are educators who have been tasked with guiding the RCLs in understanding and fulfilling their tasks (*cf.* section 1.8.5). Thirdly, as a Life Orientation educator, the researcher tries to inspire vulnerable groups of children such as learners who are involved in gangs, are orphans and or heads of homes by making them aware of how education can open doors for them and change their lives. This research can broaden and complement the researcher's knowledge on these groups of children and will help him to make informed contributions to all four participating schools.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Kumar (2014:381) defines a **research problem** as “[a]ny matter, problem or question that becomes the basis of your investigation. It is what you want to find out about during your research endeavour”. The real-life problems which underpin this research is learners' lack of commitment to the realisation of their right to education. The recognition and promotion of children's rights brought about many changes that impact learners' status and their education. Recognising learners' rights has always been and still is, a controversial and critical issue worldwide.

Attempts to address learner rights have brought confrontations between learners and educators. This can most likely be ascribed to learners and educators interpreting learners' rights differently and from preconceived and contradicting perspectives (Henrad 2011:224-225). Learners have the right to education and educators, as functionaries of organs of state have a legal obligation to protect and promote the right to education, inter alia by ensuring effective teaching and learning (Joubert & Prinsloo 2013:18, RSA 1996a, s7(2)). However, educators equate recognising learners' rights with losing their authority; that is why they complain, “learners have too many rights” (Rossouw 2003:424). Educators are unsure, perplexed and anxious that they might mistakenly contravene a learner's rights and be accused of misdemeanour (Taylor 2008:6). According to Charles (2012:23), work-related stress due to learners' misbehaviour and non-commitment, force many educators out of the profession. The aforementioned is also confirmed by research commissioned by the Organisation Teacher Support in Scotland (Finlayson 2002:67), which found that the main cause of educators' stress was learner misbehaviour, coupled with a lack of commitment to their education. The South African Human Rights Commission's Charter of Children's Basic Education Rights (SAHRC 2012:20), aims at providing support to all responsible role-players to further the realisation of the right.

The Charter identifies learners as active role players in the realisation of their right to an education (SAHRC 2012:10); however, they are thus not only right-holders but also duty-holders. Learners have an obligation to attend school on a regular basis, to adhere to the school's Code of Conduct for Learners and to do their assigned schoolwork (RSA 1998, par 8). A learner has a right to education and a responsibility in relation to that right in order to ensure the fulfilment of that right. It is about learners taking personal responsibility for the realisation of their right to education. Accepting responsibilities (for example, being accountable for own actions in relation to that right) goes hand in hand with claiming a right.

Joubert (2009:126) argues that learners interpret their rights as authorisation to do as they wish, neglecting the consequences of their actions and the fact that rights are limited. The researcher concurs with Joubert and Prinsloo (2009:135) that every right has a corresponding duty, a concomitant responsibility. Joubert and Prinsloo (2013:17) alludes to the fact that though learners are very alert regarding their rights, they show little responsibility in meeting their obligations. Holborn (2013:2) contends that literature gives evidence that learners claim their right to education without accepting responsibility for that right.

Learners' own actions make education unavailable and inaccessible. Learners' actions from which a lack of commitment is evident are, inter alia, the high incidence of learner absenteeism, failure to do homework, misconduct which sometimes is of a criminal nature, and making lifestyle decisions that put them in harm's way and which affects their education negatively. For example, girls fall pregnant at a tender age, boys belong to gangs, learners damage and misuse school infrastructure and commit serious misconduct, such as using drugs on the school premises (Holborn 2013:2). A study conducted by the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), which examined learner performance in regional contexts, revealed high levels of learner absenteeism and late coming as the consequence of lack of commitment to their own education (Van der Berg 2006:28).

Joubert (2009:124-125) describes learners who verbally abuse and threaten their educators and who bring weapons such as knives and firearms to school as not being committed to their schoolwork. She identifies violent and aggressive behaviour, the fact that learners smoke dagga and carry dangerous weapons on the school premises as tell-tale signs of non-commitment. This assertion is supported by a study conducted under the support of the South African Council for Educators (SACE), which found that it is not unusual for South African learners to 'bunk' classes or to drink alcohol in public while in their school uniforms.

What is of concern, however, is the accessibility of drugs and alcohol among school learners (SACE 2011:10), confirmed by Burton and Leoschut (2013:26) that weapons, drugs and alcohol are accessible in many schools across the country. The Pretoria News (8 September 2019) attested to the fact that violence has taken over schools across the country, and spread fear in both educators and learners alike, as weapons, drugs, fighting and bullying reign supreme.

A case in point is *S v N and Another* (SHE 59/14) [2015] ZAWCHC 5 (9 January 2015) that deals with two learners who stabbed a co-learner to death. The comments of Judge Binns-Ward clearly illustrate the lack of learner commitment (at 15):

Violence at schools has reached such a high level of degree [sic] that it needs to be curtailed. ... Children who have been sent to school are expected to behave as school children, not to behave as adults. ... You and the deceased made a mockery of our education system. There are pupils who want to study and to become something in life and you disturbed them from obtaining that.

Former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, is concerned, that with learner misconduct, the future of the country will be compromised if violence, abuse and drugs become the norm in the South African schooling system (South African Government Information, 21 November 2006). One can indeed agree with Lloyd (2008:65) that there is a crucial need to add a fourth “R”, that for “Responsibility” to the well-known “Three Rs” (reading, writing and arithmetic).

The question now arises: ***How can management in selected secondary schools promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to an education?***

Since the research question is broadly phrased, the researcher broke it down into the following researchable sub-questions:

1. What are learners’ rights and responsibilities in relation to the realisation of their right to education in terms of law and policy?
2. What are learners’ perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and reasons for not being committed to their own education?
3. What are the factors hampering learners’ commitment at the participating schools?
4. Which strategies are school managers and educators currently employing to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education?
5. Which strategies will enable school managers and educators to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education?



In the following section, the researcher used the research question to formulate a main aim of the study and the research sub-questions to formulate specific, achievable objectives.

## **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Denicolo and Becker (2012:53-54) state that the aim contains the purpose of the research while objectives are pinpoint outcomes that must be reached in order for such aim to be attained. In the following section, the research aim and objectives are outlined.

### **1.5.1 Aim**

The aim of this study was to research learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop management strategies for promoting learner commitment.

### **1.5.2 Research objectives**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To ascertain learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy.
2. To establish learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and the reasons for not being committed to their own education.
3. To determine the factors hampering learners' commitment at the participating schools.
4. To discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.
5. To develop management strategies that will enable school managers and educators to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Punch and Oancea (2014:361) suggest that **significance of a qualitative study** can be equated with "contribution". The contribution can relate to knowledge; for example, filling a knowledge gap, or to the impact of the research (Punch & Oancea 2014:362). The researcher was aware of the knowledge gap identified in the Statement of the Problem and as such, adds to the existing knowledge base on the topic which future researchers could build on. In addition to adding to existing knowledge, this study also has practical significance.

The study aimed at developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. In addition, the researcher extended scholarly and practitioner understanding on what factors hamper learners' commitment at the participating schools and identifying why learners are not committed to their own education. In so doing, the researcher was able to develop 'custom-made' strategies to promote learner commitment for the participant schools. The researcher evaluated the reasons and then used these to inform the management strategies developed for the selected schools.

Before finalising the strategies, the researcher collaborated with the principals to ensure that the strategies have practical application and value to the relevant schools and that with each principal there is a buy-in into adopting the strategy developed for his or her specific school. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in this particular field. It is also relevant to policy-makers as learner commitment is vital to the realisation of the right to education. The researcher made the findings of the study and the new strategies accessible to the Free State Department of Education and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District (*cf.* Chapter 6).

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Limitations of the study, according to Hofstee (2006:87), indicates how, as a researcher, you were restricted in your ability to do your research. Research limitations as potential weaknesses in research, are out of the researcher's control. Because of these limitations, the conclusions may not be appropriate in certain situations or may not address certain related issues. Limitations are inherent in academic work. This simply means the researcher cannot do it all (Renuka & Jansen 2010:87). Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2015:21) state that researchers should point out which challenges or limitations could affect the research, for example, time limitations, access to participants and the manner in which they intend to deal with these concerns.

In this study, the main limitation was time. The researcher was challenged in finding time to collect the data effectively because as Head of Department at a secondary school, he had to request leave from work in order to collect data. With the hectic schedule of senior managers and periods when one just cannot be out of school, it was challenging to find a convenient time for participating schools to allow the researcher on site.

To overcome the aforementioned limitations, the researcher, with regard to each participating school, ...

- informed the school of the dates that he would be available to collect data,
- requested the principal to indicate the date that would suit the school the best,
- scheduled the visit,
- called the school a few days before his visit to confirm staff and learner availability, and
- called again the day before the visit to confirm the arrangements.

After receiving the dates that were most appropriate for the schools, the researcher applied for leave to ensure adequate time to collect data undisturbed. Despite all the precautionary measures, when arriving on the pre-arranged day, the researcher found that learners were attending extra classes and educators were attending departmental workshops and were not available.

A typical limitation of qualitative research is that findings and conclusions cannot be generalised. This may result in the trustworthiness of such findings and conclusions being questioned. Tiwani (2010:90) posits that the choice of knowledgeable participants and the use of purposeful sampling ensure transferability. Research findings and conclusions that are transferable gives evidence as to the trustworthiness of the research (Maree & Pietersen 2010:215). Transferability helps the researcher to ask whether the findings of the research can be transferred from an exact situation or case to another (*cf.* Chapter 4).

In this study, the researcher delimited the field of study through restricting the scope of the study. Webster (2016:455) describes the **scope of the study** as the means to limit by marking out the boundaries of a study. This study focused on four schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State, which are predominantly Black schools, a legacy of the previous apartheid government. The majority of the learners are Sesotho speaking, but there are also a few IsiZulu-speaking learners. The researcher chose the Thabo Mofutsanyana District because it is close to where he lives and that meant he could quickly gain access to the schools. The reasoning behind the specific research was to determine whether learners fulfil their responsibilities and if not, why not and to develop management strategies to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education. This research aimed at developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education and the schools' responsibility in ensuring that this commitment is managed in a proper way.

However, assumptions arose in the course of the research. Assumptions are matters that you take to be true without checking whether they are true or not (Hofstee 2006:88). According to Hofstee (2006:88), one also expects his or her reader to believe him or her without offering further evidence. In addition, according to the above-mentioned author, researchers should name all assumptions underlying their work, because often they are not obvious but can affect the research enormously.

The following assumptions arose:

- The first assumption underlying this study was the researcher's belief that learners in the sample have knowledge about their right and responsibilities to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District.
- Secondly, that principals, grade heads, Members of the Disciplinary committee and TLOs would remember and explain factors affecting learners' commitment to their education and that they would explain the strategies employed in promoting learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.
- Thirdly, the researcher also assumed that principals, grade heads, members of the disciplinary committee, TLOs as well as learners would give truthful and frank responses.

These assumptions are addressed in Chapter six of this study

## **1.8 CONCEPTUALISATION AND OPERATIONALISATION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

A researcher needs to ensure that readers understand the meaning attached to terms and concepts used in his or her research (Parahoo 2006:26). To determine what is or is not applicable to the field of study, a conceptual analysis was done with regard to the following concepts: right to education, learner, public school, commitment, learner responsibilities and management strategies.

### **1.8.1 Right to education**

Since various International Human Rights instruments and the Constitution do not use the exact same phrase, the researcher used 'the right to education' in his report to ensure consistency and flow of argument. Coetzee (2019:83) describes **a right** as the ability to claim something you are entitled to or something you are entitled to have done.

Smit and Oosthuizen (2013:45) define a **right** as a legally enforceable interest that warrants protection by means of a legal remedy or sanction. In this study, **right to education** refers to the right learners have been given in terms of section 29 of the Constitution (RSA 1996a).

In terms of section 29, children have the right “to receive a basic education as a fundamental right in the Bill of Rights”. It is a social right that depends on the state’s provision for its fulfilment (Malherbe 2009:400). The right further comprises aspects such as free and obligatory basic education and the provision of special education. According to Malherbe (2009:399), one of the important rights for children is the right to education and thus, has direct bearing on the development of children to attain their full potential and embrace their rightful place in society. However, the right is accompanied by responsibilities. As indicated in the South African Bill of Rights, learners have a right to education but also responsibilities in relation to that right in order to ensure the fulfilment of that right (DoBE 2008).

### **1.8.2 Learner**

In terms of section (3)1 of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b), the concept **learner** refers to “any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of this Act”. In this study, the term **learner** will refer to a person at a secondary public school who is receiving, or obliged to receive, a basic education and who thus is subjected to compulsory school attendance (*cf.* Chapter 2).

### **1.8.3 Public school**

Section 15 of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b) provides that every **public school** is a “juristic person” with the legal capacity to carry out its functions. Bray (2012:466) established that a **public school** carries the responsibilities and the accountability attached to its legal status, has continuous succession and will continue to exist as an entity despite any change that may take place in its constituent parts. Section 239 of the Constitution (RSA 1996a) states that a public school is regarded as an “organ of state” because it exercises public power and performs public functions in terms of legislation. In this study, a **public school** refers to an ordinary school that enrolls learners from grade eight to grade twelve, is a juristic person in terms of the Schools Act and an organ of state in terms of the Constitution.

### **1.8.4 Commitment**

*The Oxford Dictionary* (2010 s.v. “commitment”) describes **commitment** as a willingness to give your time and energy to something that you believe in or a firm decision to do something.

The problem of learners not being committed to their own education and learning is not new. This is evident from the fact that Hanson addressed the matter as early as the 1955s. According to Hanson (1955:144-145), a committed learner “show[s] a quality of intellect which takes careful consideration of ends and consequences”, “exhibits a high quality of intellectual integrity”, “is persistent and motivated, has a disposition to act because he/she sees where the new learning will lead him/her, has courage of his/her convictions and a good character”. These characteristics still hold true today and, in this study, **commitment** refers to Hanson’s description above.

A learner’s commitment is illustrated by the manner in which a learner takes up the responsibility in relation to his or her own education. Because of the inseparable link between responsibilities and commitment, learners cannot be committed to realising their right to their education without discharging their learner responsibilities. It was thus essential to determine what the phrase **learner responsibilities** entails. In this study, the responsibilities were identified through a review of the existing research and literature on the topic and a literature study of law and policy (*cf.* section 2.4).

### **1.8.5 Learner responsibilities**

*The Oxford Dictionary* (2010, s.v. “responsibilities”) describes a **responsibility** as “a thing which one is required to do as part of a job, role, or legal obligation”.

Scharle and Szabo (2000:4) define **responsibilities** as being in charge of something, but with the connotation that one has to deal with the consequences of one’s own conduct. In this study, **learner responsibilities** are those things that learners are required to do and for which they are accountable. **Learner responsibilities** include those cited by the Department of Education (RSA DoE 1998, par 1.4) such as attending school, learning, doing homework, behaving well, avoiding behaviour, for example, using drugs and being sexual promiscuous, that put themselves or others at risk not to fully enjoy an education and, doing their part to protect the school infrastructure.

### **1.8.6 Management strategies**

The word strategy is derived from the Greek word “*stratēgia*”, (stratus meaning army) and “ago” (meaning leading/moving). Strategy is an action that managers take to accomplish one or more of the organisation’s goals.

It can also be defined as “a general direction set for the company and its various components to achieve a desired state in the future” (Management Study Guide Experts 2017:1). The Oxford Dictionary (2010, s.v. “strategy”) describes **strategy** as “an art, method or skill for planning how an activity or action will be undertaken”.

The Oxford Dictionary (2010, s.v. “management”) describes **management** as an act, manner, or practice of managing, handling, supervising or control. According to the Management Study Guide Experts (2017:1), **management strategy** is all about recognition and account of the strategies that managers can implement to attain better performance and a competitive advantage for the organisation. It can also be defined as a compilation of decisions and acts which managers tackle to decide the result of the firm’s performance.

In this study, **management strategies** are the collection of decisions and acts the SMT and educators implement to promote learner commitment in the realisation of their right to education.

## **1.9 Theoretical framework**

A theory is, according to De Vos (2002:40), a framework that is used as an aid in a researcher’s attempt to explain a particular phenomenon. Since the researcher aimed at developing management strategies for managing and promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education, he needed to consider both theoretical aspects underlying children’s rights as well as leadership theories. He further considered theories underlying disciplinary models to determine which model, in combination with particular leadership theory will support the promotion of learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education the best.

This study is supported by the Bill of Rights as settled in the Constitution of South Africa of 1996 (RSA 1996a). Learners’ right to education is framed within the concepts of free to basic education, equality, law and policy. Therefore, the study is supported by a legal framework (The Constitution of South Africa and legislations) and the leadership theories that schools can use to promote learner commitment. The Constitution was established to protect the fundamental right to education for all children (RSA 1996a, s29). Section 28 of the Constitution protects the fundamental rights of children because of their youth and immaturity (*cf.* section 1.1). Ahmad, Bhat and Hussanie (2017:249) are of the view that leaders create the vision, support the strategies, and are the catalysts for enhancing the individual bench strength to take the organisation forward.

In this study, classroom management theory, human relation theory, behavioural scientific theory, non-directive intervention theory and Van Niekerk's leadership theory, were explored. Leadership styles that promote learner commitment were also found relevant to this study because stakeholders involved in promoting learners to be committed to their education, such as principals, grade heads, members of the disciplinary committee and educators, are leaders in their spheres. Savas and Toprak (2014:173) assert that leadership is known as an effort that directs organisational activities to achieve a common goal (*cf.* section 3.3.2). With the ever-changing educational landscape, it is the responsibility of the school managers to incorporate a wide range of leadership skills and styles in order to direct their school organisation towards common goals and a well-directed vision.

Lastly, disciplinary models that promote learner commitment were also found relevant for this study. In order to create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning in schools, good discipline amongst learners is of paramount importance. Classroom management models such as the Ginott and the Dreikurs conceptual models were considered to be of importance to educators and the SMT in adopting counter measures against misbehaving learners, and thus appropriate for this study. These models are regarded as the best-suited disciplinary models to assist in the management of learner commitment in the realisation of their right to education (*cf.* section 3.3.4).

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Gray (2014:690), research methodology comprises “[a]pproaches to systematic inquiry developed within a particular paradigm with associated epistemological assumptions ...”. In this section, the researcher briefly looks at what a literature review entails. Thereafter, the research paradigm, research approach, the research design, data collection and data analysis methods that are appropriate to this type of study, are discussed.

### **1.9.1 Literature review**

It is accepted that most studies are preceded by previous research or writings on the same topic albeit not necessarily with the same focus or scope. It is essential that the researcher review this existing literature to understand what views exist on the issues being studied (Mahlangu 2005:5). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:26), the importance of a literature review is that it:

- provides a context for ascertaining the significance of the study,



- offers benchmarks for comparing the results of the study with those of other studies,
- relates the study to the larger, on-going dialogue in the literature about a topic,
- fills the gaps in and expounds prior studies, and
- introduces the reader to the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being done.

The researcher primarily reviewed literature on learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to the right to education and literature dealing with management strategies to promote commitment, for example, accepting personal responsibility (*cf.* Chapter 2). After having stated the research objectives, he had to decide how the research phenomenon was to be studied. In doing so, he first had to consider from which assumptive base he would approach the research. This consideration is addressed next.

### **1.9.2 Research paradigm**

A **paradigm** is defined as “an overarching philosophical or ideological stance, a system of beliefs about the nature of the world, and ultimately, when applied in the research setting, the assumptive base from which we go about producing knowledge” (Rubin & Rubin 2012:174). A research paradigm lies behind and guides the way a person thinks and affects how the researcher approaches his or her study (Groenewald 2011:7). Kusi (2015:49) argues that each paradigm has an “epistemological and ontological foundation”. The most familiar paradigms acknowledged in research literature are the positivist, interpretive (constructivist) and critical paradigms (Henn, Weinstein & Foard 2013:183).

The positivist paradigm, placed in prescriptive studies and linked to the objectionist view, is based on the premise that there is an objective social reality independent from the researcher that can be discovered (Kusi 2015:68). As Bernard and Ryan (2010:10) indicate, positivist researchers believe that knowledge already exists, and researchers only have to discover it to be able to explain general patterns of human behaviour. The positivist paradigm is thus not suited for studies such as this one, where the researcher aims to understand the complexity of interactions in societies and between individuals (Flick, Kardoff & Steinke 2010:114). In contrast, studies aimed at “expos[ing] imbalances, wrong doings, injustices, exploitation, give a voice to the excluded and marginalised groups, and help explain generalised oppression in order to precipitate social change”, are grounded in the critical paradigm (Henn *et al.* 2013:16).

The objectives for this study (*cf* section 1.5.2), cannot be reconciled with goals of critical research. After taking into consideration of both these paradigms, the researcher concluded that the positivist and the critical paradigms were not suitable for this study, but that the interpretive paradigm might be suitable. Walliman (2011:33) contends that interpretative research is based on the view that a person can only experience the world through his or her feelings, which are influenced by a set of ideas and beliefs. The author further argues that because interpretivist researchers believe that the reality is socially constructed, reality is seen as the sum of people's personal experiences of the external world (Walliman 2011:33). As such interpretivists are anti-foundationalists, who believes there is no single correct interpretation of reality (Walliman 2011:46); they rather attempt to derive their constructs from the field by an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of interest.

This study is thus situated in the interpretivist paradigm. Table 1 displays the characteristics of interpretivism as set out by Cantrell (2014:138) and used in this study.

**Table 1: Characteristics of interpretivism**

Feature	Description
<b>Purpose of the research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Characteristics</u>: To develop management strategies for promoting learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to a basic education in secondary schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Ontology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Multiple realities</u>: Because there is not only one reality, four schools as cases were included in this study.</li> <li>• <u>Socially constructed realities</u>: Socially constructed realities were explored in relation to learner commitment at four schools.</li> <li>• <u>Subjective contextualised realities</u>: Field work was conducted to collect data in the natural settings because participants' realities cannot be separated from the natural context in which they live. It is about situatedness rather than generalisability.</li> <li>• <u>Realities are relative</u>: To determine participants' experiences, knowledge, views and interpretations affect their realities. Various types of participants were included to get a clear picture of learner commitment at each school. Reality cannot be discovered from a single individual.</li> </ul>
<b>Epistemology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Natural setting</u>: Reality was acknowledged as only being obtained from participants and the research thus needed to be participant and human-centred.</li> <li>• <u>Researcher involvement</u>: The researcher was aware that his thought processes and interpretation would be influenced by his interaction with social context of each school and as such he will be part of constructing reality.</li> <li>• <u>Interactive research process</u>: The researcher was further cognisant that he will be part of the process of constructing reality and that the mode of data-collection is interactive.</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>In-depth investigation</u>: Multiple methods were used to ensure in-depth understanding of learner commitment and the management thereof. <u>Reflexive</u>: Research is a product of the values of the researcher.</li> </ul>

Sources: Compiled with consideration of Cantrell (2014:132), Dean (2018:3) and Kivunja & Kuyini (2017:33-34)

Interpretive research is by nature qualitative and requires researchers who are participants rather than respondents (Kusi 2015:65), who engage in the activities and discern the meanings of actions as they are expressed within specific social contexts. According to Gray (2015:241), there are several perspectives in the interpretative paradigm, including symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. In this study, the focus was on the phenomenon of learner commitment as a lived experience of participants from selected secondary schools. Phenomenology holds that any attempt to understand social reality has to be grounded in comprehending the situation and problems in which people find themselves (Gray 2015:242).

Thus, the researcher aimed to understand the phenomenon in all its complexity in a particular situation and environment, which is, according to Oduro (2012:50) is unique to the phenomenological approach. Gall, Gall and Borg (2011:495) allude to the fact that phenomenological research is anti-thesis research or a reaction to the thesis maintained, a denial of the thesis. In this study, the researcher's thesis is that *current management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province are ineffective hence learners are not committed to their education and thus, their right to education is not realised*. This is what qualitative research attempts to achieve. In the section below, the choice of a qualitative research approach is explained and justified.

### **1.9.3 Research approach**

Quantitative research is deductive, relying mostly on statistical information to determine casual relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell 2018:19; Neuman 2011:178). Leedy and Ormrod (2010:96) and Kumar (2014:20) are of the opinion that the quantitative research approach is highly formalised, explicitly controlled and with a range that is exactly defined. Understanding a phenomenon from participants' perspectives requires a qualitative approach (Schurink, Fouché & Delpont 2011:64). Qualitative research is inductive and derives meanings from studying natural occurrences, and phenomena in their natural settings. A qualitative research approach is one in which the procedures are not as strictly formalised, while the scope is more likely to be defined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted (Kumar 2014:23). A unique feature of qualitative research is that it takes place out in the field or setting whereby there is neither any manipulation, controlled behaviour, setting nor any externally imposed constraints (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:321-322).

In qualitative research, researchers interpret occurrence in terms of the meanings people bring to them which means that it is concerned with understanding social occurrence from the participants' point of view (Creswell & Clark 2010:29; Creswell & Creswell 2018:18). For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate to investigate why learners are not committed towards the realisation of their right to education (*cf.* Chapter 4). This means that because reality is not existing but socially constructed, it can only be understood from people's experience of that social reality (Kumar 2014:21).

Phenomenology requires the researcher to put aside their existing knowledge of the phenomenon and re-examine their current encounter of it so that new meaning can be attained.

In this study, the researcher sought to ascertain learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy, to establish learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and the reasons for not being committed to their own education. In addition, the researcher sought to understand the factors hampering learners' commitment at the participating schools, and discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment. This research findings would inform the development of management strategies that would enable school managers and educators to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

Because individuals attach their own personal meaning to their experiences (Creswell & Creswell 2018:20), there are many different meanings. The researcher thus has to look for social reality constructed by the complexity of views rather than individual meanings (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba 2011:117). The research focused on the viewpoints of the participants which corresponds with the ontology and epistemology of the study. Furthermore, this qualitative approach allowed for the use of multiple methods to collect data from the principals, grade heads, TLOs, members of the school disciplinary committee and learners in their natural context.

### **1.9.3.1 The role of the researcher**

Qualitative research is an intensely personal kind of research, one that freely acknowledges and admits, "[t]he subjective perception and bias of both participants and researcher into the research frame" (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh 2011:45). Qualitative researchers take on many roles, that of researcher, interviewer, observer, and as such should reflect on their own data-making role and its relation to their research (Richards 2015:53). Reflexivity alerts the researcher to the need to reflect on his or her biases, interests and areas of ignorance (Richards 2015). In this study, the researcher endeavoured to remain objective and unbiased during all processes of the research to ensure that the study was free from bias and his influence as a qualitative researcher.

In the interest of handling qualitative data, Richards (2015:66) suggests considering the aspects of data being useful and the researcher being reflexive:

- Useful: the record should carry all available pertinent information about the research event, the participants or the setting, and all the knowledge gained, including impressions, reflections and interpretations (*cf.* section 4.5).

- Reflexive: For any act in the gathering of qualitative data, the researcher needs to consider the ways in which he or she is part of the study and write himself or herself into the account (*cf.* section 4.5), constantly reflecting on the process and procedures.

In this study, the researcher was the interviewer, but he avoided influencing the participants by projecting his views or ideas on them. He also guaranteed the anonymity of the participants, identified and addressed potential threats to the validity and reliability of the study.

#### 1.9.4 Research design

Designing one's research relates to the decisions one makes about limitations that apply when collecting and analysing data and interpreting the results. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:31) are of the view that a research design is the plan and structure of the investigation. Creswell and Creswell (2018:101) posits that research designs are "specific measures involved in the research process: data collection, data analysis, and report writing". The research questions and objectives should determine the selection of the research design and methodology (Conrad & Serlin 2013:337). Qualitative research encompasses many research designs including historical research, phenomenological study, ethnographic study and case study. Gall *et al.* (2011:243) assert that the above-mentioned designs have some related features, but different goals.

The "case" in case study research could be "an individual, a group, a community, an instance, an episode, an event, a subgroup of population, a town or a city" (Kumar 2014:155). The case study design allows researchers to develop and present a thorough view of a particular situation, event or entity. Yin (2010:36) defines a **case study** as an experimental inquiry that investigates a contemporary occurrence within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly defined. The case study design is especially useful in situations where the events as they unfold are not subject to the researcher's control. Given the interpretivist stance adopted in this research and the nature of the research question, the researcher believed that the case study design was the most appropriate research strategy for this study. This is so because of its advantage in revealing in detail the unique perceptions and concerns of individual participants in a real-world situation.

The choice of a multiple case study was deemed suitable, given that Hammersley (2012:398) asserts that a multiple case study allows the researcher to conduct a thorough analysis of participants' thoughts, behaviour, actions and feelings. It does not only allow the researcher an in-depth look at each case, but also a look at different aspects in relation to each other and to compare and contrast the cases (Rule & John 2011:21). Maree and Pietersen (2010:265)

emphasise that the key to comparative design, focuses on the ability to distinguish between two or more characteristics. This distinction acts as a facilitator for theoretical evidence for conflicting findings. Testing and confirming findings across cases, strengthens the research findings (Vissak 2010:374). The multiple case study design was the most suitable design as the researcher wanted to compare the cases from the four selected schools and establish whether there was consistency across these in terms of the research being done and the outcomes thereof.

Given that the researcher wanted to gather legitimate, comparable data, he elected four schools from the same vicinity. The choice of these schools in the study allowed him to compare cases and gather sufficient data to formulate valid conclusions. Zach (2012:2) states that a point of criticism that can be brought against case studies is the extent to which unfairness, either of the participants or of the researcher, could influence the findings and conclusions. The use of the multiple case study design helps in dealing with the possible biases of either the researcher or the participants, where bias and subjectivity in one case could be eliminated by other cases.

### **1.9.5 Population and sampling**

Sampling is necessary when conducting research as it is usually impossible to question every member of the target population (White 2011:80). The target population is the totality of people, organisations, objects or occurrences from which a sample is drawn. In this study, the target population for the proposed study was public secondary schools in the Free State Province.

Sampling is referred to as choosing subjects such as people, or objects, organisations, cities, or even nations from the population who are in a position to offer the most information (Garson 2012:5). Sample selection in qualitative research is usually “non-random, purposeful and small as opposed to the larger, more random sampling in quantitative research” (Garson 2012:5). Purposeful, criterion sampling was used to select participants in this study. It is a well-known fact that qualitative researchers purposefully or intentionally select individuals and sites that can make a meaningful contribution to the research.

In purposeful sampling, the researcher handpicks the cases to be included in the study, based on their commonness (Palinkas *et al.* 2015:533). Creswell and Creswell (2018:182), and Leedy and Ormrod (2010:219) support the contention that purposeful sampling ensures that only those who can provide useful and utmost information can help the researcher in understanding the research problem, are sampled.

The four sampled public secondary schools situated in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District in the Free State Province were in close proximity to each other, which saved the researcher time and money.

The researcher is known to principals and most of staff members in the four participating schools and as such, it created an atmosphere of trust (*cf.* section 1.8.5). The sample for each school consisted of the principal, heads of grades for Grades 10, 11 and 12, disciplinary committee members, educator component of the liaison officers (TLOs), RCL members as well as learners. The researcher used the following criteria to sample participants.

- Principal

Section 16A(2) of the Schools Act stipulates that the principal is provided with powers to carry out duties pertaining the professional management of a public school.

The implementation of law and policies is part of his or her job. Leading the school management team (SMT) consisting of the deputy principal and Heads of Departments, the principal is at the forefront in the implementation of the policies. The principals are therefore important participants in this research.

- Heads of various grades

Educators' role as front liners in policy and curriculum implementation should not be underestimated (Mugweni, Phatudi & Hartel 2014:34). They are expected to equip learners with necessary skills and knowledge that will allow them to perform their respective duties and responsibilities. Heads of various grades are the important participants in this study because through them, the researcher could discover the strategies employed by the school to promote learners' commitment to their education. They are also important participants in this study because they are the link between the SMT and learners.

- Disciplinary committee members

The primary task of the disciplinary committee is to ensure that there is no anarchy and lawlessness. The committee safeguards order and enforces adherence to discipline and lays down rules to all stakeholders for each to conduct him or her in a way that is aligned to the vision and mission.



- Teacher component of the liaison officers (TLOs)

TLOs are educators who are tasked to guide the RCLs in understanding and fulfilling their mandate. The researcher selected them as participants because they work with the RCL daily and they have developed an understanding of them.

- The RCL members are important participants in this research because they are the link between learners, the school management and educators.

They also contribute to the development and application of school policy on learner attendance and inform the SMT of barriers to learner attendance. In terms of section 11(1) of the Schools Act, the RCL is the recognised and legitimate representative learner body at schools (RSA 1996b).

- Learners

Learners were sampled as participants because they are at the centre of the study. These participants are important because in terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b s3(1)), they are obliged to be committed to their education and subjected to compulsory school attendance (*cf.* Chapter 2). Learners from Grades 10-12 from each participating school were sampled.

### **1.9.6 Data collection methods**

Saldaña (2011:32) asserts that a **data collection method** is an effective way of eliciting and documenting, in the participants' own words, an individual's or group's perspective, feelings, opinions, values, attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives. Researchers must consider whether the chosen data collection methods would enable them to realise the aim of the specific study and answer the research question. In this study, data were collected using a literature study, semi-structured interviews, qualitative questionnaires and document analysis.

These methods were deemed suitable to establish learner participants' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities regarding the realisation of their right to education, the reasons for non-commitment and factors that hamper their commitment. They were also considered appropriate to establish the managers' perspectives on factors hampering learners' commitment and the current strategies employed to promote learner commitment. Using several data collection methods allowed the researcher to triangulate data, which increased trustworthiness. In Table 2 below, the researcher links the objectives of the study with the data-collection methods/instruments and the participants.

**Table 2: Linking the objectives of the study with the data-collection methods/instruments and the participants**

Research Objective	Data Collection Methods and Instruments	Participants	Sampling	Analysis and Interpretation
To ascertain learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy.	Literature study: Relevant laws and policies such as the Constitution, the Schools Act, the National Education Policy Act, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, Guidelines for a Code of conduct for learners, the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB, Policy on Learner Attendance and the National Policy on drug abuse.	NA	NA	Content analysis
To establish learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education. To determine learners' reasons for not being committed to their own education.	Qualitative Questionnaire	RCL members and learners.	Purposive-criterion sampling 24 members of the RCL (6 members per school).96 learners from grade 10-12 (24 learners per school), ranging from 16-19 years old from each participating school.	Thematic analysis
To determine the factors hampering learners' commitment at the participating schools.	Qualitative Questionnaire Semi-structured interviews: Interview guides	<u>Qualitative Questionnaires:</u> RCL members, learners Head of various grades (10-12), educator component of the liaison officers (TLOs) and disciplinary committee members (excluding principals or educators that are also Grade Heads or TLOs). <u>Interviews:</u> Principals	Purposive-criterion sampling 24 members of the RCL (6 members per school).96 learners from grade 10-12 (24 learners per school), ranging from 16-19 years old from each participating school. 12 Grade Heads (1 Grade Head for grades 8 to 10 per school) 2 TLOs per school 1 disciplinary committee member per school	Thematic analysis

Research Objective	Data Collection Methods and Instruments	Participants	Sampling	Analysis and Interpretation
			4 principals (1 principal per school)	
To discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.	Semi-structured interviews: Interview guides Qualitative Questionnaire Document analysis: Minutes of the SMT meetings, the book wherein transgressions are recorded and the school Code of conduct for learners, the schools' quarterly learner attendance, School discipline policy and the schools' Year Plan.	<u>Interviews:</u> Principals <u>Qualitative Questionnaires:</u> Head of various grades (10-12), educator component of the liaison officers (TLOs) and disciplinary committee members (excluding principals or educators that are also Grade Heads or TLOs).	4 principals (1 principal per school) 12 Grade Heads (1 Grade Head for grades 8 to 10 per school) 2 TLOs per school 1 disciplinary committee member per school	Thematic analysis

### 1.9.6.1 Literature study

For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose to distinguish between a *literature study* and a *literature review*. A *literature study* is considered a data-collection method used to study legal literature to identify those provisions that relate to and thus frame learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education. The legal literature included the Constitution, the Schools Act, the National Education Policy Act, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners, the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB, Policy on Learner Attendance and the National Policy on Drug Abuse. The researcher conducted the literature study first as this enabled him to identify those provisions that relate to and thus frame learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education.

A *literature review* is an indication of pre-existing knowledge in a certain subject which is derived from current developments and discussions. The aim of the *literature review* is to determine research which has been conducted, what has been reported on the topic and finally, where the literature is silent. (Mouton 2011:10).

### 1.9.6.2 Document analysis

Looking at the definition of **documents**, it is clear why document analysis is considered the most suitable data collection method in interpretive, phenomenological research, which is based on the assertion that the researchers can access reality only through social constructions. According to Coffey (2014:369), documents are shared, produced and used in public. They exhibit different forms of authenticity which are written based on various principles with a particular objective in mind.

The views of Flick (2011:47) are that document analysis is a process of examining official documents of an institution to gather information-rich data. For example, this can include public documents, policies, minutes, plans and diaries. The researcher analysed school documents such as minutes of the SMT meetings, the book wherein transgressions are recorded, the schools' Codes of Conduct for Learners and the schools' quarterly learner attendance reports, schools' discipline policy and the schools' Year Plan. From these documents, the researcher was able to elicit information concerning forms of misconduct that indicate learners' lack of commitment to their education.

Documentary evidence can be used to cross-validate information gathered from interviews and overcome the dilemma of the discrepancy between what people say and what they actually do (Mohd 2008:160). In this study, documents were analysed to discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

While it is of paramount importance to examine documents, the advantages and disadvantages of document analysis must be noted. Advantages of conducting document analysis includes aspects such as “language and words used by the participants could be learned, data that were thoughtfully designed over a period of time could be analysed, documents serve as written evidence and data could be analysed at a convenient time” (Creswell & Creswell 2018:189). In contrast, there are also disadvantages to document analysis which include issues such as “documents may not be readily available to the public, the search for documents might be a difficult process, they [documents] might need transcribing and scanning for computer use and some documents may be incomplete and finally, some documents may not be authentic” (Creswell & Creswell 2018:189).

### **1.9.6.3 Qualitative questionnaires**

Qualitative questionnaires were used as instruments for data collection with heads of grades for Grades 10, 11 and 12, disciplinary committees, TLOs and learners of the participant schools. In this study, qualitative and open-ended questionnaires were appropriate. Open-ended questionnaires do not limit participants to a choice from pre-set categories of responses but enable them to give their answers in their own words and to add explanations where they want to qualify such. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:134) maintain that questionnaires serve as “self-revealing documents(s)” or “first person document(s)” which “describes an individual's actions, experiences and beliefs” about the particular phenomenon. Open-ended questions have some limitations such as that it may provide participants the opportunity to give irrelevant information on something which they want to get off their chests so to speak. Moreover, the questions could be too open-ended and open to a different interpretation than intended. The researcher piloted the qualitative questionnaires to establish whether the formulated questions would solicit the intended information and thereafter, ensured that ambiguous questions were rephrased (*cf.* Chapter 4).

#### 1.9.6.4 Interviews

Because of interviews' interactive nature, they are considered the foremost means of data collection in qualitative research. Interviews are ideal to evaluate people's feelings, the meanings they attach to and their constructions of reality (Creswell & Creswell 2018:142). It is also one of the most powerful ways of understanding other people's views. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012:3), an in-depth interview is a powerful method for bringing about the description and interpretation of people's social worlds and as such, are a basic qualitative research method. The power of an in-depth semi-structured interview is to encapsulate research topics, as emphasised by Rubin and Rubin (2012:3):

When using in-depth qualitative interviewing...researchers talk to those who have knowledge of or experience with the problem of interest. Through such interviews, researchers explore in detail the experiences, motives and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own.

The researcher opted for semi-structured interviews, which allowed the researcher to ask questions that are open-ended, yet specific in purpose and use probing for clarification or more detail (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:168). The semi-structured interviews were appropriate to gain insight into principals' responsibilities in managing learners' commitment in realisation of their right to education in schools. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with principals from the four participating schools so that the researcher could understand and interpret the situation correctly from their perspectives. As Jones (2010:46) stated:

In order to understand other persons' constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them, and ask them in such a way that they tell us in their terms (rather than those imposed rigidly and a priori by ourselves) and in a depth which addresses the rich content that is the substances of their meanings.

The researcher was interested to establish management strategies that school principals and deputy principals use to make learners aware how to balance rights with responsibilities and being committed to the realisation of their right to education. The researcher opted for this type of interview because it allowed for:

- combining structure with flexibility. The researcher can use an interview guide, but it is only a guide and flexible enough to allow participants to raise issues the researcher did not address.
- interaction. The researcher and participants are actively involved in the interview.
- the researcher to get below the surface. The researcher can probe to obtain a thorough understanding of the participants' views, feelings and reasoning.

- generation for new knowledge and thoughts. Participants' interests are raised and space for reflection is created.
- determining deeper meaning. The language used and the issues the participants raised reveal meaning (Creswell & Creswell 2018:184; Yeo *et al.* 2014:183-184).

### **1.9.7 Data analysis and interpretation methods**

Bogdan and Biklen (2011:106) are of the view that data refer to the information collected by researchers from the world that they are reviewing. Richards (2015:36) attest to the fact that data are the “stuff” one works with, the record of what one is studying. In this study, the data consisted of information extracted by means of the literature study, document analysis, individual, semi-structured interviews with principals, qualitative questionnaires with heads of various grades (10-12), TLOs, disciplinary committee members, RCL members and learners. The literature study was undertaken first as the content of various appropriate laws and policy had a direct bearing on the document analysis.

Creswell and Creswell (2018:182) describes data analysis as “eclectic”, suggesting that there is no one correct way to analyse data. Qualitative data analysis has no specific starting point because it takes place simultaneously with data collection (Gay & Airasian 2010:239). Creswell and Creswell (2018:182) posits that to understand the process of data analysis and interpretation, researchers should see it as a spiral where they need to move in analytic circles. Furthermore, earlier analytic processes (such as selecting what will be data and what not, deciding which data to record and which not) affect the actual data analysis processes (Richards 2015:80-81).

The main purpose of data analysis, according to Mouton and Marais (2012:108) is to gain an understanding of the data available, to identify variables, patterns and themes and establish the relationship between them. The initial step to the data analysis process is to manage data, which means that the researcher needs to break the data down into manageable chunks. Gay and Airasian (2010:239) claim that analysis itself requires four interactive steps, namely, reading, memoing or describing, classifying and interpreting. Expanding on this explanation, qualitative analysis is an inductive process of organising data into categories, synthesising, searching for patterns and identifying patterns among categories (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:345, Patton 2012:202). Categories and patterns must not be enforced on the data prior to data collection but it must emerge from the data.

In a research study, one begins the analysis with data that could be made up of text or images (for example, photographs and videotapes) and exits with an account or a narrative (Patton 2012:202). Analysis of data in this study was done through an analyst, with the use of qualitative software, the Atlas.ti version 8 (*cf.* section 4.7). The final process is to interpret the analysed data. Baxter and Jack (2008:555) point out that in order to fully understand the findings, they are compared and contrasted with what can be found in published literature in order to situate the data in pre-existing research. This is affirmed by Creswell and Creswell (2018:189) who explain that the researcher derives the meaning from a comparison of the findings with information obtained from literature or theories.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical implications should be considered throughout the research process. It starts from deciding on a research topic, a research design and methods of data collection, approaching prospective participants, gaining access to the research site and dealing with the collected data and ends with the writing up of the research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2010:162). Although there are several approaches to ethics, Wassenaar (2008:66) contends that respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice underline all these approaches. Respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons finds expression in the requirements for research participants that participants' voluntary informed consent must be obtained (Wassenaar 2008:67). In ensuring that the participants' consent was informed, the researcher provided them with an information letter explaining the aim and objectives of the study, the purpose, the name of the university where the researcher was studying, the researcher and the supervisor's contact details, why the interviews were to be tape recorded, information on the role they would be required to play, a description of how data would be collected, and how the data obtained would be used, as well as how the participating schools and the researcher would benefit from the study (*cf.* section 4.8.2). According to Brooks, TeRiele and Maguire (2014:24), "the protection of individuals and institutional confidentiality is the important operational expression of the principle of respect for the autonomy and dignity of persons".

In this study, the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity were explained to participants (*cf.* section 4.8.3). In addition, the researcher guaranteed and observed participants' privacy and a right to withdraw from the study.



The protection of the participants' identity can be done by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity (Babbie & Mouton 2012:523). In this study, the researcher used codes to protect the identity of participants and their different schools. The collected data were used for the purposes of the doctoral research only and schools' names and the names of participants were not mentioned in the thesis - codes were used (for example, Principal A, GHA1 and Learner A1). Various ethical measures were considered in this study and these included autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. Participants were allowed autonomy which means that research participants could decide on whether they wished to participate in this study, for example, by being able to make an informed decision armed with the relevant information (Brooks *et al.* 2014:28). The principle of non-maleficence aligns with the principle of autonomy as researchers need to ensure that research participants come to no harm as a direct or indirect consequence of the research (Farrimond 2013:29). In combination with the principle of non-maleficence, beneficence relates to aspects such as risk and benefit. The researcher must consider the risks of participating in the study in relation to the benefit. Because participants are the ones who will be inconvenienced by the research, the researcher must ensure that they are also the ones who reap the benefit and that the research findings are beneficial to them, their institutions and practice (Brooks *et al.* 2014:24; Wassenaar 2008:66). It is for this reason that the researcher should take care to ensure fair selection of participants and to treat research participants "equitably and fairly during all stages of the research" (Garret 2011:79).

In this study, it was foreseen that developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment, would offer the benefit of improved relationships between the SMT, educators and learners in the selected schools and this would possibly impact positively on school management. To ensure that participants were well-informed, the aim and the objectives of the study were clearly articulated, including a description of how data were to be collected and used. All means of data collection and activities that would be employed were discussed with participants which allowed them to make an informed decision on whether to participate in the study. Prior to a study being conducted, approval needs to be sought from various bodies. Approval for the research to be carried out in the selected schools was obtained from the Free State Department of Education as well as the University. Table 3 provides a summary of the processes followed to obtain the necessary ethical clearance and consent.

**Table 3: Summary table on ethical considerations: obtaining permission**

Permission obtained from?	Process to obtain permission	Letter requesting permission	Permission letters	Permission requested for?
DoE: Free State Principals	Request and obtain permission from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DoE: Free State</li> <li>• Principals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official form for requesting permission from the Head of Department (DoE: Free State)</li> <li>• Letter requesting permission from the principals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DoE: Free State permission letter</li> <li>• Permission letters from principals</li> </ul>	Permission requested to do <u>interview</u> with principal, administering qualitative <u>questionnaire</u> with participant TLOs, Head of various grades, disciplinary committee members and learners. and an <u>analysis of relevant documents</u> (School Code of Conduct for Learners, minutes of the SMT and books wherein transgressions are recorded)

Table 4 below, comprises a summary on ethical considerations for obtaining consent and assent from participants to ensure compliance with ethical standards.

**Table 4: Summary table on ethical considerations: Obtaining consent and assent**

<b>Sample/ Participants</b>	<b>Process to obtain consent / assent</b>	<b>Letter requesting consent/ assent for participation</b>	<b>Informed consent letter</b>	<b>Data collection instruments</b>
4 Principals	Request participation and consent from the principals	Letter requesting participation and consent from the principals	Consent letters from principals	Interview guide for the principals
8 TLOs, 12 Heads of various grades, 4 disciplinary committee members	Requesting participation and consent from the members of the TLOs, Head of various grades, disciplinary committee members	Letter requesting participation and consent from the TLOs, Head of various grades, disciplinary committee members	Consent letter from the TLOs, Head of various grades, disciplinary committee members	Qualitative Questionnaire
24 members of the RCL (6 members per school), 96 learners from grade 10-12 (24 learners per school) ranging from 16-19 years old from each participating school	Underage learners: requesting participation and consent from parents/guardians and participation and assent from learners	Letter requesting learner participation and consent from parents of underage learners, and letter requesting participation and assent from underage learners	Consent letters from parents Assent letters from learners	Qualitative Questionnaire

The following are ethical precautions, the researcher took to prevent any dilemmas that arose during the research:

**Researcher:** Mr M.M. Mabea was the researcher at the designated schools (that is, the four schools chosen). The researcher was supervised by an experienced professor of education who has for many years, conducted research in education law.

**Nature of the study:** The study involved people, and therefore the researcher gave the guarantee to participants that they would suffer no physical, psychological, legal, or social harm. The researcher informed the participants of all procedures to be used during the research process.

**The research participants:** The participants were recruited purposefully but participation was voluntary. After the distribution of information letters, participants were invited to a meeting where they were officially briefed about the research procedures and then asked to sign the consent/assent form if they agreed to participate in the research. Consent to participate in this study was given freely by participants. The researcher indicated that participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without retribution.

**Material:** The researcher used a tape recorder for the interviews and participants were given the opportunity to decide whether they wanted to be recorded or not. If they were against the recording, notes were taken as an alternative.

**Debriefing:** The researcher held a meeting with participants to address issues that arose from the research process.

**Plagiarism:** The researcher took great care not to plagiarise. His thesis was run through turn-it-in programme (*cf.* Appendix S). All sources used in this study were referenced.

## **1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION OF THE RESEARCH REPORT**

This research report consists of six chapters. **Chapter one** introduced the research with outlining the orientation of the study including the background and context of the study. The researcher also described the motivation of the study, statement of the problem, aim and objectives of the study, research design methods, and data collection methods in this chapter. Information on how the researcher approached population determining the sampling, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations of the study, conceptual analysis as well as choices with regard to data analysis and interpretation methods were presented in this chapter.

**Chapter two** deals with, inter alia, the debate on the right to an education, learners' responsibilities in relation to that right as identified from a literature review and a literature study of South African law and policy. The chapter concludes with a discussion of factors that prompt learners not to be committed to their education.

**Chapter three** deals with the existing literature on strategies that school management use to promote learners' commitment to their right to education. The chapter also deals with how strategies are developed and what steps can be used to develop strategies to promote learners' commitment to their right to education.

**Chapter four** comprises more detailed discussions on the research design and methodology building on what was presented in Chapter one. Following the guidelines set out by Coetzee (2015b:4), in Chapter one, the researcher focused on introducing the approach, design, data collection or analysis methods and explaining why the chosen methods are the best suited for this research. In Chapter four, the focus is on the implementation (the HOW) of these methods.

**Chapter five** contains the analysis of data and presentation of the findings. The findings are discussed and interpreted further to propose implication of the results.

In **Chapter six**, the researcher provides the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The researcher presents the management strategies for promoting learner commitment in realisation of their right to education that he has developed.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the introduction to the study as well as the background were given, and the problem statement formulated. The research paradigm (interpretive phenomenology), research approach (qualitative) and data collection methods were discussed. Data analysis and interpretation methods, population sample and sample selection were also looked at. The focus of the research was on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment towards the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. The chapter concluded with the discussion on the ethical considerations.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE STUDY AND REVIEW: LEARNER COMMITMENT

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

A research project does not exist in isolation but builds upon existing research and literature. Determining the existing literature requires a literature review. A literature review involves the identification and analysis of literature related to one's research topic. This process includes recognising potentially relevant sources, an initial assessment of these sources, an in-depth review of selected sources, and the construction of an account that integrates and explains relevant sources (Kumar 2014:374). A literature review is an indication of pre-existing knowledge in a certain subject which is derived from current developments and discussions. It is where connections are made between the source texts that you draw on and where you position yourself and your research among these sources (Ridley 2012:3). Any literature review should include both primary and secondary sources so that the accumulated knowledge in the stated field of interest can be exposed (Ary *et al.* 2011:67). The said literature sources can include books, scientific articles, thesis, dissertations, lecturers, conference papers, and newspapers. By means of a literature review, researchers develop theoretical and conceptual frameworks for their own studies, wherein their research findings can be integrated (Kumar 2014:374).

The purpose of Chapter 2 is not only to review the existing literature on learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools, but also to integrate that with law and policy in relation to such commitment. The researcher determined learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy by means of a literature study which is a data collection method (*cf.* section 1.8.1). The researcher studied laws and policies relevant to learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education to determine those instances where law and policy create a legal obligation that needs to be taken into consideration. Combining the literature review and the literature study ensured that a logical argument on the topic under review could be made. For learners to be able to claim and realise their right to education, they must be acknowledged as legal subjects and rights-holders.

In the next section, the researcher presents an overview of who a learner is in terms of the law in order to understand their legal status in a school environment.

## **2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF WHO A LEARNER IS IN TERMS OF THE LAW**

In this section, the researcher reviewed aspects that focus on learners as (1) legal subjects and rights holders, (2) as children and (3) as partners and members of the school population.

### **2.2.1 Learners as legal subjects and rights holders**

Learners are humans who are legal subjects and who enjoy the protection of human rights like any other human. A **legal subject** is “anyone or anything that can be the bearer of rights and duties in the eyes of the law” (Kleyn, Viljoen, Zitzke & Madi 2018:209). It is of paramount importance to keep in mind the distinction between legal and moral rights. A legal right is a claim that is acknowledged by a legal system and enforceable in a court (Franklin 2012:13). The right to vote, for example, is vested in each citizen, except those persons who are exempted due to mental incapacity, age or any other ground of disqualification. Human (2009:244) contends that a moral right does not enjoy the same acknowledgement and primarily entails a claim to humanitarian considerations. Thus, the purpose of the moral right allows for the questioning of the current legal position which may result in the initiation of possible legal reform (Franklin 2012:13-14). Human (2009:245) is of the view that although legal rights can be differentiated from moral rights, these terms can at times stand in a special relation to each other. Stating that each child has the right to education could refer to either the moral or legal right or an interplay between both (Human 2009:245). However, the moral right is supplementary to and supportive of the legal right.

The legal and fundamental rights are set out in the Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 of the Constitution. Through the recognition of fundamental human rights in a Bill of Rights, the state guarantees protection to the individual against the abuse of power by the state (Joubert & Prinsloo 2013:34). Section 7(2) of the Constitution (RSA 1996a) provides for vertical application of the Bill of Rights and reads as follows: “The state must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights.” The application is vertical because the state is in a position of power. Nieuwenhuis (2013:89-90) posits that section 7(2) places an obligation on the state with regard to all rights, including the right to education. This means that the state has a negative duty not to act in a manner that will arbitrarily deprive learners of their right to education; for example, by closing down a school without providing the learners with access to other schools or expelling a learner who is of compulsory school-going age without making a placement at another school.

This obligation also requires the state not to unfairly discriminate against certain learners; for example, the state may not deny learners with severe intellectual disabilities their right to education. For his or her part, the learner must respect the authority (the public powers and functions) of the education authorities (Nieuwenhuis 2013:90).

In terms of section 8(2)-(3) of the Constitution, a learner (or parent) may also enforce his or her fundamental rights against other “private” persons (for example, the educator in his or her private capacity) in terms of the horizontal application of the Bill of Rights (RSA 1996a). In this private-law relationship, the fundamental rights of the other person in the relationship has to be acknowledged and respected.

The following section discusses learners as children in terms of the Constitution.

### **2.2.2 Learners as children**

A fundamental issue to be determined is whether a learner is still a child because children also enjoy special protection under section 28 of the Constitution. Based on this section, additional protection is offered to children in the form of socio-economic rights that are unqualified and directly enforceable (RSA 1996a).

In the case of *Centre for Child Law v Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development and Others* 2009 (6) SA 632 (CC), 2009 (11) BCLR 1105 (CC) par. 26, Judge Cameron pointed out that:

the Constitution draws this sharp distinction between children and adults not out of sentimental considerations, but for practical reasons relating to children’s greater physical and psychological vulnerability. Children’s bodies are generally frailer, and that ability to make choices generally more constricted, than those of adults. They are less able to protect themselves, more needful of protection, and less resourceful in self-maintenance than adults.

In terms of section 28(2) of the Constitution, children’s best interests must be paramount (RSA, 1996a). Section 28(3) of the Constitution defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. At the age of 18, a person attains his or her majority and all limitations based on age, which previously affected that person’s status, fall away (Boezaart 2017:20). A person’s status depicts in essence his or her legal position or standing in law. Each individual acquires competencies through the operation of law and that person’s status is determined by the existence and extent of those competencies (Kleyn *et al.* 2018:212). Bray (2012:472) alludes to the fact that a learner is a person whose fundamental rights are entrenched in the Bill of Rights.



In terms of the Bill of Rights, children have the same rights as any other person (except of course for those that apply to adults only) (RSA 1996a, s7(1)). Though children are rights holders, they do not have full autonomy and the right to self-determination (*cf.* section 2.3.1).

### **2.2.3 Learner as partners and members of the school population**

Learners have important educational interests (school education in particular) to protect and promote and must act as responsible partners in education. Without their equal participation and co-operation in education decision-making, education will be incomplete (RSA 1996b, ss11(1) and 8(1)-(2)). In recognition of democratic governance and the application of the partnership principle, the Schools Act makes specific provision for the representation of learners at every public school (that is, enrolling learners in the eight or higher grade) through a RCL (RSA 1996b, s23(4)).

The Schools Act also recognises a learner as a stakeholder in educational matters. The elected learner representatives become bearers of the rights and duties as attributed to the governing body. Learner governors are, in particular, charged with the duty to promote the rights and duties associated with the interests of the learners (RSA 1996b, ss11, 23(2) and (4)). As a minor on the governing body, the law protects both the public school and minor governor in his or her personal capacity from certain legal conduct and legal consequences. For example, the minor may not contract on behalf of the public school or vote when the governing body adopt resolutions, imposing liabilities on any of the contracting parties. Furthermore, a minor incurs no personal liability for any consequence of his or her membership of the governing body (RSA 1996b, s32).

In the following section, the literature review on the theory of children's rights is discussed.

## **2.3 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

When children's rights are at risk, analysis of the legal issues must be treated with awareness of the realities of human lives (Austin 2010:148). Human (2009:243) is of the view that the theory of children's rights is complex because philosophical, moral and social considerations are involved. In the sub-sections below, concepts and definitions on children's rights as well as theories on their rights are discussed.

### 2.3.1 Conceptualisation of children's rights

As Brocklehurst (2012:1) points out, there is “no single or agreed definition of childhood recognized or acted upon worldwide”. Similarly, Aries (1962:3) refers to the fact that the meaning of **childhood** differs greatly across historical and cultural traditions and is used to identify everyone from new-born babies to young adolescents. The diverse nature and significance of childhood presents challenges for anyone wishing to bring analytical rigour to the definition of childhood (Cowden 2012:363).

Article one of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines children as “every human being below the age of eighteen unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (UN 1989). Much has been considered about the unpredictable nature of age-related definitions of children. Given the slow and changing nature of human development, any fixed age will be open to the challenge that some individuals are physically and mentally adult long before they are recognised by the state (Cowden 2012:364). Lowering the age from 18 to 16, however, would similarly draw criticism that some 16-year-olds are not yet mature enough to be considered adults.

Despite the difficulty of age-related definitions, the notion of childhood cannot be understood unless there is a concept of adulthood. A child is defined as one who is *not yet* adult (Archard 2010:24). According to Robinson (2003:24), childhood simply means the period before one becomes an adult. It is a time when one goes from total dependence as a baby to relative independence as an adult (Cowden 2012:364). As Archard (2010:25) states, “the underdevelopment of children is a biological given, a brute fact of human existence”.

However, the concept of childhood is biological as well as socially constructed. The manner in which we understand and affix meaning to these “biological givens” is created by the society in which we live. Therefore, the significance attributed to this period of cognitive, moral and physical development has differed greatly across history and continues to differ across cultures today (Brocklehurst 2006:1). This definition is intentionally broad and does not seek to identify an age by which one ceases to be a child. The vast differences in capacities between a 2-year-old child and a 14-year-old child and the development and evolution of children's capacities, is what any theory of rights must account for. Cowden (2012:364) argues that such theory must explain how to recognise children as right-holders despite their differing capacities yet also taking account of the importance of these capacities.

Cowden (2012:364) further argues that rights are contingent on an individual's interests and ability to realise the benefit of the interest, and therefore the distinction between child and adult becomes largely unimportant for rights theories.

In the following subsection, the different theories, origin and development of children's rights are stated.

### **2.3.2 Theories, origin and development of children's rights**

The protection of children and the liberation of children represent the two main streams of the children's rights movement. The first-mentioned group is often referred to as "child savers" – following the protective approach - and the latter as "kiddie libbers" – following the liberation approach (Mnookin 1981:24).

The protective approach is based on the argument that children should enjoy the greatest advantage of an environment based on parental autonomy (Human, 2009:247) and protection. Foster and Freed (2013:494-496) contend that claims are usually portrayed as moral rights and are typically formulated as follows:

A child has a moral right and should have a legal right: To receive parental love and affection, discipline and guidance, and grow to maturity in a home environment which enables him to develop into a mature and responsible adult, to be regarded as a person within the family, at school, and before the law.

Coons and Mnookin (1978:391) also emphasise that children are vulnerable and dependent and that there is a definite need to protect children against their parents, strangers and even themselves in some instances. Protective measures and paternalistic conduct are justified in the light of promoting the best interests of the child by the state. The state's concern for children finds expression in legislation that regulates the relationship between parents and children and between children and the broader community (Bevan 2012:7-8). Cohen (2013:viii) maintains that "kiddie libbers" reject the protective approach, arguing that it impairs children's status and dignity. They reject age as criterion to determine children's status and contend that all rights afforded to adults should similarly be extended to children (Freeman 2010:22-23).

This argument follows a similar route to civil rights movements and women's rights movements where the line of reasoning was that race and gender should be irrelevant when determining one's status (Human 2009:248). Bainham and Cretney (2011:80) reiterate that rights represent a universal claim and can promote the interests of a group (such as children). Because children have lacked the moral coinage of rights, their interests were brushed aside, and they easily became victims (Freeman 2010:54).

Human (2009:249) is of the view that advocating for the recognition of children as rights-holders performs an important function with regard to their social change. This social change acknowledges that there are certain things that should be provided for children not because adults think it would be nice if they had them, but because there is a willingness to recognise that children want them or can reasonably be assumed to want them (Eekelaar 2014:21). To Alston (2011:76), the significance of children's rights is that any qualification to the range of rights that are accorded by society has to be fully justified by reference to other human rights principles rather than to the predilections, prejudices or narrowly conceived self-interests of adults.

From the theories of children's rights discussed above, it becomes apparent that any well-balanced theory should consist of both elements, namely protection and liberation or recognition of autonomy (Skelton 2012:275). Protection and liberation should not be seen as opposites, but rather as phases in the continuum of a child's development (Freeman 2010:23). The third, more balanced theory, is found expression in the principle of evolving capacities coined by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In terms of Article 5 of the UNCRC, state parties have a duty to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the wider family or others involved in the upbringing of the child in a manner appropriate to the child's evolving capacities. This implies that the older the learner, the higher the degree of responsibility and thus the higher the degree of commitment that can be expected. Young children are highly dependent due to their lack of capacity and general vulnerability, and this means that protection of children is a priority during the early years. Parents and other caregivers play an important role in guiding and socialising their children, and in providing the first line of support for them. The necessity for protection of their rights continues from the beginning of their childhood, and they continue to need assistance with the achievement of their rights because their capacity is not fully developed until adulthood.

As children grow older, they become able to exercise their rights to choose their religion, express their views, aspire to personal privacy and make decisions about their relationships with others. Parents' responsibilities and rights in relation to their child weaken relative to the child's growing capacities (Skelton 2012:276).

The evolving capacities principle is promoted in section 5 of the Children's Act, which reads:

(5) A child, having regard to his or her age, maturity and stage of development, and a person who has parental responsibilities and rights in respect of that child, where appropriate, must be informed of any action or decision taken in a matter concerning the child which significantly affects the child.

The Constitutional Court has given some recognition to autonomy by encouraging children who are of sufficient age and maturity to participate in litigation. In the cases of *MEC for Education: Kwazulu-Natal and Others v Pillay* (CCT 51/06) [2007] ZACC 21; 2008 (1) SA 474 (CC); 2008 (2) BCLR 99 (CC), Judge Langa pointed out that in the context of a case concerning children, that their ...

actual experiences and opinions would not necessarily have been decisive, but they would have enriched the dialogue, and the factual and experiential foundations for the balancing exercise in this difficult matter would have been more secure (par. 56).

In the case of *Minister of Welfare and Population Development v Fitzpatrick and Others* (2000 (3) SA 422 (CC), the court declared section 18(4)(f) of the now repealed Child Care Act to be invalid because it prohibited the adoption of a South African child by non-citizens. The court found that the law was too restrictive because it limited the best interests of the child. Judge Goldstone pointed out in *Fitzpatrick* that section 28(1) is not exhaustive of children's rights:

Section 28(2) requires that a child's best interests have paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. The plain meaning of the words clearly indicates that the reach of section 28(2) cannot be limited to the rights enumerated in section 28(1), and 28(2) must be interpreted to extend beyond those provisions. It creates a right that is independent of those specified in section 28(1).

In addition, in *Christian Lawyers' Association of South Africa v Minister of Health and Others* 2005(1) SA509 (T), the High Court was concerned with the constitutionality of a law that permits girls below the age of 18 years to choose whether to terminate their pregnancies, if they have the intellectual and emotional capacity for informed consent. The court found that the Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 of 1996, which was based on the girl's capacity to decide rather than a specific age, promoted the best interests of the child because it was flexible and recognised that decisions taken to terminate pregnancy would depend on her intellectual, psychological and emotional maturity, rather than her chronological age.

The next section deals with the rights to, in and through education, as described in the Constitution.

### 2.3.3 Rights to, in and through education as described in the Constitution

Rights are mutually dependent and the right to education must be interpreted within the context of the other rights in the Bill of Rights (Chürr 2012:135). The ethical standards for a democratic system of education are set through the right to equality (s9) and the right to human dignity (s10). It is stipulated that: “[E]very child – regardless of race, gender, culture, language, religion, ability or disability – is equally entitled to learn, under conditions that respect, protect and promote the inherent human dignity of each child” (Pendlebury, Lake & Smith 2011:20). There is thus a duty on the state to ensure the full and immediate enjoyment of the right to a basic education (Chürr 2012:136). The Constitutional Court in *Juma Masjid Primary School* confirmed this. Nkabinde J, who penned the judgement on behalf of a unanimous court, stated the following:

It is important, for the purposes of this judgement, to understand the nature of the right to “a basic education” under section 29(1)(a). Unlike some of the other socio-economic rights, this right is immediately realisable. There is no internal limitation requiring that the right be “progressively realised” within “available resources” subject to “reasonable legislative measures”. The right to a basic education in section 29(1)(a) may be limited only in terms of a law of general application which is “reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom”. The right is therefore distinct from the right to “Further education” provided for in section 29(1)(a) the state is, in terms of that right, obliged, through reasonable measures, to make further education “progressively available and accessible” (*Juma Masjid Primary School*, par 37).

It is clear from the above, that the right to education is a cardinally important socio-economic right, which aims to fully promote, improve and develop a child’s personality, talents, mental and physical abilities. The importance of education cannot be emphasised enough – it is nearly impossible to “survive” without education in an educated world. Education empowers human beings to claim and realise their other rights, and the right to basic education is a “central facilitative right in South Africa’s constitutional democracy” (Chürr 2012:136).

One can thus argue that through education, people are better able to recognise the value of their human rights and they are in a better position to exercise the full range of these rights. It is of paramount importance to consider the meaning and ambit of the right to education. According to Pendlebury, Lake and Smith (2011:25), the right to education simply means the state has the obligation to make education available to learners (for example, fiscal allocation matching human rights obligations, schools matching school-aged children and to provide transport to school or textbooks free of charge.).

In terms of article 13(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the state has the obligation to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable (UN 1999). These principles were set out as the so-called “4-A scheme” or Tomaševski framework – named after the former Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the Right to Education who developed it (UN 1999, para 7). The researcher concurs with Malherbe (2009:402) that the “4-A scheme” forms a useful benchmark against which to measure government’s performance towards the realisation of the right to education. Section 39(2) of the Constitution enjoins the courts, when interpreting a right in the Bill of Rights, to consider international law, thus also the “4-A scheme”.

As explained in the General Comment 13 (UN 1999), availability requires that functioning educational institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the state party. Accessibility requires that educational institutions and programmes be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the state party. Acceptability has to do with the form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods. This is where quality comes into the equation. Adaptability directs that education has to be flexible, so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of learners within their diverse social and cultural settings. Pendlebury *et al.* (2011:20) are of the view that these four elements of the right to education are used increasingly as a yardstick to measure states’ compliance with the international requirements for the fulfilment of the right. The right to education in South Africa was discussed against the backdrop of these universally recognised minimum standards for the realisation of the right to education.

Table 5 below illustrates how the “4-As” interrelate to one another, as stated by Pendlebury *et al.* (2011:20).

**Table 5: “4-A scheme”**

<b>Availability</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>Acceptability</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>
<p>The state has the duty to provide education and to make it available to all children. In other words, the state has the duty to make educational institutions and programmes available in sufficient quantity in order to meet the needs of children. The availability obligation can be fulfilled through a public educational system and to allow non-state actors to establish non-public schools. The government will then have a combination of both public schools and non-public (private) schools.</p>	<p>The state has the duty to make educational institutions and programmes accessible to everyone, without discrimination, as stipulated in section 9 of the Constitution. In order to meet the accessibility criteria, schools must be physically and economically accessible and affordable.</p>	<p>The state has the duty to ensure that the form and substance of education, as well as the curricula and teaching methods, are acceptable, relevant, culturally appropriate and of high quality to children. In order to meet the acceptability obligation, the state must ensure that the education provided is stable, reliable and consistent with the rights of children set out in the human rights instruments such as the ICESCR and the CRC.</p>	<p>The education system has to be flexible and expandable in order to adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities, and to respond to the needs and requirements of learners and students within their social and cultural circumstances. Thus, there should be the necessity for curriculum flexibility, liveness and adaptation to meet the needs of children.</p>

Source: Pendlebury *et al.* (2011:20)



The Children's Charter of South Africa (SAHRC 2012) provides valuable insights into the content of the constitutional right to education. Article 8 of the Children's Charter of South Africa (SAHRC 2012) stipulates the following:

All children have the right to free and equal, non-racial, non-sexist and compulsory education within one department as education is a right not a privilege. All children have a right to education which is in the interest of the child and to develop their talents through education, both formal and informal. All educators should be qualified and should treat children with patience, respect and dignity. All teachers should be evaluated and monitored to ensure that they are protecting the rights of the child. Parents have the duty to become involved in their children's education and development and to participate in their children's education at school and at home. All children have the right to play and to free and adequate sports and recreational facilities so that children can be children. All children have the right to participate in the evaluation and upgrading of curriculum which respects all the traditions, cultures and values of children in South Africa. All children have the right to education on issues such as sexuality, AIDS, human rights, history and background of South Africa and family life, and all children have the right to adequate educational facilities and the transportation to such facilities should be provided to children in difficult or violent situations.

The **rights in education** also means the state must ensure that the education provided is stable, reliable and consistent (for example, assistance to learners to overcome linguistic obstacles or learning disabilities). The **rights through education** places the obligation on the state to prevent children from being used as soldiers, and to eliminate child labour and child marriages. The following table illustrates the rights to education, rights in education and rights through education, as protected in the Constitution.

**Table 6: The rights to education, rights in education and rights through education as protected in the Constitution**

Rights to Education	Rights in Education	Rights through Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is everyone’s right to a basic education (s29(1) (a)).</li> <li>• It is everyone’s right to further education (s29(1) (b)).</li> <li>• It is everyone’s right to learn in their official language of choice (s29(2))</li> <li>• All children have the right to be protected from work that places their education at risk (s 28(1)(f))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is everyone’s right to dignity (s10).</li> <li>• It is everyone’s right to equality (s9).</li> <li>• It is everyone’s right to an environment that is not harmful to health (s24).</li> <li>• Every child has the right to protection from abuse and neglect (s28(1) (d)).</li> <li>• Every child has the right to basic nutrition (s28(1) (c)).</li> </ul>	<p>Basic education facilitates access to a wide range of political, social and economic rights.</p> <p>This includes, amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights to equality and dignity (ss9 &amp; 10)</li> <li>• Right to further education (s29)</li> <li>• Right to information (s32)</li> <li>• Right to health care and social security (s27)</li> <li>• Right to just administrative action (s33)</li> <li>• Right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion (s15) and association (s16).</li> </ul>

Source: Pendlebury *et al.* (2011:25)

In the next section, learners’ duties and responsibilities are discussed with regard to the realisation of their right to education.

## **2.4 LEARNERS’ DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

Learners’ awareness of their responsibilities associated with human rights is the noblest outcome of education (Jennings & Eichinger 2011:37). While section 29 of the Constitution guarantees the right to education for everyone, the Schools Act places the specific obligation on learners, who exercise their right to education, to undertake nine years of compulsory education (RSA 1996b s3(1)). The argument here is that every right poses a corresponding duty on the bearer of that right. The right of each person also poses a duty on the rights of others; for example, the right to education poses a duty on parents to ensure their children attend school and on educators to be at school, be prepared and educate to the best of their abilities taking into consideration the learners’ best interests (Joubert 2013:510).

The Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE, 1998a) contains the following responsibilities of learners under their right to:

- attend school (See Schools Act s3(1));

- learn;
- abide by the school rules,
- behave well, and
- accept responsibility for their personal wellbeing.

In the Department of Basic Education’s *Bill of Responsibilities* (DoBE 2008) several of these responsibilities, such as the duty to attend school, to learn and to comply with the Code of Conduct for Learners, are repeated. Further responsibilities mentioned in the Bill of Responsibilities are to respect and obey educators and to respect the rights of educators and other learners (DoBE 2008).

Next, the researcher takes a closer look at each of these responsibilities.

#### **2.4.1 The responsibility to attend school**

The right to education places the obligation on learners to attend school regularly (Beckmann, Foster & Smith 2011:155). As mentioned above (*cf.* section 2.4), learners of compulsory school-going age are required to attend school. Various international and regional instruments contain provisions aimed at monitoring school attendance and attempting to reduce the dropout rate. Article 11(3)(d) of the ACRWC: (d) take measures to encourage regular attendance at school and the reduction of drop-out rate and article 28(1)(e) of the UNCRC: (e) take measures to encourage regular attendance at school and the reduction of drop-out rates. Concerning compliance with compulsory attendance requirements, Beckmann, Foster and Smith (2011:155), state “... it is a learners’ right, if not obligation to attend school...”, but learners do not have the right to start their school career before they reach the compulsory school-going age. In the case of *Doreen Harris v The Minister of Education* (2001) concerning General Notice of 2000, King David Primary School denied Doreen Harris’ daughter access to schooling on the grounds of her becoming seven after 31 December 2001.

Counsel for the applicant argued that it was “... a violation of the rights of the girl and other similarly situated children under section 28(2) of the Constitution to have their best interests treated as being of paramount importance in all matters concerning them”. The court’s subsequent findings were that the notice was:

- *ultra vires* the powers of the respondent in terms of the National Policy Act 27 of 1996,
- an unconstitutional violation of her rights, and
- an unconstitutional violation of section 125 of the Constitution.

The Schools Act places the obligation on learners to attend school *regularly* (RSA 1996b, s3(1)). This obligation is also included and extended to include *punctuality* in the Policy on Learner Attendance (RSA DoBE 2010, par 15-17). School governing bodies are advised in the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 5.4) to address learners' obligation to attend school regularly during school hours in their schools' Code of Conduct for Learners. In terms of the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools (RSA DoBE 2010, par 13), if a learner of compulsory school going age fails to attend school, the provincial Head of Department may act in terms of section 3(5) and (6) of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b).

Parents have no right to deprive their children of the right to basic education. The Policy on Learner Attendance (RSA DoBE 2010, par 13) states the following:

A learner is allowed to be absent from school with a valid cause; for example, death in the immediate family or an emergency. If a learner is absent from the school for ten consecutive days and his or her parents fail to report the cause of such absence, and the educator's efforts to find a cause have been in vain, then such a learner will be suspended from school. The principal must, as soon as possible, make a reasonable effort to contact the parent by whatever means are suitable for the circumstances of the school and of the family concerned (RSA DBE, 2010, par 6).

Coetzee and Venter (2016:5, 6) argue that learners are denied their voice in this regard. They further argue that since learners are not part of the process of dealing with their absence, their own responsibilities are not acknowledged, and their commitment not emphasised. It is implied that parents are solely responsible for their children to attend school and that the learners carry no responsibility in this regard (Coetzee & Venter 2016:5, 6). That in itself, places a learner's progress and his or her right to education in jeopardy. In terms of the Policy on Learner Attendance (RSA DoBE 2010, par 13), a learner is allowed to be absent from school with a valid cause; for example, death in the immediate family or an emergency. If he or she returns within 40 days, he or she is readmitted and retains his or her former admission number. If he or she returns after 40 days, he or she is allocated a new admission number (RSA DoBE 2010, par 13).

In terms of section 3(1) of the Schools Act, if a learner who is subject to compulsory school attendance is not enrolled at or fails to attend a school, the Provincial Head of Department of Education may investigate the circumstances of the learner's absence from school and take appropriate measures to remedy the situation. If the situation does not improve, a written notice may be issued to the parents requiring them to comply with section 3(1).

If the parents fail to comply, they are guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months. Section 4(1) of the Schools Act gives the Provincial Head of Department the discretion to exempt a learner entirely or partially from compulsory school attendance, if it is in the best interests of the child. In terms of the Policy on Learner Attendance (RSA DoBE 2010), the principal is responsible for fostering a caring school environment in which the SMT and educators take an interest in each learners' well-being and are alert to problems that might affect a learners' attendance. In schools with Grade 8 and above, the RCL should contribute to the development and application of school policy on learner attendance and inform the SMT of barriers to learner attendance (RSA DoBE 2010, par 17).

#### **2.4.2 The responsibility to learn**

Since its debut about three decades ago, learner autonomy has changed the traditional roles of educators and learners as we have known them, introducing a new era in which learners are no longer the passive learners who sit and listen, and the educators are no longer the only source of knowledge (Tamer 2013:1). Learners are now being transformed into independent learners assuming more responsibility for their own learning just as educators are becoming facilitators, advising more and teaching less (Tamer 2013:1). According to Trebbi (2012:33), before we can answer the question of what constitutes learner autonomy, we need to understand what freedom is, because it is a prerequisite to learner autonomy. He contends that the definition of freedom can be subtle; it may mean different things to individuals living in different cultures. Owing to the fact that we all live in a society that is subject to rules and regulations, we cannot talk about absolute freedom. Trebbi (2012:38) believes that “we are bound to both external and internal forces” and “from an ontological point of view, human beings are not free in an absolute sense”. He then establishes a link between the concept of freedom and learner autonomy, arguing that if freedom at a broader sense suffers from external and internal constraints, learner autonomy will also be bound by those constraints in the same way.

Nevertheless, various definitions are used in the literature to refer to learner autonomy with nuances based on versions of it such as **learner autonomy**, **learner independence**, **self-direction**, **autonomous learning**, and **independent learning**.

Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012:4) define autonomy in terms of what it is not rather than what it is:

It is not self-instruction/learning without an educator, it does not mean that intervention or initiative on the part of the educator is banned, it is not something educators do to learners, i.e. a new methodology, it is not a single easily identifiable behaviour, it is not a steady state achieved by learners once and for all.

Lamb and Reinders (2011:3) describe learner autonomy as a paradigm shift:

From linguistic to communicative, from behaviouristic to cognitive descriptions of the acquisition process, from priority to teaching and educators to priority to learning and the learner, ...

According to Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012:4), the ability to take charge of one's own learning pertains to a wide range of capacities to exercise control over his or her learning process such as determining the objectives, choosing the content materials to study, selecting strategies and methods of study, monitoring and evaluation of one's learning. Sinclair (2010:243) states "this capacity consists of the development and conscious awareness of a body of specific meta-cognitive knowledge about one's self as a learner, one's learning context, the subject matter to be learnt, the processes of learning".

Little (2012:156) reaffirms Sinclair's views by stating that autonomous learners use meta-cognitive skills that relate to capacity for critical reflection, decision-making, independent action and transferring what one has learnt to other contexts of learning. Al-Saidi (2011:99) illustrates the contrast between dependent and independent learners across a continuum with the dependent ones on one end and the independent ones on the other. The dependents' side represent conventional learners who lack independent learning skills whereas on the other side of the continuum are the ones who are self-reliant, motivated and capable of learning without the educator. This continuum can be linked to the principle of children's evolving capacities where children take responsibility for their own learning. There is a gradual transition from the dependent side to the independent side by the successful learners with the scaffolding by educators and other sources of support. Table 7 below contains a comparison of the characteristics of dependent and independent learners, as compiled by the above-mentioned author.

**Table 7: Characteristics of dependent and independent learners**

<b>Dependent learners</b>	<b>Independent learners</b>
Rely heavily on the educator	Are self-reliant
Cannot make decisions about their learning	Can make decisions about their learning
Do not know their own strengths and weaknesses	Are aware of their strengths and weaknesses
Do not connect classroom learning with the real world	Connect classroom with the real world
Think that the educator is wholly responsible for their learning	Take responsibility for their own learning
Do not know the best way to learn something	Know about different strategies for learning
Do not set learning goals	Plan their learning and set goals
Will only work when extrinsic motivators such as grades or rewards are offered	Are intrinsically motivated by making progress in learning
Do not reflect on their own progress or lack thereof	Often reflect on the learning process and their own progress

Source: Al-Saidi (2011:99)

In the South African context, the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners, under paragraph 5, requires learners to commit themselves to do their schoolwork during classes, complete assignments and homework and catch up on work missed because of absence (RSA DoBE 1998a). Learners have the responsibility to learn and develop their academic, social, occupational, spiritual and cultural potential (RSA DoBE 1998a). They can expect their educators to assist them with their learning difficulties, report on their progress, and to look after their well-being. The collaboration of educators and learners presupposes a mutual relationship with an educator-learner relationship based on mutual trust and respect (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 5.6). An educator-learner relationship should be built on both parties' understanding of the significance of intervention and collaboration (RSA DoBE, 1998a, par 4.4.1) and disagreements should be settled amicably (RSA DoBE 1998, par 5).

In this educator-learner relationship, both educators and learners are mutually accountable for resolving disputes. A clear warning is sounded that learners are not in charge of schools, they are depicted as collaborators in creating learning sites that are favourable for successful teaching and learning (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 7.4). In terms of the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 7.6), learners have to gain skills, knowledge and values necessary for their daily living.

Educators have a responsibility to help learners to learn and learners on the other hand, should actively participate in the learning and decision-making process and have the opportunity to talk about their problems. Creating responsible learners and encouraging them to begin to take responsibility for their own learning is an admirable ambition for every school (Weimer 2017:2). The author further argues that active commitment and relevant learning leads to outcomes far beyond expected progress measures or age-related milestones. According to Weimer (2017:2), learners who have an intrinsic sense of responsibility for their own learning will stand the best possible chance of succeeding in any area of their lives. The responsibility for learning means that learners should:

- take responsibility for their own learning,
- accept responsibility for their own life's situatedness and the affect thereof on their learning,
- become independent learners,
- differentiate between doing homework, performing tasks and learning (that is actively studying),
- actively engage with study material, and
- be self-regulatory (not controlled by educators).

### **2.4.3 The responsibility to abide by the school rules**

The purpose of school regulations and rules is to ensure that schools are safe and peaceful environments where teaching and learning can take place. This suggests that discipline must be kept at all times so that the education of learners proceeds without disruptive behaviour and offences. The focus of discipline is to teach and lead learners to self-discipline (RSA 1996b).

The Schools Act (RSA 1996b, s8(1)) provides that a governing body of a public school must adopt a Code of Conduct for Learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. The Code of Conduct for Learners must contain a provision that indicates learners' commitment, obligation or responsibilities towards their education (RSA 1996b, s8(4)). In terms of the Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA 1996, s8(4)), schools must set up a principle of good behaviour amongst learners and provide them with knowledge and skills they would be expected to evince as worthy and responsible citizens. It must also promote positive discipline, self-discipline and exemplary conduct, as learners learn by observing and experience (RSA DoBE 1998a, paras 1.4, 1.6).



In terms of the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 3.5-3.7), learners themselves must understand that contravening this code has consequences. The guidelines state that nothing exempts a learner from complying with the school's Code of Conduct for Learners.

Learners have the right to be informed why particular conduct is considered misbehaviour and why they are to be disciplined. School rules are designed to regulate the general organisation of schools, including educator-learner relationships. It is important that all school rules should be coherent with the Constitution. Schools should have precautionary and corrective measures in place so as to ensure that the Code of Conduct for Learners is adhered to (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 3.7).

#### **2.4.4 Learners' responsibility to behave well**

The Code of Conduct for Learners must promote the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the creation of a proper learning environment in schools. In terms of the Guidelines for Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE 1998, paras 1.10, 4.6, 4.7.5) learner responsibilities are that they should play a role in developing a proper learning environment, look after school property and be present in classes. They may not behave in a manner that violates other learners' rights and the rights of the school authorities. If they do, educators may use reasonable measures to correct the learner's behaviour. With their professional authority, educators have the power and authority to control and discipline learners according to the Code of Conduct for Learners during the time learners are at the school, or engaged in any official activities (RSA DoBE 1998a, paras 5.2.,5.5). In terms of the Guidelines for the Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoBE 1998a, par 1.6.7.1), learners are responsible for their own behaviour and should increasingly show self-discipline. Learners' responsibilities in relation to their own wellbeing will, in particular, require self-discipline. The sub-section below deals with the personal well-being of learners in terms of the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB.

#### **2.4.5 Responsibilities with regard to personal well-being**

Personal well-being is an essential element for learners' achievement (Canadian School Boards Association 2017:1). The National Plan of Action for Children in South Africa (2012-2017) outlines a complete structure for the combination of all policies and plans developed by governments and civil society to promote the well-being of children (RSA DoBE 2012:8). The main aim of the aforementioned plan is to put children first.

For example, it promotes the realisation of children's rights to survival, development, protection, participation and to mobilise resources on all levels (Department of Health & Basic Education 2012:12). However, learners must take the responsibility of caring for their own physical, academic and emotional well-being (Edwards-Meyer 2013:99).

This responsibility is, in particular, evident in the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB. In response to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, especially among the youth, the Department of Education formulated and implemented the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for learners and educators in public schools, and students and educators in Further Education and Training institutions (RSA 1999). In 2017, this policy was replaced by the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners, educators, school support staff and officials in primary and secondary schools in the Basic Education Sector (RSA DoBE 2017), which gives effect to section 9(4) of the Constitution (RSA 1996a). This section of the Constitution supports the duty set out in paragraph 5.5.3.2 of the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners, educators, school support staff and officials in primary and secondary schools in the Basic Education Sector to prohibit direct and indirect unfair discrimination against a learner with HIV, STIs and TB (RSA DoBE 2017).

Currie and De Waal (2013:236) define discriminatory unfairness as a contrast against the law. The aforementioned authors further attest that differentiation on the grounds that is not included in the list of presumptively illegitimate grounds of differentiation in section 9(3) of the Constitution, constitutes discrimination if the ground is analogous to the listed grounds. Analogous grounds are those grounds that will have a similar relationship and impact on human dignity than the listed grounds.

In the case of *Prinsloo v Van der Linde and Another* (CCT4/96) [1997] ZACC 5, 1997 (6) BCLR 759, 1997 (3) SA 1012 (18 April 1997) the court held (at 31):

In our view unfair discrimination, when used in this second form in section 8(2), in the context of section 8 as a whole, principally means treating persons differently in a way which impairs their fundamental dignity as human beings, who are inherently equal in dignity.

Learners' responsibilities are outlined in the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for learners, educators, school support staff and officials in primary and secondary schools in the Basic Education Sector (RSA DoBE 2017, paras 5.2.8.2–6.2.8.2). In terms of this policy, learners should

- respect the rights of other learners (par 5.5)

- observe all rules aimed at preventing behaviour which may create a risk of HIV/AIDS (paras 5.2.8.2, 5.2.8.4 and 6.2.1)
- take an active interest in acquiring any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS supplied by the school. The policy further suggests that learners' wellbeing is foundational to the realisation of their right to education (par 6.2.8.2).
- make use of health care, counselling and support services (including services related to productive health care and prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted disease) offered by community service organisation (par 5.3.3.1)

In the section below, the researcher discusses the conceptual concepts and literature review on learner commitment.

## **2.5 LEARNER COMMITMENT**

Learners' duties and responsibilities were discussed in section 2.4 above. In this section, learner commitment, learner ethics as well as factors that prompt learners not to be committed to their education are explored.

### **2.5.1 Learner commitment conceptualised**

In the Oxford Advanced Dictionary (2010 s.v. "commitment), **commitment** is defined as "the state of being willing to give a lot of time, work, energy, etc to something"; for example, someone with a real sense of commitment to the job (*cf.* section 1.7.2.5). Cheng, Heng, Love and Irani (2010:462) describe **commitment** as one's own promise, pledge or undertaking. Hu and Kuh (2017:3) define **commitment** as "the quality of effort learners themselves devote to educationally purposeful activities that contribute directly to desired outcomes". Wellborn (2012:56) refers to **learner commitment** as the extent of a learners' active involvement in a learning activity. Kuh (2010:683) further defines **learner commitment** as "the time and effort learners devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college [sic] and what institutions do to induce them to participate in these activities".

Fredericks, Blummenfield and Paris (2013:59) posit that school managers should focus on learners' behavioural, emotional and cognitive commitment. The process of learner commitment requires collaborative relationships. All members of the school community should have the opportunity to partake in promoting learner commitment. Motivating learners to commit to learning requires positive emotional experiences.

Positive experiences contribute to a classroom climate that forms the foundation for educator-learner relationships and interactions necessary for commitment (Fredericks *et al.* 2013:59).

In this instance, motivation has a serious impact on the learners' behavioural, academic-cognitive and social-psychological commitment. In their study on what motivates learners to take up learner representative roles such as becoming members of the RCL, Lazzio and Wilson (2012:69) found that the responses predicated along two intersecting axes: motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) and focus (personal or systems).

Coates (2013:121) asserts that learners who are reporting an intense form of commitment, are highly involved with their schoolwork or studies. They tend to see teaching staff as approachable, and see their learning environment as responsive, supportive and challenging. Trowler (2010:10) point out the three types of **learner commitment**, which can be represented along axes. Individual studies can be located at various points along each of these axes, as illustrated in the example below:

#### Axis 1: Individual learner learning

This axis represents a continuum along which an individual learner works and that can be located to his or her concern or perspective. Along this axis, work that had no patent concern with individual learner learning would be located at 0, with waypoints along this axis including “learner attention in learning, learner interest in learning, learner involvement in learning, learner (active) participation in learning and learner-centredness involvement in the design, delivery and assessment of their learning”.

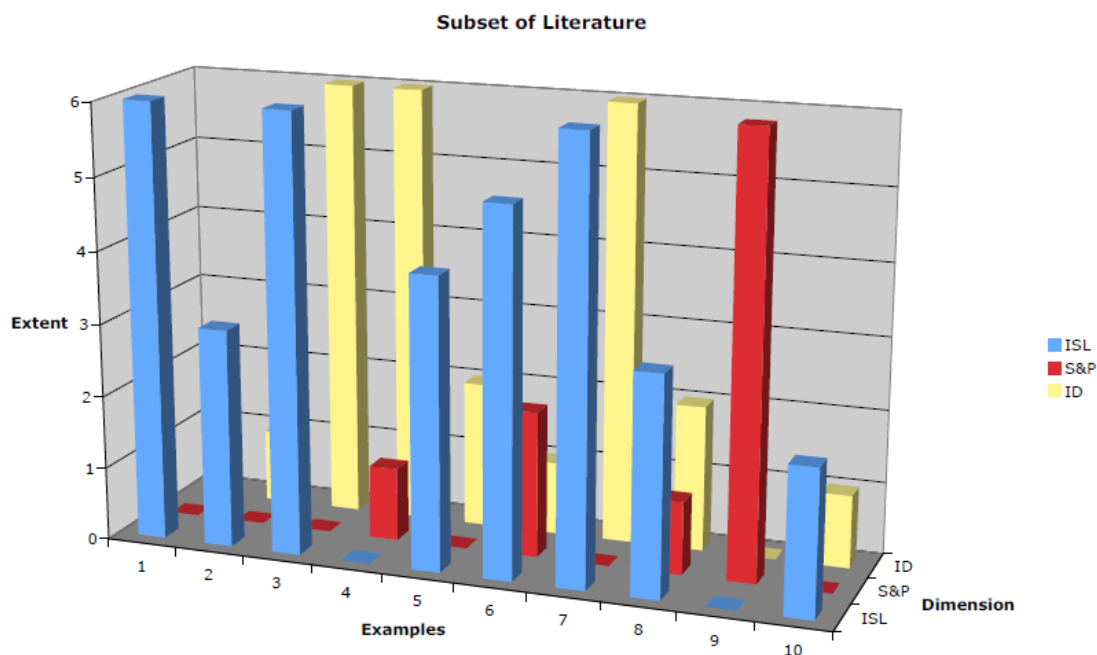
#### Axis 2: Structure and process

The second axis focuses on issues in relation to structure and process, including learner representation, learners' role within governance, learner feedback, and other such matters. Location along this axis at the 0 point would denote that the work had no patent concern with the collective structural or process role of learner commitment, while waypoints along this axis would include “representation as consultation such as tokenistic learner membership of committees or panels to obviate the need for formal consultation with learners, learners in an observer role on committees, learners as representatives on committees (delegate role), learners as full members on committees (trustee role) and integrated and articulated learner representation as course, department, RCL committee members”.

### Axis 3: Identity

This can range from concerns about how to generate a sense of belonging for individual learners, to concerns about how to commit specific groups of learners – particularly those deemed “marginal” with midpoints including issues concerning the role of representation in conferring identity.

Examples of waypoints along this axis include “commitment towards individual learner’s “belonging”, identity attached to representation (module/course/discipline/institution/learner role, commitment of groups such as non-traditional learners”. Figure 1 below illustrates the above-mentioned axis graphically. ISL represents individual learner learning, S&P is structure and processes, while ID stands for identity. The examples listed along the bottom are random examples taken from the literature – example 1 is focusing on “learner-centred” individual learning but is silent on aspects of structure and process or on identity issues, while example 10 is concerned the individual learners’ interest in (particular aspect of) learning among a particular subset of learners.

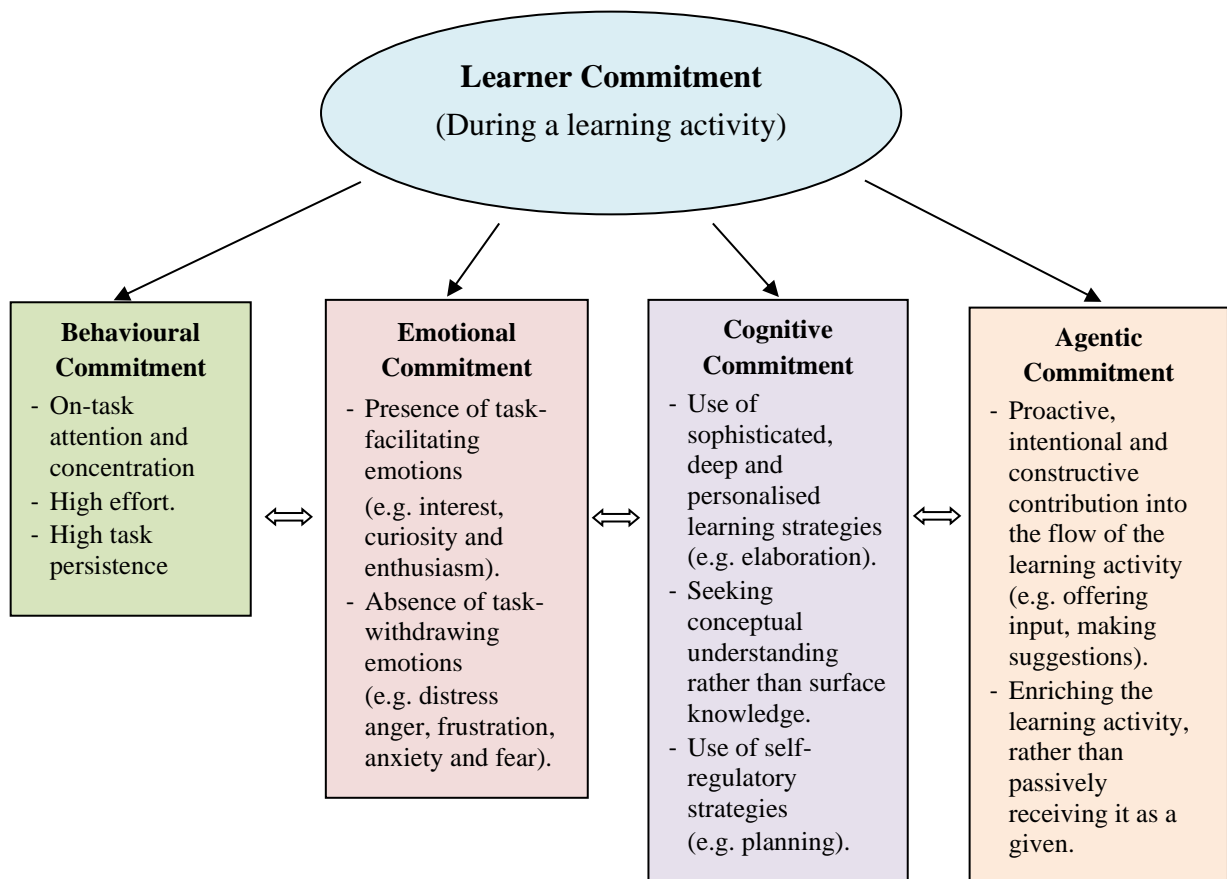


**Figure 1: Types of commitment represented in the literature**

Source: Trowler (2010:10)

The researcher concurs with Harper and Quayle (2011:125) that **learner commitment** is more than involvement or participation. It requires feelings and sense-making.

The aforementioned authors further state that it is a multi-dimensional construct, as depicted in Figure 2 below. It features four distinct, but highly inter-connected, aspects. The definition offered by Gibbs and Poskitt (2010:10) is comprehensive and acknowledges potential educator impact. They argue that **learner commitment** is a variable state of being that is influenced by a range of internal and external factors including the perceived value or relevance of the learning and the presence of opportunities for learners to experience appropriately pitched challenges and success in their learning. They further maintain that **learner commitment** is a multi-faceted construct that encompasses learners' sense of belonging and connectedness to their school, educators and peers, their sense of agency, self-efficacy and orientation to achieve within their classrooms and in their broader extra-curricular endeavours, their involvement, effort, levels of concentration and interest in subjects and learning in general.



**Figure 2: Four distinct types of learner commitment**

Source: Gibbs and Poskitt (2010:10)

### 2.5.2 Learner ethics

Understandings of learner commitment recognise that ethics are deeply embedded within learner commitment practice and theory (Nixon 2012:62). According to Bryson's (2014:9) definition, learner commitment is about what a learner brings to the school with regard to their goals, aspirations, value and beliefs and how these are shaped and mediated by their experience whilst a learner.

Learner commitment is constructed and reconstructed through the lenses of the perceptions and identities held by learners and the meaning and sense a learner makes of their experiences and interactions. Such a definition is important, in the researcher's view, because it recognises learner commitment as a holistic, dynamic and socially constructed process and acknowledges that every learner is an individual and therefore different.

In a similar vein, the researcher concurs with Taylor's (2012:112) view of learner commitment as a heterogeneous field of practice, which means different things to different people in different contexts. Given the absence of an explicit discussion of ethics in learner commitment discourses, the researcher begins with a 'back to basics' approach to ethics. He considers two important philosophical understandings of ethics and, from this, proposes a hybrid – or bricolage – approach to ethics. According to Aristotle (1973:72), the notion of *phronesis* (which translates as "practical wisdom") serves as a helpful guide to "acting well". Ethics concerns the rules or moral principles which govern behaviour. Such moral rules may be legal (socially prescribed behaviour punishable by law) or normative (socially acceptable codes of behaviour) but are often open to different interpretation and application by different people, which is why so many ethical disputes arise in society. The term *axiology* is used to describe the internal value systems which influence ethical decisions and actions. Philosophical discussions often make a distinction between morality, which concerns personal character and the moral principles of an individual, group or tradition, and ethics, which refers to the study of morality and, as such, focus on the social systems within which those moral principles are put into action.

In studying ethics, philosophers distinguish between three different types of ethics, namely normative ethics, positive morality and metaethics. Normative ethics refers to standards of right and wrong, good and bad which *ought* to be accepted, social or religious ethics, relates to, for example, Sikh ethics or Confucian ethics.

Positive morality is derived from adherence to a doctrine or profession; for example, doctors are regulated by the Hippocratic oath. In addition to such distinctions, some theorists separate a social science analysis of ethics which they call ‘descriptive ethics’ from a philosophical analysis of ethical concepts and beliefs referred to as metaethics (Mautner 2012:180-181). Having introduced the above-mentioned ethical types and the framework of positive morality to indicate why ethics is fundamental to learner commitment and practices, the researcher considers Aristotle’s concept of *phronesis* a useful guide to ethical action within learner commitment, as it will serve as a guide for them to act well and it concerns the rules or moral principles which govern their behaviour. According to Aristotle, *phronesis* is “a type of wisdom or intelligence”. It is clearly a type of wisdom relevant to practical action, implying both good judgement and excellence of character and habits, sometimes referred to as a practical virtue. He believed that practical wisdom is concerned with human things and with those that about which it is possible to deliberate.

He who [has practical wisdom] is skilled in focusing, in accordance with calculation, at what is best for a human being in things, in things attainable through action. Aristotle asserts that learner commitment is something which a learner must do for himself or herself and this is the necessary consequence of the doctrine that humans have with the duty of building their own destiny. It is his or her belief in the reality of this duty that Aristotle declares that we learn by doing and not merely by listening to educators.

### **2.5.3 Factors that prompt learners not to be committed to their education**

There are many reasons why learners lack commitment to their own education (Varma 2014:31). Non-commitment arises when learners set out to frustrate educators from attaining the task for which they have been employed. They do this by being preoccupied, secretly disruptive, disobedient, ill-mannered and threatening to push the situation out of the educator’s control. Before educators assume the challenge to maintain the above-mentioned problems in schools and in the classroom situation, it is imperative that they consider the factors that contribute to the non-commitment of learners so that they can take proactive steps to curb such. Lemmer (2012:46) posits that when one attempts to face the challenges of learners not committed to their education, one should look at what is best and practicable for learners.

The section below deals with the factors that prompt learners not to be committed to their education, as revealed by other researchers.



### **2.5.3.1 Lack of parental involvement in the education of their children**

There is a literature supporting the involvement of parents in the education of their children (Hara & Burke 2016:219). Mncube and Harber (2013:25) found that impulsive, apathetic parents expose their children to risk factors which make them vulnerable in that they engage in illegal and violent acts. On the other hand, children feel secure, perform and behave better if their parents are involved in school activities. Dowling and Osborne (2010:164) support this view by arguing that if children with behavioural problems realise that their parents and educators are cooperating to manage difficulties, they experience more consistency and feel more content. Children's school achievement improves when parents have high expectations for them, encourage them to do their homework, communicate with educators and volunteer in schools (Rimm 2017:21). Moreover, parental involvement can have a significant impact on their children's behaviour by making sure 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. Educators need parents' support to ensure commitment on the part of learners. Sugut and Mugasia (2014:131) refer to parental involvement as a relationship between parents, educators, learners and the community at large.

The researcher concurs with Gay (2015:1) that an active relationship between parents and educators is of great benefit and could be utilised to promote learner commitment. Christensen and Cleary (2013:76) link parents' active involvement with greater recognition of educators' skills, better educator evaluations from their principals, enhanced parental understanding of the inner workings of the school, and higher school ratings in effectiveness and programme success. Bender and Emslie (2010:195) and Gould and Ward (2015:1) posit that there are two key elements that make up the concept of parental involvement. One is the type of parental support, such as encouraging learners and understanding them. The other element is a type of parental activity and participation, such as doing something that is observable. According to La Bahn (2010:62), this combination of level of commitment and active participation is what makes an involved parent.

The following subsections focuses on how parents can improve their children's commitment with encouraging children's homework, communicating with educators and volunteering in schools.

### **(a) Support children to do their homework**

In terms of the Schools Act (RSA 1996b), parents have the following responsibilities in support of their children's education:

- to monitor their children's educational progress
- to create a space where children can do their homework
- to ensure that their children complete their homework

Rimm (2017) contends that families become closer when they work on school projects together, and children are able to observe their parents' interest and commitment to their education. However, she advises that parents should be cautious about not getting too involved and avoid taking over ownership of the project from their children.

They should rather impress upon their children that nothing is gained without effort and allow their children the opportunity to act independently and to take responsibility for the completion of their school projects (Rimm 2017:2).

### **(b) Communicate with educators**

It is of paramount importance that parents take responsibility for attending school meetings that are organised for them by the school (Sugut & Mugasia 2014:132). The school governing body is legally bound to report to parents from time to time and should keep parents informed about issues that affect them or their children. Parents should not hesitate in communicating with educators if they have any concerns. Thus, if you think your children are unchallenged or being irresponsible, a call to an educator will help clarify what has to be done and bring your children to the educators' attention. If your children require accountability communication on a daily or weekly basis, educators can help make this happen. Either e-mails, notes home, or phone calls can be used.

### **(c) Volunteering in schools**

Parents' volunteering in their children's school can be of utmost importance as that may enhance their children's academic performance. They may wish to assist other children in class, become a room mother or father, assist with clerical work in the office, assist with a class trip, or motivate a class about their careers or travels. There are many ways that schools and children can use parental assistance, but they will need to think about how they can assist and offer that help to their children's educator or principal. When children see their parents involved in school, they understand that their education is important to their parents.

When parents are involved in the education of their children, they have a more realistic picture of their children's everyday life in the classroom (Rimm 2017:2).

### **2.5.3.2 Lack of management strategies amongst educators**

Management strategies are central to effective teaching and learning (Blandford 2012:9). If educators are unable to manage learner behaviour, they will be unable to teach. Van Wyk (2013:198) is of the view that many educators in South Africa have limited knowledge of management strategies and as such, most disciplinary measures are reactive, punitive and humiliating instead of being corrective and nurturing. If educators do not involve learners in classroom activities, they may experience disciplinary problems (Mtsweni 2008:23). Split and Koomen (2011:34) posit that when learners are involved in matters pertaining to their education, behavioural problems are minimised.

Educators who involve their learners in classroom activities and treat them as people capable of thinking for themselves, experience fewer disciplinary problems (Roby 2013:68). According to Mani and Devi (2010:133), educators' attitudes influence discipline at school. Mani and Devi (2010:133) categorise the detrimental attitudes of educators that may lead to non-commitment on the part of learners as follows:

The Tardiness Syndrome: educators who are always late for class and in starting the lesson. The "He is not my child" Syndrome: educators who ignore learners who misbehave in class. The "I will keep a low profile" Syndrome: educators who are present in body but not in mind. The "It's none of my business" Syndrome: educators who try to become learners' allies and following the motto "I will stick to my business; you stick to yours".

### **2.5.3.3 Poor relationship between educators and learners**

Educators play an important role in the trajectory of learners throughout the formal schooling experience (Cam & UnalOruc 2014:3). Although most research regarding educator-learner relationships investigate the elementary years of schooling, educators have the unique opportunity to support learners' academic and social development at all levels of schooling (Mabeba & Prinsloo 2010:44). Cangelosi (2013:152) indicates that the quality of the educator-learner relationship influences learners' academic achievement, behaviour, motivation and desire to learn. The author posits that if educators treat learners with respect, learners are more likely to co-operate with them, behave correctly and commit to their studies. By creating a personal relationship with each learner, the educator makes each learner a significant part of the learning environment and builds a sense of belonging.

Positive educator-learner relationships enable learners to feel safe and secure in learning environments and provide scaffolding for building important social and academic skills (Cangelosi 2013:153). Positive educator-learner relationships create a conducive environment for academic motivation, regular school attendance and learner commitment. It equally creates positive academic attitudes, sense of belonging and ownership amongst educators and learners (Kruger & Steinman 2011:15). A positive school climate could promote learner commitment because learners would want to be at school and be more motivated to learn (Kruger & Steinman 2011:15-16).

Cangelosi (2013:152) is of the view that learners are likely to co-operate with educators if they consistently communicate in a repetition situation rather than either a hostile or a passive manner. If learners feel secure in the classroom, they will be more prone to engage and be committed to their schoolwork. Cam and UnalOruc (2014:6) argue that balancing power is as important as learning responsibility in education. According to the notion of learner-centred education, achieving a balance means that there is power sharing between the educator and the learner. This power sharing is achieved via the responsibilities given to learners. In fact, learners are held responsible for their learning. Weimer (2017:87) suggests four basic variations for learner-centred education, namely the function of the content, the role of the educator, learners' responsibilities to learn and evaluation. According to Weimer (2017:87), increasing learners' willingness to accept responsibility for learning is only possible in an environment where power is shared amongst educators and learners. Simón (2010:586) suggests that the educator should not interfere in the development process of a learner but take on the role of a facilitator. In this regard, the paradigm shift from educator-centred teaching to learner-centred teaching and learning requires that learners take responsibilities of their own learning process and making decisions in the teaching and learning process (Svinicki 2011:18).

#### **2.5.3.4 Educators as poor role models**

For educators manage their classes effectively and for them to exercise discipline over learners, they must themselves be disciplined. The examples they set as disciplinarians are the most potent force in the character formation of learners. Hunter (2011:121) as well as Jones and Jones (2010:65) emphasise that learners learn a great deal by watching adults. According to Mtsweni (2008:43), a role model generally lives in such a manner that his or her way is worthy of imitation in both lifestyle and the underlying value system.

Badenhorst and Scheepers (2012:35) further argue that when they think back to the remarkable 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. Bennett (2013:6) states that a boring, lifeless lesson might cause learners to be frustrated and may lead to them acting disruptively during class. Naidoo and Potterton (2010:7) are of the view that in a situation where the educator is doing all the talking and not allowing learners to explore and discover themselves, his or her learners are forced into a passive listening role. In such cases, some learners will then look for ways to entertain themselves at the expense of the educator. This frustration and disruptive behaviour may be a way for them to assert themselves and challenge the school system because the lessons are boring and not challenging. In this regard, Kruger (2011:1) found that 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.

Furthermore, an educator who lacks these skills, according to Kruger (2011:1), will experience enormous frustration on the job. For this reason, it is the responsibility of the school managers to ensure that educators are able to attain necessary skills to perform their duties successfully. In the South Africa context, there is great concern about what seems to be the collapse of moral values at personal, community and national levels. This has a great impact on learner behaviour (Summers 2011:6) and is also confirmed by Bissety (2013:3) who agrees that the collapse of moral values at personal, community and national levels is evident from the increasing number of sexual relationships between educators and learners and from the collapse of mutual respect and dedication. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2010:41) indicate that an educator who goes to class unprepared, find learners displaying a negative attitude which creates disciplinary problems. In the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, the unprofessional conduct of some educators is a cause for concern. Examples of deviant behaviour reported in this district's schools include late coming and early departures of educators, long absences from school with or without permission, dodging classes, lack of commitment to their work and insubordination.

#### **2.5.3.5 Unjustified school rules**

Learner involvement in adopting rules is emphasised in the Dreikurs Model (*cf.* section 3.3.4.2). Rich (2013:169) asserts that school rules may be breached when learners feel that they are unjustified. It is of paramount importance for the SMT to avoid making irrelevant rules because that may lead to non-commitment on the part of learners.

McQueen (2011:56) argues that irrelevant school rules are useless and disastrous because poorly chosen rules will create serious management and disciplinary problems in the classroom. Developing and implementing a school policy should be a collaborative decision-making process involving all members of the school community. Learners who are involved when rules are formulated, understand why the rules have been formulated and why they should comply with them (Charles 2012:229; Msomi 2012:12; Murphy 2010:33). Learners thus become more committed to and adhere to school rules that they understand, rules that are simply worded and without several qualifiers and conditions (Burden 2011:111).

### **2.5.3.6 Unmotivated learners**

The word **motivation** is derived from the Latin word “*movere*”, meaning to move (McLean 2010:7). It is the sum of all that moves a person to action. To motivate indicates that one person provides assistance to another, with a motive to do something. Motivation can be considered as a key aspect of emotional intellect covering the gathering of feelings of enthusiasm, confidence and persistence. According the Oxford School Dictionary (2010, s.v. motivate), the concept **motivate** means to give a person a motive or incentive to do something. According to McLean (2010:7), motivation has two main tasks. Firstly, 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. Burden (2011:146) is of the view that educators use the concept motivation to describe those processes that 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.

It is the responsibility of school managers to ensure that learners are motivated to learn and behave appropriately. In addition, they should adopt a behaviouristic model whereby desirable behaviour is reinforced while undesirable behaviour is ignored. Some form of reward or some form of approval usually reinforces good behaviour (McLean 2010:8).

In contrast, Du Preez (2013:70) posits that some learners may have a negative attitude towards learning and doing schoolwork in general, which results in learners’ non-commitment, evident in their laziness, indifference, persistent carelessness, cheating, restlessness or untidiness.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher explored an overview of who a ‘learner’ is in terms of the law, children’s right to education, learners’ duties and responsibilities with regard to the realisation

of their right to education. Learner commitment was conceptualised and the factors that prompt learners not to be committed to their education. The next chapter deals with the existing literature (both national and international) on management strategies to promote learners' commitment to their right to education.

# CHAPTER 3

## MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING LEARNER COMMITMENT

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, the researcher conceptualised **learner commitment**. The focus in this chapter is a review of the literature on the SMT's management of learners' commitment. In this study, the researcher examined the management of learner commitment, in particular the different management strategies that can be used to promote learner commitment.

### 3.2 MANAGING LEARNER COMMITMENT

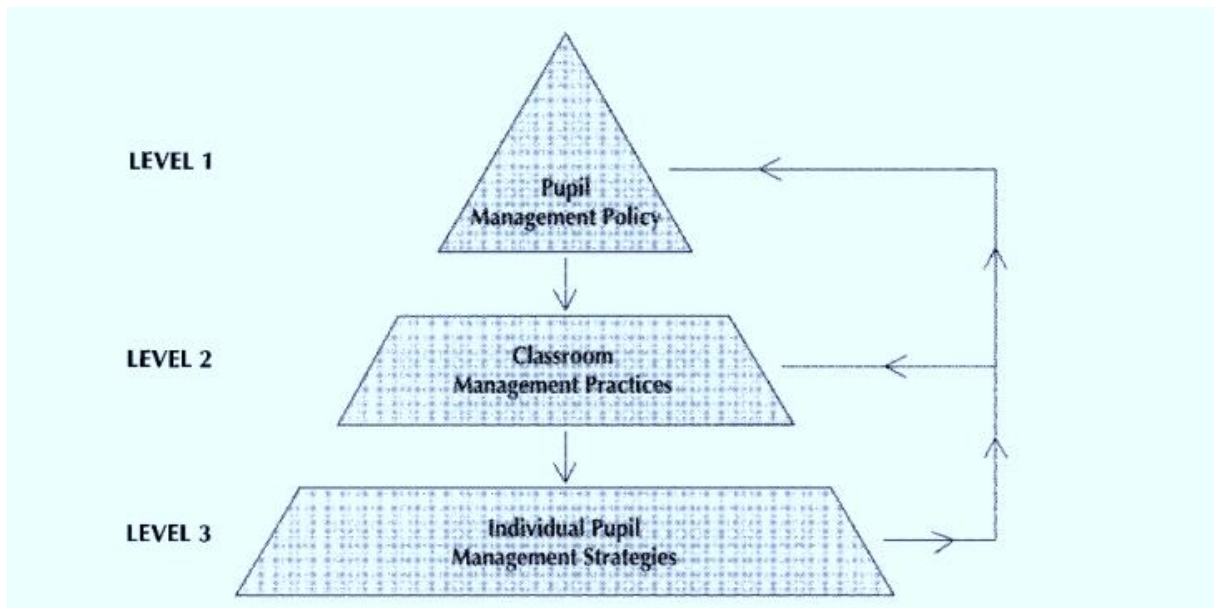
Learner commitment was historically and still is, primarily about increasing accomplishment, positive behaviours, and a sense of belonging in the classroom (Harris 2012:5; Saha 2014:153). Harris (2012:5) asserts that the correct way of managing learner commitment is through measurement. Measurements predominantly focus on quantitative data such as attendance or absence, and standardised test scores (Harris 2012:5). According to Taylor (2012:5) most of these measurements track levels of attainment (outcome such as high scores, full attendance for the year) rather than levels of learner commitment in learning such as interest, time on task and enjoyment in learning.

According to McNamara (2014:3), schools are complex systems and require effective management. Positive learner management and motivation can be viewed as operating at three levels, and are described as follows:

- Level 1: Whole-School learner management policies and practices.
- Level 2: Classroom management policies and practices.
- Level 3: Individual management policies and practices.

These levels are represented diagrammatically in Figure 3. Integrated, consistent, monitored and evaluated learner management policies, permeating from level 1 through level 2 to level 3, are the hallmarks of the effective school.





**Figure 3: Positive Learner Management and Motivation**

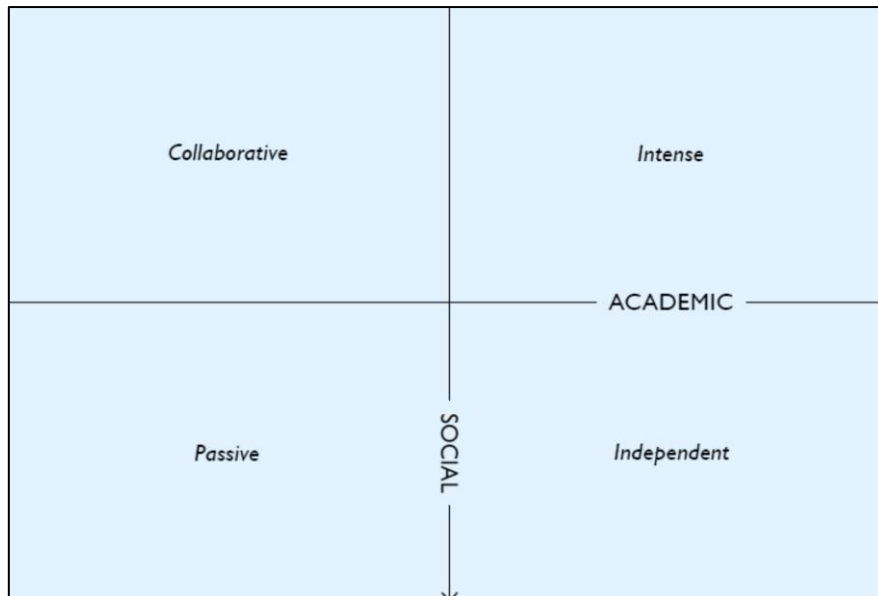
Source: McNamara (2014:3)

Sometimes assessment of learner behaviour at level 3 reveals policy or practice shortcomings at level 2 and/or level 1. If level 2 and/or level 1 policy or practice shortcomings or deficit contribute to level 3 problems, then to restrict the intervention to level 3 would at best resolve a problem for the time being but not contribute to a preventive approach – achieved by intervening at level 2 and/or level 1. Intervention at levels 1 or 2 would reduce the probability of similar problems occurring in the future.

School managers and educators cannot manage learner commitment if they do not have a clear understanding of learners’ commitment styles which are discussed in the following subsection.

### **3.2.1 Learner commitment styles**

Coates (2013:134) proposes an analysis for learner commitment styles positioned along two axes, known as social and academic, and cautions that these ‘styles’ of commitment refer to transient states rather than learner traits or types that should not be taken as lasting qualities that are sustained within individuals over time or across context. The styles are presented in Figure 4 and then described thereafter.



**Figure 4: Learner commitment styles**

Source: Coates (2013:132-134)

*Intense*

Learners with an intense form of commitment are highly involved with their schoolwork. They manage to see teaching staff as easy to talk to, and to see their learning environments as receptive, supportive and challenging. The Wellacre Academy (2018:1) describes learners with excellent commitment to learning as learners who:

- actively participate in the lesson and are fully committed at all times,
- actively seek feedback on how to improve the quality of their work,
- show great resilience and persevere with all challenges, even when they are difficult, try to sort out problems themselves,
- manage their own time and are highly self-disciplined,
- use their initiative and do not always need to be told what to do, and
- go above and beyond what the educator asks of them.

*Independent*

Learners with an independent style of commitment have a more academically and less socially-orientated approach to study. They recognise themselves as participants in a supportive learning environment.

They also recognise staff members as being friendly, as receptive to learner needs, and as encouraging and legitimating learner reflection and feedback. The aforementioned type of learner is less likely to work collectively with other learners within or beyond class, or to be involved in events and activities in the school environment.

### *Collaborative*

Learners with a collective style of commitment favour the social aspects of school life and work, as opposed to the pure cognitive or individualistic forms of interaction. High levels of general collective commitment replicate learners feeling validated within their school environment, especially by participating in broad beyond-class talent development activities and interacting with staff and other learners.

### *Passive*

Learners whose response styles indicate passive styles of commitment hardly participate in broad beyond-class talent development and conditions linked to productive learning.

In the section below, management strategies that the SMT can develop to promote learner commitment is discussed.

## **3.3 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE LEARNER COMMITMENT**

Healey (2013:7) asserts that in order to manage learner commitment, emphasis must be placed on building a sense of belonging amongst learners. The responsibility to develop programmes that actively focus on promoting learners 'relationships with all relevant stakeholders, falls on all educators in terms of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (DoBE 2014). A clearly articulated pastoral care system is key to the promotion of learner commitment. Healey (2013:7) suggests that educators must build relationships with learners, their peers, their families, the school and their parents.

Strong relationships are essential in establishing effective support for at risk learners. To identify at risk learners such as learners who are anxious, unsettled and disengaged, the SIAS should be followed. The purpose of SIAS (RSA 2014) is to:

- provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school (par 1(1)).

- outline a process of identifying individual learner needs in relation to the home and school context, to establish the level and extent of additional support that is needed (par 6(2)(a)).
- determine a support package which is dependent on the findings of the range of assessments conducted and the outcomes of support plans implemented by several role players (including the parents and the learners) while following the SIAS process (par 8(10)).

### **3.3.1 Developing management strategies to promote learner commitment**

Strategic planning is important in an attempt to avoid crisis management (Van Deventer 2016:131). According to Olsen (2011:8), the fundamental components of strategic planning processes should be based on the following questions: “Where are you now?”, “Where do you want to go?” and “How will you get there?”

**Where are we now?** This necessitates the review of the current strategic position, by undertaking a SWOT analysis, thus explaining the mission, vision and values. In this respect, each school will differ as each is unique; however, the use of a SWOT analysis in a strategic plan is essential. Van Deventer (2016:135) infers that a SWOT analysis ensures that planning is realistic. She points out that in order for a strategy to be effective, one needs to know what needs improvement, what problems need solving and the decisions that need to be taken to resolve the problems.

**Where are we going?** The mission and vision of the organisation must be clearly established with aims and outcomes clearly defined. A culture of teaching and learning must be cultivated by managing learner commitment between all stakeholders in the school. The senior management team must work with all stakeholders in order to determine the mission, aims and outcomes of the school (Van Deventer 2016:137).

**How will we get there?** This requires knowing where one is going by determining the strategic objectives and goals followed by having a plan to action it. In this study, the researcher provided the data required for the development of strategic plans and current strategies present in the selected schools, which informed the **how**, for example, how schools should address learner commitment.

Nancy and Fawcett (2011:15) propose certain criteria for developing a good strategy. A strategy is good when it:

**Gives overall directions:** A strategy such as promoting learner's commitment to the realisation of their right to education, should give the overall direction without dictating a particular narrow approach (for example, the principal attending workshops dealing with various leadership styles or suggesting sources that can be read on different styles of leadership).

**Fits resources and opportunities:** A good strategy encompasses an individual's enthusiasm to act in supporting community well-being. It also contains new prospects such as the concern of the SMT regarding learner commitment resulting in effective teaching and learning.

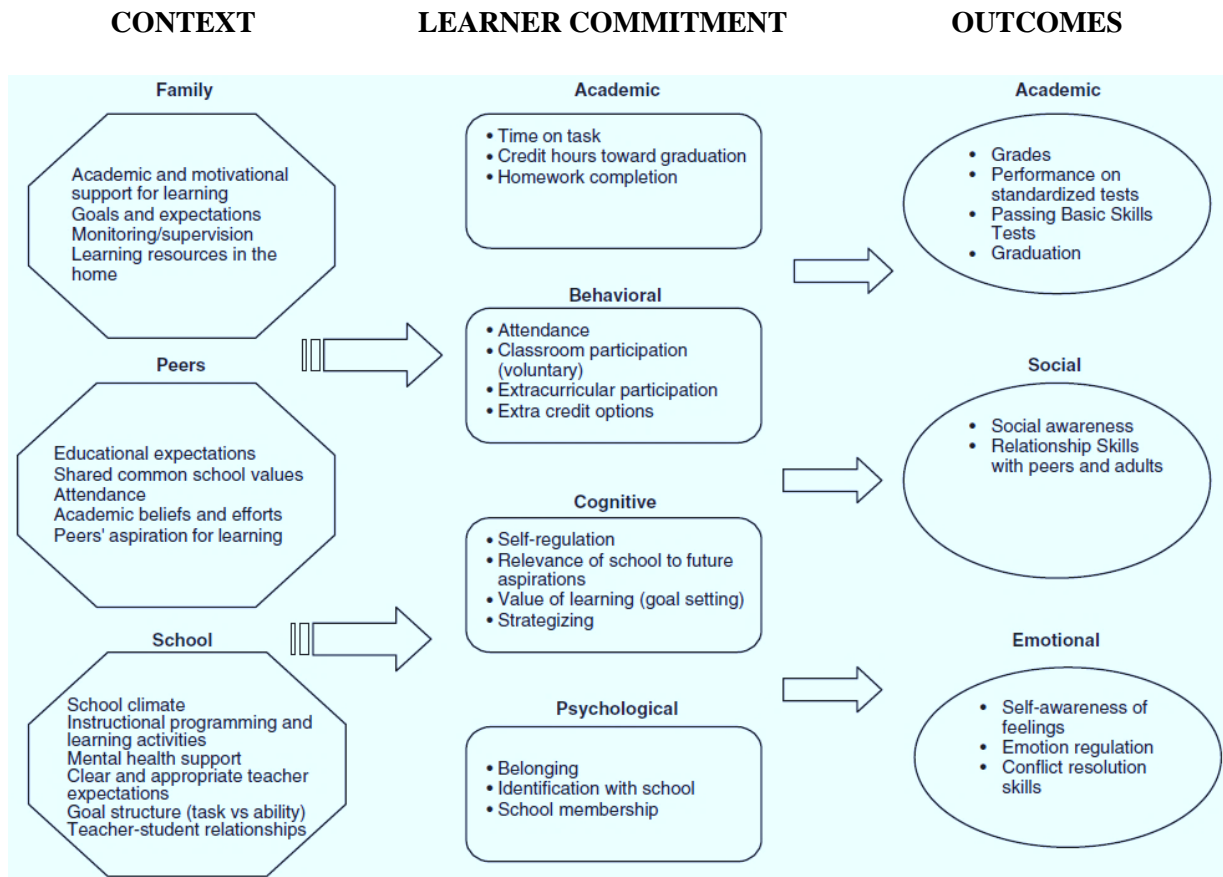
**Minimises resistance and barriers:** When plans are set, one may encounter opposition. However, strategies must not provide a reason for such opposition. Good strategies attract supporters and discourage opponents.

**Reaches the affected:** In order to solve a problem, a successful strategy must be chosen. For example, if the mission of the initiative is to manage learners' commitment to their education, do the strategies assist the SMT in managing commitment to their education?

**Advances the mission:** If the aim is to reduce a problem, such as learners' perceptions on their right to education, then the strategies employed must be effective to change the perception of learners. If on the other hand, the aim is to reduce learners' transgressions that led to non-commitment, then one must question whether the factors that contribute to non-commitment have changed sufficiently to reduce cases of learner transgressions that led to non-commitment. Psychological commitment has been associated with adaptive school behaviours, including task, participation and attendance. The researcher concurs with Appleton, Christenson, Kim and Reschly (2006:430) in that it is important to acknowledge that school behaviours which include academics, involvement and attendance can either be positive or negative based on the learners' level of commitment.

Zepke and Leach (2010:168-173) state that learner commitment is intrinsically linked to learners accepting their responsibilities. For example, doing their schoolwork, attending school regularly and respecting their educators.

The figure below illustrates the commitment subtypes, indicators and outcomes.



**Figure 5: Strategies of learner commitment**

Source: Zepke and Leach (2010:168-173)

There is no agreement in the literature as to what motivates learners to commit, but the dominant view is that learners commit when they act as their own learning agents working to achieve goals meaningful to them. According to Ryan, Stiller and Lynch (2011:79), learners who feel connected to and cared for by their educators shows positive commitment to school-related behaviours. They must believe they can learn, including that they can overcome and learn from failure. There are, however, many other qualities associated with resilience which develop through children’s life experiences. The main qualities can be summarised as follows (McLean 2004:10-11):

*Good self-esteem* is derived from being accepted by people whose relationship one values and from accomplishment in tasks one values. Praise, on its own, will not improve self-esteem, the child him or herself has also to ascribe value to the achievement.

*Initiative* is the ability and willingness to take action. Children and young people facing adversity are in a stronger position to deal with it if they are able to take the initiative in finding “creative” responses. This sometimes combines with a strong sense of responsibility towards others such as siblings.

*Faith and morality* can be described as “a belief in a broader value system (which) can help the child to persist in problem solving or in surviving a set of challenging life circumstances. A sense of coherence in their experiences gives children a feeling of rootedness, the conviction that life has meaning and an optimistic focus” (Daniel, Wassell & Gilligan 1999:76).

*Trust* is believing in or relying on another person or thing. In order to trust others, you do not need to love them, but you need to experience them as reliable, feel respect for them, value them and not expect them to betray your confidence.

*Attachment* is “an affectionate bond between two individuals that endures through space and time and serves to join them emotionally” (Klaus & Kennel 1976:54). A secure attachment relationship creates a base from which a child feels safe to explore the world. In fact, one sign of resilience in children is the ability to ‘recruit’ caring adults who take a particular interest in them. This could be a neighbour, friend’s parent(s), educator, child minder, relative, mentor or befriender, foster care or, of course, residential worker. However, the context of looking after children has developed a wider meaning, that is the provision of a consistent and stable place to live and continuity of wider relationships which then allows the maintenance or development of attachment relationships. Where placement moves are absolutely unavoidable, strenuous efforts should be made to maintain continuity in other aspects of children’s lives.

*Meaningful roles* include proficiency at academic and non-academic activities at school, sporting prowess, part-time work, volunteering, caring for siblings, and domestic responsibilities, provided they are not excessive. Such roles are likely to have a positive effect in several ways. They can be beneficial in providing a sense of positive identity and a source of pleasure and hope or distract young people from the adversity they are experiencing in other areas of their lives.

*Autonomy* means the ability to make decisions. Young people who are autonomous know that it is ‘OK’ to make mistakes and that you can learn from mistakes. They take reasonably well calculated risks. Autonomous children and young people are good at self-regulation, increasingly gaining control over their own emotions and behaviour.

*Identity* relates to a deep need to know and understand who young people are, where they belong and to whom they are important. They may need help to find these answers. Children and young people’s ethnicity, religion, culture and language form part of their identity. Preservation of their background and culture helps to create continuity and a secure base, it is also a legal right. Young people who have good insight into their own difficulties, including a realistic assessment of their own contribution and the contribution of others to those difficulties, are more likely to be resilient. Young people who are able to recognise benefits, as well as negative effects, from severe adversity are likely to be resilient. Insight helps people to take appropriate actions and make appropriate choices. It is therefore linked to self-efficacy and to initiative.

*Humour* is the final building block of resilience. It can help young people to distance themselves from, and therefore reduce, emotional pain and it can also help them establish and sustain relationships ... “humorous people are usually popular people”. It may even be the source of a career. Giving learners some control over the learning process helps develop this confidence and commitment to learning. Commitment can also be promoted by letting learners know that they should strive for excellence and by daring them to push themselves and not to underestimate themselves. According to Mosston (2010:10-11), curiosity, controversy, choice, cooperation and connection are the cornerstones in promoting learners’ commitment to their education. Silver and Strong (2012:8) identify a set of reliable motivators or levers that the SMT can employ to promote learner commitment, known as The ‘Eight Cs of Learner Commitment’, which are presented in Table 8 below.

**Table 8: The eight Cs of learner commitment**

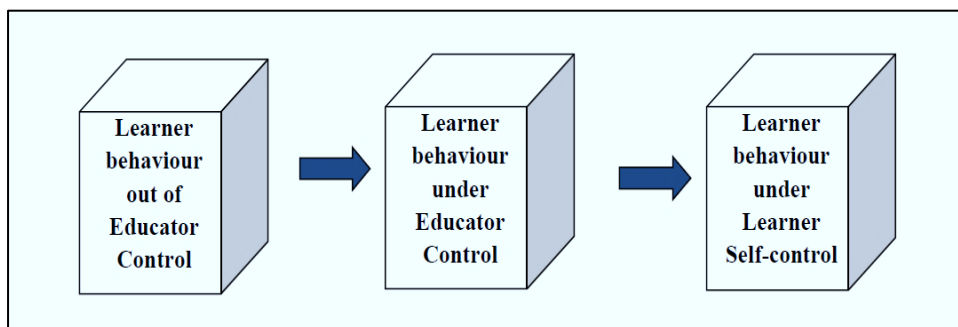
We can commit the mastery drive through... Competition and Challenge	We can commit the interpersonal drive through... Cooperation and Connections to learners’ lives, feelings, and experiences
We can commit the understanding drive through... Curiosity and Controversy	We can commit the self-expressive drive through... Choice and Creativity

Source: Silver & Strong (2012:9)



Authors such as Raphael, Pressley and Mohan (2010:63) link the use of a wide variety of techniques and strategies to promote learner commitment, with a decline in behavioural problems. According to McNamara (2014:72), learner self-management is one of the strategies school managers can use to promote learner commitment. The author posits that the on-report system (positive behaviour) is designed to bring learner behaviour under educator control, and thus constitutes a method of reducing inappropriate learner behaviour and increasing appropriate behaviour. While appropriate behaviour achieved in this manner is desirable, it is nonetheless educator controlled. Ideally learner behaviour should be under learner self-control, that is, appropriate behaviour should also be responsible behaviour.

Responsible behaviour is appropriate behaviour which occurs in the absence of the educator – it is not educator dependent as it is learner self-motivated. This concept of a continuum of control is illustrated in Figure 6 below.



**Figure 6: The continuum of control**

Source: McNamara (2014:72)

Sometimes when a learner is confronted with their misdemeanour, they make protestations of their intent ‘to behave’, that is to conform to the ordinary demands of school life, be at school on time, complete homework and not insult educators. However, it is not uncommon for the very same learner to be referred again to the pastoral educator within a few days of the first referral, despite the learners’ previous commitments ‘to behave’. Such situations might give rise to the learner being described as insincere, dishonest or self-serving, with the lack of learner behaviour change being interpreted as indicating a lack of commitment to change. This may well be the case, and an appropriate response might be to place the learner on-report or to negotiate a contract. However, it may be that the learners’ protestations to change were honest and sincere, and the lack of change may be a consequence of lack of self-control or will-power (McNamara 2014:72). There may even be factors outside the control of the learner that prevent them from keeping their promises and hampering their commitment.

In the subsections below, the researcher explores the different theories that the SMT and educators of participant schools can follow to promote and regulate learners' commitment to their education, are explored.

### **3.3.2. Leadership theories promoting learner commitment**

Developing an understanding of leadership theories is a very good way of developing one's own classroom philosophy and classroom management strategies. Leadership theories are also important in schools as they assist educators and SMTs in defining their own classroom management methods and make decisions about how to best approach interactions with learners. The Antecedents-behaviour-consequences classroom management theory, the classroom management theory, the human relations theory, behavioural scientific theory, non-directive intervention theories and the Van Niekerk's leadership theory are discussed in more detail below.

#### **3.3.2.1 Antecedents-behaviour-consequences classroom management theory**

The so-called Antecedents-Behaviour-Consequences or A-B-C model is ideal to analyse learner behaviour and inform classroom management interventions (McNamara 2014:7). The model is the central conceptual statement of the relationship of behaviour (B) to the environment.

Environmental factors can be sorted into those which precede the behaviour, the antecedents (A) and those which follow the behaviour, the consequence (C). The 'laws' of behaviour underpinning this model are:

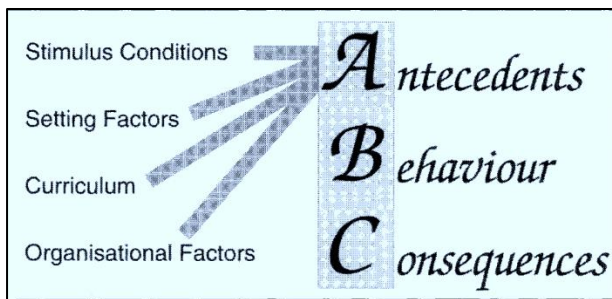
- *Behaviour* which is influenced by its consequences – the B-C dimension. Behaviour which is followed by *positive reinforcement*, increases in frequency. Behaviour that is followed by something unpleasant, such as punishment, is discouraged. Behaviour which has its reinforcer withdrawn and requires the behaviour to be reinforced, is extinguished.
- *To change behaviour* by positive reinforcement requires the behaviour to be reinforced immediately, frequently and consistently.
- *To maintain* behaviour at a high frequency requires the behaviour to be reinforced intermittently.

### (a) Antecedents

The probability of behaviour occurring is influenced by its antecedents – the A-B dimension. In education settings, the antecedents to behaviour can be considered under the following four headings:

- *Stimulus conditions* – the immediate precursors to learner behaviour (for example, educator-learner interaction).
- *Setting factor* (for example, desk arrangements, publicly posted rules).
- *Curriculum* (for example, content, structure and delivery).
- *Organisational factors* (for example, incentive and sanctions systems, mixed ability/streamed classes).

The following figure illustrates the relationship of Antecedents to behaviour in the classroom.



**Figure 7: The relationship of antecedents to behaviour in the classroom**

Source: McNamara (2014:6)

### (b) Behaviour

The main concern of educators when faced with the management of a difficult learner or class of learners is the actual behaviour of the learner(s). Consequently, the focus of the concern is learner behaviour.

### (c) Consequences

Behaviour is influenced by its consequences. Educator response to learner behaviour is a significant consequence of learner behaviour in classroom situations (that is, educator response to learner behaviour is a powerful determinant of that behaviour). There are a range of educator responses, both verbal and non-verbal, which can influence learner behaviour. The most significant being educator praise or positive feedback and educator criticism or negative feedback, in response to learner appropriate/inappropriate social and academic behaviour.

In addition to consequences, the other major determinants of behaviour are the immediate antecedents of the behaviour, that is, what happens immediately before (stimulus conditions), the classroom situation (setting factors), what is being asked of the learners (curriculum content, structure and delivery), and organisational factors such as the composition of the class, for example, mixed ability or set.

### **3.3.2.2 The human relations theory**

The human relations theory is a neo-classical theory and gives recognition to the importance of the individual as well as group relationships by emphasising the importance of valuing humans in an organisation (Van Seters & Field 2011:29). This theory is most applicable to the school situation as the learners are continuously interacting with one another and are recognised as stakeholders in education (Van Seters & Field 2011:29-30). The human relations theory is not context-bound, and as a people-centred approach, it is equally beneficial to educational, religious, public service or business organisations (Bhindu & Duignan 2011:119). Sensitive and caring leaders will be able to easily adapt to situations under their control. According to Bhindu and Duignan (2011:119), the specific characteristics of this type of leadership theory is that learner commitment will be supported when there are good relationships between educators and learners. It is the responsibility of schools to promote this kind of theory at their schools as this will inculcate a sense of sound human relations amongst educators and learners that will result in learners taking their schoolwork seriously (Ayers & Gray 2010:31).

Commitment requires a positive attitude and opportunities to participate and those are only possible if the relationships between the learners and educators are such that it creates a milieu conducive to learners feeling safe and free to participate; for example, be role players in their own education. The human relations theory is important to schools because it promotes good relations amongst educators and learners. By creating a personal relationship with each learner, the educator makes each learner a significant part of the learning environment and builds a sense of belonging. Positive educator-learner relationships create learning environments where learners can feel safe and secure and form the scaffolding for building important social and academic skills (Aristotle 1973:73) (*cf.* section 2.5.2.).

### **3.3.2.3 The behavioural scientific theory**

Behaviourists do not recognise that learners have an inborn ability to self-determination but regard them as being conditioned by their environments. Therefore, human behaviour is assumed to be influenced and manipulated by incentives and reinforcement (Kohn 2011:68-

69). This idea is supported by Van Seters and Field (2011:32-33) who maintain that behaviour modification techniques, such as rewards and punishment, will bring about predictable behavioural changes. In controlling behaviour, one needs to take cognisance of both the negative and positive effects of such. Focusing on learners' behaviour assist the SMTs of the participating schools in promoting their learners' commitment in relation to their right to education. Importance is placed on the specific behaviour exhibited by learners and not on the reasons of such behaviour (Ayers & Gray 2010:6). Kerr and Nelson (2013:13) alluded to the fact that in helping learners with disciplinary problems such as girls falling pregnant at a tender age, boys belonging to gangs, learners damaging and misusing school infrastructure, and committing serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises, the learning environment should be considered. Behaviour is studied in the classroom setting and importance is placed on measuring present situational causes of the behaviour (Martella, Nelson & Martella 2012:30). The foundation of a theoretical background has led to many intervention programmes and there is an increasing amount of research and literature on how resilience can be built through social support. The main social support building blocks described are that resilient children are those in need of social support.

The term support is widely used in social work, but it is not always clear what practitioners mean by it and how well it is provided. Richman, Rosenfeld and Hardy (1993:74) suggest that social support takes eight distinguishable forms such as listening support (just listening, not advising or judging), emotional support, emotional challenge (helping the child evaluate his or her attitudes, values and feelings), reality confirmation support (sharing the child's perspective of the world), task appreciation support, task challenge support (challenging, stretching, motivating), tangible assistance support (money or gifts), and personal assistance support (driving the child somewhere).

Richman, Rosenfeld and Bowen (1998:124) found with disadvantaged school children that regularly receive different types of social support tend to do better at school with a variety of measures than those who did not receive them. Many authors stress the importance of education and attainment for building resilience.

#### **3.3.2.4 Non-directive intervention theories**

Edwards and Watts (2010:19) are of the view that non-directive intervention theories are premised on the principle that children develop from an inner unfolding. The process may be associated with the innate responses of the child to self-correct his/her behaviours.

Intervention in the form of external control is not necessary to control behaviours (Taylor 2012:16). A tenet of this theory is that “one cannot change positively, grow or learn by force” (Bonfanti 2014:23) This is where the difference lies between behavioural conditioning and education (Bonafanti 2014:23).

Parents and educators play a pivotal role in making sure that learners are doing what is expected of them (Glasser 2012:94). The core foundation of this theory is that educators have a role to play in assisting children on how to control their own lives. By so doing, educators will help their learners to be more responsible and encourage them to take control over their own behaviour. When considering the appropriate leadership theories to decide how he or she should manage a learner in a manner that will promote rather than inhibit their commitment, educators should assist their learners in recognising the consequences of the behaviour and encourage them to change so as to better their own lives and be responsible (Edwards & Watts 2010:28).

### **3.3.2.5 Van Niekerk’s leadership theory**

Van Niekerk (2019:66-90) developed a leadership model that distinguishes between short-and long-term leadership. According to this model, the educator as a leader, influences learners in two ways. Firstly, the leader influences the circumstances under which leadership is provided by creating an environment within which the learners can learn to the best of their ability. Secondly, the educator takes action to empower the learners to develop optimally. The tasks that the educator must perform in order to achieve long-term success are in the creation of a vision, effective communication of the vision, creation of the desirable value climate to contribute to the achievement of the vision, training and development of the learners and, finally, empowerment of the learners. In relation to this study, the vision is for the SMT to manage learner commitment proactively and constructively.

The first task of effective long-term leadership is thus the establishment of an inspiring vision. Van Niekerk (2019:67) is of the view that the educator, as the leader in the classroom, is the ideal person to encourage the development and implementation of a vision on cooperation with the learners. Learners should know precisely what is expected of them and they should then be deliberately guided to achieve that vision (Van Niekerk 2019:69). Once envisioning takes place, then the next task is to communicate this vision. There are many possible ways of communicating the vision and at times, learners may even be unaware that the educator is communicating the vision consciously.

It is not necessary that they should always know this, as long as effective communication of the vision keeps them aligned with and focused on attaining it (Van Niekerk 2019:71). Every person should be treated with dignity and respect and the whole class should know that negative behaviour will not be tolerated. It is the duty of the SMT to make sure that learners exercise their constitutional rights, but those rights must be balanced with responsibilities and that the school's Code of Conduct for Learners is upheld at all times, thus ensuring the smooth running of the school. The different management and leadership styles the SMT of the participating schools can adopt to promote learner commitment are discussed below.

### **3.3.3 Adopting a leadership style to promote learner commitment**

There are a variety of philosophies and theories surrounding leadership styles in education. According to Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube (2015:9), leadership styles are the approaches used to motivate followers. The authors further argue that leadership is not a "one size fits all" phenomenon. Savas and Toprak (2014:173) assert that leadership is known as an effort that directs organisational activities to achieve a common goal. With the ever-changing educational landscape, it is the responsibility of the school managers to incorporate a wide range of leadership skills and styles in order to direct their school organisation towards common goals and a well-directed vision.

The uniqueness of each school manager does, however, bring to the fore a particular leadership style. The four leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, *laissez-faire* and ethical leadership) highlighted in this study, form the foundation for an integrated leadership model that can potentially have an impact on learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

#### **3.3.3.1 Autocratic style of leadership**

An autocratic leadership style is a directive method whereby the leader direct others on how to do things (Beach & Reinhartz 2010:87). This is characterised by the robust leadership role adopted by an unapproachable, strict educator who exhibits one-way communication and has little scope for creative thinking or learner involvement (UNISA 2011:6). Autocratic educators are short of opinions on human nature and believe that learners cannot control their own behaviour. They believe that they must exercise their authority to control learners by determining and applying standards of behaviour in the classroom. In this leadership style, the educator turns out to be a dictatorial figure that exercises control and imposes strict rules.

In this regard, most learners become ill-disciplined, uncooperative, and develop a negative attitude towards the learning area (Jackson 2010:57). This leadership style is built on the expectations that learners work well in a strictly controlled learning environment, they are not given the freedom to be responsible for their actions, they tend to ‘fear’ certain educators, especially those who are authoritative, they lack self-control, and continue to misbehave despite being subjected to beatings and sarcasm. Learners who role model authoritarian educators may become defiant and exhibit non-compliant behaviour (Tiwani 2010:36).

### **3.3.3.2 Democratic style of leadership**

The democratic style of leadership is built on the idea of governing of the people, by the people, for the people. It is characterised by a cool and welcoming teaching attitude, which encourages creativity by learners and cooperation between educators and learners (UNISA 2011:6). The participative leadership style comprises individual and mutual goals and necessitates the use of strategy, supported by compassion (Pontefract 2013:69). Zabel and Zabel (2012:124) argue that democratic managers balance the educator-directed and learner-centred activities so that they can take on more directive methods to determine content and learning activities. Furthermore, Kruger (2010:22) contends that an educator who adopts this leadership style inspires his or her learners to take part in matters concerning their schoolwork. It is important to involve learners in all issues that relate to them so that they may also consider themselves as part of the solutions to classroom-related behaviour challenges.

The democratic leadership style has the main objective of building commitment and compromise among the several stakeholders at school. This style encourages learner contribution in decision-making and encourages by rewarding team effort (Cardinal 2013:1). The style as explained above, ensures that self-controlled learners develop, embracing accountability by cooperating with educators. According to Cardinal (2013:1), the democratic style is appropriate and relevant to a proactive approach of learner discipline. The danger of democratic leadership is that it can falter in circumstances where swiftness or efficacy is essential. During a crisis, for instances, valuable time can be wasted while gathering input from all team members (Kruger 2010:23).

### **3.3.3.3 *Laissez-faire* style of leadership**

The opposite of autocratic leadership is the free rein, self-centred or *laissez-faire* style of leadership. A *laissez-faire* leadership may be the best or the worst of leadership styles (Goodnight 2011:34).



*Laissez-faire*, which means “let it be”, when applied to leadership, describes leaders who allow people to work autonomously. *Laissez-faire* leaders abdicate responsibilities and avoid making decisions, they may give people complete independence to do their work and set their time limit. This type of leader usually allows educators the power to make decisions about their work (Chaudhry & Javed 2012:258). They provide teams with resources and advice, if needed, but otherwise do not get involved. This leadership style can be effective if the leader follows performance and provides feedback to team members on a regular basis (Chaudhry & Javed 2012:258). (2013:142). Ololube (2013:29) is of the view that this type of leadership can also occur when leaders do not have sufficient control over their staff or educators over their learners.

This style of leadership permits too much autonomy to learners (UNISA 2011:6). The style is not appropriate to encourage learner commitment because it allows them to do as they please and disregard their responsibilities towards their education. To reduce this problem, the principal as a supervisor and leader of a school, operates in line with certain values. These are discussed below under ethical leadership.

#### **3.3.3.4 Ethical leadership**

When ethical leadership is in operation, the leader recognises his or her core values and has the audacity to live them (values) in all spheres of his/her life in the service of the common good of those concerned. Phosa (2011:4), in his address entitled *Ethical Leadership*, suggest that when we come to ethical leadership, we have to consider several factors, including our inborn dislike for the imposition of guidelines that govern our conduct. This means ethical behaviour must be intrinsic. If ethical leadership comes from within, the school principal models the necessary behaviour for educators and learners. The principal as the leader and site manager, uses one or a combination of the leadership styles discussed above.

#### **3.3.4 Adopt a disciplinary model to promote learner commitment**

In order to create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning in schools, good discipline amongst learners is of paramount importance. Classroom management models such as the Ginott and the Dreikurs conceptual models were chosen as it is of importance to educators and the SMT in adopting counter measures against misbehaving learners. Learners’ low esteem or lack of motivation maybe a factor contributing to non-commitment to their education (*cf.* section 3.3.3.2).

The researcher regards these models as the best-suited disciplinary models to assist in the management of learner commitment in the realisation of their right to education. In the next two sub-sections, the Ginott and Dreikurs models are discussed in more detail.

#### **3.3.4.1 The Ginott model**

Haim Ginott, a former professor of psychotherapy, viewed discipline as series of little victories, a long-term developmental process rather than an immediate solution to a child's misbehaviour (Charles 2012:56-57). He maintains that educators should ensure a secure, humanitarian and productive classroom through the use of "congruent communication"; that is, communication that is harmonious, where educators' messages to learners are relevant and equivalent to learners' feelings (Burden 2011:38). In this regard, educators should use calm language, which is appropriate to the situation and feelings. Ginott (1973:24) points out that the educator, like parents, hold the power to make or break the child's self-concept.

Ginott's model focuses on how adults can build the self-concept of children. In this regard he states:

Educators' own self-discipline is the most important ingredient in maintaining good classroom discipline. Harmonious communication is vital in the classroom, educators should model good behaviour, educators should avoid labelling [sic] learners and there should be a conducive environment that promotes optimal learning, a dehumanizing environment will affect discipline negatively.

According to Woolfolk (2011:333), the best way to help learners is to develop a democratic classroom where educators and learners co-operate in establishing classroom rules and penalties for negative behaviour. The author further emphasise that the role of educators is to be of assistance to learners in order for them to acquire self-discipline and self-motivation (Hudson 2012:37). Self-discipline is the goal of positive discipline, which in turn may impact positively on the accountability attached to learners' decisions.

Ginott's model focuses on how educators speak to learners when "educators are at their best and when they are at their worst". At their best, educators strive to express their anger and feelings appropriately, they invite cooperation, accept, and acknowledge learners' feelings. Educators at their worst are sarcastic, label learners and do not model good behaviour. Ginott (1973:28) argues that many educators act unbecomingly if they are constantly under attack.

When responding, educators should not act out of frustration and anger because doing so could result in them offending others, opting for name calling, being discourteous, cruel or irritational. Learners observe how complicated circumstances are handled by adults.

Rather, they should show the conduct they expect from the learners, which is to be civil, well-mannered and considerate (Bray 2012:134). Ginott's model advocates that learners should be provided with opportunities to become less dependent on educators and to become more responsible for what happens in the classroom. The underlying principles of his model are developing a calm language that appropriately fits situations and feelings, finding alternatives to punishment, preventing oneself from judging a child's character and remaining a good model and training oneself to use "I"-message rather than "You"-message (Steere 2010:21). For example, there will be times when an educator is upset and expresses displeasure by the use of an "I"-message (Steere 2010:20). In this case, an educator may say: "I am disappointed because you did not do your homework". The "I"-message is more appropriate than the "You"-message that shames and blames the learner, as is seen in the statement: "You are lazy", which is disrespectful towards the learner.

Educators should be mindful of the harmful effects of labelling and criticising children such as that it damages learners' self-esteem (Kauffman, Wong, Lloyd, Hung & Pullen 1991:5). Frequently used labels become a self-fulfilling prophecy in that the learners will begin to demonstrate behaviours characteristic of the labels with which they are branded. Labels create negative attitudes in children that are difficult to erase. Ginott (1973:24) articulates that educators should not criticise children, as too much criticism is detrimental to their welfare and social growth because it deflates self-esteem and interferes with learning. He recommends that educators should give learners suggestions and advice and offer suggestions for improving their performances and seeking their input on corrective behaviour.

Thus, the criticism should not be aimed at the person of the learner but at the performance or behaviour. Acknowledging learners' feelings promotes self-worth and confidence and provides an avenue for free expression. When educators have faith in learners, the learners begin to have faith in themselves (Gatongi 2013:210). By assisting learners, the educator assures them that support is readily available. Children need to feel assured that they can turn to their educators for help when they are confronted with problems.

This prevents them from trying to solve their problems on their own as it may lead to inappropriate behaviours. Educators should always be earnest in their attempt to assist learners without damaging their character (Taylor 2012:35). If educators are angry, then such anger must not be expressed to learners, rather their instruction should be clear and resolute without dehumanising them. Educators must role model the behaviour that they wish to see in their learners, therefore, they need to control their anger and not have outbursts (Marshall 2011:24).

When tempted to blow up in anger, they should ask themselves, “Am I dealing with the anger in a way I expect my learners to do, and am I modelling the behaviour that I want to see in my classroom?” (Wynne & Ryan 2010:240). Children feel nurtured and accepted when their expressed feelings are recognised.

The views of Ginott on teaching and working with learners is summarised in the following excerpt from *Teacher and Child*, quoted in Charles (2012:26):

As an educator I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As an educator I possess tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.

It can be inferred from the above that communication between educators and learners is critical in ensuring that unacceptable conduct is transformed into appropriate, acceptable conduct. This particular style of communication between educators and learners is called “congruent communication” (Ginott 1973:20) and entails addressing the actions of the learner and not the learners’ character.

#### **3.3.4.2 Dreikurs’ logic consequences model**

The Dreikurs’ conceptual model is based on the premise that learners want to belong and feel worthwhile and misbehaviour is mostly the result of not feeling worthwhile and not belonging. To overcome these feelings of non-worth and not belonging, learners tend to strive towards goals such as acquiring attention or averting attention from themselves in order to conceal the fact that they cannot manage their academic material (Dreikurs & Soltz 1992:55).

The Dreikurs’ model is built on the humanistic theory of Adler that people’s basic motivation is to belong. The better the sense of belonging, the more the person will strive to give expression to such sense and to make a contribution, and when there is an absence of a sense of belonging, the person will adopt “mistaken goals” (Dreikurs Ferguson 2010:1). In line with the humanistic approach, the first step in developing effective strategies to handle discipline problems is understanding why learners misbehave in certain ways, in other words, determining the “mistaken goals”. Possible reasons for misbehaving can be attention-seeking, revenge seeking, power-seeking or failure avoiding. The next step is then to, with consideration of the reasons, determine logical consequences for the misbehaviour. A mistake that many parents and educators make is to disguise punishment as logical consequences (Gfroerer,

Nelsen & Kern 2013:296). The premise behind these logical consequences is not to control learners' behaviour but to assist them in taking responsibility for their actions. Based on this philosophy, the educator confronts a learner regarding his or her behaviour and helps learners develop self-discipline that give them the power to change and contract with a learner to execute a mutual agreement for behavioural change (Burden 2017:28). Punishment should not reaffirm the child's feelings which lie behind the reasons for misbehaving. In terms of the Dreikurs' model, punishment should not lead to so-called four Rs of punishment; for example, beliefs about which punishment can create, namely resentment, revenge, rebellion and retreat (Dreikurs Ferguson 2000:3). Focusing on logical consequences will avoid the creation of these beliefs:

- Resentment, where the learner will lose faith in the educator and develop distrust in the educator.
- Rebellion, where the learner will do the opposite to what is required just to oppose the educator's wishes.
- Revenge, where the learner seemingly concedes but it is only temporary, and the punishment has not brought about a permanent change.
- Retreat, where the learner will either become sneaky and make plans to continue the misbehaviour but not to be caught again or to internalise a feeling of having no value and not belonging (Dreikurs Ferguson 2000:18).

Punishment that creates the above beliefs are not conducive to the development of responsibility because it "renders the autonomy of conscience impossible" (Dreikurs 1958:177). Positive discipline, based on the theories of Adler and Dreikurs, is seen as the best approach to create a sense of belonging (Gfroerer *et al.*, 2013:295).

Positive discipline is discipline that creates a sense of belonging and importance (for example, I matter), it acknowledges that a transgression was committed but the response is kind (for example, do not equate the learner with the transgression), has a long term focus and aim (for example, building character, fostering self-respect, compassion) and is developmental and motivational (for example, focus on self-discovery and self-reliance within respectful relationships) (Gfroerer *et al.*, 2013:301). Educators should attend to the psychological needs of learners in order to develop learners' self-discipline and prevent misbehaviour problems (Ahmed & Hosary 2011:42; Lopes & Oliveira 2017:73). Educators have to guide, motivate, and develop learners' capacities and create warm and communal environments (Burden 2017:88).

Dreikurs has emphasised the importance of democratic relationships and the fact that respect for the individual cannot be separated from respect for the group (Dreikurs Ferguson 2000:14). Seen as such, one can argue that enhancing the welfare of the individual learner ultimately enhances the welfare of the school. What makes Dreikurs's theory so appropriate for the promotion of learner commitment is that it acknowledges learners to be rights-holders with their own obligations and not just passive recipients of instructions and commands (Dreikurs 1958:171).

### **3.3.5 Establish a Culture of Learning to promote Learner Commitment**

Nixon, Martin, McKeon and Ranson (2012:68) are of the view that a learning school is driven by how learners of that particular school are committed to their education. This culture of learning can augment learning in nearly every facet of education and every stage of life. It is a core part of the so-called 'arc of life' learning, which comprises the activities in our daily lives that keep us learning, growing, and exploring (Thomas & Brown 2011:18). The concept of the learning organisation, first coined by Senge (1990:76) who popularised the term in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*, began to gain popularity in the 1990s. Other authors such as Davidoff and Lazarus (2012:83), Kruger and Steinman (2011:57) and Wilson (2012:48), have extended his ideas and applied them in educational settings where a learning organisation is said to contrast structures and strategies purposefully in order to enhance and maximise organisational learning.

Schools, as 'learning organisations' are envisioned as organisations that can react quicker to changing external environments, embrace innovations in internal organisation, placing learners at the centre and ultimately improving learner outcome (OECD-UNICEF 2016:1). While the literature is disparate, it is generally agreed that the learning organisation is a necessity, is suitable for any organisation and that an organisation's learning capability will be the only sustainable competitive advantage in the future. Most scholars see the learning organisation as a multi-level concept involving individual behaviour, teamwork and organisation-wide practices and culture (OECD-UNICEF 2016:1).

A learning organisation is a place where the beliefs, values and norms of employees are brought to bear in support of sustained learning, where a "learning atmosphere", "learning culture" or "learning climate" is cultivated, and where "learning to learn" is essential for everyone involved (OECD-UNICEF 2016:1).

Wilson (2012:48) observes that it is intrinsic to humans to have a desire to learn, to discover, to figure something out, and to be able to do something well enough to proclaim it as one's own. He then questions why so many children dislike school, the very place society created to nourish their minds so that they can experience personal fulfilment. The answer is vested in the culture that exists within the school, where culture is defined as a set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people (Sergiovanni & Starrat 2012:342). Sedibe (2010:27) concludes that a "culture of learning" is the bringing about of the conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling to bear on educators and learners.

In understanding culture as a meaning giving system, as suggested by Lessem and Schieffer (2012:118), the emphasis needs to be on changing the mental paradigms that people have as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour for nurturing a culture of learning. This needs to then be turned into reality by living out the cultural artefacts and attributes that underpin these paradigms in the day-to-day social-interaction that takes place within the classroom and school.

Wilson (2012:38) asserts that key contributors to positive, productive schools are building a culture of learning into the vision and mission of the school and making sure that everyone knows and believes it. Masitsa (2009:213) stresses the need for all stakeholders to be involved in the formulation of the mission and vision, so that they are able to accept ownership thereof. Encouraging learners to exercise and develop their mental skills and attitudes are central to the nurturing of a culture of learning (Claxton & Lucas 2010:11) because relationships and caring attitudes are critical elements of a learning school's culture (Wilson 2012:38). Implied is that a culture of learning is built on an infrastructure of discipline and rules.

In the absence thereof, a culture of learning for all intents and purposes, would fail to exist (Sedibe 2010:27). Schools have the potential to inculcate what they refer to as "habits of mind" that underpin a generic and open-minded attitude to learning. Research indicates that a clear distinction can be made between *work-oriented* and *learning-oriented* classrooms (Wydeman 2019:106). In the first, the focus is on production. Learners follow instructions carefully to complete their task. These classrooms are usually well-managed and quiet, but the responsibility for the learning taking place lies with the educator. In the second type of classroom, the focus is on learning. The learners still have to follow instructions, but they are also encouraged to question directions and explore possibilities. These classrooms are usually noisy, with a lot of learner activity and the responsibility for learning lies with the learners.

The educator who values learning, views the classroom in terms of the learning that is taking place, not only the work done. The objectives aimed for are the learners' valued knowledge, skills and attitudes. According to Van der Horst and McDonald (2003:99), the foundation of such a learning-oriented classroom is a system of critical attitudes.

- The first critical attitude is *respect* for the learners. The educator's concern for the learners as individuals is emphasised.
- The second critical attitude is *credibility*. Educators who are credible, practise what they preach.
- The third critical attitude is educators who hold themselves and their learners *accountable* for the learning that is taking place.

A distinctive habit of mind identified by Claxton and Lucas (2010:14) is that of courage. This statement simply means that confident learners are not afraid of uncertainty and complexity and have the confidence to proclaim that they do not know, which in turn leads to "let's find out" and this in turn then brings one back to the habit of curiosity (Claxton & Lucas 2010:14). A further habit Claxton and Lucas (2010:15) refer to is that of exploration and investigation, which is supported by Hughes and Kritsonis (2010:6) who suggest that "learning by seeking answers to questions, collaboratively researching new ideas, discovering new methods, and testing and evaluating them are what drive individuals in functioning learning communities".

The fourth habit mentioned is experimentation and knowing how to extract optimal learning from experience (Claxton & Lucas 2010:15). It entails trying to discover what works in practice, by active engagement or doing and learning from the experience. Closely aligned to the fourth habit is the notion of learning from failed experimentation.

Thomas and Brown (2011:25) place emphasis on what they term to be a "new culture of learning that enables learners to learn from another". They make the point that the traditional-based approach to learning focuses on teaching learners about the world, while "the new culture of learning focuses on learning through engagement within the world". Managing the school culture, as a living system, contradicts traditional mechanistic management processes (Lessem & Schieffer 2012:118; Weeks 2010:44).

In concluding this section, the researcher would like to endorse the culture of learning as one of the characteristics of a learning school. He advocates the concept of the learning school as well as the culture of learning as a useful theoretical framework to promote learner commitment in the realisation to their right to education and to manage sound values in schools.



Schools can become meaningful and safe spaces where confidence can be built and opportunities for personal development are provided.

### **3.3.6 Promoting learner accountability**

By definition, **learner accountability** is the willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions (Merriam-Webster 2010:34). A learner has the right to education and a responsibility in relation to that right in order to ensure the fulfilment of that right. Accepting responsibility, such as being accountable for our own actions in relation to that right, goes hand in hand with claiming a right. In reflecting on the work of James (2012:65), a learner creates his or her success or failure by his or her own actions and the management of his or her thoughts. The classroom-educator-driven learning model no longer predominates, and the accountability for learning is shifting to learners (Porter-O'Grady 2011:76).

The subsection below deals with the requirements for promoting learner accountability.

#### **3.3.6.1 Requirements for promoting learner accountability**

Despite the learning discipline or level, Schwimmer and Hester (2008:43) are of the view that learner involvement in the process increases learner ownership. Ellis (2011:85) further argues that when made available to learners, explicit statements of intended outcomes encourage clarity and ownership. Porter-O'Grady (2011:78) asserts that active learning, as part of learner-centred learning, assures both positive interdependence and individual accountability.

Of particular interest is that the learner-centred approach emphasises learners' responsibility for and control of their own learning. "Responsibility" in this instance should be seen as synonymous with accountability (Merriam-Webster 2010:35).

De Cremer, Snyder and DeWitte (2013:93) assert that accountability implies that people's behaviour may be constrained to some degree as they expect that their behaviour may be linked to the person they are. The implication may be positive in that with the ownership, in a learner-centred environment, a learner may choose to behave more appropriately since he or she wants to be perceived by those who surround him or her in a certain way. Table 9 below illustrates learner-centred learning in contrast to conventional approaches.

**Table 9: Learner-centred learning**

Aspects of Teaching/Learning	Learner-centred Approach	Conventional Approaches
Learner body	Caters to heterogeneous learner population and individual learner needs	Caters to homogenous learner population and lowest common denominator
Mode of teaching	Active-teaching: more interactive, group work, getting the learner to think, be creative, facilitates retention	Passive-teaching: little group work, learner replicates what they have been told, lost from memory once regurgitated
Responsibility	Learners more responsible for and in control of their own learning, become more independent, personal accountability, an empowering process	Staff responsible for making the learners learn, learners remain dependent on the educator
Motivation	More motivating due to the formulation of personal learning objectives and cycle of constructive feedback	Less motivating due to working someone else's agenda and little or no feedback

Source: Lea, Stephenson and Troy (2013:65)

### 3.3.7 Using learner motivation to promote learner commitment

Learner motivation has been described as a process that includes specific directive and stimulating properties (Brophy 2012:15). A motivated learner will be more inclined to participate in the formulation of their personal learning objectives and the cycle of constructive feedback. It gives direction and purpose to their behaviours, allows behaviours to persist, and leads to choices of preferred behaviours (Dweck 2014:87). According to Wlodkowski (2010:76), a general pattern of learner motivation toward learning often takes the following sequence of steps: learner energy, volition, direction, involvement and completion. Wlodkowski (2010:76) further argues that if one step of learner motivation breaks down, the entire process may come to a complete halt. Christophel (2013:342) posits that one aspect of motivation that makes motivation difficult to understand, as well as to apply, is the misleading beliefs related to this concept held by many people, which she calls “motivational misconcepts”.

According to Christophel (2013:342), there are five of these misbeliefs and they are discussed below:

- Belief 1: *When learners are not willing to involve themselves in class activities or assignments, they are unmotivated.* Although learners may not be motivated to learn, they are usually motivated to do something. If that motivation is not directed toward learning, it is likely to be directed towards disruptive behaviours.

- Belief 2: *Educators motivate learners.* Although no one person can claim sole responsibility for motivating another person, it is the responsibility of educators to make learning attractive and stimulating, provide opportunities and incentives, allow for development, and match learner interests.
- Belief 3: *Since learners must learn in order to survive, making them learn is more important than their motivation to learn.* If learning is associated with coercion, it can become a generally aversive stimulus, one that learners will go out of their way to avoid. Forced learning today may result in no learning tomorrow.
- Belief 4: *Threats can facilitate learner motivation to learn.* Using threats only stimulates learners to become frightened and resentful of the threats and the person using them. The long-term outcome is learner avoidance of the educator and the subject matter.
- Belief 5: *Learning automatically improves with increased learner motivation.* Although there is no conclusive evidence to support such a claim, motivation appears to be an important element that can enhance learners' desire to learn. Motivation is not a panacea for instruction, but it may provide a foundation for effective instruction.

According to Jones and Jones (1998:178), learner motivation is improved when the following processes are followed:

- Establishing inclusion – creating a learning atmosphere in which learners and educators feel respected by and connected to each other.
- Developing attitude – creating a learning atmosphere in which learners will not be afraid to fail in their attempts at new learning experiences.
- Enhancing meaning – creating challenging, thought-provoking learning experiences that include learner perspectives and values.
- Engendering competence – creating an understanding that learners are effective at learning about something they value.

Arends (1998:81) asserts that if educators are to create appropriate learning environments that motivate learners to learn, they must have knowledge of applicable motivational theories, some of which are summarised in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Theories of human motivation**

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Theorist</b>	<b>Main idea</b>
Reinforcement theory	Skinner	Individuals respond to environmental events and extrinsic reinforcement.
Needs theory	Maslow, Deci, McClelland	Individuals strive to satisfy needs such as self-fulfilment, self-determination, achievement, affiliation and influence.
Cognitive theory	Weiner	Individuals' actions are influenced by their beliefs and attributions, particularly attributions about success and failure situations.
Social learning theory	Bandura	Individuals' actions are influenced by the value particular goals hold for them and their expectations of success.

Source: Arends (1998:81)

### **3.3.8 Creating a supportive relationship framework**

According to Sergiovanni and Starrat (2012:54), a more recent approach is that schools should create a supportive relationship framework. The Relationship Framework Management Theory is based on the assumption that strong positive relationships are critical to the education process (Gilbert 2010:6). Kuh (2010:687) posits that learners are more likely to make a personal commitment to engage in rigorous learning when they know their educators, parents, and other learners care about how well they do.

They are willing to continue making the investment when they are encouraged, supported, and assisted (Saha 2014:156). The Relationship Framework consists of seven levels of relationships as detailed in the table below.

**Table 11: Relationship framework**

<b>Relationship Framework</b>	
<b>Learning Relationships</b>	<b>Support for Learners</b>
<b>Level 0 Isolated</b>	Learners feel significant isolation from teachers, peers, or even parents. Learners lack any emotional or social connection to peers and educators.
<b>Level 1 Known</b>	Learners are known by others and are frequently called by name. Educators and their families, interests, aspirations, and challenges. Learners are known by peers with whom they interact in the institute.
<b>Level 2 Receptive</b>	Learners have contact with peers, parents, and teachers in multiple settings. Educators exhibit positive behaviours of “being there” that show genuine interest and concern.
<b>Level 3 Reactive</b>	Educators, parents, and peers provide help to learners when requested, but support may be sporadic and inconsistent among support groups.
<b>Level 4 Proactive</b>	Others take an active interest in a learner’s success. Educators take initiative to show interest and provide support. Learners and others express verbal commitment for ongoing support and validate this commitment with their actions.
<b>Level 5 Sustained</b>	There is extensive, ongoing, pervasive, and balanced support from educators, parents, and peers that is consistent and sustained over time.
<b>Level 6 Beneficial</b>	Positive relationships are everywhere and commonplace in the way that learners, educators, and parents interact and support the learner as learner.

Source: Saha (2014:156)

This Relationship Framework first helps educators to understand that strong positive relationships are critical to the education process and creating a sense of belonging is essential for learner commitment. Jones and Jones (1998:75) argue that the relationship between an educator and a learner is good when it has:

- *Openness or transparency*. Each one is able to risk being honest with the other one.
- *Caring*. Each knows that he or she is valued by the other one.
- *Independence*, as opposed to dependency.
- *Separateness*. This allows each to develop his or her uniqueness, creativity and individuality.
- *Mutual meeting of needs*, so that neither’s needs are met at the expense of the others.

Peers play an important role in determining the quality of the learning environment (Wydeman 2019:106). With today’s increased emphasis on learners’ achievement, educators are often hesitant to spend time on creating positive peer relationships in the classroom.

In addition, educator education programmes seldom provide educators with specific skills for developing positive, supportive classroom climate. However, it is not enough to simply feel good in the classroom without any constructive learning taking place. Learners should not like to be in the educator's class because it is only play and no work. The skill in this case is to get the learning and work done successfully while everybody enjoys being in class.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the management of learner commitment in the school as well as the different strategies the SMT of the selected schools can use to promote learner commitment were discussed. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses the research methodology used to conduct the field work.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:182), a purpose statement advances the overall direction or focus for a study. The purpose of this research was to answer the research question: *How can management in selected secondary schools promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to an education?* and develop management strategies that can be used to promote learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in each of the four selected schools. In this chapter, the researcher explains how the research methodology and procedures, introduced in Chapter 1, were employed in the study. To recall, research methodology refers to all the measures the researcher employs in answering the research questions (Neuman 2011:108). After briefly revisiting the research approach and research design, the selection and profiles of the participating schools (population) and the implementation of the purposive, criterion sampling technique are discussed. Before concluding the chapter with discussions on the actions the researcher took to ensure trustworthiness and ethical research, data-collection and how the data-analysis was conducted is addressed in detail.

#### 4.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate for the study because it is an approach that favours a naturalistic setting, is not driven by theory and hypothesis-testing but foregrounds the perceptions and experiences of the research participants (Neuman 2011:116). The aim of qualitative research is to “better understand human behaviour and experience [...] grasp the processes by which people construct meaning and to describe what those meanings are” (Bogdan & Biklen 2011:38). Put differently, qualitative researchers aim to develop understanding (Castellan 2010:9), describe multiple realities, develop grounded theory (Bogdan & Biklen 2011:42), outline insight (Creswell & Creswell 2018:18). The data collected qualitatively are tacit (intuitive) and the reliability and validity thereof depend on what Creswell and Creswell (2018:18) calls “trustworthiness”. Maree (2011:230), referring to data differences, indicates that data collected qualitatively rather than quantitatively use the social actors' views, describes the phenomenon thickly and is context-bound. Troachim (2011:154) indicates that researchers choose to do the research qualitatively when:

They want to generate new theories and hypothesis, when they want to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, the nature of the research is such that there is a need to be exploratory and inductive and the context and perceptions cannot be divorced from reality.

The choice of whether or not to undertake qualitative or quantitative research depends on the conditions of the research itself, that is, value is either attached to meaning (qualitative) or numerical statistics (quantitative) by those involved in the research process (Flick 2011:177). The nature of the study, its reliance on the knowledge and experience of the participants, and the willingness of the researcher to engage participants in the research process, often dictate that the researcher follows a qualitative approach.

Five steps in collecting qualitative data, as identified by Creswell and Creswell (2018:22), were followed:

- Identified participants and site (*cf.* sections 1.10.6, 4.4.2)
- Gained access (*cf.* sections 1.11, 4.8.3)
- Determine the types of data to collect (*cf.* section 1.10.6)
- Develop data collection instrument (*cf.* sections 1.10.6, 4.6)
- Administered the process in an ethical manner (*cf.* sections 1.11, 4.9)

### **4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Essentially, the research design is a plan of how the researcher will “systematically collect and analyse data that is needed to answer the research question” (Bertram & Christiansen 2014:210). In Chapter 1, the researcher explained that because he wanted to understand why learners are not committed to their education in the four secondary schools without tempering the results to all the schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, a multiple case study design was most suitable for this research. Multiple case study research is “qualitative research in which researchers focus on a unit of study known as a bounded system” (Gay *et al.* 2011:444). The researcher followed the three steps that Fox and Bayat (2012:69) suggest researchers should bear in mind when conducting multiple case study research:

- The case should be defined or demarcated, which means that its boundaries should be determined (*cf.* section 1.7.1).
- Whatever technique is used to collect data, the concern is not merely to describe what is being observed, but to search, in an inductive way, for consistent regularities and recurring patterns (*cf.* sections 4.6.2 – 4.6.4).



- Triangulation is used. In qualitative case studies, triangulation is used to extract the data the instrument was intended to extract (*cf.* section 1.8.5 and Chapter 5).

#### **4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

The population in this study, and sample selection are dealt with in this section.

##### **4.4.1 Population**

“Population” is defined by Neuman (2011:224) as the pool of cases from which a researcher draws a sample. Sampsford (2007:213) adds that “population” means the entire set of objects spoken about. Briefly, a research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. It is for the benefit of the population that the research is done. However, due to the large size of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time-consuming. This is why researchers rely on sampling techniques (Neuman 2011:226). The population in this study therefore comprises all secondary schools in the Free State Province.

##### **4.4.2 Sampling**

“Sample” is defined by Neuman (2011:218) as a small set of cases a researcher selects from a larger pool and generalises to the population. A “sample” comprises the elements with the most features, representative of the typical attributes of the “population”. Sampling serves several important functions. It is trite that the main function of sampling is to select participants as representatives of the chosen research population. Sampling also helps the researcher by having a representation of the cases that are being studied and this enhances future deductions that are extracted from the cases (Silverman 2011:471).

The sample size in qualitative research does not play a significant role, as the purpose is to study one or a few cases, in order to identify the spread and diversity, and not its magnitude (Kumar 2014:229). But what is important, is that the researcher purposely selects “information-rich” participants, who will provide them with the information that they need (Kumar 2014:229). The researcher was able to sample participants as initially envisaged, without encountering any problems (*cf.* section 1.10.6). In this study, the sample was selected from secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. School principals were interviewed. Qualitative questionnaires were given to grade heads, TLOs, disciplinary committee members, RCL members and learners.

For logistical reasons, such as resources and time, only four secondary schools in a selected district of the Free State Province were selected for the purpose of this study.

**Table 12: Profiles of the participating schools**

School	School Size	Number of Children per Class
A	540	35-40
B	635	35-40
C	622	35-40
D	936	35-40

The selected participant groups were suitable for this study (*cf.* section 1.8.5) as their valued input assisted the researcher in reaching the aim of this study, which was to develop management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in the selected schools and to make recommendations to ensure more constructive and proactive management.

The list of participants with the relevant pseudonyms are presented in Tables 13 and 14 respectively.

**Table 13: Number of participants**

Participants	Number of participants
Principals	4
Grade heads	12
TLOs	8
Members of disciplinary committee	4
RCL members	24
Learners	96
<b>Total:</b>	<b>148</b>

**Table 14: Pseudonyms**

School	Principals	Grade Heads	TLOs	Members of Disciplinary Committee	RCL Members	Learners
School A	Principal A	GH A1 to A3	TLO A4 and A5	DC Member A	RCL A1 to A6	Learner A1 to A24
School B	Principal B	GH B1 to B3	TLO B4 and B5	DC Member B	RCL B1 to B6	Learner B1 to B24
School C	Principal C	GH C1 to C3	TLO C4 and C5	DC Member C	RCL C1 to C6	Learner C1 to C24
School D	Principal D	GH D1 to D3	TLO D4 and D5	DC Member D	RCL D1 to D6	Learner D1 to D24

In the section below, the data collection procedure and implementation of the various data collection methods is elaborated on.

#### **4.5 DATA COLLECTION**

In this section, the procedure followed in implementing the data-collection instruments before elaborating on the data-collection methods are discussed. In the sub-section on data-collection methods, the pilot study is described before indicating the procedure and order in which the data-collection instruments were implemented. Thereafter how the data-collection methods were planned and how they were implementation of (semi-structured interviews, qualitative questionnaire and document analysis) in four secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District is described.

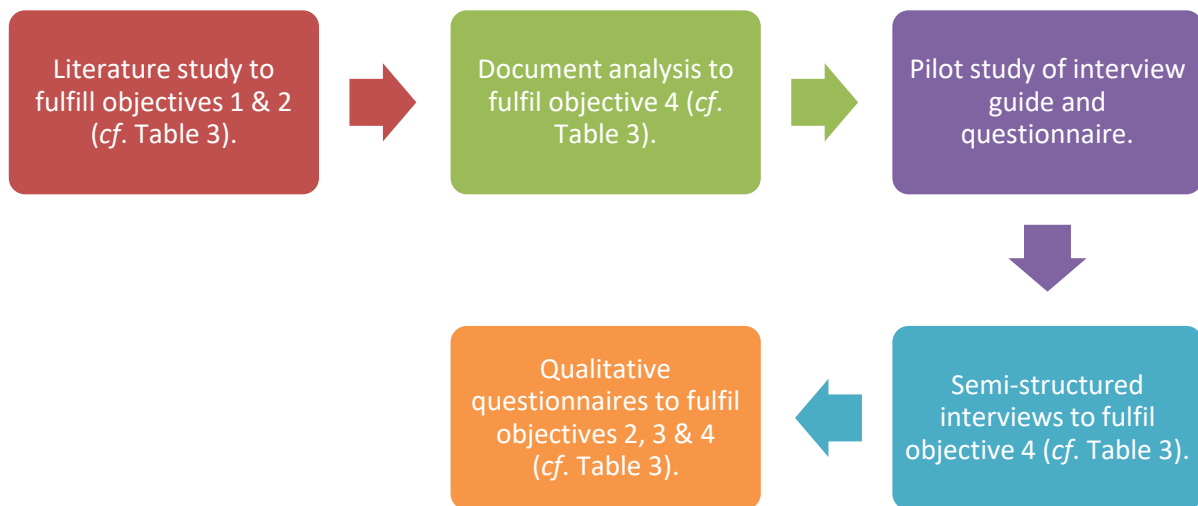
##### **4.5.1 Data collection procedure**

Data collection started with the first phase, namely a literature study to ascertain learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy. The second phase was a document analysis to discover the strategies school managers and educators of the participating schools currently employ in promoting learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education. The researcher used law and policy that regulate learners' rights and responsibilities in public schools to guide this analysis. The third phase of the data collection was interviewing principals in the four selected schools. The interviews allowed the researcher to discover the strategies that school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

The interviews were followed by qualitative questionnaires which the researcher distributed to both heads of various grades, the educator component of the liaison officers, disciplinary committee members, excluding principals or educators that are also grade heads or TLOs, RCL members and learners respectively. The qualitative questionnaires enabled the researcher to:

- establish learners’ perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and the reasons for not being committed to their own education.
- discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

The flow diagram in Figure 8 is a representation of the data collection procedure followed in this research.



**Figure 8: Flow diagram of data collection procedure**

Source: Adapted from Mpunzana (2017:18)

#### 4.5.2 Data collection methods

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypothesis and evaluate outcomes, and while methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same (Most *et al.* 2015:1339).

In an account of the use of the literature study, document analysis, individual interviews with principals, qualitative questionnaires for both grade heads, TLOs, RCL members and learners is given. The section is concluded with a detailed discussion of how the data were analysed.

#### 4.5.2.1 Pilot study

Once general agreement has been reached about which data collection methods and data sources to use, it is time to test the waters (Grinnell & Unrau 2011:422). In the case of this study, prior to the actual research, the researcher tested the waters by administering a pilot study. The view of Bertram and Christiansen (2014:49) that the research instruments should be pilot-tested with a small group, was followed. For the whole pilot study, the researcher followed every procedure exactly as planned to identify anticipated problems or issues during the main study, as suggested by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:121). The researcher used the findings from the pilot study evaluate the data collection instruments. Questions that several participants in the pilot test had misunderstood and responded to in a way that did not produce data that the researcher had hoped to extract with those questions, were rephrased. Originally, the researcher requested the participants in the pilot study to answer questions in English, but he discovered that some struggled to convey their views in English. In such instances, he allowed participants to use their home language, Sesotho. Some participants were sceptical to provide their exact age and their experience in their position, but the researcher explained to them that the information they give, would be confidential. The duration of the pilot study was a minimum of an hour and the amendments to the instruments based on the findings of the pilot study, are presented in the Tables 15, 16 and 17 below:

**Table 15: Amendments to the interview guide for the principal**

Original Question	Reformulated Question
11. Were members of the SMT, school disciplinary committee and the TLOs trained on promoting learner commitment to their education?	11. Were members of the SMT, school disciplinary committee and the TLOs trained on promoting learners' commitment to their education? If yes, who trained them and what topics did this training cover? If no, what do you think might be a reason for not receiving any training?
<i>EXPLANATION: The original question was more of a closed question that requires a yes/no answer. The researcher amended it to form an open-ended question.</i>	

**Table 16: Amendments to the questionnaire for the grade heads, TLOs and members of the disciplinary committee**

Original Question	Reformulated Question
12. What input do you bring to the school with regards to learners' commitment in realisation to their right to a basic education?	12. What do you do to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education?
<i>EXPLANATION: This question included unnecessary words. It was then amended to be more to the point.</i>	
13. Does the school have any strategy as a control measure to curb non-commitment on the part of learners in realisation to their right to a basic education?	13. What strategies does the school have in place to curb non-commitment on the part of learners in realising their right to education?
<i>EXPLANATION: This question was more of a closed question that require a yes/no answer. The researcher amended it to form an open-ended question</i>	

**Table 17: Amendments to the questionnaire for the learners**

Original Question	Reformulated Question
9. Does learners at your school get support from the SMT?	9. What does the school's SMT do to support learners at your school if they fail to accept responsibility for their own education?
<i>EXPLANATION: This question was more of a closed question that require a yes/no answer. The researcher amended it to form an open-ended question</i>	

#### 4.5.2.2 Literature study

As previously mentioned, for the purposes of this study, the researcher regards a 'literature study' as distinct from a 'literature review'. A 'literature study' is a data-collection method, while a 'literature review' is an overview of scholarship in a certain discipline to determine what research has already been conducted, and what has been reported on the topic (Shongwe 2013:17). A literature study was undertaken of South African law and policy provisions indicating learners' rights and responsibilities in realisation to their right to education.

These included specifically the Constitution, the Schools Act, the National Education Policy Act, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners, the National Policy on HIV, STIs and TB, the Policy on Learner Attendance and the National Policy on drug abuse (*cf.* Chapter 2). The relevant law and policy provisions were identified but not discussed or analysed. Consulting these primary sources gave the researcher the framework to ascertain learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy.

### 4.5.2.3 Document analysis

The purpose of document analysis is to use the documentary evidence to cross-validate information gathered by means of such methods (Noor 2008:164). In this study, analysis of documents such as minutes of the SMT meetings, the books wherein transgressions are recorded and the schools' Codes of Conduct for Learners, the schools' Discipline Policies, schools' quarterly learner attendance reports and the schools' Year plans were analysed. All these documents assisted the researcher in triangulating data which ensured the findings were trustworthy (*cf.* section 1.8.5). Below are reasons for a specific document being, followed by questions that were used to guide the analysis:

- Minutes of the SMT meetings were analysed to determine whether the SMTs handled learner commitment in realisation to their right to education in a manner that complies with the legal prescripts. The following questions were used to direct the analysis:
  - (1) How does the SMT handle misconduct cases where the misconduct evidenced non-commitment on the part of learners in realisation to their right to education?
  - (2) What role does the school governing body play in preventing incidents related to non-commitment on the part of learners in realisation to their right to education?
  - (3) Does the SMT get support from parents with regard to learners who violate the school Code of Conduct for Learners?
- The books wherein transgressions are recorded were analysed to determine how the participating schools manage learner commitment and whether that complies with legal prescripts. The following questions focused the analysis:
  - (1) Has the school experienced any cases related to non-commitment on the part of learners in realisation to their education?
  - (2) Which transgression, illustrating non-commitment, occurs the most?
  - (3) How are these cases handled in terms of disciplinary measures?
  - (4) Is there an increase or decline in these cases?
- The Code of Conduct for Learners was analysed to determine whether it addresses learner commitment in realisation to their right to a basic education. Questions used to direct the analysis included:
  - (1) Does the school have a Code of Conduct for Learners?
  - (2) Does it contain provisions with regard to learner commitment in realisation to their right to education?

- The Schools' Discipline Policies were analysed to determine how the schools manage learner commitment and whether that complies with legal prescripts. Questions used to guide the analysis are:
  - (1) Does the school have a disciplinary policy that addresses transgressions that relate to learner non-commitment?
  - (2) Does the disciplinary policy comply with the legal prescripts?
- The schools' quarterly learner attendance reports were analysed guided by the following questions:
  - (1) How many learners are on average absent per semester?
  - (2) If so, what are the main reasons why learners do not attend school?
  - (3) Are these reasons clearly indicated in the quarterly reports?
- Schools' year plans were analysed to determine whether schools include activities that promote learners' commitment to their education. The question used to guide the analysis, was:
  - (1) Does the school have a year plan that include activities to promote learners' commitment to their education?

Since some documents contain confidential information, it was not easy to obtain the access to them. The researcher arranged meetings with the participating schools' principals to discuss obtaining access to the documents. He had to convince the principals that ethical considerations such as keeping documents secure and not discussing the contents with anyone would be adhered to. But ultimately, agreement was reached that no school documents would be removed from the schools' premises which meant that the researcher had to visit schools and conduct the analyses on site.

#### **4.5.2.4 In-depth semi-structured interviews with principals**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the researcher elected to conduct semi-structured interviews. Four personal interviews were conducted with principals of the participating schools. Each interview took a minimum of an hour and these interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants for future reference and in-depth analysis.

The one-on-one interviews conducted with principals were to fulfil objective 4, namely "To discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education".



The nine steps in conducting interviews as described by Creswell and Creswell (2018:203) were followed:

- Identify the interviewee (*cf.* Table 3).
- Purposeful sampling was used to select participants in this study (*cf.* section 1.8.7).
- Determine the type of interview you will use (*cf.* Table 3 and section 1.8.5.3).
- Have a plan but be flexible - using an interview guide allowed the researcher to probe for clarity or extract more information when needed.
- Locate a quiet, suitable place for conducting the interview (*cf.* section 1.8). The researcher conducted the in-depth face-to-face interviews in the principal's office after school hours because it was a quiet place.
- Obtain consent from the interviewee to participate in the study (*cf.* Table 4 and section 1.9).
- Schedule the interview. The researcher contacted the participants before the interviews to ensure that they would be available on the day of the interview. The interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient for the participants, so as to avoid disruption of their daily duties.
- Establish rapport. During the entire interview period, the researcher made a concerted effort to create an atmosphere of trust and to put the interviewees at ease (Johnson 2010:104). According to Baruth (2013:189), the following should be explained:
  - the contents of the study
  - the fact that a digital tape recorder will be used during the interview
  - the procedures that will be followed during and after the interview, and
  - an undertaking that confidentiality will be maintained with respect to all information given. The researcher addressed these aspects in the information letter given to the participants, when he requested their participation and consent. Explaining these aspects is also essential to ensure that the participants can give their informed consent.

Since it became evident during the pilot study that some participants may struggle to understand and properly express themselves in English, participants were allowed to use some Sesotho phrases where they felt those would better explain to the researcher what they wanted to communicate.

- Audiotape the interview (see the paragraph above).
- Take brief notes during the interview. Although the interview was recorded, the researcher also took field notes and made notes on the reactions of participants that he observed during the interview. For example, when a participant sighs, shakes his/her head in disagreement, nodded in the agreement, clapped his/her hand to suggest his/her agreement with a statement or body language.
- Use probes to obtain additional information (see the first paragraph above).
- Be courteous and professional before and during the interview (see the interview guide).

The researcher used the following interview guide for the individual, semi-structured interviews with principals.

**Section A: Biographical profile of principals**

Principal	Work experience	Years in this position	Qualifications	Gender	Age

**Section B: Indicators of learner non-commitment**

1. What do you think are the reasons why some learners are not committed to their education?
2. Is learner absence a serious problem at this school? If so, what are the main reasons why learners do not attend school?
3. How would you describe learners’ commitment to do their homework at the school?
  - 3.1 What are the main reasons that learners give for not having done their homework?
4. How would you describe the learners’ commitment to study for tests and examinations?
  - 4.1 What are the main reasons that learners give for not having studied for a test or examination?
5. Which learner transgressions would you say show a lack of commitment on the part of the learners?

5.1 Which of these learner transgressions occur the most?

5.2 Why do you think that is so?

6. Which practices, present in this school, show that learners are not committed to their own wellbeing?

### **Section C: Management strategies to promote learner commitment**

7. Which policies were developed and committees established at the school that management can use to promote learner commitment?

8. What kind of support would you consider vital for promoting learner commitment in this school?

9. Which measures does the school governing body take to promote learners' commitment to their education?

10. Were members of the SMT, school disciplinary committee and the TLOs trained in promoting learner commitment?

10.1 If yes, who trained them, and which topics did this training cover?

10.2 If no, what do you think might be a reason for not receiving any training?

11. What advice would you give principals on how to go about managing learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education?

12. Which forms of misbehaviour can be regarded as indicators of learner non-commitment?

13. If you find a learner is in trouble regularly and clearly not committed, what do you do to support such a learner and promote commitment?

14. What does the school do to:

14.1 promote learner attendance?

14.2 promote punctuality?

14.3 motivate learners to do their homework?

14.4 take care of their own wellbeing?

14.5 practice abstinence or safe sex?

14.6 be informed and practice universal precautionary measures?

14.7 encourage learners to be active participants in their own education?

#### **Section D: Factors affecting learner commitment**

15. Do you have parental support with regard to learners who are clearly not committed to their education?

15.1 If yes, elaborate on the kind of support parents give.

15.2 If no, give a few examples of instances where parents obstruct their children to accept the responsibilities with regard to their own education?

16. What role, if any, do the LRC play in ensuring/promoting learner commitment?

17. From your own experiences, what would you regard as the cultural and religious challenges that hamper learners' commitment to school?

18. What challenges do you encounter as the principal in fulfilling your management functions in relation to learners' commitment to their education, and how are these challenges addressed?

The data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were complemented by the data collected from the qualitative questionnaires.

#### **4.5.2.5 Qualitative questionnaires**

Bertram and Christiansen (2014:73) define a questionnaire as a list of either closed-ended or open-ended questions which the participants answer. Questionnaires are more impersonal than interviews and result in shorter answers (Graustein 2014:73). The researcher opted for open-ended questions because, as Bertram and Christiansen (2014:76) indicate, open-ended questions allow participants the opportunity to express their own views. By guaranteeing participants' anonymity, the researcher ensured that the participants felt free to express themselves without any fear of being judged. The importance of honest answers was emphasised, and participants were made aware that the negative responses were as important as positive responses.

Two qualitative questionnaires were designed in order to investigate the issues surrounding a lack of learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education. The first qualitative questionnaire was used for the Grade Heads, TLOs and members of the disciplinary committees, RCL members and the second for learners. The following qualitative questionnaire was administered for the grade heads, TLOs and members of the disciplinary committees of the participating schools.

### **Section A: Demographic information**

Please fill in your gender and qualifications in the space provided.

1. Gender : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Work experience : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Qualifications : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Position : \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section B: Indicators of learner non-commitment**

5. What do you think are the reasons why learners are not committed to their education?
6. Is learner absence a serious problem at this school? If so, what are the main reasons why learners do not attend school?
7. How would you describe the learners' commitment to do their homework at the school?
  - 7.1 What are the main reasons that learners give for not having done their homework?
8. How would you describe the learners' commitment to study for tests and examinations?
  - 8.1 What are the main reasons that learners give for not having studied for a test or examination?
9. Which practices, present in this school, show that learners are not committed to their own wellbeing?

### **Section C: Management strategies to promote learner commitment**

10. What do you do to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education?
11. What strategy serves as means to curb non-commitment on the part of learners in realisation of their right to education?
12. In your opinion, does the principal manage learners' commitment in realisation of their right to education well?
13. Does the school have support structures in place for learners whose non-commitment is due to barriers that hamper the realisation of their right to education?
  - 13.1 If yes, who is responsible to make sure that those learners receive the necessary support?

13.2 If no, what do you think might be the reason for not supporting learners who are experiencing difficulties in realising their right to education?

14. How does the school deal with those learners who lack commitment to their schoolwork?

15. Which departmental circulars and policies does the school have to assist in managing learners' commitment to their education?

16. How was promoting learner commitment and supporting learners who experience barriers that hampered the realisation of their right to education addressed in the training you have received?

17. What suggestions would you make to improve learners' commitment to their education?

#### **Section D: Factors affecting learner commitment**

18. Which factors do you think affect learners' commitment to their education?

19. What challenges are you facing with regard to the involvement of parents in the education of their children?

20. From your own experience, what would you regard as factors that cause learners not to recognise their educators as role models at your school?

21. How would you describe the role that educators play in motivating learners to be committed to their education?

22. How "hands on" is the SMT in lending support to learners by making sure that school rules are justified?

23. Below is a list of factors that usually affect learner commitment in schools. Please number the factors in order from the one that you regard as most applicable to the school (1) to the factors least applicable to the school (6).

Lack of parental involvement	
Lack of management strategies among educators	
Poor relationship between educators and learners	
Educators as poor role models	
Unjustified school rules	
Unmotivated learners	

24. Are there any other factors not mentioned above that you think are affecting learner commitment at your school? Explain.

The following qualitative questionnaire was administered for RCL members and learners of the participating schools.

### **Section A: Demographic information**

Please fill in the information in the space provided.

1. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age : \_\_\_\_\_

3. Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section B: Indicators of learner non-commitment**

4. What would you say are your rights with regard to your right to education?

5. Do you take your responsibility to attend school regularly seriously? If not, why not?

6. What would you say are your responsibilities with regard to your right to education?

7. In instances where you failed to do your homework, what were the reasons?

8. Was there ever a situation where you did not study for a test or examination? If your answer is yes, why didn't you study? If no, what do you think are the reasons why other learners do not study for tests or the examination?

9. Are there any of the school rules that you are not committed to follow and if so, which rules are you not committed to follow and why?

10. Your education can be affected negatively by poor personal lifestyle choices. Which lifestyle choices do you think affect learners' education negatively?

11. Are any of these choices that you have mentioned present in this school? If so, how serious is the problem?

12. What can learners at this school expect from the SMT in support of them fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to their education?

13. Do you see yourself as committed to your education? Explain.

### **Section C: Management strategies to promote learner commitment**

14. How does the school deal with learner absence?
15. Explain why you think the way the school deals with learner absence will motivate or not motivate learners to attend school regularly?
16. How does the school deal with drugs and drug use?
17. Explain why you think the way the school deals with learners who bring drugs to or sell drugs on the school grounds or use drugs, will discourage or not discourage drug-related misbehaviour?
18. How does the school deal with learners who make poor choices in relation to sexual relations?
19. Explain why you think the way the school deals with learners who make poor choices in relation to sexual relations, will discourage or not discourage learners to enter into sexual relations?
20. How does the school deal with pregnant learners?
21. Explain why you think that the way the school deals with pregnant learners supports the learners to continue their education?
22. What is your opinion: Does the school's disciplinary system encourage learners to behave and to take their education seriously?
23. Did the school inform your parents about your unbecoming behaviour towards your schoolwork?
24. What was your parents' response to you for not showing commitment to your schoolwork?
25. What could the school do to promote learner commitment in realisation of their right to a basic education?
26. Do you think that the schools' Code of Conduct for learners deals with learners who are not committed to their education?

### **Section D: Factors affecting learner commitment**

27. What challenges do learners face with regard to the management of their lack of commitment towards their education? Does the school address these challenges?



28. Do your parents encourage you to fulfil your responsibilities with regard to your education? If so, what do they do that you find encouraging?

29. Do your parents support you (enable you) to fulfil your responsibilities with regard to your education? If so, what do they do that you find supportive and enabling?

30. Are you aware of any co-learners whose parents make it difficult for them to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to their education? If so, what do these parents do or fail to do?

31. What can your parents or the school do to increase your commitment to your education?

32. Below is a list of factors that usually affect learner commitment in schools. Please number the factors in order from the one that you regard as most applicable to the school (1) to the factors least applicable to the school (6).

Lack of parental involvement	
Lack of management strategies among educators	
Poor relationship between educators and learners	
Educators as poor role models	
Unjustified school rules	
Unmotivated learners	

33. Are there any other factors not mentioned above that you think are affecting learner commitment at your school? Explain.

In the following section, how data were analysed and interpreted is discussed.

#### **4.6 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Bernard and Ryan (2010:46), data analysis is the processes through which we move from having raw data to some form of explanation, understanding, or interpretation of the people or the situations we investigated. It involves organising and transforming data into manageable units, synthesising items, searching for patterns and deducing what is valuable and what is to be learnt (Neuman 2011:426). Data analysis can therefore be said to be the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data which results in the generation of patterns, themes, constructs and inferences (Creswell & Creswell 2018:190). The “aim of data analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one’s data through an inspection of the relationship between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or establish themes in the data” (Mouton 2011:108).

It involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analysis, moving further into understanding, presenting and interpreting the data (Creswell & Creswell 2018:191). Richards (2015:156) suggests five signs of sufficiency of data, namely

- Simplicity – a “small polished gem of a theory”, rather than “a mere pebble of truism”,
- Elegance and balance – it is coherent,
- Completeness – it explains all,
- Robustness – it does not fall over with new data, and
- It makes sense to relevant audiences.

In this study, data analysis was done by examining information from the literature study, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires. The process of data analysis involves making sense of the collected data so that you could form answers to your research questions. For qualitative researchers that means making sense of text (Creswell & Creswell 2018:193); for example, doing a non-numeric examination and interpretation to discover underlying meanings and patterns of relationship (Babbie 2014:378). According to Maree (2011:234), the data analysis process in qualitative research must take into consideration that, unlike in quantitative research, the data are concerned with:

The use of social actors’ views, and not with the quantitative measuring of concepts. a thick description of the phenomenon, not with the causality of variables, social processes, not with generalising findings to a wide population and a flexible approach, not with replication or developing.

In this study, data consists of data sets obtained via literature study, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires. Analysis of data was done by using content analysis, thematic analysis and the use of a qualitative software, the Atlas.ti version 8. Atlas.ti is a powerful workbench for qualitative data analysis, particularly for large sections of text, visual and audio data. This software offers support to the researcher during the data analysis process, in which texts are analysed and interpreted using coding and annotating activities. Furthermore, it provides a comprehensive overview of a research project, which is called the *Hermeneutic Unit (HU) in Atlas.ti*, and it facilitates immediate search and retrieval function (Smit 2012:65). According to Rambaree and Faxelid (2013:34) Atlas.ti is an essential tool that facilitates researchers’ ability to undertake well-organised, systematic, effective and efficient data analysis in many studies.

Rambaree (2008:54) asserts that the software renders qualitative data more visual, portable, and it is also a companion that accompanies them from the conception to the end of a project.

## **4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness is an important aspect in qualitative research as it allows the researcher to explain the advantages of qualitative terms without the constraints that apply to quantitative terms. Internal and external validity and objectivity assist in exploring the consistency in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Punch 2009:243). Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2011:147) infer that the concepts of reliability, validity and generalisation were relocated from the natural sciences. Durability and validity are concepts that are related to quantifying data and is suitable to the natural sciences. Much discussion exists on the assessment of quality in qualitative research (Richards 2015:65). Merriam (2009:189) states that all research aims at producing reliable and valid information in an ethical manner. According to Merriam (2009:189), the quality of qualitative research of a particular study is determined by evaluating that individual study. Trustworthiness is guaranteed by encountering the following criteria: transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability, each of which are discussed below.

### **4.7.1 Transferability**

Transferability allows the researcher to query if the research findings can be transferred from a particular situation to another (Schurink *et al.* 2011:420). Knowledge generated through qualitative methods can still transfer and be useful in other settings, or circumstances and with other populations (Tracy 2010:845). Transferring the “generalisation” of the findings from the sample to the research population is of paramount importance in qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton 2012:277), for this matter, the population of School A, B, C and D. Using purposeful sampling ensures the selection of information-rich participants, which according to Tiwani (2010:90), increases the possibility for transferability. Another measure to ensure transferability is the use of a “thick description” which specifies many details, conceptual structures and meanings as opposed to just a factual account without any interpretation (Tracy 2010:846). The researcher had to handpick participants who would be most able to give applicable information about the research topic from their personal experience of learner commitment.

### **4.7.2 Credibility**

Credibility refers to the qualitative substitute to internal validity in quantitative research (Schurink *et al.* 2011:419). The credibility of research is assured if it indicates that the study was accurate in its description of the topic. In this study, all interview meetings were recorded, thus ensuring accuracy and validity of the research. Creswell and Creswell (2018:86) infer that credibility signifies accountability for the research undertaken and the use of a reflexive journal aids in the researchers recording of data. The researcher made use of a reflexive journal whereby notes were kept on daily events that occurred during the research. In this study, the researcher achieved triangulation by using multiple methods of data collection. These were viz, a literature study, document analysis, in-depth interview as well as qualitative questionnaires. Triangulation assists the researcher in counteracting the limitations that are related to a single method of data collection as it encompasses the use of two or more methods of data collection in a study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011:1). Using this strategy assists researchers in offsetting the limitations associated with using one method to collect data (Creswell & Creswell 2018:87).

### **4.7.3 Dependability**

The dependability of research requires that the research is logical, well recorded and follows an audit trail. Each of the participants were given a copy of their transcribed interviews to verify its accuracy. Their views on their interpretations of the interviews were also considered by the researcher. The participants accepted the researcher's interpretation of the interviews without making any changes. This is referred to as "member checking" and permits the researcher to consult with the participants in order to confirm the authenticity of information (Babbie & Mouton 2013:277). It enhanced the dependability of the data as the participants could either confirm or reject the interpretations concluded in this study. The objectivity of the researcher was maintained at all times. Shurink *et al* (2011:420) infer that dependability is the substitute to reliability in quantitative research, whereby the researcher explains that the changes in the study and the design is understood by having a knowledge of the setting. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:90), qualitative researchers need to document as many of the steps of the procedures as possible. In considering ethics, the researcher requested permission from the selected schools to access the documents and records. The researcher only extracted data from documents that were relevant to the study.

Documents such as a book where disciplinary conduct incidents were recorded were analysed, the interviews with principals were recorded to ensure the accuracy. In this study, such an audit trail was accomplished as follows:

- A request for permission to the Head of Department: Free State Department of Education to conduct the research
- A permission from the Head of Department: Free State Department of Education
- Written request for permission from the principals of participant schools to conduct the research
- Written permission from the principals of the participant schools to conduct research
- Letter requesting participation and consent from the principal, the Grade Heads, TLOs, members of the disciplinary committees, RCL members and learners.
- Letter requesting learner participation and consent to parents of underage learners
- Letter requesting learner participation and assent to underage learners
- A letter was also sent to the Disciplinary Committee requesting permission from them to have access to records of disciplinary hearings dealing with non-commitment of learners towards their schoolwork.
- Confidentiality disclaimer signed by all participants
- Copies of interview transcripts with school principals (safely stored; only the researcher has access to it).
- Qualitative questionnaires (safely stored; only the researcher has access).
- Expert guidance was also given by an experienced professor of education deeply versed in conducting research of this nature.

#### **4.7.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability reflects the necessity to guarantee that interpretations and findings match the data (Smit 2012:6), that is, that no claims are made that cannot be supported by the data. For this reason, argumentative writing is critical. As this is qualitative research, it is often challenging to make objective results because qualitative researchers are rooted in prejudices and values, biases and convictions, which influence, to some degree, the findings (Smit 2012:10). The researcher did this by following the advice of Charmaz (2014:32), and guaranteed that “the results, accepted as the subjective knowledge of the researcher, can be traced back to the raw data of the research, that they are not merely a product of the observer’s worldviews, disciplinary assumptions, theoretical proclivities and research interests”.

The researcher also used an audit trail, which offer ways of guaranteeing that constructions could be seen to have arisen directly from the data, thereby approving the research findings and rooting them in the evidence or the raw data (Merriam 2009:159).

#### **4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:338) declare that educational research involves people, and that it is therefore vital that ethical and legal responsibilities are assumed when educational research is conducted. Ethics refers to correct behaviours and procedures that are necessary for the researcher to conduct research. Furthermore, ethics provides standards by which the researcher can examine their own work. Taking ethics into account before embarking on qualitative research prepares the researcher to respond in an ethical, caring manner when difficult situations arise (Gay *et al.* 2011:123). Ethical clearance was given by the UNISA College of Education Research Committee and permission was obtained from the Department of Education, Free State Province (*cf.* Appendices A & C). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:338) proclaim that educational research focuses mainly on people and that it is therefore important that ethical and legal responsibilities are assumed when educational research is carried out. This demands that ethical guidelines must be followed.

The researcher was ethically accountable in guarding the rights and welfare of the participants in the study. In this study, for example, the researcher followed the guidelines stated by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:338) that informed consent should be gained from all participants involved. Informed consent was thus acquired. A record of ethical concerns, which were drawn by the researcher (*cf.* section 1.9), backed the choices made, when data were collected and analysed. These principles were clarified for the participants preceding the interviews or responding to questionnaires. The researcher and the participants decided to adhere to confidentiality.

It was ethically imperative to maintain self-respect and human dignity when conducting the research. A sense of caring should always exist in the researcher's mind, so as to encourage personal morality and fairness (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:339). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:339) ethical research can be realised by:

obtaining informed consent and or assent depending on the age of the participants, encouraging the voluntary involvement and participation of all participants, assuring confidentiality, anonymity and privacy, respecting all participants in terms of their viewpoints, avoiding misrepresentation of collected data, and ensuring that no physical harm and distress comes to the participants.

In this study, the researcher reassured the participants that whatever is taking place was linked only to the study and that belief of confidentiality would be taken into consideration. The ethical considerations such as voluntary participation, violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, deception of the participants and plagiarism were regarded throughout this study.

#### **4.8.1 Voluntary participation**

Consent to participate must be given freely and voluntarily (UNISA 2014:11). Participants were notified of the existence of the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and given details of the Ethics Review Committee (UNISA 2014:12). UNISA requires that this policy be made available to participants in order to help them make informed decisions regarding their participation (UNISA 2014:12). Consent from all research participants in this study was granted freely before they participated in the study. According to Brooks *et al.* (2014:80) the consent must also be informed.

To ensure the consent was informed, the researcher first sent information letters to the participants giving a clear explanation of what the researcher was expecting from them, the purpose of the study, the name of the university where the researcher is studying, the researcher and the supervisor's contact details, why the interviews were tape recorded and how the researcher and the participating schools will benefit from the study.

#### **4.8.2 Violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality**

According to Strydom (2011:119), every individual has the right to privacy and it is his or her right to decide when, where, to whom and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs and behaviour will be revealed. Since some of the participants knew the researcher because he had worked with them, his affiliation to some of the schools may make the school identifiable to the specific participants. The researcher brought this to the attention of the schools and consequently used pseudonyms for each of the schools. This was to protect the privacy of the participants and to avoid them being labelled by others and to protect their self-esteem and their levels of confidence. All the necessary precautionary measures such as considering ethical considerations, avoidance of harm to the participants, gaining the informed consent of the participants and respecting the confidentiality of the participants were observed to ensure that all the participants decided for themselves the extent to which their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours may be exposed.

### **4.8.3 Deception of the participants**

Deception refers to misleading participants, intentionally misrepresenting facts or withholding information from participants (Struwig & Stead 2010:69). Strydom (2011:118) state that no deception whatsoever should be inflicted on the participants. In this study, the participants were informed about the nature of the study as well as the methods that would be employed, namely individual interviews with principals and deputy principals and qualitative questionnaires to Grade Heads, TLOs, members of the disciplinary committee and learners.

### **4.8.4 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is using another person's work and presenting it as your own without a reference or citation (Matthews & Ross 2010:451). UNISA College of Education Research Ethics Committee classify plagiarism as a serious offence (UNISA 2014:5). To avoid committing this offence, this study was run through the Turnitin programme.

## **4.9 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher explained how he implemented the research methodology while conducting this research. Instruments used to collect data were semi-structured interviews, document analysis and qualitative questionnaire. The data collected through the qualitative research techniques used can be deemed adequate to address the research question and objectives of the study within the constraints of reliability, validity and credibility. These are demonstrated in Chapter 5 where the findings from the collected data are presented and interpreted.



## CHAPTER 5

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The application of the data collection methods was discussed in Chapter 4. The purpose of this chapter is to present and interpret the rest of the findings that emerged from data analysed from the document analysis, semi-structured interviews and the questionnaires at the selected schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. Since four cases were studied, a chronological structure was used in the analysis of the data (*cf.* section 4.7). The findings of each case are presented in sequence according to the identified themes, after which a cross-analysis is done. The aim of this study was to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop management strategies for promoting learner commitment (*cf.* section 1.5.1).

Analysis of data was done with the use of qualitative software, the Atlas.ti version 8 but the researcher could not use all the analysed data and had to revisit and analyse parts of the data again. The coding process involved grouping of all codes related to each other, which led to the development of themes and sub-themes.

In the following section, the demographic data, the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from School A-D is presented.

#### 5.2 THE DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

The demographic data for the participating schools is presented in this section. The demographic data for the participants of School A is presented in Table 18 below.

**Table 18: Demographic data for the participants of School A**

Participants	Work experience	Years in this position	Qualifications/Grade	Gender	Age
Principal A	24 Years	5 Years	STD, ACE and BEd Honours	Male	49
DC Member A	25 Years	7 Years	STD and ACE	Female	55
GH A1	7 Years	2 Years	BEd and BEd Honours	Female	32
GH A2	30 Years	7 Years	STD and BA	Male	54
GH A3	5 Years	5 Years	NDP Marketing and PGCE	Female	29
TLO A4	6 Years	6 Years	BSC, BSC Honours and PGCE	Male	30

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Work experience</b>	<b>Years in this position</b>	<b>Qualifications/Grade</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>
TLO A5	5 Years	5 Years	BA and PGCE	Female	28
RCL A1	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
RCL A2	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	18
RCL A3	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	20
RCL A4	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	20
RCL A5	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	18
RCL A6	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	18
Learner A1	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	22
Learner A2	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	17
Learner A3	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	19
Learner A4	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	20
Learner A5	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner A6	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	18
Learner A7	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	18
Learner A8	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	20
Learner A9	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	17
Learner A10	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
Learner A11	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	21
Learner A12	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	19
Learner A13	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	18
Learner A14	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	17
Learner A15	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	17
Learner A16	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
Learner A17	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner A18	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	17
Learner A19	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	16
Learner A20	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	18
Learner A21	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	18
Learner A22	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	18
Learner A23	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	17
Learner A24	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17

The demographic data for the participants of School B is presented in Table 19 below.

**Table 19: Demographic data for participants from School B**

Participants	Work experience	Years in this position	Qualifications/Grade	Gender	Age
Principal B	29 Years	22 Years	PTD, BA, BEd and PGDE	Male	52
DC Member B	14 Years	3 Years	BEd	Male	39
GH B1	11 Years	2 Years	SPTD	Female	41
GH B2	22 Years	8 Years	SPTD and ACE	Male	48
GH B3	24 Years	24 Years	SPTD and ACE	Female	50
TLO B4	5 Years	5 Years	BA and PGCE	Male	27
TLO B5	27 Years	27 Years	SPTD and ACE	Male	53
RCL B1	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	16
RCL B2	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	19
RCL B3	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
RCL B4	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	18
RCL B5	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	18
RCL B6	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner B1	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	18
Learner B2	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner B3	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	15
Learner B4	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	19
Learner B5	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner B6	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner B7	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner B8	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner B9	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner B10	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	19
Learner B11	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	18
Learner B12	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	16
Learner B13	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	18
Learner B14	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner B15	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
Learner B16	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
Learner B17	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	20
Learner B18	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	20
Learner B19	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner B20	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	18
Learner B21	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	15
Learner B22	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner B23	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	18
Learner B24	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	16

The demographic data for the participants of School C is presented in Table 20 below.

**Table 20: Demographic data for participants from School C**

Participants	Work experience	Years in this position	Qualifications/Grade	Gender	Age
Principal C	11 Years	4 Years	BEd	Male	36
DC Member C	11 Years	3 Years	SPTD	Female	40
GH C1	20 Years	8 Years	SPTD and ACE	Male	52
GH C2	27 Years	5 Years	SPTD and ACE	Female	54
GH C3	6 Years	6 Years	BEd	Male	29
TLO C4	24 Years	24 Years	SPTD and ACE	Female	50
TLO C5	5 Years	5 Years	BA and PGCE	Male	31
RCL C1	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
RCL C2	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	18
RCL C3	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	19
RCLC4	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	20
RCLC5	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	17
RCL C6	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	20
Learner C1	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	19
Learner C2	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner C3	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner C4	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	16
Learner C5	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	19
Learner C6	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner C7	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	19
Learner C8	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner C9	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	19
Learner C10	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
Learner C11	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	20
Learner C12	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	18
Learner C13	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	20
Learner C14	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	19
Learner C15	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner C16	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	17
Learner C17	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	19
Learner C18	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	18
Learner C19	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17
Learner C20	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner C21	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner C22	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	17
Learner C23	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	18
Learner C24	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	17

The demographic data for the participants of School D is presented in Table 21 below.

**Table 21: Demographic data for participants from School D**

Participants	Work experience	Years in this position	Qualification/Grade	Gender	Age
Principal D	22 Years	10	BA Ed, BEd Hons and Diploma in School Leadership	Female	57
DC Member D	10 Years	3 Years	BEd	Male	32
GH D1	22 Years	9 Years	SPTD and ACE	Male	52
GH D2	5 Years	2 Years	BEd	Male	30
GH D3	3 Years	3 Years	BSC	Male	24
TLO D4	2 Years	2 Years	BTech, PGCE	Female	23
TLO D5	28 Years	28 Years	SPTD	Female	50
RCLD1	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	18
RCLD2	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
RCL D3	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	18
RCL D4	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	15
RCL D5	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	15
RCL D6	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	18
Learner D1	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner D2	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner D3	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	15
Learner D4	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	17
Learner D5	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner D6	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	15
Learner D7	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	16
Learner D8	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	17
Learner D9	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner D10	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner D11	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner D12	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner D13	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner D14	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	17
Learner D15	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner D16	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Male	16
Learner D17	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	15
Learner D18	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	16
Learner D19	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Female	17
Learner D20	N/A	N/A	Grade 11	Male	19
Learner D21	N/A	N/A	Grade 10	Female	16
Learner D22	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	20
Learner D23	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Female	18
Learner D24	N/A	N/A	Grade 12	Male	20

### 5.3 FINDINGS EMERGING FROM THE DATA

Table 22 below sets out the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis. The following three themes emerged: learners’ rights and responsibilities, learners not committed to their own education and management of learner commitment, as presented in Table 22.

**Table 22: Summary of themes and sub-themes emerging from the qualitative data**

Themes and Sub-themes emerging from the Qualitative Data	
Themes	Sub-themes
1. Learners’ rights and responsibilities	1.1 Learners’ perspectives on their rights and responsibilities.
2. Learners not committed to their own education/ non-committed learners	2.1 Transgressions of school rules that can be indicative of non-commitment.
	2.2 Learners’ reasons for not being committed.
	2.3 Factors hampering learner commitment.
3. Management of learner commitment	3.1 Management strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education. Indicators of learner non-commitment.

Data to fulfil Objective 1 (To ascertain learners’ rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy (*cf.* section 1.5.2 & Table 3) were extracted by means of a literature study and included in Chapter 2 (*cf.* section 2.4) but this data was again considered when interpreting the analysed data extracted by means of other data-collection methods such as interviews, questionnaire and document analysis. A sequence structure was used to organise the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data extracted from the cases. In a sequenced structure, individual cases are presented in order. In the case of this study, the following sequence applies:

- The case of School A
- The case of School B
- The case of School C
- The case of School D
- Cross-case analysis

### **5.3.1 Theme 1: Learners' rights and responsibilities**

The theme 'Learners' rights and responsibilities' emerged from the qualitative questionnaires completed by the RCL members and learners as they expressed their perspectives on their rights and responsibilities to the realisation of their right to education.

#### **5.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities**

In this section, findings emerging from the data collected from the participating schools on learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities are presented and discussed followed by a cross-case analysis.

##### **5.3.1.1.1 School A**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (*cf.* section 1.1) guarantees the fundamental right to education to all children (*cf.* section 2.3.3). Learner participants of School A are aware of their constitutional right to education and their responsibilities in relation to that right. They regard it as their right to receive free education, in the language of their choice, in a safe environment and to receive the required textbooks. Learner A22 had this to say: *The Constitution of South Africa protects me to receive my education in the language of my choice.* The views of Learner A22 were echoed by Learner A23 when he said: *It is my right to be taught and ask questions where I don't understand as required by the Constitution.* Participants also understood that it is their right to be in a safe environment whilst they are at school. Learner A8 commented as follows: *I have a right to a free education, in a safe environment.* RCL A2 said: *I have the right to a basic education and the quality of that education which is free* [sic]. Learner A4 confirmed his constitutional right to education when he said: *I have a right to get information I need for my studies and textbooks that will assist me to be successful in my studies.* Responses from learner participants above indicated that they are cognisant of their constitutional rights to education and it brought a noticeable imbalance between rights and responsibilities. For example, learners only focus on their rights and none of them mentioned any responsibility.

Learner A10 said: *It is my constitutional right to attend school and to be provided with necessary textbooks required for my grade.* Learner A18 mentioned: *It is my right to attend school and to be provided with the necessary transport when I go to school.* The literature review (*cf.* section 2.3.3) states that the right to education simply means the state has the duty to make education accessible to learners, which means for example, fiscal allocation matching

human rights obligations, schools matching school-aged children and to provide transport to school or textbooks free of charge. The right to education includes the right to attend all classes, to learn and be taught in all approved subjects, to be informed regularly about school progress, to make use of all school facilities, and to develop one’s potential (*cf.* section 1.2).

Responses from the learner participants in School A indicated that they do understand their responsibilities well. Table 23 below illustrates learners’ views on their responsibilities.

**Table 23: School A learners’ views on their responsibilities**

Learner	To attend school	To learn (do homework, study for tests and examination)	Abide by the school rules	To behave well	Be responsible for personal wellbeing
RCL A1		X	X	X	
RCL A2	X	X	X		
RCL A3	X	X			
RCL A4	X	X	X		
RCL A5	X	X			
RCL A6	X		X	X	X
Learner A1	X	X		X	
Learner A2	X	X		X	
Learner A3	X	X		X	
Learner A4		X	X	X	
Learner A5		X	X		
Learner A6		X	X	X	
Learner A7	X	X		X	
Learner A8		X	X		
Learner A9	X	X	X		
Learner A10	X	X			
Learner A11	X	X			
Learner A12		X	X		
Learner A13		X	X	X	
Learner A14		X		X	
Learner A15	X	X		X	
Learner A16	X	X		X	
Learner A17	X	X			
Learner A18	X	X		X	
Learner A19	X	X			X



Learner	To attend school	To learn (do homework, study for tests and examination)	Abide by the school rules	To behave well	Be responsible for personal wellbeing
Learner A20		X		X	
Learner A21	X	X			X
Learner A22	X	X			
Learner A23	X	X			
Learner A24	X			X	X

As one of the leaders representing other learners at the school, RCL A6 agreed that it is her responsibility to *attend school regularly, abide by the school rules and to behave well... be a good example and become a role model to other learners*. Other learners at School A understand that having rights alone cannot ensure success, but rights always go hand in hand with responsibilities. For example, Learner A10 commented: *It is my responsibility to go to school every day so that I can pass at the end of the year*. RCL A2 confirmed that his responsibility is to attend school, do his schoolwork regularly and abide by the school rules. Learner A23 said: *It is my responsibility to take my schoolwork very serious by listening to my educators and do my homework*. RCL A1 affirmed his responsibility by stating: *My responsibility is to attend school every day so as to pass at the end of the year*. The said statement was echoed by Learner A14 when she said: *My responsibility thereof [sic] is to study very hard so as to pass at the end of the year*. The majority of learners in School A are aware of their responsibilities in relation to their right to education. They know that their right to receive education is coupled with a responsibility to do their schoolwork. They also agreed that it is their responsibility to take their schoolwork seriously in order for them to pass the grade by for example, attending school regularly, doing their homework and to abide by the school rules. The literature review (*cf.* section 1.4) provides that accepting responsibilities by for example, being accountable for their own actions in relation to that right goes hand in hand with claiming a right. Creating responsible learners and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning is an admirable ambition for every school. It is about them taking personal responsibility for the realisation of their right to education. As is evident from the above, learners at School A are well aware of their rights in relation to their right to education. However, some learners showed little responsibility in meeting their obligations and disregarded the corresponding or concomitant responsibilities in relation to their right to education.

For example, Learner A13 had this to say:

*Although it is my constitutional right to be taught and to be provided with necessary textbooks, I sometimes do not take my schoolwork so serious such as not doing my homework or submitting my assignments and projects in time.*

Learner A22 said:

*The Constitution of South Africa allows me to attend school and to be provided with basic education, but I don't take the responsibility to make sure that I do what is expected from me for example, I absent myself from school without reason and I sometimes not behave well at school.*

#### **5.3.1.1.2 School B**

Learner participants of School B acknowledged their constitutional right to education and their responsibilities in relation to that right. They regarded it as their right to receive free education in a safe environment, to be treated fairly and to receive the required textbooks. RCL B3 said: *It is my constitutional right to receive education that is free and not to be discriminated.* Learner B20 brought to the light that it is his constitutional right to receive a free and fair education in the language of his choice. He commented: *It is my constitutional right to receive an education that is free and fair, in the language of my choice.* It seems that the majority of the participants also understood that it is their right to be in a safe environment whilst they are at school. Learner B26 commented: *It is my right to receive an education that is free, in a safe environment.* The other views of learner participants were that it is their constitutional rights to receive education under the environment that will respect, protect and promote their human dignity. These views corroborate what was said by RCL B6: *We have the right to be respected, regardless of our culture, language or disability.*

Concerning their responsibilities, all learners in School B understand their responsibilities. They regard their responsibilities as having to always be at school during school hours, to learn, to do their homework and respect their educators. They were thus aware of their responsibilities as indicated in the Bill of Responsibilities (*cf.* section 1.7.2.1). Table 24 below illustrates their views on their responsibilities.

**Table 24: School B learners' views on their responsibilities**

Learner	To attend school	To learn (do homework, study for tests and examination)	Abide by the school rules	To behave well	Be responsible for personal wellbeing
RCL B1	X		X		
RCL B2	X	X			
RCL B3	X	X			
RCL B4	X	X	X		
RCL B5	X	X	X		
RCL B6		X	X		X
Learner B1	X	X			
Learner B2		X			
Learner B3		X		X	
Learner B4	X	X			
Learner B5	X	X		X	
Learner B6	X	X		X	
Learner B7		X		X	
Learner B8		X		X	
Learner B9				X	X
Learner B10	X	X		X	
Learner B11		X			
Learner B12	X	X			
Learner B13	X	X			
Learner B14		X	X		
Learner B15	X			X	
Learner B16		X			
Learner B17		X		X	
Learner B18		X	X		
Learner B19		X	X		
Learner B20	X	X		X	
Learner B21	X	X			
Learner B22	X	X			
Learner B23	X	X			
Learner B24	X	X	X		

Learner participants at this school agreed that it is their responsibility to come to school, to learn, to do their homework and respect their educators.

When commenting on his responsibilities, RCL B4 said: *It is my responsibility to learn, to come to school, and to respect my educators.* The views of RCL B4 were echoed by Learner B13 when she said that it is her responsibility to do all her schoolwork and respect other learners. RCL B5 mentioned: *My responsibility is to attend school, do my homework and to study very hard so as to pass at the end of the year.* Learner B20 commented as follows: *My responsibility is to write all my formal and informal tasks, do my homework, cooperate with my educators and fellow learners, and to be always present at school.*

Based on the data collected from School B, the majority of learners mentioned that it is their responsibility to attend school regularly, to learn, as well as to behave well. Furthermore, they regarded doing their homework, studying for tests and examinations as part of their right to learn. For example, Learner B12 mentioned: *It is my responsibility to attend school on a regular basis, doing my homework and study for my tests or examinations because that will make me to progress to the next grade.* Learner B16 indicated that it is her responsibility to make sure that she studies so that she can pass at the end of the year. Learner B16 commented: *It is my responsibility to make sure that I study for a test or examination so that I can pass at the end of the year.*

RCL B6 and Learner B9 mentioned that it is their responsibility to behave well at school and be responsible for their personal wellbeing. They indicated that by behaving well and being responsible for their wellbeing would assist them in taking care of their own physical, academic and emotional wellbeing. RCL B6 said:

*My responsibility is to behave well in school so that I can be a role model to other learners. As their leader, I must also be responsible for taking care of my physical and emotional well-being because that will help me to protect myself against diseases like HIV/AIDS, STIs and TB.*

Learner B9 commented as follows: *My responsibility as a learner is to take care of my wellbeing. I had to make sure that I protect myself against diseases such as HIV/AIDS and STIs.* The literature review (*cf.* section 2.4.5) reveals that personal wellbeing is essential for learners' achievement. It is apparent from the above-mentioned data that learners at this school know and understand their responsibilities. RCL members were aware of their roles in promoting the behaviour of other learners and to also promote their own wellbeing. Despite the fact that learner participants in School B understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education, there were clear indications that they do not always act in accordance with such knowledge. RCL B1 commented that although learners do have a right to education, some of them showed lack of commitment because they misuse the school

infrastructure, occupy their time with illegal and non-school related activities, use drugs and alcohol around the school premises and boys belong to gangs. RCL B1 had this to say:

*It is true that the Constitution protects every learner's right to education and be provided with necessary textbooks to pass at the end of the year, but some of them are misusing the same rights they a provided with. They are using drugs in the school premises and others are coming to school drunk.*

The sentiments of RCL B1 were echoed by Learner B17. Learner B17 said:

*Some learners at our school are misusing the rights they have been provided with. They damage school infrastructure, carried knives and firearms, and threaten to stab other learners during school hours.*

The literature review (*cf.* section 1.4) attests to the fact that violence has taken over schools across the country and spread fear in both educators and learners alike, as weapons, drugs, fighting and bullying reign supreme. They are not committed to their schoolwork, and turn to violent and aggressive behaviour, smoke dagga and carry dangerous weapons on the school premises. Some of them are aware of their rights to education but showed little responsibility in meeting their obligations.

#### **5.3.1.1.3 School C**

Learner participants of School C were knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities regarding their right to education. They agreed that it is their right to receive free education in a safe environment. Learner C18 stated: *I have a right to education and to be in a safe environment.* Participants also understood that it is their right to a free education, in the language of their choice. Learner C13 commented: *I have a right to a free education, in the language of my choice.* The above-mentioned statement is confirmed by Learner C22 from the same school who stated: *It is my constitutional right to receive free education and textbooks required [sic].* RCL C1 said: *I have a right to a free education as long as I want and to be respected [sic].* Responding to the question of rights, RCL C4 indicated: *The Constitution allows me to have the right to information concerning my education.*

It is evident from the abovementioned comments that learners from School C understand their constitutional rights to education. The Schools Act (*cf.* section 2.4) states that it is their right to education; however, it also requires them to attend school and comply with the Code of Conduct for Learners. Concerning their responsibilities, all learners in School C understand their responsibilities in regard to their right to education. Table 25 below illustrates their views on their responsibilities.

**Table 25: School C learners' views on their responsibilities**

Learner	To attend school	To learn (do homework, study for tests and examination)	Abide by the school rules	To behave well	be responsible for personal wellbeing
RCL C1			X		
RCL C2	X	X			
RCL C3		X		X	
RCL C4	X	X	X		
RCL C5		X	X		
RCL C6	X		X		
Learner C1	X	X	X		
Learner C2		X			
Learner C3	X	X		X	
Learner C4	X		X		
Learner C5	X				X
Learner C6	X	X			
Learner C7		X	X		
Learner C8		X		X	
Learner C9		X		X	
Learner C10		X		X	
Learner C11		X	X		
Learner C12	X	X			
Learner C13	X				X
Learner C14	X	X	X		
Learner C15	X			X	
Learner C16		X	X		
Learner C17	X	X	X		
Learner C18	X	X			
Learner C19	X		X		
Learner C20	X	X			
Learner C21		X		X	
Learner C22	X		X	X	
Learner C23	X	X			
Learner C24	X	X	X	X	

Learners in School C agreed that it is their responsibility to attend school, to learn, to do their homework, to abide by the school rules and to behave well. Furthermore, they realised that it is their responsibility to respect their fellow learners and their educators. For example, RCL C2 said that her responsibility is to attend school, work hard and to obtain positive outcomes at the end of the year. Learner C24 emphasised that attending school and doing homework as part of her responsibility at the school. She commented: *It is my responsibility to attend school, be punctual and to do my homework as requested by my educators.* Learner C14 has this to say: *My responsibility is to do all my homework and study.* Learner C15 commented as follows: *It is my responsibility to make sure that I respect my fellow learners and educators, do my schoolwork and comply with the school Code of Conduct for Learners.*

In terms of the Guidelines for the Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA DoE 1998, par 1.6.7.1) learners are responsible for their own behaviour and should increasingly show self-discipline. They are thus not only right-holders but also duty-holders with regard to their right to education. They also have a duty to attend school on a regular basis, to adhere to the school's Code of Conduct for Learners and to do their assigned schoolwork. It is evident that though learner participants from School C claimed the rights in relation to their right to education and acknowledge that they have concomitant duties in relation to such, they do not fulfil these duties.

Some learners maintained it is their democratic right to do as they wish, neglecting the results of their actions and the fact that rights are limited. This was confirmed by the data collected from the document analysis. School C has a problem with learners who absent themselves from school without valid reasons and bunking classes. Some learners are not committed to their education and for example, they do not do their homework, leave their books at home, use drugs on the school premises and belong to gangs. They also not do adhere to the school rules and do not take their education seriously. The literature study (*cf.* section 2.4.4) brought to the fore that learners should play a role in developing a proper learning environment, look after school property and be present in classes. In School C this was not the case, as some learners behave in a way that contravenes other learners' rights and the rights of the school authorities. Learner C11 said:

*I am unable to perform my responsibilities because I have associated myself with a group of learners who are using drugs and we normally come to school being under the influence of alcohol.*

Learner C22 echoed the sentiments of Learner C11 by saying he is addicted to drugs and most of his friends are not taking their education seriously where they for example, absent

themselves from school without reasons, bunk classes, come without their books to school and do not complete their homework. Learner C22 mentioned:

*I am addicted to drugs and I am also not taking my education serious. For example, I sometimes absent myself from school without any reason, bunk classes and not doing my homework.*

#### **5.3.1.1.4 School D**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (*cf.* section 2.3.3) imposes a duty on the state to respect, protect and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights, which include the right to education. This means that the state must at least provide the necessary facilities and must eliminate factors inhibiting the enjoyment of the right.

The right to an education includes the right to attend all classes, to learn and to be taught in all approved subjects, to be informed regularly about school progress, to make use of all school facilities, and to have learners' potential developed (*cf.* section 2.4). Learner participants of School D all agreed that it is their right to receive education and their responsibility in relation thereof is to attend school, do their schoolwork and respect their educators. They also understand that it is their democratic right to be treated fairly with the respect they deserve and that it is their responsibility to abide to all the school rules and respect fellow learners. RCL D1 commented as follows: *I have a right to education that is free and get the information I need for my studies.* RCL D2 said: *I have a right to receive education that is free, in a safe environment.* In regard to her right to education, Learner D16 said the following: *I have a right to free education and to be treated equally and fairly.* Learner D21 posits that it is her right to receive free education and to be treated fairly. She commented: *I have a right to free education and to be treated fairly.*

The views of Learner D 24 are that it is his constitutional right to receive education that is free and fair, in a safe environment. Learner D7 pointed out that it is her constitutional right to be taught in the language she feels comfortable with and that it is also her right to receive education that is free and fair. She commented: *It is my constitutional right to be taught in the language I feel comfortable with. I also have the right to a free and fair education.* Learner D14 indicated that it is his constitutional right to be enlightened regularly about school progress, to make use of all school facilities, and to have learners' potential developed. From the above-mentioned data, it is evident that learners of this school have the knowledge about their constitutional right to their own education.



They are also aware that the Constitution imposes a duty on the State to respect, protect and fulfil the rights in the Bill of Rights, which include the right to education (*cf.* section 2.3.3). Learner D17 had this to say: *It is my right to be respected and the state has to make a point that my rights are protected and fulfilled as it is stated in the Constitution.* With regard to their responsibilities, learners in School D understand their responsibilities well. They know that it is their right to receive education and it is their responsibility to attend school regularly. Table 26 below illustrates their views on their responsibilities.

**Table 26: School D learners' views on their responsibilities**

Learner	To attend school	To learn (do homework, study for tests and examination)	Abide by the school rules	To behave well	Be responsible for personal wellbeing
RCL D1	X	X			
RCL D2	X	X			
RCL D3	X		X	X	
RCL D4	X		X		
RCL D5		X	X		
RCL D6		X	X		
Learner D1	X	X			
Learner D2	X		X		
Learner D3	X	X			
Learner D4		X		X	
Learner D5	X	X			
Learner D6	X			X	
Learner D7		X	X		
Learner D8		X		X	
Learner D9		X		X	
Learner D10	X	X	X		
Learner D11	X			X	
Learner D12	X	X			
Learner D13		X			
Learner D14		X	X		
Learner D15	X		X		
Learner D16	X	X			
Learner D17	X	X		X	
Learner D18		X	X		

Learner	To attend school	To learn (do homework, study for tests and examination)	Abide by the school rules	To behave well	Be responsible for personal wellbeing
Learner D19		X	X		
Learner D20	X	X	X		
Learner D21	X			X	
Learner D22	X	X			
Learner D23	X	X		X	
Learner D24	X	X		X	

As is evident from Table 27 above, learners in School D indicated attending school, doing their homework and abiding by the school rules are their most important responsibilities. For an example, RCL D3 responded as follows: *It is my responsibility to attend school regularly and do my homework given to me by my educators.* Learner D22 commented: *My responsibility is to do my schoolwork and respect my educators.* Learner D17 understands her responsibilities, hence she said: *My responsibility is to come to school regularly and obey all the school rules.* Learner D12 emphasised that it is her responsibility to study for tests and examinations in order for her to pass at the end of the year and to abide all the school rules.

Learners such as Learner D20 and Learner D22 pointed out that it is their responsibility to attend school, do their homework, to abide by the school rules and to behave well. Learner D20 said: *It is my responsibility to attend school and to do my homework and to abide by the school rule.* Learner D22 offered the same sentiments: *My responsibility is to attend the school and do my homework.* Data collected from School D affirms that learners are aware of their constitutional right to education and the responsibility thereof. The majority of them indicated that it is their responsibility to attend school, to study for tests and examinations and to abide by the school rules. The literature study (*cf.* section 2.4.1) confirms that it the duty of learners to attend school regularly. This obligation is also included and extended to include punctuality in the Policy on Learner Attendance. In terms of the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (*cf.* section 2.4), responsibilities include the responsibility to attend school, to learn, do homework, adhere to the school’s Code of Conduct for Learners, behave well, avoid conduct that put them at risk not to fully enjoy an education such as using drugs and being sexually promiscuous, and to do their part to protect school infrastructure.

Despite the fact that learner participants in School D understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education, there are clear indications that they do not always act in accordance with such knowledge. RCL D4 stated that even though learners have rights to their education, some of them ignore the responsibilities thereof. According to RCL D4, learners at their school absent themselves from school without reasons and some of them do not do their homework or come to school with the required books. RCL D4 said: *Although it is every learner’s right to receive education, some of them ignore their responsibilities in relation to their right to education [sic]. They don’t do their homework, absent themselves from school without reasons and left their books at home.* RCL D5 commented as follow:

*The Constitution allows all learners to receive education and to be treated fairly and with respect, but most learners at my school do not take the responsibility in relation to their right to education. For example, they don’t attend classes, they don’t do their homework, come to school being under the influence of alcohol, boys belong to gangs and they use drugs on the school premises.*

### 5.3.1.1.5 Cross-case analysis

The findings reveal that participants in the four selected schools have a reasonable understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education, but in reality, there are more emphasis on their rights and much evidence that they do not fulfil their responsibilities.

**Table 27: Comparison table on rights identified by learner participants from all four schools**

SCHOOL A Right to ...	SCHOOL B Right to ...	SCHOOL C Right to ...	SCHOOL D Right to ...
free education	free education	be taught in the language of their choice	free education
be taught in the language of their choice			be taught in the language of their choice
a safe school environment	a safe school environment	a safe school environment	a safe school environment
receive the required textbooks	receive the required textbooks	receive the required textbooks	receive the required textbooks
	be treated fairly		be treated fairly
			get information they need for their studies

As is evident from the comparison table above, the learner participants of all four schools have a good grasp of their rights in relation to their right to education.

Although the learner participants from School A are aware of their responsibilities in relation to their right to education, their personal circumstances prevent them from fulfilling their responsibilities; for example, they absent themselves from school without reasons, do not submit their assignment or projects, do not complete their homework, associate themselves with wrong people and misuse the school infrastructure (*cf.* section 5.2.1.1).

The learner participants from School B regard their responsibilities as having to be at school during school hours, to learn, to do their homework and to respect their educators (*cf.* section 5.2.1.2). Some learners at this school showed lack of commitment in relation to their right to education; for example, boys belong to gangs, occupy their time with illegal and non-school related activities and misuse the school infrastructure. The learner participants from School C agreed that it is their responsibilities to attend school, to learn, to do their homework, to abide by the school rules and to behave well. In contrast, some learners claim it is their democratic right to do as they wish, ignoring the consequences of their actions; for example, they absent themselves from school without valid reasons, bunk classes, do not complete their homework, leave books at home, use drugs, boys belong to gangs, do not adhere to the school rules and do not taking their education seriously (*cf.* section 5.2.1.3).

In School D, learner participants agreed that their responsibilities in relation to their right to education are to attend school, do their homework, study for tests and examinations, respect their educators, abide by the school rules and behave well (*cf.* section 5.2.1.4). Although they understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education, in reality there is more emphasis on their rights and much evidence that they do not fulfil their responsibilities; for example, they leave their books at home, damage and misuse school infrastructure, do not complete their homework, absent themselves from school without reasons, commit serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises, boys belong to gangs and girls fall pregnant at a tender age) (*cf.* section 5.2.2.1).

### **5.3.2 Theme 2: Learners not committed to their own education**

In this section, the researcher presents and interprets the findings emerging from the data collected from the participating schools by means of interviews, qualitative questionnaires and document analysis which deals with the transgressions of school rules that can be indicative of non-commitment.

### **5.3.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: Transgressions of school rules that can be indicative of non-commitment**

Grade heads, members of the disciplinary committee, TLOs, RCLs and learners were asked which learner transgressions they would say show a lack of commitment on the part of learners.

#### **5.3.2.1.1 School A**

The following are transgressions that can be regarded as being indicative of learner non-commitment include malicious damage of the school property or infrastructure, absenteeism, learners not doing their homework, not studying for tests or examinations, using drugs, bunking classes, not bringing their books to school, teenage pregnancy, late coming, non-attendance of extra classes, failure to submit assignments or projects on time, stealing other learner's books, coming to school with dangerous weapons such as guns and knives, coming to school under the influence of alcohol and learners not taking responsibility for their own physical, academic and emotional well-being. From the document analysis, the researcher could determine that School A has a Code of Conduct for Learners which is in line with the Schools Act and the Constitution. Their Preamble read thus: "This Code of Conduct has been developed in accordance with the South African Schools Act and is aimed at demonstrating a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning at our school". The Code of Conduct also contains provision with regard to learner commitment in relation to their right to education. For example, in terms of their school code of conduct, a learner will be guilty of serious misconduct if he or she deliberately and without just excuse repeatedly breaks the school rules and fails to respond to the school's disciplinary measures.

Consequences for serious misconduct are determined at an internal disciplinary hearing or, if deemed necessary, at a hearing constituted by the School Governing Body (SGB). Such consequences could include suspension or expulsion from school. In terms of School A's Code of Conduct for Learners, any learner who absents himself or herself on a day must hand in a letter from his or her parents to his or her class educators, on the day they return to school. If a learner absents himself or herself from school for more than ten days without any reason, that is regarded as misconduct. For such misconduct, a parent or guardian will be called to come and explain why disciplinary measures must not be taken against his or her child. Failure to that, such a learner will be withdrawn from the school admission book and attendance register. Records such as incident book and learner attendance registers from School A signify that the school has a problem with learners who absent themselves from school without a valid reason.

As is evident from the data-evidence below, common transgressions committed by learners at School A that indicate non-commitment relates to failing to do their homework, late coming, absenteeism, bunking of classes and non-attendance of extra classes. Some learners do not do their homework, and some do not come to school with their books.

Principal A had this to say: *There is a high rate of absenteeism, late coming, failure to do homework, bunking of classes and non-attendance of extra classes at this school.* Educator A5 and GHA1 identified the same transgressions as indicators of learners' non-commitment. Educator A5 said:

*Most learners absent themselves from school without [a valid] reason, they bunk class and do not want to do their homework. And, GHA1 pinpointed: Late coming, failure to do homework, absenteeism and bunking of classes are transgressions that indicate non-commitment at this school.*

During the researcher's visit, he witnessed a group of learners bunking class and loitering idly around the school premises. When he asked the principal about those learners, the answer given to him was that they bunk classes and some of them did not do their homework, hence they are outside the classroom. Educators such as DC Member A and TLO A4 identify failure to submit their assignments or projects in time and failure to attend extra classes as common transgressions committed by learners at their school. They argue that most learners are not taking their education seriously and as a result, their academic performance suffers. DC Member A mentioned: *Failure to submit their assignments or projects in time and learners who are not attending extra classes are transgressions that indicate non-commitment from learners at this school.* TLO A4 emphasised that learners' failure to attend extra classes, learners who come to school without schoolbooks and those who do, rarely do their school work which are transgressions that indicate non-commitment on the part of learners. TLO A4 stated:

*Most learners at this school do not attend extra classes as expected and some of them do not come to school with their books. The said transgressions put their academic performance in danger as some of them perform bad in their different subjects.*

Data from RCL A6 and Learner A21 confirm that learners from School A, despite having a duty to attend school on a regular basis, to adhere to the school's Code of Conduct for Learners and to do their assigned schoolwork, are not committed to their education.

RCL A6 said: *I always arrive late at school and forget to do my homework. Other learners do not do their homework, they bunk classes and not attending school.*

Learner A21 said: *I did not write my homework because the day that particular aspect was treated, I was not in class. For that matter, I did not have an idea to approach the work given to me.* In terms of the Guidelines for the Code of Conduct for Learners (*cf.* section 2.4.3), learners themselves must understand that contravening this code has consequences. The guidelines state that nothing exempts a learner from complying with the school's Code of Conduct for Learners. Learners in School A argued that although they absent themselves from school without valid reasons, coming late to school, not doing their homework, bunking classes or not attending extra classes, it is still their constitutional right to receive education. The sentiments of Learner A18 confirm the above-mentioned statement. Learner A18 commented:

*Although I absent myself from school without reasons or bunking classes, it is my constitutional right to receive education. Nobody has the right to chase me away or stop me attending classes.*

The learners tend to think that their right to education is something done to them instead of them being active participants in the process (*cf.* section 5.2.1.1).

When analysing the minutes of the SMT, the researcher discovered that there was an incident where a learner who arrived late at school was asked to go back home and to return the following day with his parents. The learner refused to obey and entered the school premises forcefully and refused to take the instructions from the principal. His argument was that it is his constitutional rights to be at school and nobody has the right to deprive him that right. The way the school handles late-coming learners can be questioned. The evidence is clear that in some instances, learners in School A transgress school rules on the basis that it is their right to education, forgetting that every right has a corresponding duty, a concomitant responsibility (*cf.* section 1.4).

#### **5.3.2.1.2 School B**

The following are transgressions that can be regarded as being indicative of learner non-commitment: malicious damage of the school property or infrastructure, absenteeism, learners not doing their homework, not studying for tests or examinations, using drugs, bunking classes, not bringing their books to school, teenage pregnancy, late coming, non-attendance of extra classes, failure to submit assignments or projects on time, stealing other learner's books, coming to school with dangerous weapons such as guns and knives, coming to school intoxicated and learners not taking responsibility for their own physical, academic and emotional well-being. School B also has a Code of Conduct for Learners which is in line with the Schools Act and the Constitution.

In the Preamble of the school's Code of Conduct for Learners, reference is made to learners' responsibilities in relation to their own education: "This Code of Conduct aims to make each learner aware of the value of self-control, order and the need to cultivate a sense of responsibility for his or her own conduct and for the larger community of which he or she is a part". The school uses the Merit Level of Misconduct. In terms of School B's Code of Conduct for Learners, "A learner will be guilty of serious misconduct if he or she intentionally and without just excuse, uses or is under the influence of alcohol or any other mind-altering substance".

A learner with illegal substances still in his or her bloodstream is considered to be under the influence of that substances. As level 3 misconduct, it can draw a written warning, suspension, referral to counsellor or a social worker. From the document analysis, it is evident that common transgressions committed by learners from School B are learners who are making life decisions that put them in harm's way and which affect their education negatively; for example, girls fall pregnant at a tender age, boys belong to gangs, learners damage and misuse school infrastructure and commit serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises. Principal B responded as follows:

*Learners at this school, although not all of them, are taking drugs, misusing school infrastructure and boys belong to gangs in spite of the many advices given to them.*

Educators GHB1 and GHB3 argued that most learners at their school are not committed to their own wellbeing, some learners fall pregnant at a tender age and some use drugs on the school premises. GHB1 commented as follows:

*Teenage pregnancy and gangs are the transgressions indicating non-commitment on the part of learners at our school. They are also damaging the school property like. breaking windows and doors in the classrooms and stealing other learners' books.*

GHB3 has this to say:

*Our learners are making life decisions that put them in harm's way and which affect their education negatively. Some of them are committing serious misconduct such as using drugs and coming to school being under the influence of alcohol.*

The TLOs' responses confirm the views of the principal and grade heads. TLO B4 said:

*Learners at this school are not focused in [sic] their studies. They are damaging school property, and some are using drugs and coming to school being under the influence of alcohol. The majority of them are not taking any advice from their educators.*



And, TLO B5 commented: *Our learners are using drugs in the school premises, some boys belong to gangs, girls fall pregnant at an early age and they don't cooperate with educators.*

It is evident that learners at this school are misinformed about their democratic rights in relation to their education. They are not aware that every right constitutes a corresponding commitment on the holder of that right. Their right to education poses a duty to learn, attend school, comply with the Code of Conduct for Learners, respect and obey educators, and respect the rights of educators and other learners. Since children are bound by the Bill of Rights, they should respect the rights of other learners and also, the right of their educators (*cf.* section 2.4.4). Using drugs, damaging the school property, coming to school intoxicated attests to the fact that learners from this school do not respect themselves, their educators, their fellow learners as well as their parents.

Participants believe that personal wellbeing is an essential element for learners' achievement. For example, DC Member B argued that some learners at the school do not take care of their personal wellbeing. According to TLO B4, the high rate of pregnancy amongst girls is one of the transgressions indicating non-commitment on their part. TLO B4 said: *They are not taking an active interest in acquiring any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS supplied by the school.* GHB2 mentioned that girl learners who fell pregnant always put the blame on peer pressure or bad company and that learners who become infected with HIV/AIDS or STIs, tend to blame other people instead of accepting responsibility for their own choices. Learners taking responsibility for their own physical, academic and emotional well-being is an essential part of them committing to the realisation of their right to education (*cf.* section 2.4.5).

While the school's Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA 1996b s8(4)) contain a provision that indicates learners' commitment, obligation or responsibilities towards their education, the responses show that in School B, in practice, the types of learner transgressions most prevalent are indicative of non-commitment. They make life decisions that puts them in harm's way and which affects their education negatively. They use drugs and alcohol on the school premises, boys wear hats and earrings that are not allowed according to the school's Code of Conduct for Learners. For example, RCL B1 commented as follows:

*Yes, I do come to school wearing my hat and my earrings because I really don't see any wrong doing in doing that. Again, I don't see how it disturb my education.*

Learner B8 expressed similar views, stating:

*The use of drugs, learners not submitting their assignment[s] or project[s] in time and learners who are not wearing the school uniform are the transgressions indicating non-commitment on the part of learners at our school.*

RCL B2 had this to say:

*Wrong choices of friends, drugs and lack of respect are indicative of non-commitment here at this school. Some learners are befriending wrong people who are exposing them to transgress some school rules (for example, boys are using Nyaope, bunking classes and not doing their schoolwork) [sic].*

It is apparent from the above-mentioned discussion that learners at School B are not taking responsibility for their education. Their unbecoming behaviour gives evidence of non-commitment, which makes it difficult for educators to ensure that teaching and learning take place. It also does not help that RCL members such as RCL B1, have the view that they can decide which rules to follow because that signifies that they will also decide which rules are worthy of enforcing and which not. Learners such as Learner B11 and B15 identified damaging of the school property, late coming and learners who disrespect their educators as transgressions that shows non-commitment. According to them, learners break school property, such as windows, chairs, doors and they also play football in the classroom. Learner B11 said: *I always come to school under the influence of drugs and that makes me to lose control. When I am under the influence of drugs, I damage the school property such as windows or burned my schoolbooks.* Learner B15 commented: *Some boys at this school are disrespecting their educators and transgressing certain school rules. They damage the school property and play football inside the classroom. As a result, some electric bulbs and the ceiling are broken.*

It is apparent that learner participants from School B are not only uncommitted but their actions make education unavailable and inaccessible not only to themselves but also other learners in the school (*cf.* section 2.3.3). Furthermore, if one considers how important role models are in promoting learner commitment (*cf.* section 2.5.3.4), the fact that the senior learners are poor role models, is worrying. If a learner burns his or her books or damages the school property, he or she limits the realisation of his or her right to education. At this school, learners' non-commitment is evident from, *inter alia*, coming late to school, disrespecting their educators, misconduct which sometimes are of a criminal nature, and making lifestyle decisions that puts them in harm's way and which affects their education negatively.

#### **5.3.2.1.3 School C**

The following are transgressions that can be regarded as being indicative of learner non-commitment: malicious damage of the school property or infrastructure, absenteeism, learners

not doing their homework, not studying for tests or examinations, using drugs, bunking classes, not bringing their books to school, teenage pregnancy, late coming, non-attendance of extra classes, failure to submit assignments or projects on time, stealing other learner's books, coming to school with dangerous weapons such as guns and knives, coming to school under the influence of alcohol and learners not taking responsibility for their own physical, academic and emotional well-being. School C has a Code of Conduct for Learners which is in line with the Schools Act and the Constitution. The school uses the Merit Level of Misconduct. In terms of their Code of Conduct for Learners, every learner is expected to attend school for the full academic year and submit a parents' note if absent from school.

Learners must complete all tasks given to them as per the assessment policy of the school and must not possess illegal drugs or alcohol on the school premises. Its Code of Conduct for Learner reads as follows:

#### School and class attendance

- Parents/guardians, learners and educators are jointly responsible for ensuring that all learners attend school and complete all tasks given to them as per assessment policy of the school.
- Absence from the school/class, without the permission of the relevant housemaster, is prohibited.
- Should any learner be absent from school for a period of three (3) days or longer, this leave of absence must be supported by a letter from a registered medical practitioner.

#### Rules Governing Public Places

- No dangerous objects or illegal drugs as defined in the Schools Act or the safety Regulations will be brought onto and/or used on the school property unless authorised by the principal for educational purposes
- The carrying and /or smoking of cigarettes is prohibited
- Alcohol is not permitted on school premises or during any school activity.

These are regarded as issues of serious misconduct and fall under Level 3 type of misconduct. The sanctions thereof are referrals to professional counsellors or social workers and suspension. From the literature study (*cf.* section 2.4), learners' rights to education constitute a responsibility to learn, attend school, obey the Code of Conduct for Learners, respect educators, obey educators and respect the rights of educators and other learners.

The right of each person also constitutes a responsibility on the rights of others, for example, the right to education poses a duty on parents to ensure their children attend school and educators to be at school, be prepared and educate to the best of their abilities and in the best interests of the learners. Records such as the incident book and learner attendance registers from School C indicated that the school has a problem of high rate of teenage pregnancy, and learners who absent themselves from school without a valid reason. From the SBST's minutes book, during the first and the second quarter of the year, six grade twelve girls, three from grade eleven, eight from grade ten and four from grade nine became pregnant and did not come back to school. Learner attendance registers as well as the SA-SAMS indicated that School C has a problem of learner attendance.

Approximately 19% of learners were absent from school during the second term. Some learners do not do their homework, and some do not come to school with their books, bunk class, use drugs and alcohol on the school premises and boys belong to gangs. The principal's response confirms the findings from the document analysis. Principal C said:

*Learner absenteeism is a serious problem at this school. Some of them are not committed to their education, they bunk classes, not submitting their projects or assignments on time. Educators complain that some of them do not even do their homework or write tasks given to them.*

Educators in School C also argue that learners' unbecoming behaviour poses a threat to their schoolwork. Their argument is that learners are not committed to their schoolwork, for example, they do not do their homework, they come to school under the influence of alcohol, use drugs, boys belong to gangs and bunk classes. GHC2 commented as follows:

*Some learners at our school are not committed to their education. They do not do their homework, are using drugs and some boys belong to gangs. They don't even care about their schoolbooks. Others will leave them at home and when asked, they will say they forget to bring them along.*

The views of other educators from the same school show that learners do not do their homework, do not come to school with their books, they do not take their education seriously and some boys belong to gangs. DC Member C indicated the following: *Learners do not do their homework. Some will always come with excuses that they forget their books at home. They don't take their education serious as some of them will come drunk [## to] school.* GHC1 stated that some boys belong to gangs and they use drugs on the school premises. RCL C1 commented as follows: *Common transgressions committed by our learners are, failure to do homework, learners who left their books at home, absenteeism and some of them are bunking classes.*

In response to the question on transgressions that are indicative of non-commitment on the part of learners, RCL C5 said: *I have a problem of sleeping late at night and that makes me to be late at school and not doing my homework in time.* Learner C17 stated: *I always woke up late and that makes me to be late at school or not attending. As a result, I am unable to do my schoolwork and submit my assignments in time.* Learner C19 mentioned: *Failure to submit assignments or projects in time and learners who absent themselves from school without reasons are the transgressions that indicate non-commitment at our school.* According to Learner C19, some learners do not attend the scheduled extra classes and some of them bunk classes. They also do not adhere to the school rules and do not take their education seriously.

From the learners' responses, it is evident that some learners do not take their education seriously and do not adhere to the school rules, as set out in the school's Code of Conduct for Learners. Learners such as Learner C13 and Learner C21 identify self-discipline and learners' wellbeing as transgressions of school rules that can be indicative of non-commitment. They mentioned that high rate of learner pregnancy and learners who are not practicing safe sex or abstinence are the transgressions indicating non-commitment at their school. In terms of the Guidelines for the Code of Conduct for Learners (*cf.* section 2.4.4), learners should play a role in developing a proper learning environment, look after school property and be present in classes. Their responsibility in relation to their own wellbeing will in particular, require self-discipline. This implies that discipline must be preserved at all times so that the education proceeds without unruly conduct and misdemeanour. In this regard, the focus of discipline should be to teach and lead learners to self-control.

#### **5.3.2.1.4 School D**

The following are transgressions that can be regarded as being indicative of learner non-commitment: malicious damage of the school property or infrastructure, absenteeism, learners not doing their homework, not studying for tests or examinations, using drugs, bunking classes, not bringing their books to school, teenage pregnancy, late coming, non-attendance of extra classes, failure to submit assignments or projects on time, stealing other learner's books, coming to school with dangerous weapons such as guns and knives), coming to school under the influence of alcohol and learners not taking responsibility for their own physical, academic and emotional well-being. School D has a Code of Conduct for Learners which is in line with the Schools Act and the Constitution. The Code of Conduct for Learners contain a provision with regard to learner commitment in realisation to their right to education. For example, the school's preamble for the Code of Conduct read thus: "Our school is committed to providing

an environment for the delivery of quality teaching and learning by promoting the rights and safety of all learners and educators and parents, ensuring learners' responsibility for their own actions and behaviours, prohibiting all forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance and eliminating disruptive and offensive conduct". School D uses a Merit Level of Misconduct. Its Code of Conduct for Learners stipulates that any disruptive, unruly or offensive behaviour is not tolerated. The School Code of Conduct for Learners reads as follows:

#### General Principle

- The basic rule is that no one may disrupt school life.
- The ethos and traditions of the school should be upheld at all times.
- Respect must be shown for the needs and interests of others.
- No learner has the right to behave in a manner that will disrupt the learning activity of other learners or will cause another learner physical or emotional harm.
- Learners are expected to abide by the school rules with regard to appearance and behaviour when representing the school both during school hours and after school hours.

These are regarded as serious misconduct and the sanctions thereof are referrals and suspensions. Data collected from the document analysis attest to the fact that some of the learners are not committed to their education, for example, they do not do their homework, absent themselves from school without reasons, leave their books at home, damage and misuse school infrastructure and commit serious misconduct such as drugs on the school premises, girls fall pregnant at a tender age and some boys belong to gangs. It was evident from the transgression book wherein all transgressions are recorded, that learners from School D do not take their education seriously. The SA-SAMS provided the information that absenteeism is a problem at this school. During term two about 13% of learners were absent from school with some not reporting the reasons for being absent. As previously stated, learners' right to education poses a duty on them to learn, attend school, comply with the Code of Conduct for Learners, respect educators, obey educators and, respect the right of educators and other learners (*cf.* section 2.4). The right of each person constitutes a duty on the rights of others; for example, the right to education constitutes a responsibility on parents to make sure that their children attend school and on educators to be at school, be prepared and educate to the best of their capabilities and in the best interests of the learners.

The literature study (*cf.* section 2.4.3) brought to the fore that school rules are designed to manage the general organisation of schools, including educator-learner relationships. It is of paramount importance that all school rules should be consistent with the Schools Act and the Constitution. A school should have provision and correctional measures in place, to ensure that the Code of Conduct for Learners is adhered to. Principal D had this to say: *Learner absenteeism, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and learners who are not doing their schoolwork is a serious challenge that indicate that they are not committed to their education.* Educators in School D are of the view that most learner transgressions show a lack of learner commitment. They agreed that learners' behaviour poses a serious threat to their education such as not doing schoolwork as is required of them. GHD1 commented as follows: *High rate of learner pregnancy, drug abuse, learners who are not committed to their education are indication[s] of their non-commitment.* GHD3 complained about learners' behaviour towards their studies:

*Learners show [a] lack of interest in their schoolwork. They don't do their homework, there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy and some of these learners use substance abuse such as drugs and alcohol.*

GHD2 stated: *[These] learners are coming to school drunk, damaging the school property and some of them are not studying for tests or examinations.* DC Member D said: *High rate of learner absenteeism, learners using drugs and learners who are not doing their homework are the transgressions that indicate non-commitment from our learners.* TLOD4 resonated the sentiments of DC Member D by saying: *Most learners at our school are absenting themselves from school without valid reasons. They bunk classes and the majority of them are not doing their homework.* The literature review (*cf.* section 2.3.3) provides that learners claim their right to education without accepting the responsibility for that right. Although they do understand their right to education, they must know that every right has a corresponding duty, a concomitant responsibility. Their own actions make education unavailable and inaccessible. Their lack of commitment is evident from, inter alia, the high incidence of absenteeism, failure to do homework, misconduct which sometimes is of a criminal nature and making lifestyle decisions that put them in harm's way and which affect their education negatively. They are not committed to their schoolwork, turn to aggressive behaviour, smoke dagga and carry dangerous weapons on the school premises.

When commenting on transgressions of school rules that could be indicative of non-commitment, Learner D9 said:

*Some learners here at our school are not taking their studies very serious. They damage the school infrastructure and some of them are using drugs. They smoke dagga and carry knives when they come to school.*

RCL D3 had this to say:

*Learner absenteeism, teenage pregnancy and learners who are not doing their schoolwork is the indicative of non-commitment at our school. Educators are always complaining about their performance in their tests or examinations. For the fact that they are not doing their homework or assignments, it is difficult for them to pass tests or examinations.*

Learners D16 said:

*High rate of pregnancy, learner who are not doing their homework and drug abuse are the indicators of non-commitment here. Their behaviour poses a serious threat on their education.*

According to Learner D16, there is no way that learners at her school can perform well in their studies because of the negative attitude towards their schoolwork. They are not dedicated to their education as some boys belong to gangs while other misuse the school infrastructure. RCL D1 and Learner D23 mentioned that a serious challenge at their school is learners who deliberately contravene the school rules. According to them most learners do not comply with the school's Code of Conduct for Learners. Learners are very rude, do not want to respect their educators and some of them carry dangerous weapons on the school premises. RCL D1 said:

*Some learners are deliberately contravening the school rules and the school Code of Conduct for Learners. They know that it is unlawful to carry dangerous weapons or use drugs on the school premises, but they deliberately carry them. The reason why they do so is because some of the boys here belong to gangs and there is always a fight between different gangs around our school.*

Learner D23 commented:

*Most learners here, especially boys, [~~they~~] come to school under the influence of dagga. For that matter, they become so rude to educators and that sometimes makes them to disrespect them [sic]. When they are asked why they did not perform certain tasks, their answer is that it is their right to be at school and nobody is allowed to administer corporal punishment to them.*

As stated before, the literature review (cf. section 2.3.3) gives much evidence that learners claim their right to education without accepting the responsibility for that right. Their own actions make education unavailable and inaccessible. Their lack of commitment is evident from, inter alia, the high incidence of absenteeism, failure to do homework, misconduct which is sometimes of a criminal nature and making lifestyle decisions that put them in harm's way



and which affect their education negatively. They are not committed to their schoolwork, turn to aggressive behaviour, smoke dagga and carry dangerous weapons on the school premises.

#### **5.3.2.1.5 Cross-case analysis**

The findings show that the transgressions of school rules that are particularly indicative of non-commitment in the four participating schools are

- learner absenteeism,
- late coming,
- bunking of classes,
- learners not doing their homework,
- drug and alcohol abuse,
- misuse of the school infrastructure,
- boys belonging to gangs, and
- teenage pregnancy.

The responses from principals and educators confirm the findings from the document analysis that the four participating schools have a serious problem of learners who are not committed to their education.

#### **5.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: Reasons for not being committed to their education**

In this section, participants were asked why learners are not committed to their education.

##### **5.3.2.2.1 School A**

Responding to the question on the reasons why learners are not committed to their education, Principal A commented:

*Most learners do not stay with their parents, and if they stay with them, they stay in the backrooms [sic]. It is evident that there is no monitoring of learners' work from home and some of them just don't like school. Again, the other reason that makes learners not to be committed to their education is that some educators go to class unprepared.*

According to the principal, if educators come into the classroom unprepared, learners misbehave, and educators started to label and criticise them in front of other learners. From the principal's sentiments, one of the reasons learners are not committed to their education is educators who are not fully prepared for the classroom.

How can educators expect learners to behave whilst they themselves do not respect their profession by not doing what they are paid to do? The literature review (*cf.* section 3.3.9.2) revealed the two disturbing facts about disciplinary problems: (1) educators generally believe that they are not only unprepared for dealing with disruptive behaviour, but that the increasing amount of disruptive behaviour substantially interferes with their teaching and (2) it is essential that only about half of all classroom time is used for instruction and that disciplinary problems occupy most of the other half. It is important to point out that addressing disciplinary problems is not the sole responsibility of the classroom educator. Effective discipline is a combination of effective management at the school level as well as effective management at the classroom level (*cf.* section 3.3.9.2). Educators at School A identified lack of parental involvement in the education of their children as resulting from child-headed families, family background and peer pressure as the main reason for most learners not committing to their education. DC Member A said:

*The reason why our learners are not committed to their education is that most of them doesn't get any support from their parents. When the school invites their parents to discuss issues concerning the behaviour or progress of their children at school, they don't show up.*

According to DC Member A, instead of attending such meetings, they will send their neighbours or children who completed their schooling the previous years to come and represent them. GHA1 indicated that some learners at their school are in child-headed families and need to look after their siblings, take care of and clean the house as well as cook. These learners are thus not committed to their education is because they are loaded with the family responsibilities that they cannot handle in conjunction to their education. It is challenging for children to be committed to their education if they themselves are acting as parents. GHA1 had this to say:

*The reason why learners are not committed to their education at our school is that some of them are child headed families who are taking care of family issues like taking care of their siblings and making sure that they prepare food for them before coming to school.*

TLO A4 commented:

*The background where these learners come from, makes it very difficult to be committed to their education. Some of them are raised by single parents who are not staying with them because of work related issues and nobody is checking their schoolwork or assisting them with homework, assignments or projects. As a result, they are not dedicating much of their time to their studies.*

From the above-mentioned data, it is evident that the reason why some learners from School A are not committed to their education is because there is no strong relationship framework

supporting them. Strong positive relationships are critical to learner commitment because learners are more likely to make a personal commitment to engage in rigorous learning when they know that educators, parents and other learners care about how well they do (cf. section 3.3.8). They are willing to continue making the investment when they are encouraged, supported, and assisted.

Positive support from their peers is equally important to learners (cf. section 3.3.8). GHA3 and TLO A5 identified peer pressure and learner motivation as a further reason for learners not being committed to their education at their school. Association amongst learners causes problems with boys belonging to gangs and drug abuse which results in them committing things that are not related to their education. GHA3 stated: *Peer pressure and learner motivation are the main reasons why our learner[s] are not committed to their education.* GHA3's statement was corroborated by TLO A5 when she said:

*The reason why learners at our school are not committed to their education is the fact that most of them are not motivated enough to do their schoolwork and they have joined bad company of people who are not encouraging them focus on their schoolwork. They have evolved a pessimistic attitude towards their studies and they are not performing well in their respective subjects.*

Learner A14 pointed out that he is the head of the family because his parents do not live with them. This means that he has to take the responsibility to ensure that he takes care of the home and his siblings. He commented that such responsibilities take much of his time which results in him being tired with little energy or time left for schoolwork.

Learner A14 said the following:

*I am not committed to my education because I had to cook for my siblings and clean the house after that I am tired, I can't do anything. Sometimes I do not understand the questions of that particular subject, hence I did not do my homework or assignment.*

One can deduce that the relationship between the learner and his educators are not based on trust and respect otherwise he would have asked for help. Not only do poor educator-learner relationships make interaction and collaboration challenging (cf. sections 2.4.2, 2.5.1), it is also a factor that prompts learners to disengage and not to be committed to their education (cf. 2.5.3.3). RCL A1 indicated that the reason why she is not committed to her education is because she cannot manage her time in a proper way. She responded as follows:

*I do not manage my time correctly and focus on things which are not school related. For example, bunking classes, watching TV till late and smoking dagga and drinking alcohol in the school premises[sic].*

The sentiments of RCL A1 were echoed by Learner A16 when she said: *I become so lazy sometimes and spend most of my time on things that are not school-related. Sometimes I don't do my schoolwork because I was not in class when that topic was treated in class.* The literature review (*cf.* section 1.7.2.4) brought to the fore that a learner's commitment is illustrated by the manner in which he or she takes up the responsibilities in relation to his or her own education.

If not, they cannot be committed to realising their right to their education without discharging their responsibilities. From the data collected at School A, it is apparent that the school requires parents' involvement to ensure commitment on the part of learners. An active relationship between parents and educators has great benefit and could be utilised to promote learner commitment. Learners' attitude towards school, classroom conduct, self-esteem and absenteeism show that they lack motivation. A motivated learner will be more inclined to participate in the formulation of their personal learning objectives and the cycle of constructive feedback. It will give direction and purpose to their behaviours, allow behaviours to persist, and lead to choices of preferred behaviours (*cf.* section 3.3.7). Before the SMT and educators assume the challenge to address the above-mentioned problems in their school and in the classroom situation, it is imperative that they consider the reasons that contribute to the non-commitment of learners so that they can take proactive steps.

#### **5.3.2.2.2 School B**

Regarding the reasons why learners are not committed to their education, Principal B pointed out:

*The reason why our learners are not committed to their education is that they are so addicted to things that are not related to their studies and for that matter, they lose focus to what is required from them. For example, some of them are disruptive, disobedient, rude and threatening to push the situation out of our control.*

Common sentiments from educator participants in School B were that lack of discipline amongst learners, child-headed families, learner absenteeism and substance abuse are the main reasons why learners at their school are not committed to their education. DC Member B commented:

*The reason why our learners are not committed to their education is the fact that they lack discipline. They don't come with their books to school and that makes teaching and learning difficult to take place in the classroom. Again, some educators are labelling them as failures who are not going to pass at the end of the year.*

According to DC Member B, labelling learners is not a good approach because it can demotivate them and they tend not to perform well in their studies. GHB3 mentioned drug abuse as one of the reasons why some learners are not committed to their education. GHB3 stated:

*We have a problem of learners who are making life decisions that put them in harm's way and which affect their education negatively. They are misusing and damaging the school infrastructure and commit serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises on the basis that they have rights, ignoring their responsibilities thereof.*

From the above-mentioned data, it is evident that some learners at this school lack discipline. The literature review (*cf.* section 3.3.4) provides that good discipline ensures that the environment is conducive for teaching and learning in a school. Good discipline can only be maintained if schools can adopt a disciplinary model that will promote learner commitment. Their low esteem or lack of motivation may be a factor contributing to non-commitment. GHB2 indicated that the burden of home or household chores is a further reason for learners not being committed. He pointed out that it is impossible for learners to be committed to their education when they are burdened with work that is not related to their education. GHB2 had this to say:

*Child-headed families is a challenge at our school. Most learners are heads of families and that makes them to lose focus on their studies. As a result, they are unable to do their homework, submit their assignments on time or prepare for tests and examinations.*

In response to the reasons why she is not committed to her education, Learner B7 pointed out that her parents' divorce was traumatic for her and she turned to drugs for solace. She said the following: *I was through a difficult time at home as my parents were divorcing so I ended up using drugs.* When responding to the reasons why she is not committed to her education, Learner B12 stated: *Family background, listening to wrong people are the main reasons why I am not committed to my studies.* The sentiments of Learner B12 was echoed in Learner B11's complaint about having to stay alone at home and having nobody to help her with her homework or assignments. She also mentioned that because she stays alone, she surrounds herself with wrong friends. Learner B11 commented as follows: *I have no one to assist me with my homework and I also surrounded myself with friends who are not committed to their education.* According to Learner B23, television and bad company take much of his time. He surrounds himself with people who use drugs on the school premises and after school, he does not do his homework or study. He said: *The reason why I am not committed to my education is because of wrong people surrounding me. We are using drugs and that doesn't give me enough*

*time to look after my education.* It is evident that these learners experience a lack of parental support and involvement and then, ironically, search the company of people and/or activities that do not have a positive influence on them and leads them astray. Not surprisingly, it came to the fore in the literature review that parents who are indifferent to their children, expose them to risk factors which increase the possibility that they will become involved in undesirable activities (*cf.* section 2.5.3.1). It seems parents' failure to lay down rules, provide structure and monitor their children's schoolwork, coupled with learners being demotivated, result in the children wasting their time talking to friends, being on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or watching television instead of doing their homework or studying for tests or examinations. Learner B14 and B23 identify social media and watching television till late as reasons why they are not committed to their education. Learner B14 mentioned that she is addicted to her cell phone and she spend much her time talking to friends, being on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Learner B14 said:

*The reason why I am not so much committed to my education is because I'm so glued to the social media and that doesn't give me time to concentrate on my education. I hardly spend time studying or doing my assignments because of my addiction to social media.*

Learner B23 also identified watching too much television as something that does not leave him with any time to do schoolwork. He said: *Television is also one of the things that takes much of my time because I watch movies until late.*

From the literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.3.1), it is apparent that parents who fail to create a space where their children can do their homework and study and who do not monitor whether their children complete their homework and prepare for tests or examinations engender a lack of commitment. A parent's interest in and encouragement of his or her child's education can affect the child's attitude towards school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism and motivation. These learners clearly lack motivation and do not see any advantage in spending their time doing their homework and preparing for tests or examinations (*cf.* section 2.5.3.6). On the continuum of autonomy (*cf.* section 2.4.2), these learners are conventional learners who lack independent learning skills and who have not started on the journey to assume responsibility for their own learning.

### **5.3.2.2.3 School C**

Data collected from School C shows that learners are not committed to their studies because they do not take their education seriously. Principal C had this to say:

*Learners have the attitude or outlook that everything should be given to them for free, and that they don't have to work for something. I think that is the main reasons why most learners are not committed to their education at this school.*

Educator participants agree with their principal that their learners have developed a negative attitude to their education. They also believe that drugs, gangs, lack of parental support and laziness, are the main reasons why some learners are not committed to their education. DC Member C said:

*The main reason why our learners are not so committed to their education is because they are using drugs even during school hours. Some of them are coming to school being under the influence of alcohol.*

GHC1 stated: *Their negative attitude towards their studies is the main reason why they are not committed to their education. They don't study for tests or exams, they don't attend school regularly and also, they befriend wrong people who exposed them to wrong things.*

Educators such as GHC2 and TLO C5 identified family background, television and social media as reasons for most of their learners not being committed to their education. GHC2 mentioned:

*The reason why our learners are not committed to their education is that the majority of them are not staying with their parents. Nobody is monitoring their schoolwork and as a result, they fail to do their homework or assignments in time.*

TLOC5 argued that time spent watching television and participating in social media are reasons for some learners not being committed to their education. TLO C5 had this to say:

*Our learners are addicted to television and some of them don't have time to study because they watch movies until late. Social media is also one of the reasons why they are not committed to their education. They spend much of their time on WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.*

In response to the reasons why she is not committed to her education, Learner C10 stated:

*Sometimes I become lazy to do my schoolwork and I don't take my education or studies very serious. The other reason is that when I am not performing well in my tests or examinations, some educators are using inappropriate language that discouraged me to study. They will always label me as a failure and that come the end of the year, I have already failed.*

RCLC1 stated: *I am always tired so when I get home I sleep. I don't take my studies serious and nobody from home encourages me to do well at school, as I am not staying with my parents.* According to Learner C13, learners who come to school under the influence of drugs and alcohol are not committed to their education. He said: *Some learners come to school being*

*under the influence of drugs and alcohol which makes them not to be committed to their studies.*

The above-mentioned statement is confirmed by RCL C6 from the same school who said:

*The reason why some of our learners are not committed to their education is that they don't take their education serious. They come to school under the influence of alcohol and some of them are using drugs (for example, marijuana or nyaope) during the school hours. What they are doing is a clear sign that they are not committed to their education.*

From the above-mentioned data, it is evident that learners at this school are not committed to their studies. Many learners are lazy and do not spend time on their schoolwork and studying, some of them do not live with their parents and some of them use alcohol and take drugs on the school premises. The Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (*cf.* 2.4.2), stipulates under paragraph 5 that learners must commit themselves to do their schoolwork during classes, complete assignments and homework and catch up on work missed because of absence. At this school (School C), they are doing the opposite to what the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learner prescribes. Some learners at this school bunk classes because they are influenced by the wrong choice of friends. They do not listen to their educators whilst in class and some are lazy. They spend much of their time sleeping in class and do not concentrate. For example, Learner C16 and Learner C24 identified laziness and befriending wrong people who expose them to wrong things that are not school related.

Learner C16 had this to say: *The reason why our learners are not committed to their education is that they are lazy to do their schoolwork and spend much of their time sleeping in the class.* In terms of the Guidelines for a Code of Conduct for Learners (*cf.* section 2.4), every learner is expected to attend school for the full academic year, on time and every day. In alignment with assessment policy, learners must complete all given tasks on time and according to the Code of Conduct for Learners, must not be in possession of illegal drugs on school premises. Their right to education poses a duty to learn, attend school, comply with the Code of Conduct for Learners, respect educators, obey educators and, respect the rights of educators and other learners.

#### **5.3.2.2.4 School D**

Responding to the reasons for learners not being committed to their education, Principal D commented:

*Parental support and child-headed families are the main reasons at this school why our learners are not committed to their education. Parents are not supporting their children's education and that exposed them to drug abuse and gangs.*



Educators at this school agreed with their principal that parental support is the main reason why their learners are not committed to their education. They believe that unlimited freedom coupled with drug and alcohol abuse, are the reasons why their learners are not committed to their education. GHD1 said:

*Parents are not supporting their children with their schoolwork. They are not signing their children's books to show that they monitor their progress, and that makes them not to put much effort to their studies because there is no one from home who motivates them to do so.*

DC Member D commented as follows:

*Our learners have too much freedom and they don't listen to us. The other reason that makes them not to be committed to their education is that they are using drugs and some of them are using those drugs on the school premises.*

Educators such as GHD2 and GHD5 identified wrong choices of friends and learners' lack of responsibility as reasons for learners not being committed to their education. They believe that learners do not take their education seriously, hence they perform badly in tests and examinations. In addition, most learners at their school befriend the wrong people who have a negative influence on their lives.

GHD2 stated:

*The main reason why our learners are not committed to their education is that they don't take their studies serious. They don't do their homework, study for tests or examination and some of them don't even submit their assignment or projects.*

The sentiments of GHD2 were echoed by TLO D5 when he said:

*Wrong choices of friends and learners who are not taking their studies very serious are the main reasons why most learners at this school are not committed to their education. They show this by joining gangs and using drugs on the school premises. Some of them are not afraid to come to school being under the influence of alcohol.*

In response to the reasons why he is not committed to his education, Learner D14 pointed out that wrong choices of friends and family background are the main reasons why he is not committed to his education. Learner D14 commented as follows: *I find it hard to attend school because I have surrounded myself with wrong people who do not encourage me to do well in my studies.* When responding to the reasons why he is not committed to his education, Learner D15 stated:

*The reason why I am not committed to my education is that I am heading the family at home because both my parents are no staying with us. For that matter, I had to take care of my siblings, making sure that I*

*prepare food for them and clean the house. To me, such a responsibility takes much of my time. After doing all that I mentioned, I am tired, and I had to sleep.*

Learner D19 said the reason why she is not committed to her studies is that she does not take her education very seriously in that she bunks classes and does not do her homework. This is what she stated: *I don't take my studies very serious and I am addicted to alcohol.* According to Learner D22, wrong choices of friends, peer pressure and alcohol and drug abuse are the reasons given for not being committed to her education. She also agreed that she does not get enough support from her parents because they do not live with her. This is what she said: *The reason why I am not committed to my education is because I have surrounded myself with wrong friends who exposed me to drugs and the peer pressure takes much of my time.*

It is evident that there is no partnership between where these children come from (home) and the school and then, ironically, substituting this with alignment with wrong people and/or activities that do not have a positive influence on them which results in poor behaviour.

Not surprisingly, it came to the fore in the literature review that the process of learner commitment requires collaborative relationships. Partnership between the home and the school plays a major role in the education of learners at school. All members of the community should have the opportunity to participate in promoting learner commitment (*cf.* section 2.5.1). It seems parents' failure to monitor their children's educational progress, to create a space where their children can do their homework and to ensure that their children complete their homework, coupled with learners being demotivated, results in them wasting their time on things that are not related to their education. For example, Learner D13 and Learner D22 identified social media and watching movies till late and Learner D13 stated that she is addicted to her cell phone and she spends much of her time talking to friends via WhatsApp until late. She commented as follows:

*The reason why I am not committed to my education is because I am so addicted to social media and that doesn't afford me time to pay much attention to my studies. I hardly spend time concentrating on my assignment or studying for tests or examinations.*

It is evident from the data collected from School D that these learners need motivating to realise the importance of spending much of their time doing their homework, studying for tests or examinations (*cf.* section 2.5.3.6). The literature review (*cf.* section 3.3.9.1) revealed that learners who are motivated to perform competently on academic tasks will learn in accordance with their academic ability and reach their potential.

#### 5.3.2.2.5 Cross-case analysis

Participants identified the following reasons for not being committed to their education:

- parents are absent
- learners do not live with their parents, which pushes them to seek support from the wrong people
- parents are uninvolved in the education of their children
- demotivated and not taking their studies seriously
- waste time with social media or watching films
- alcohol or drug abuse
- poor time management
- child-headed families and
- laziness

The responses from principals and educators confirm the abovementioned reasons in the four participating schools where learners are not committed to their education.

#### 5.3.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: Factors hampering learner commitment

In this section, the findings emerging from data collected from all participants by means of interviews, qualitative questionnaires and document analysis on factors hampering learner commitment are presented and interpreted.

##### 5.3.2.3.1 School A

Participants were asked what factors hamper learners' commitment the most at their particular school. Principal A indicated that parental support and learners who are household heads, are the main factors hampering learners' commitment. Principal A said: *Lack of parental support and learners who are household heads are the main factors hampering learners' commitment at my school.* This contention is supported by educator participants from School A. For example, GHA1 stated: *Learners have poor discipline and inadequate support from home.* According to GHA1, learners at their school have an attitude of not taking their education seriously because no one from home reprimands them when they do wrong things. For that matter they carry the same unbecoming behaviour to school. Lack of parental support is also identified by TLO A4 as hampering factor.

Lack of parental support has been identified as the main hampering factor, which is supported by the fact that 25 of the 30 learners regard it a factor that hampers their commitment the most.

There is a sizable body of literature supporting the involvement of parents in educational settings and activities. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.3.1) brought to the fore that parents who are unpredictable and indifferent expose their children to risk factors which increase the possibility that these children will be involved in criminal violent acts. On the other hand, children feel secure, perform and behave better if their parents are involved in school activities (*cf.* section 2.5.3.1).

As referred to above, the principal identified parental involvement and support, learners who are heads of child-headed households, as the main factors hampering learners' commitment. A learner who must take on the role as parent is a challenge in foreseeing a future for him or herself because they will have that responsibility for many years to come. DC Member A pointed out that he is part of the school disciplinary committee and most cases emanated from, *inter alia*, learners who are family heads. He stated: *Lack of parental care and support, coupled with child-headed families are the main factors hampering learners' commitment to their education at our school.*

Educators such as GHA3 and TLO A5 further identified the lack of motivation as a hampering factor. GHA3 had this to say: *Learners at this school have no sense of purpose towards their education. they have poor discipline and they lack motivation.* According to TLO A5, learners at their school have an attitude of not taking their education seriously. She mentioned: *Our learners have a negative attitude towards their education and that is a sign showing that they lack motivation.*

Table 28 reveals that the factor that affects learners at School A the most is that learners are unmotivated; for example, 11 of the 30 learner participants identify lack of motivation as the factor affecting their commitment the most. In response to factors hampering their commitment to education, RCL A1 pointed out that lack of parental involvement and child-headed households are the main factors hampering learners' education at their school. RCL A1 commented as follows:

*Some learners do not have enough time to do their schoolwork because nobody at home is able to assist them as most parents are not staying with their children due to work related issues.*

Learner A7 indicated that they do not get any support from their educators. He pointed out that if some of them are not performing well in their tests or examination, instead of encouraging them to do well in the next test or examination, their educators offer negative comments about their motivation and performance, which in turn demotivates them.

Learner A7 said:

*Factors hampering our education at this school are that we don't get encouragement from our educators. Instead of encouraging us, we are told that some of us are dull and we are not going to pass at the end of the year.*

According to Learner A7, a poor relationship between educators and learners, as well as educators as poor role model, hampers progress at their school. RCL A2 mentioned lack of management strategies among educators as a hampering factor. He mentioned that some educators come to class unprepared, instead they will give them lots of work to do without explaining it. According to RCL A2, they become demotivated when educators come to the classroom unprepared.

This is what he said:

*Some of our educators lack managerial strategies to handle their classes. They come to classes unprepared and gave us a lot of work which were not treated. When we complain to the principal, we are told that the SMT will look to our complaints and give us the feedback as soon as possible. The feedback will never come, instead we will be [threatened] that if we continue with our behaviour, the school will suspend us.*

From the data above, it is evident that poor relationships between educators and learners, as well as lack of management strategies among educators are factors hampering learners' education at this school. If there is no sound relationship between educators and learner, that will lead them to disrespect their educators and not recognise them as their role models which ultimately has an effect on learners' performance. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.3.3) posits that if educators treat learners with respect, learners will be more likely to co-operate with them, behave correctly and commit to their studies. By creating a personal relationship with each learner, the educator makes each learner a significant part of the learning environment and builds a sense of belonging. Learner A12 and Learner A24 identify lack of motivation as a hampering factor at their school. They pointed out that even if they have performed well in their respective subjects, they are not rewarded for good performance. For them, rewards may motivate them to achieve more or to sustain their good performance.

Learner A12 commented:

*Some of the learners at this school are not performing well [~~to~~ in] their studies. For that matter nobody (especially our educators) is willing to uplift their moral [sic] to perform better in their education. The manner in which they respond to the instructions given to them by their educators shows that their moral is so low. They don't do their homework or submit their assignments or projects in time.*

Learner A24 when he said:

*The morale of some learners at our school is so low to an extent that they come late to school, not doing their homework or studying for the test or an examination. As a result, they need someone who can motivate them or inspire them to do better in their studies.*

It is of paramount importance that learner commitment should be coupled with learner motivation. A motivated learner will always be more inclined to participate in the formulation of his or her personal learning objectives and the cycle of constructive feedback. Motivation gives direction and purpose to their behaviours, allows good behaviours to persist, and leads to choices of preferred behaviours. If motivation breaks down, the entire process may come to a complete halt (*cf.* section 3.3.7).

Table 28 below reveals factor that affect learners at School A the most is that most learners are unmotivated, that is 11 of the 30 learner participants identify lack of motivation as the factor affecting their commitment the most.

**Table 28: School A learners' perspectives on factors hampering their commitment**

Factor	Placement order					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of parental involvement	4	7	7	7	0	5
Lack of management strategies among educators	4	3	6	3	10	4
Poor relationship between educators and learners	5	11	6	4	3	1
Educators as poor role models	2	3	7	6	4	8
Unjustified school rules	3	3	2	6	9	7
Unmotivated learners	11	4	3	5	2	5

### 5.3.2.3.2 School B

When asked which factors hamper learners' commitment the most at his school, Principal B indicated that the school does not get enough support from parents. According to the principal, when parents are called to school for the unbecoming behaviour of their children, they are always on their children's side and blame educators. Learners take advantage of their parents' support and do wrong things on the basis that they will get support. Principal B commented as follows:

*Parents believe more in the rights of their children at the expense of their rights and responsibilities (for example, they are afraid to discipline their children because they are afraid that they will get arrested).*

The principal's sentiments are confirmed by educator participants from School B. They complain that parents do not attend parents' meetings, and some do not come to school even if

they are requested to do so. According to educators, most parents do not live with their children and that poses a considerable challenge towards the discipline of their children. If children do not get enough support from parents, they become unmotivated. They feel secure, perform and behave better if their parents are involved in school activities. Parental involvement leads to better classroom behaviour. A parent's interest in and encouragement of his or her child's education can affect the child's attitude towards school, classroom conduct, self-esteem, absenteeism and motivation.

Records reported in the incident book and learner attendance registers reflect cases of non-commitment on the part of learners. The said records show that School B has a problem of learners who are making life decisions that put them in harm's way and which affect their education negatively; for example, girls fall pregnant at a tender age, boys belong to gangs, learners damage and misuse school infrastructure and commit serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises. This was confirmed by the principal incident book as well as the SBST minutes that shows that police have been asked to come to the school and conduct random searches. Most learners, especially boys, were found with dagga and some of them were carrying dangerous weapon on the school premises. Children's school achievement improves when parents have high expectations for their children, encourage them with their homework and communicate with educators. Parents can be there to help and support the education of their children; for example, help with homework, monitor their children's work, guide and teach them manners how to talk with their educators and other learners.

That is why lifelong education and training are essential. It is important to inculcate in learners at an early stage that education does not end during the school going ages, but it is a lifelong process (*cf.* section 2.5.3.1). DC Member B had this to say:

*There is a very serious problem about the involvement of parents in the education of their children at this school. They do not attend sectional meetings, some of them do not come to school even if they are requested to do so. Some parents do not stay with their children and that poses a serious challenge towards the discipline of their children.*

According to DC Member B, child-headed families are the main concern at their school. GHB2 commented:

*Some learners at our school do not stay with their parents. When asked who helps them with their homework or if they getting (sic) support from their parents, most of them say no. As a result, the majority of them become unmotivated.*

As is evident in Table 29, only 12 of the 30 learner participants regarded a lack of parental support as the hampering factor. However, the fact that it is a serious concern at the school, is supported by the fact that 24 of the 30 learners regard it as one of the four main factors that hamper the commitment the most. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.2.1) affirms that if children with behavioural problems realise that their parents and the educators are collaborating to manage difficulties, they experience more consistency and feel more content. An active relationship between parents and educators has great benefits and could be utilised to promote learner commitment. Educators such as GHB1 and B4 further identified that not viewing educators as role models was identified as another hampering factor. GHB1 stated: *Our learners do not see us as their role models. The fact that they disrespect us shows that they don't regard us as their role models.* According to Educator B4 learners' negative attitude towards educators and the way they talk to their educators, show that they do not regard their educators as their role models. Responding to the factors hampering his education, Learner B13 had this to say:

*I lost my mother in 2015 and my father is not taking care of me. When I ask any support from him, he always say he doesn't have money or he is so busy that he cannot come and see me. I am staying with my uncle who is trying to assist me but sometimes he also has children to look after.*

Learner B19 indicated that he is not getting any support from his parents. According to him, they do not check his schoolwork or make sure that he attends school or not. Learner B19 commented:

*My parents are not encouraging me to perform well at school. They don't even care if I do my schoolwork or not and no one is asking me my report card, or anything related to my education.*

As mentioned above, parents can have a great impact on their children's behaviour by ensuring that they arrive on time at school, behave correctly, wear relevant school clothing, are in possession of required books and equipment and complete tasks on time. Schools need parental support to ensure commitment on the part of learners. Some learners at this school do not get enough support from their parents and that in itself hampers their education. Learner B16 and Learner B24 identified educators as poor role models as a factor hampering their education. Learners reported that they do not regard their educators as role models because of unprofessional behaviour. Learner B16 said:

*Some of educators at our school are doing things that are unprofessional. They are in relationship with other children at school and that brings shame to us in such a way that we don't regard them as role models.*



Learner B24 corroborates the contention that educators at the school are unprofessional by saying that educators at their school are in relationships with school children and some of them come to school under the influence of alcohol. Learner B24 stated:

*I don't regard some of my educators as role models because they are not acting as professionals to us. They come to school being under the influence of alcohol and some of them are having relationship[s] with school children.*

Learners learn a great deal by watching adults. The example they set as disciplinarians are the most potent force in the character formation of learners. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.3.4) brought to the fore that the collapse of moral values at personal, community and national levels is evident from the increasing number of sexual relationships between educators and learners and from the collapse of mutual respect and dedication.

The unprofessional conduct of some educators is a cause of concern at this school. Learners will not regard their educators as their role models or respect them as adults. Lack of suitable roles models could result in learners making life decisions that put them in harm's way and which affects their education negatively; for example, with girls falling pregnant at a tender age, boys belonging to gangs, learners damaging and misusing school infrastructure and committing serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises. Table 29 below, presents factor that affect learners at School B the most. Parents are not involved in the education of their children; for example, 12 of the 30 learner participants identify lack of parental involvement as the factor affecting their commitment the most.

**Table 29: School B learners' perspectives on factors hampering their commitment**

Factor	Placement order					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of parental involvement	12	2	2	8	2	3
Lack of management strategies among educators	1	5	8	5	5	6
Poor relationship between educators and learners	2	9	10	1	5	6
Educators as poor role models	9	5	4	8	3	1
Unjustified school rules	3	4	4	5	8	6
Unmotivated learners	3	7	5	3	5	7

### 5.3.2.3.3 School C

In answering the question, what are the factors hampering learner's commitment at his school, Principal C had this to say:

*The background where these children come from does not motivate them to take their education very serious. Some of them are [heading] child-headed households and as a result, that hampers their commitment to education.*

The principal commented that the school is confronted with the challenge of parental support which is needed in order for learners to be encouraged to take their education seriously. He mentioned that if parents do not support the education of their children, they expose them to risk factors which may increase the possibility that they become involved in criminal acts. According to the principal, when he calls parents to come to the school to assist him with regards to learners' disciplinary issues, most parents do not attend and a large percentage of those whom attend are not the biological parents of the learners.

He also mentioned that some learners are demotivated because there are no role models for them. This contention is supported by the responses from School C's educator participants. For example, TLO C4 commented as follows:

*Most learners here at our school are not taking their education very serious and their parents are not supporting the school to make sure that they are committed to their education. They don't do their homework, use drugs, drink alcohol and they absent themselves from school without valid reasons. They also don't show respect to their educators. As a result, learners' relationship with their educator is very poor.*

DC Member C identified the same factors:

*Some learner here at our school are demotivated. You could see when you gave them work to do. They don't show any interest even if educators are trying to explain to them how important that task is to them. They also don't study for their test[s] or exams and their parents don't sign their books regularly to confirm that they check their children's work. Their results after are shocking.*

GHC3 indicated that lack of parental support hampers learner commitment at their school. He complains that parents do not take responsibility for the education of their children. GHC3 had this to say:

*Lack of parental support is the main factor affecting learner commitment at our school. They are failing to take the responsibility for the education of their children. Most of them are not even bothering themselves to check their children's books or coming to school to enquire about their progress.*

At School C, 28 of the 30 learners regard lack of parental support as one of the factors that hamper their commitment the most. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.2.1) brought to the fore that parental involvement benefits children and parents. By becoming involved in their children's education, moms and dads get the satisfaction of contributing to their children's education and future.

They have a better understanding of the school curriculum and activities and can be more comfortable with the quality of education that their child is receiving. Educators such as DHC1 and TLOC5 further identified poor relationships between educators and learners as a hampering factor. GHC1 stated:

*The relationship between us as educators and learners is challenging. Learners are not respecting us, they don't do their homework and that brings tension between us and them [sic]. Some of them do have sexual affairs with their educators, hence they no longer respect us.*

According to TLOC5, negative attitude from educators and sometimes the level of unprofessionalism are the factors hampering learners' commitment at this school. The sentiments of the above-mentioned educators are echoed by learner participants at the school.

For example, RCL C1 indicated that the relationship between educators and some learners at the school is not good particularly as it seems that learners do not take responsibility to their studies. RCL C1 said:

*The relationship between educators and some learners at our school is very poor, and that hamper learners' commitment. Educators are complaining that some learners are not taking their education serious by not doing what is expected from them (for example, not doing their homework, bunking classes, and not coming with their books at school. Learners also complain that educators are not treating them with respect. They (educators) always tell them that they don't belong to school and that they are a group of failures who are just wasting their time to come to school.*

Learner C7 pointed out that even if some of them perform well in their respective subjects, they do not get any praise or award from the school. Furthermore, she complains that they do not get support from their educators. She said:

*What hamper our commitment at this school is that we don't get any support from our educators. We don't feel appreciated in the classroom and that lead to some of us not being committed to our education. Again, if we do well in our specific subjects, no one is praising us or awarding us for our good effort.*

From the document analysis of School C's incident book and learner attendance registers, cases of non-commitment on the part of learners are reflected. For example, they absent themselves from school without having valid reasons, they do not complete their homework, they leave their books at home, bunk classes, use drugs on the school premises and boys belong to gangs. RCL C3 and Learner C20 identified motivation as a factor hampering their education at their school. They mentioned that some learners at their school are demotivated and they have developed a negative attitude towards their education. RCL C3 commented as follows:

*Most learners at this school are demotivated and that hampers their commitment to education. For example, they are not taking their schoolwork very serious. Some of them use drugs on the school*

*premises and they also absent them from school without reporting. Their attitude towards their education shows that they need motivation or someone to uplift their morale.*

Learner C20 stated:

*Lack of motivation on the part of learners hamper their commitment to education at this school. Their unbecoming behaviour shows that they really need someone to motivate them. Most of the boys here belong to gangs and they are misusing and damaging the school infrastructure.*

It seems parental involvement in the education of their children, poor relationships between educators and learners, coupled with learners being demotivated, using drugs, not doing their homework and befriending or getting involved with the wrong people who influence them negatively influence learner commitment to their education. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.2.3) reveals that the quality of the educator-learner relationship influences learners' academic achievement, behaviour, motivation and desire to learn. By creating a personal relationship with each learner, the educator makes each learner a significant part of the learning environment and builds a sense of belonging. Learners are likely to co-operate with educators if they consistently communicate in an assertive rather than a hostile or passive manner. If learners feel secure in the classroom, they are more prone to becoming active and engaged and be committed to their schoolwork.

Educators have to be role models, motivate learners to do their work, guide them, build their character, win their confidence so that they become involved in their work. But that can be done only if educators are positive and display a positive attitude towards learners. This means that learners become positively motivated if educators are positive towards them. School managers must ensure that learners are motivated to learn and behave appropriately (*cf.* section 2.5.3.6). In addition, they should adopt a behaviouristic model whereby desirable behaviour is reinforced while undesirable behaviour is ignored. Furthermore, school managers should use some form of reward like merit or some form of approval as that will reinforce behaviour. Table 30 below, presents factor that affect learners at School C the most. Parents are not involved in the education of their children, is identified by 15 of the 30 learner participants as the factor affecting their commitment the most.

**Table 30: School C learners’ perspectives on factors hampering their commitment**

Factor	Placement order					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of parental involvement	15	7	4	2	2	0
Lack of management strategies among educators	1	6	11	2	8	2
Poor relationship between educators and learners	10	4	5	5	5	1
Educators as poor role models	1	4	4	5	4	12
Unjustified school rules	4	2	6	6	6	6
Unmotivated learners	4	6	0	6	5	9

**5.3.2.3.4 School D**

In responding to the question on the factors that hamper learners’ commitment at his school, Principal D said: *Child-headed families, absenteeism, drug abuse and gangs in the school premises are the main factors hampering learner commitment at this school.*

She indicated that she received too many misconduct cases from staff members due to non-commitment of learners. She also mentioned that the cause of this behaviour could be the background of the learners. According to her, most learners at her school do not live with their parents and this aspect makes it difficult to manage the learners. The responses of School D’s educator participants echoed the sentiments of their principal. For example, DC Member D had this to say:

*Parents are not checking their children’s books to show support to them and their educators. Only 14% of them put their signature on their children’s books to show that they have checked them.*

TLO D4 states:

*10% of the parents are involved in their children’s education. Some of them do not even [bother] themselves to come to meetings where the future of their children is going to be discussed. When the school call urgent meetings for the unbecoming behaviour of their children, they don’t show up. Most parents who attend are the ones whom their children are doing well in their studies.*

GHD3 agrees that a lack of parental support and unmotivated learners are factors hampering learner commitment at their school. As is evident in Table 31, 18 of the 30 learner participants regarded a lack of parental support as the main hampering factor. The fact that lack of parental support is a serious hampering factor at this school, 26 of the 30 learners regard it as one of the four hampering factors that hamper their commitment the most. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.1) states that learner commitment is a variable state of being that is influenced by a range of internal and external factors including the perceived value or relevance of the learning

and the presence of opportunities for learners to experience appropriately pitched challenges and success in their learning. It is also a multi-faceted construct that encompasses learners' sense of belonging and connectedness to their school, educators and peers, their sense of agency, self-efficacy and orientation to achieve within their classrooms and in their broader extra-curricular endeavours, their involvement, effort, levels of concentration and interest in subjects and learning in general.

Before school managers assume the challenge of maintaining learner commitment in schools and in the classroom situation, it is imperative that they consider the factors that contribute to the non-commitment of learners as that will assist them in taking proactive measures to curb non-commitment on the part of learners. Educators need parents' support to ensure commitment on the part of learners. Children's school achievement improves when parents have high expectations for their children, when they are assisted with their homework, and when there is communication with educators and volunteers at the school.

Furthermore, parents can have a great impact on their children's behaviour by ensuring that they arrive at school on time, behave correctly, wear relevant school clothing, are in possession of required books and equipment and complete tasks on time. An active relationship between parents and educators is of great benefit and could be utilised to promote learner commitment (*cf.* section 2.5.2.1). In the case of School D, the SMT together with the staff must promote parents' involvement regarding their children's education. When children see their parents involved in school, they understand that their education is important.

When parents are involved in schools, they have a more realistic picture of their children's everyday life in the classroom. Educators such as GHD1 and TLO D5 further indicated a lack of motivation amongst learners as a hampering factor. GHD1 commented as follows:

*Lack of motivation amongst learners is the main factor hampering learners' commitment at our school. Their lack of commitment to their studies and the way they attended extra classes show that they lack motivation.*

According to TLO D5, it is evident from their tests or assignments that learners at their school lack motivation. TLO D5 complained that some of the learners perform below par in their tests and they do not submit their assignments on time. The document analysis attests to the fact that learners at this school are not committed to their schoolwork. School D experiences the following problems that can be linked to learners' non-commitment: learner absenteeism, learners not doing their homework, learners not bringing their schoolbooks to school, damaging and misusing school infrastructure and serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school

premises. When learners are not motivated, they are easily influenced by external factors such as using drugs, belonging to gangs or committing serious misconduct that could lead them to criminal offences.

Responding to factors hampering her commitment to education, RCL D1 commented: *Lack of parental support and staying alone without someone assisting me with my schoolwork are the most [serious] factors hampering my commitment to education.* RCL D2 said:

*Peer pressure and child headed families are the factors hampering learners to be committed to their education at this school. Some of our learners are head of families and they don't get enough time to do their schoolwork, hence their performance is so bad in their respective subjects.*

Learner D13 and Learner D19 identified lack of motivation as a hampering factor. They agree that most learners at the school are demotivated because nobody inspires them to perform better in their studies. Learner D13 had this to say:

*Some of learners are not motivated enough to do good in their studies and their poor performance leads them to commit serious crimes that may take their lives (for example, boys using drugs and drinking alcohol on the school premises).*

Learners D19 pointed out that late coming, learner absenteeism and learners not doing their homework is a sign that most of them do not see any necessity to come to school. According to her, they are demotivated and they need someone to motivate them so that they can take their education seriously. Learner D19 commented as follows:

*The factor hampering my commitment to education is that I don't have passion anymore to go to school. I am always late to school, not doing my homework and sometimes don't feel [like] going to school.*

The sentiments of the above-mentioned learners were echoed by Learner D23 when he said:

*The most factor hampering my commitment to education is that I lack motivation. I lost my parents last year and since that time, I don't see the reason why I must attend school. I tried to let it go, but I can't because they were my source of hope and the fact that both of them are no more, makes me to feel unwanted.*

Table 31 below, reveals that it is apparent that the factor affecting learners at School D the most is the fact that most is that learners are unmotivated, for example, 10 of the 30 learner participants identify lack of motivation as the factor affecting their commitment the most as well as a poor relationship between educators and themselves.

**Table 31: School D learners’ perspectives on factors hampering their commitment**

Factor	Placement order					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lack of parental involvement	9	6	5	6	1	3
Lack of management strategies among educators	1	2	3	5	4	15
Poor relationship between educators and learners	3	8	10	3	4	2
Educators as poor role models	0	6	4	8	7	5
Unjustified school rules	3	2	5	7	5	8
Unmotivated learners	10	7	1	3	5	4

The document analysis attests to the fact that learners at this school are not committed to their schoolwork. School D experiences the following problems that can be linked to learners’ non-commitment: learner absenteeism, learners not doing their homework, learners not bringing their schoolbooks, damaging and misusing school infrastructure and committing serious misconduct such as using drugs on the school premises. Data collected at this school, shows that a clear and articulated management strategies to promote learner commitment are needed. The literature review (*cf.* section 2.5.3.2) provides that management strategies are central to effective teaching and learning. The literature (*cf.* 2.5.3.2) reveals that most disciplinary measures that are corrective and nurturing are more conducive to promoting learner commitment than reactive, punitive and humiliating punishment. In order to promote learner commitment, emphasis must be placed on building a sense of belonging amongst learners *inter alia* by involving learners in classroom activities and treating them as people who are capable of thinking for themselves (*cf.* section 3.3). The responsibility to develop programmes that will actively focus on promoting learners’ relationships with all relevant stakeholders, falls on all SMTs and educators in terms of SIAS. They must build relationships with learners, their peers, their families, the school and their parents.

### 5.3.2.3.5 Cross-case analysis

Findings revealed that lack of parental involvement, unmotivated learners, educators failing to act as role models and poor relationships between educators and learners are the main factors hampering learner commitment in the four participating schools. Non-commitment is evident when learners do not attain the task set for them by educators. Learners in these schools are inattentive, covertly disruptive, disobedient, rude and threatening to push the situation out of the educator’s control. Principals and educators complain that a lack of parental involvement is the main factor that prompts learners not to be committed to their education.



The low level of attendance at parent meetings where the behaviour of learners is discussed, may leave the children with the impression that education is not very important.

Minutes and attendance registers shows that at School A, not more than 18% of parents are involved in their children's education. School B recorded only 25% of parents who attend parent meetings. The situation is much better at Schools C and D respectively. At School C, 46% of parents accepted to the invitation while at School D 52% of parents attended parent meetings. It was established that most parents at School A do not live with their children hence they are unable to attend meetings or support principals and educators with regard to learners who violate school rules. School B has a different story. According to the minutes, School B gave the parent invitation letters for the meetings to the learners but some learners did not give their parents the invites, hence only 25% of parents attended the meetings.

Minutes also showed that School C has the majority of learners who are orphans and some are from child-headed families. For that matter, nobody can represent them at school when they misbehave or when the principal wants to talk with their parents. School D's parents did get invites in time but most of them just ignore such invitations without rendering any apology. Instead, learners take advantage of the situation. When they are asked to come to school with their parents, they just ask their friends or neighbours to accompany them.

School A and D has a problem of learners who are unmotivated. Their attitude towards their schoolwork shows that they really need motivation to uplift their morale. School B's learners do not have role models at their school. The findings show that they do not regard their educators as role models while School C shows a poor relationship between educators and learners. In some cases, it was discovered that educators do not treat their learners with respect and in turn, learners do not respect their educators.

### **5.3.3 Theme 3: Management of Learner Commitment**

The theme "Management of learner non-commitment" emerged as participants expressed how they manage learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education and strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education and this was supported by the following sub-themes: Indicators of learner non-commitment and management strategies. In this section, the researcher presents and analyses data collected from Schools A to D by means of document analysis, interviews and qualitative questionnaires.

### **5.3.3.1: Sub-theme 3.1 Management strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education**

Management strategies are defined as a general direction set for the company and its various components to achieve a desired state in the future (*cf.* section 1.2.6). It is all about identification and description of the strategies that managers can implement to achieve better performance and a competitive advantage for the organisation. In this section, participants were asked which strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education. Data to fulfil this objective were extracted by means of document analysis, interviews and questionnaires.

#### **5.3.3.1.1 School A**

Participants understood their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education. Principal A said the following:

*We have policies in place and both the SMT and educators are doing their utmost best to adopt, comply and implement them. The following policies and committees are in place: disciplinary policy, Learner Code of Conduct and the assessment policy. We also have the disciplinary committee, RCL and School Based Support Team) (SBST) committees.*

The principal mentioned that in order to maintain order and discipline at his school, the functionality of the above- mentioned policies and committees is key. According to the principal, although learners at their school are recognised as partners and members of the school population, some of them make it difficult for the school to recognise them as such. They absent themselves from school without reason, use drugs on the school premises, do not complete their homework and some do not come to school with their books. He also accepts that although the strategies are in place to promote learners' commitment to their education, the intervention strategy is still a challenge as some parents do not come to the school when they are needed.

The principal also mentioned that his school has established a support structure in order to promote learners' commitment to their education but they struggle to get parents involved in the education of their children. According to him, parental support is a challenge at his school even though they are working towards a culture of learning at their school for promoting learner commitment to their education. These sentiments are corroborated by educator participants from School A. For example, GHA3 commented:

*The school has set up committees and policies that deals specifically with promoting learner commitment. Committees such as School Based Support Team (SBST), QLTC, TLOs, disciplinary committee, RCL is functional and policies such as Code of Conduct for Learners are in place.*

According to GHA3, in cases where a learner has transgressed the Code of Conduct for Learners, necessary steps are taken such as disciplinary hearings. A merit level system is used, and each case is treated according to its merit. GHA1 has this to say:

*We have a comprehensive year plan that includes activities promoting learners' commitment to their education (for example, Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) meetings where stakeholders visit the school to discuss matters concerning learner discipline and performance, monitoring of extra classes and weekend classes, and promoting the extra mural activities such as sport.*

DC Member A indicted that measures are in place to encourage their learners to take responsibility for their own learning. He mentioned that they do have an organogram, whereby learners' grievances are communicated through the right channels. The RCL is the mouthpiece of learners at the school and they are part of the School Governing Body (SGB). He also indicated that school rules, classroom rules and the school Code of Conduct for Learners are in place for encouraging learners to take responsibility for their education. DC Member A had this to say:

*As part of the strategy, we have measures in place to encourage our learners to take responsibility for their own education. For example, some members of the RCL are part of the School Governing Body and they are given tasks to perform during school hours (that is, assisting educators with gate control in the morning and during break time, submitting period registers to their class educators for curbing bunking of classes).*

The purpose of school regulations and rules is to ensure that schools are safe and peaceful environments where teaching and learning can take place. This implies that discipline must always be maintained so that the education of learners proceeds without disruptive behaviour. The literature study (*cf.* section 2.4.3) provides that a governing body of a public school must adopt a Code of Conduct for Learners, in addition to a code for parents and educators of the school. Codes of Conduct for Learners must contain a provision that indicates learners' commitment, obligation or responsibilities towards their education. From the document analysis, the researcher established that School A has a Code of Conduct for Learners that is functional and in line with the Schools Act and the Constitution. Different committees are functional and regularly hold meetings. Furthermore, documents analysed show that the primary task of each committee and the reason why they are important, are clearly articulated. The following committees and their functions have been established in School A: Disciplinary

committee, TLOs, Representative Council for Learners, School Based Support Team and Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (cf. section 1.8.7). As previously mentioned, the principal identified a culture of learning as one of the strategies they have established to promote learners' commitment to their education. TLO A4 pointed out that: *Our school has put in place a support structure in order to promote learners' commitment.* The literature review (cf. section 3.3.8) provides that strong positive relationships are critical to the education process. This relationship framework first helps educators to understand that strong positive relationships are critical to the education process and creating a sense of belonging all of which are essential for learner commitment. Educators such as A2 and Educator A5 identified a strong positive relationship framework as one of the strategies to promote learner commitment.

For school managers to manage learner commitment effectively, emphasis must be placed on building a sense of belonging amongst learners (cf. section 3.3.1.1). In terms of SIAS, the responsibility to develop programmes that will actively focus on promoting learners' relationships with relevant stakeholders, falls on all school managers and educators. A clearly articulated pastoral care system is key for consistency of learner management. The SMT together with educators must build relationships with learners, their peers, their families, their school and their parents in order to promote learner commitment to their education (cf. section 3.3.9). If not, the possibilities are that they will fail dismally in their quest to manage learner commitment effectively.

#### **5.3.3.1.2 School B**

In response to what strategies are currently employed to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education, Principal B indicated that at his school, policies were developed consistent with the Schools Act and the Constitution, and committees are in place to promote learners' commitment to their education. According to him, the school has also implemented universal precautionary measures to ensure HIV/AIDS prevention. Principal B commented as follows:

*The school does have policies that management can use to promote learner commitment. The following policies were developed: Code of Conduct for Learners which outline the expected conduct of learners and disciplinary policy. Committees such as SBST, Sports, culture and disciplinary committee are in place.*

From the document analysis, it is evident that the school has put strategies in place to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education and committees have been established to implement those policies.

Departmental documents such as Personal Administrative Measures (PAM) and the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) are fully utilised in dealing with various leadership styles to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education. Minutes shows that these committees held meetings as per their plan and important issues such as learner discipline, absenteeism, learners' wellbeing, learner motivation are thoroughly discussed. Principal B pointed out that it is imperative to establish such committees and developed those policies as this assists him in managing the school properly. The principal pointed out that support is in place for learners so that they are motivated to take responsibility for their education by being committed to reaching their full potential. He indicated that they often invite ex-learners who are successful in life to come and motivate their learners.

With regard to learners' wellbeing, the principal stated: *The school invites nurses to talk about health issues, eating [disorders], prevention of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.* Principal B mentioned that those nurses also touch [on] issues such as safe sex, danger of early pregnancy and the results of unsafe sex. The school practises universal precautionary measures to promote learner commitment. According to him, this is done by involving all stakeholders in education to motivate and implement awareness programmes. Members of the disciplinary committee, TLOs and the SMT were trained by the principal, following the guidelines from the district office. To curb non-commitment on the part of learners, educators such as GHB2 and TLO B4 identify motivation as a strategy to encourage learners to be committed to their education. They mentioned that professional motivational speakers are invited to school for motivating learners to do well in their studies. For example, GHB2 commented as follows: *As a strategy, motivational speakers are invited to our school to motivate learners to attend school, to be committed to their education, to be punctual at school and in classes, and to do their homework.* The sentiments of GHB2 are echoed by TLO B4. TLO B4 said:

*We normally invite[\*] motivational speakers to encourage our learners in matters such as how to be committed to their education, practicing the universal precautionary measures concerning HIV/AIDS and practice abstinence or safe sex.*

Data collected from Principal B attests to the fact that strategies are in place to promote learners' commitment to their education. Educators in School B corroborate with their principal that strategies are in place to promote learners' commitment to their education at their school with committees being appointed and policies in place. They acknowledge that with systems in place facilitate the work of institutions such as a school to work effectively.

They also believe that constant feedback, making learners accountable for their work and motivational talks are the best ways of promoting learners' commitment to their education. TLO B5 had this to say:

*The school has drawn policies and committees that will make sure that learner commitment is promoted. Class educators uses class registers to check learner absenteeism. Constant feedback is given to learners and performance awards are given to learners who did well in their specific subjects. This is done to motivate them to work even harder. Again, TLOs train the RCL members about their rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education.*

This indicates that the school is functional and that learners are afforded the privilege to enjoy their rights to education as stipulated by the Schools Act and the Constitution.

DC Member B commented as follows:

*The school is using unconventional ways of teaching such as extra classes and motivational talks are organised during the beginning of each term. Different methods of teaching are used in class to make learners to enjoy the subject and the school make learners to account for their own work.*

In addition, GHB1 indicated that the SBST plays a key role in making sure that learners who experience barriers in learning are taken care of, which is in line with the SIAS policy. The only challenge the principal pointed out was the strategy on how to bring stakeholders, especially the parents on board. He mentioned that they are still struggling with the intervention strategy on how to ensure that all parents of learners at his school are involved in the education of their children. GHB1 argued that even though some of them do support the school in matters involving learners' behaviour, the majority of them do not attend meetings even if they are invited to school. GHB1 said:

*Concerning parental support, we are still faced with a challenge of parents who are not supporting their children with schoolwork and parents who don't attend parental meetings where the behaviour of their children is discussed.*

The literature review (*cf.* section 3.3.7) reveals that learner motivation is a process that includes specific directive and stimulating properties. A motivated learner is more inclined to participate in the formulation of their personal learning objectives and the cycle of constructive feedback. It gives direction and purpose to their behaviours. Educators generally believe that learners who are motivated to perform competently on academic tasks will learn in accordance with their academic abilities. Using the data collected from School B, it is evident that when commitment is coupled with motivation, it produces positive results. Strong positive relationships are critical to the education process.

Relationships and creating a sense of belonging are essential for learner commitment. It is of paramount importance that schools should create a supportive relationship framework. Learners are more likely to make a personal commitment to engage in rigorous learning when they know educators, parents and other learners care about how well they do (*cf.* section 3.3.8).

#### **5.3.3.1.3 School C**

All participants understand their managerial roles to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

Principal C said:

*We have developed and implemented policies that will promote learners' commitment in our school. A disciplinary model that assists us to maintain discipline amongst learners, is in place. What is again important is that our policies are in line with the Schools Acts and the Constitution and we make sure that we adhere to the above-mentioned documents.*

According to the principal, the school makes use of learners' accountability as a strategy to promote learner commitment. He also pointed out that his school supports learners in promoting their commitment to education. Assistance from social workers, psychologists and motivational speakers are the kind of support the school makes available to and arrange for learners in order to promote their commitment to education. The principal's sentiments were supported by the evidence from the document analysis from School C.

The school has a year plan that includes activities promoting learners' commitment to their education. For example, there is evidence in School C that a motivational speaker was invited during the first week of September 2019 and her recommendations were captured in the school logbook. To promote learners' wellbeing, the principal said that they teach all their learners about life skills and invite professional nurses to the school to talk about health issues while local pastors are also invited to provide spiritual upliftment. For practising the universal precautionary measures, the school developed a HIV/AIDS awareness campaign and it is communicated to learners every Friday. Each Friday the school also invite experts to address learners with issues, for example, life skills, health issues, spiritual upliftment, HIV/AIDS awareness, that could promote their commitment to education.

The only problem that the principal mentioned was the intervention strategy to promote parental involvement in the education of their children. Thus, the school is faced with a challenge on how to bring parents on board regarding the education of their children.

According to the principal, grade heads, members of the disciplinary committee and the TLOs are trained by officials from the Free State Department of Education to promote learners' commitment to their education and topics covered include alternatives to corporal punishment, the role of the RCL in schools, classroom management techniques, how to deal with vulnerable learners and safety in schools. However, he also stated that very little training is provided for educators who work with orphaned learners. The principal's sentiments are confirmed by educator participants from School C.

For example, GHC1 commented as follows:

*At our school we have policies and committees that promote learner commitment. In making learners to feel encouraged, we organised motivational sessions in every first week of the term and those sessions are held by professional motivational speakers.*

Learner accountability, motivation and promoting the wellbeing of learners are the strategies used by School C to promote learner commitment. As referred to above, GHC3 reported the implementation of awareness campaigns as a strategy used by their school to promote learner commitment. GHC3 said:

*Our school has developed an awareness campaign for HIV/AIDS whereby we communicate to learners about issues such as teenage pregnancy, unprotected sex and STIs. We do this by inviting professional people from the Health Department to perform this task and it helps a lot.*

Educators such as GHC2 and TLO C5 further identified the importance of policies and committees in promoting learner commitment. The School Based Support Team (SBST) committee is very important as it assists the school in identifying learners with barriers. TLO C5 said:

*The school has different committees such as the SBST to promote learner commitment. In this committee we are able to have a one-on-one talk to learners with barriers and that assist us to identify their problems so as to solve them amicably.*

Data collected from School C indicates that good strategies are in place such as making learners accountable by developing a culture of learning to promote learner commitment (*cf.* section 3.3.6). Learner accountability is the willingness to accept responsibility for one's action. A learner has a right to education and a responsibility in relation to that right in order to ensure the fulfilment of that right (*cf.* section 3.3.6). Accepting accountability, for example, being accountable for own actions in relation to that right, goes hand in hand with claiming a right. By teaching a learner to be accountable to his or her education creates his or her success or failure by his or her own actions and management of his or her thoughts.



The principal together with his SMT, has a role to play in ensuring that they promote learner commitment as well as accountability as this may assist learners in accepting responsibility for their own actions. The literature review (*cf.* section 3.3.6) revealed that learner accountability is the willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions. A learner has a right to education and a responsibility in relation to that right in order to ensure the fulfilment of that right. It is also the SMT's responsibility to ensure that learners are aware that accepting responsibility, that is being accountable for their own actions in relation to that right, goes hand in hand with claiming a right. A learner creates his or her success or failure by his or her own actions and the management of his or her thoughts. For promoting a culture of learning at School C, a well formulated vision and mission is communicated to learners every Friday by making sure that everyone knows and believes in it. The literature review (*cf.* section 3.3.5) provides that all stakeholders are involved in the formulation of the vision and mission, so that they are able to accept ownership thereof. Encouraging learners to exercise and develop their mental skills and attitudes are central to the nurturing of a culture of learning because relationships and caring attitudes are critical elements of a learning schools' culture which implies that a culture of learning is built on an infrastructure of discipline and rules. In the absence thereof, a culture of learning for all intents and purposes, would fail to exist.

#### **5.3.3.1.4 School D**

The data revealed that all participants understand their managerial role in promoting learners' commitment in the realisation of their right to education. Principal D commented as follows:

*The school does have policies and committees that management is using to promote learner commitment. We also believe that good leadership with appropriate leadership style is one of the best strategies to promote learners' commitment.*

The document analysis confirms the principal's sentiments that School D has a Code of Conduct for Learners which is aligned to the Schools Act and the Constitution. According to the principal, the only problem was that not all learners in the school have copies of their school's Code of Conduct for Learners. When asked during the visit, the principal indicated that they do not have enough funds to make copies of the Code to distribute to each learner. From this conversation, the researcher established that the main reason for some learners behaving as they do is because they have not read and understood the school's Code of Conduct for Learners. The question here is: how can learners be expected to behave well or abide by the school Code of Conduct for Learners if they do not have copies for such a Code? It is the task of the SMT and educators to put in place models or strategies that will promote learner

commitment at their school. The principal mentioned the disciplinary committee members and the TLOs are trained at the district level by Circuit Managers and District Officials on: Roles and Responsibilities of the RCL. The school management invites psychologists, motivational speakers and parents to come to school and talk to learners about the value of education in their lives.

In the case of learners who do not show any commitment to their education, the principal said he calls the learner and has a one-on-one talk with him or her to find out what the problem is and how best he can assist. In promoting the wellbeing of learners at his school, Principal D pointed out that pastoral care is practised at the school and this is done by inviting stakeholders such as nurses, police officials and local pastors to encourage and advise their learners about relevant issues that concern them. According to him, the school constantly invites parents and health people to talk to learners about abstinence or safe sex. The school also practises the universal precautionary measures to encourage learners to accept responsibility for their own wellbeing. The principal also said they normally invite all stakeholders in education and other relevant sectors to come and do awareness campaigns on issues such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse.

This contention is supported by educator participants from School D. For example, TLO D5 stated: *Our school has a very good leadership with appropriate leadership style to manage learner commitment.* If the school can maintain good leadership and make use of the appropriate leadership style, disciplinary problems could be a thing of the past. GHD2 has this to say:

*We have developed classroom management models to assist educators and the SMT in adopting counter measures against misbehaving learners at our school. This model stresses the value of a proactive approach whereby learners form part of the solution because the focus is on self-control.*

GHD3 further identified screening and learner profiles as one of the strategies used by the school to promote learner commitment to their education. The literature study (*cf.* section 3.3) provides that the responsibility for developing programmes that will actively focus on promoting learners' relationships with all relevant stakeholders, falls on all educators in terms of the SIAS. GHD3 mentioned that when they admit learners from the feeder school, they request their profiles in order to screen them. Screening assists the school in identifying, assessing and providing programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation in school: *The school uses screening and learner profiles as a strategy to promote their commitment to education.* GHD1 stresses the fact that screening and compiling

learner profiles are done to identify, *inter alia*, learners who are anxious, unsettled and disengaged. Educators such as TLO D4 and DC Member D further agreed that policies are in place and committees have been established to promote learner commitment. They also pointed out that good strategies are in place even though some learners do not adhere to them.

TLOD4 commented as follows:

*We have good policies as well as committees that promote learners' commitment here at our school. We also held parents' meetings whereby we talk [about] learners' behaviour and academic matters. Motivational speakers are also invited [at] school to motivate learners to do well in their studies.*

DC Member D confirmed that the school has good policies and committees to implement them.

This is what he said:

*There are good policies in place and well-functioning committees at school to promote learners' commitment to their education. Furthermore, each and every educator had to motivate his or her learners in class and citing good examples to them. To motivate learners will encourage them to excel in their studies and make them to see life in a different way. We also emphasise accountability as one of the strategies to promote their commitment to education.*

As stated before, learner accountability is the willingness to accept responsibility for one's action. A learner has a right to education and a responsibility in relation to that right in order to ensure the fulfilment of that right (*cf.* section 3.3.5). Accepting accountability, for example, being accountable for our own actions in relation to that right, goes hand in hand with claiming a right. The researcher is of the view that by teaching a learner to be accountable to his or her education creates his or her success or failure by his or her own actions and management of his or her thoughts. There is a clear link between the good practices from School D and the above-mentioned statement by the principal. The principal has a role to play in ensuring that she promotes learner commitment as well as accountability as this may assist learners in accepting responsibility for their own actions.

#### **5.3.3.1.5 Cross case analysis**

The findings showed that participating schools do have strategies in place for promoting learner commitment. Records showed that policies are in place and committees have been established to ensure that those policies are implemented. The four participating schools have supportive relationship frameworks to promote learner commitment with for example, the SIAS policy being implemented. Principals have trained members of the disciplinary committee, Grade Heads and TLOs and followed the guidelines from the District Office. Class educators uses class registers to check learner absenteeism.

Schools give constant feedback and performance awards to learners who perform well in their respective subjects. Different methods of teaching are used in class to ensure that learners to enjoy their subjects and schools are making learners account for their own actions. Schools also practise the universal precaution measures to promote learner commitment such as awareness campaigns where professional nurses are invited to schools to communicate to learners about issues concerning HIV/AIDS and other health issues, and motivational speakers are invited to motivate learners to take responsibility for their education.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the analysed data with the findings were presented and interpreted. These research findings (*cf.* section 5.1) were formulated from data extracted by means of a one-on-one interview with principals, qualitative questionnaire with grade heads, members of the disciplinary committee and the TLOs. Data which were collected from this study, enabled the researcher to fulfil the objective of this research. It gave a perception on how management strategies to promote learners' commitment to their education were executed at the participating schools. This data also discloses that there are factors hampering learners in becoming committed to their education. A summary of the study, synopsis of the findings per case, conclusions, learner commitment management strategies, suggestions for future research, assumptions, summary of the research and chapter conclusion are contained in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a summary of the study, synthesise the findings and make recommendations. As part of summarising, the researcher restates the research questions and objectives of the study, presents the synopsis of the findings and conclusions in relation to the research question and sub-questions. The chapter concludes with recommendations related to solving the research problem and suggestions for further research. In the next sub-section, the researcher deals with the summary of the study.

#### 6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

In Chapter 1, the research questions were presented and the objectives that guide the study were developed. The main research question was: *How can management in selected secondary schools promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to an education.*

To answer the aforementioned question, the following sub-questions were formulated:

- What are learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to the realisation of their right to education in terms of law and policy?
- What are learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and reasons for not being committed to their own education?
- What are the factors hampering learners' commitment at the participating schools?
- Which strategies are school managers and educators currently employing to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education?
- Which strategies will enable school managers and educators to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education?

Objectives to this study were:

- To ascertain learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy.

- To establish learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and the reasons for not being committed to their own education.
- To determine the factors hampering learners' commitment at the participating schools.
- To discover the strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.
- To develop management strategies that will enable school managers and educators to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education.

To successfully answer the first sub-question and achieve the first objective, the researcher conducted a structured literature study on learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to the realisation of their right to education in terms of law and policy. To answer the second sub-question and achieve the second objective, the researcher conducted a study by means of qualitative questionnaires administered to learners in the four selected schools. This provided data that were used to ascertain learners' perspectives on their rights and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education and reasons for not being committed to their own education. To answer the third sub-question and achieve the third objective, the researcher conducted intensive interviews with principals, document analysis and concluded by administering qualitative questionnaires to educators. The above-mentioned data collection methods provided the researcher with the insight to identify factors which relate to learners not being committed to their education.

To answer the fourth research sub-question and achieve the fourth objective, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with principals, document analysis and this was concluded with the administering of qualitative questionnaires to educators. The above-mentioned data collection methods provided the researcher with the insight to discover strategies that school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment for the realisation of their right to education. Objective five was achieved through the recommendations formulated to address the research problem. A distinctive learners' commitment management strategy, customised to the needs of the school, was developed for each of the participating schools to manage learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education. The research methods used for this study were most appropriate as this was apparent from various aspects, namely, earnest involvement of the researcher and the participants, establishment of trust, openness and honesty between the participants and the researcher, and the development of management strategies to promote learner commitment in the selected schools.

The researcher developed strategies taking into account the identified sources of non-commitment amongst learners, which are real and original, and which gave effect to the roles and functions of the SMT and educators, as prescribed by law. The respective strategies developed for the four selected schools contributed to the existing body of knowledge in this particular field and could benefit the Free State Provincial Department of Education and in particular the selected schools, as the findings were made available to them. The researcher evaluated the reasons why learners were not committed to their education and used these to inform the management strategies developed for the selected schools. Before finalising the strategies, the researcher collaborated with the principals to ensure the strategies have practical value to the relevant schools and that each principal has a buy-in to adopting the strategies developed for his or her school.

### **6.3 SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

The following section discusses the summary of the findings from the literature study and the case studies of each of the participating school.

#### **6.3.1 Summary of the findings from the literature study**

From the literature study, it is evident that children are legal subjects with both rights and duties. However, they are minors, who do not have the right to autonomy because they are not autonomous. Educators, as officials of state organs are bound to the constitutional mandate to observe and promote learners' rights (*cf.* section 2.2.1, 2.3.1). Learners under the age of 18-years of age have, as children, special rights guaranteed in section 28 of the Constitution. One of these rights is the right to have their best interests (also those in relation to the realisation of their right to education) protected (*cf.* section 2.2.2). How learners' rights and their duties in relation to the realisation of such are interpreted, depends on the theory one supports. Those that believe children should be protected at all cost, will also believe that the content of children's rights should be decided by adults such as their parents and educators. Children are regarded as vulnerable and in need of protection. The supporters of the so called 'kiddie libbers', on the other hand, claim that the protective approach impairs children's status and dignity and that children's rights should not be subjected to adults' biases, preferences and interests of adults. The balanced theory of children's evolving capacities seems to provide the best framework to understand children's rights and duties in relation to their right to education. In terms of the evolving capacities theory, children have the right to free education in a safe space, the right to receive education in the language of their choice, the right to receive

textbooks and all teaching materials relevant to their subjects (*cf.* section 2.3.2). In as far as their responsibilities, it is their responsibility to attend school, to learn, to abide by the school rules, to behave well and to accept responsibility for their personal wellbeing (*cf.* section 2.4).

### **6.3.2 Summary of the findings from the case studies**

The following section articulates the synopsis of the findings for each school and the cross-case findings.

#### **6.3.2.1 Synopsis of the findings for School A**

The findings indicated that:

- Learner participants in School A have a good knowledge of their rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education. Rights and responsibilities identified are in line with those identified by means of the literature study of law and policy. They identified the right to free education in a safe environment, the right to be taught in the language of their choice, the right to receive textbooks and all teaching materials relevant to their different subjects (*cf.* section 5.3.1.1.1).
- The participating learners from School A are aware that their right to education places concomitant duties such as to attend school, to learn, to study for tests and examinations, to abide by the school rules, to behave well and to accept responsibility for their personal wellbeing on them.
- The learners' awareness of their responsibilities in relation to their right to education unfortunately does not translate into them fulfilling them.
- Misconduct that indicates non-commitment, which is prevalent in School A, includes a high rate of learner absenteeism, learners who are not doing their homework, learners who are bunking classes and learners not bringing their books to school (*cf.* section 5.3.2.1.1).
- Child-headed households, time management, drug abuse, excessive use of social media and laziness are the reasons learners in School A gave for not being committed to their education (*cf.* section 5.3.2.3.1).
- The main factors preventing learners at School A from being committed to their education are parental indifference to the education of their children, being household heads, lack of parental care, involvement and support, negative attitude towards their education, educators as poor role models as they tend to be unprepared and



unsupportive educators, a poor relationship between educators and learners and a lack of motivation (*cf.* section 5.3.2.3.1).

- Strategies are in place to promote learners' commitment to their education. Policies have been developed and committees have been put in place to implement them. Supporting structure such as the SBST and QLTC are in place to promote learners' commitment. The SBST assists the school through the implementation of SIAS. Where a learner has misbehaved, necessary steps are taken such as disciplinary hearings. A merit level system is used, and each case is treated according to its merit (*cf.* section 5.3.3.1.1).

### **6.3.2.2 Synopsis of the findings for School B**

The findings indicated that:

- Learner participants in School B are familiar with the rights guaranteed in the constitutional right to education and detailed in education specific law and policy, such as the right to free education in a safe environment, right to be taught in the language of their choice, right to receive textbooks and all teaching materials relevant to their different subjects (*cf.* section 5.3.1.1.2).
- Although learner participants in School B are also well-versed on the corresponding responsibilities inherent in their right to education, they do not take these responsibilities seriously. The responsibilities, as identified by the learners, include attending school, learning, abiding by the school rules, behaving well and accepting responsibility for their personal wellbeing.
- Learners at this school tend to make life decisions that put them in harm's way and which negatively affect their commitment to their education; for example, they take drugs, girls fall pregnant at tender age, they misuse the school infrastructure and boys belong to gangs (*cf.* section 5.3.2.1.2).
- Misconduct that indicates non-commitment, which is prevalent at School B, consists of drug abuse, girls falling pregnant at a tender age, misuse of the school infrastructure and boys belonging to gangs (*cf.* section 5.3.2.1.2).
- Family background, choosing the wrong friends, lack of parental support and excessive use of social media and watching too much television are the main reasons why learners at this school are not committed to their education (*cf.* section 5.3.2.3.2).

- Lack of parental involvement and support, being household heads, educators as poor role models and poor relationship between educators and learners are the main factors hampering learners' commitment to their education (*cf.* section 5.3.2.3.2).
- Strategies have been put in place to promote learners' commitment to their education. For example, policies have been developed in congruence with the Schools Act and the Constitution, and committees have been created to promote learners' commitment to their education. The school has also implemented universal precautionary measures to ensure HIV/AIDS prevention. In as far as learners' wellbeing, the school invites nurses to talk about health issues, eating disorders, prevention of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS (*cf.* section 5.3.3.1.2).

### **6.3.2.3 Synopsis of the findings for School C**

The findings indicated that:

- Learner participants at School C identified the following as rights protected by their constitutional right to education such as the right to free education in a safe environment, the right to be taught in the language of their choice, the right to receive textbooks and all teaching materials relevant to their different subjects (*cf.* section 5.3.1.1.3). These rights correspond with those provided for in specific educational law and policy (*cf.* Chapter 2).
- Learner participants from School C acknowledged that they have responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education. They pinpointed their responsibilities in attending school, learning, abiding by the school rules, behaving well and accepting responsibility for their personal wellbeing (*cf.* section 5.3.1.1.3).
- Misconduct that indicates non-commitment which is prevalent in School C consists of teenage pregnancy, absenteeism, learners not doing their homework, learners not coming to school with their books, bunking of classes, drugs and alcohol abuse and boys belonging to gangs.
- The following are the reasons why most of learners at School B are not committed to their education include factors such as being in child-headed families, drug abuse, boys belonging to gangs, laziness and excessive use of social media (*cf.* section 5.3.2.2.3).
- Lack of parental involvement and support, being household heads, lack of motivation amongst learners, poor relationship between educators and learners are the main factors

hampering learners' commitment to their education at this school. (*cf.* section 5.3.2.3.3).

- Strategies are in place to promote learners' commitment to their education; for example, learner accountability is used as a strategy to promote learners' commitment to their education. The school has developed a disciplinary model that assists in maintaining discipline amongst learners. Motivational speakers are invited to motivate learners to take their education seriously. To promote learners' wellbeing, the school teaches all their learners about life skills and invites professional nurses to talk about health issues while local pastors are also invited to provide spiritual upliftment. For practicing the universal precautionary measures, the school has developed a HIV/AIDS awareness campaign and it is communicated to learners every Friday (*cf.* section 5.3.3.1.3).

#### **6.3.2.4 Synopsis of the findings for School D**

The findings indicated that:

- Learner participants at School D understand their constitutional rights to education and ignore their responsibilities thereof (*cf.* section 5.3.1.1.4).
- Learners know their rights to education in terms of law and policy that means the right to free education in a safe environment, right to be taught in the language of their choice, right to receive textbooks and all teaching materials relevant to their different subjects (*cf.* section 5.3.1.1.4); however, they ignore the responsibilities thereof. The responsibilities include attending school, learning, abiding by the school rules, behaving well and accepting responsibility for their personal wellbeing.
- Misconduct that indicates that learners are not committed to the realisation of their right to education prevalent in School D include learners not doing their homework, absenting themselves from school without valid reasons, leaving their books at home, damaging and misusing school infrastructure, drug abuse, girls falling pregnant at a tender age and boys belonging to gangs.
- Girls falling pregnant at a tender age and boys belonging to gangs are the main reasons why learners are not committed to their education at this school (*cf.* section 5.3.2.1.4).
- Lack of motivation, being household heads, lack of parental involvement and support are the main factors hampering learners' commitment to their education at this school (*cf.* section 5.3.2.3.4).

- Strategies have been put in place to promote learners' commitment to their education. School D has policies and committees that management use to promote learner commitment. The school has the Code of Conduct for Learners aligned to the Schools Act and the Constitution. Disciplinary committee members and the TLOs are trained at the district level by Circuit Managers and District Officials on roles and responsibilities of the RCL. Psychologists, motivational speakers and parents are invited to come to the school and talk to learners about the value of education in their lives. Pastoral care is practised at the school and this is done by inviting stakeholders such as nurses, police officials and local pastors to encourage and advise learners about relevant issues that concern them. The school also practices the universal precautionary measures to encourage learners to accept responsibility for their own wellbeing. Stakeholders in education and other relevant sectors are also invited to run awareness campaigns on issues like HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse (*cf.* section 5.3.3.1.4).

#### **6.3.2.5 Cross-case findings**

The findings indicated that:

- Learner participants in the four selected schools understand their constitutional rights to education such as the right to free education in a free environment, the right to be taught in the language of their choice, the right to receive textbooks and all teaching materials relevant to their different subjects but ignore the responsibilities thereof.
- The responsibilities include attending school, learning, abiding by the school rules, behaving well and accepting responsibility for their personal wellbeing.
- Absenteeism, late coming, failure to do their homework, bunking of classes, boys belonging to gangs and teenage pregnancy are the indicators of non-commitment in the four selected schools.
- Lack of parental involvement, unmotivated learners, educators as poor role models and poor relationship between educators and learners are the main factors hampering learner commitment in the selected schools.
- Child-headed households, poor time management, drug abuse, misuse of social media and laziness are the main reasons for most learners not being committed to their education in the four selected schools.
- Most of the parents are not actively involved and do not attend meetings when they are invited by schools to solve issues pertaining their children's education.

- Strategies are in place for the four participating schools. For example, the Code of Conduct for Learners is in place, and policies and committees to promote learner commitment are also in place. Participating schools also practise the universal precautionary measures to encourage learners to accept responsibility for their own wellbeing. Stakeholders and other relevant sectors are invited to the four participating schools to run awareness campaign on issues like HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy and drug abuse. Psychologists, motivational speakers and pastors are also invited to talk to learners about the importance of education and how they should behave.

#### **6.4 CONCLUSIONS**

The rights guaranteed by the right to education include available schools, trained educators and teaching material, access to education, acceptable teaching content and methods and education that is adaptable in terms of learners' needs, language and culture. Learner participants of all the participating schools are well aware that their right to education affords them the right to do as they wish, disregarding the outcome of their actions and the fact that rights are limited. They agreed that they have responsibilities in relation to their right to education. Responsibilities identified by the learner participants correspond with the responsibilities in terms of law and policy, namely, to attend school, to learn by completing their homework and studying for tests and examinations, abiding by the school rules, behaving well and being responsible for their personal wellbeing. However, a closer look revealed that this evident clarity regarding their rights and responsibilities is successive. In all four participating schools, the forms of learner misconduct which are most prevalent, give a clear indication of non-commitment and a failure to acknowledge the importance of the right to education as a facilitative right, essential to the realisation of all other socio-economic rights. Such include absenteeism, not doing their homework, not studying for tests or examinations. Though they are knowledgeable of their rights, they show minimal responsibility to meet their tasks. Learners' interpretation of their right to education illustrates an overemphasis of the interests guaranteed by this right and a lack of appreciation and acceptance of the duties inherent to this right. The learner participants only regard themselves as right holders and fail to acknowledge their duties and responsibilities with regard to the realisation of their right to education. That learners have knowledge of their responsibilities does not necessarily translate into commitment, and is particularly evident from some of the reasons that learners proffered for why they are not committed to their education such as laziness, poor time management, drug abuse and misuse of social media.

It became evident that it is not possible to make a clear-cut distinction between misconduct which is an indicator of non-commitment, the reasons learners gave for not being committed and the factors that hamper commitment. For example, indicators such as not taking care of their own well-being by being promiscuous, joining a gang or getting hooked on drugs can become reasons for non-commitment.

A girl who falls pregnant or has a child, a boy who is a gang member or a learner who hooked on drugs are faced with many pressures which are outside their control and which affect their commitment to their education negatively. Similarly, some learners mentioned that a reason for non-commitment is that they are heads of child-headed households which affect their commitment to their energy levels but also the time they have available to attend to their schoolwork. Because of the unfavourable effect on the learner's education, being household heads also constitute a factor hampering the child's commitment. Even where households are headed by parents, most of the parents are unsupportive, preoccupied and not involved in the education of their children. To make matters worse, learners do not have positive relationships with their educators and the unprofessional conduct of some educators causes learners not to regard them as good role models. The learners thus neither get the support they need to be able to commit to their education at home nor at school and a vicious process ensues where the children then search for attention and support from undesirable people and/or become involved in gangs and with drugs activities which then reduces their commitment to their education even further. Neither the reasons nor the factors mentioned above promote motivated learners, which is essential for learner commitment.

Current strategies employed by the participating schools include developing policies, putting committees in place to implement and monitor learners' commitment to their education, creating supportive relationship frameworks through the implementation of SIAS, implementing the universal precautionary measures, and inviting motivational speakers to motivate learners to take responsibility for their education. However, considering the presence of indicators of non-commitment and the fact that learners feel unsupported, demotivated and excluded, means that the effectiveness of these strategies should be questioned.

In the next section, the researcher formulates recommendations before presenting the customised management strategies for promoting learner commitment developed for each of the schools.

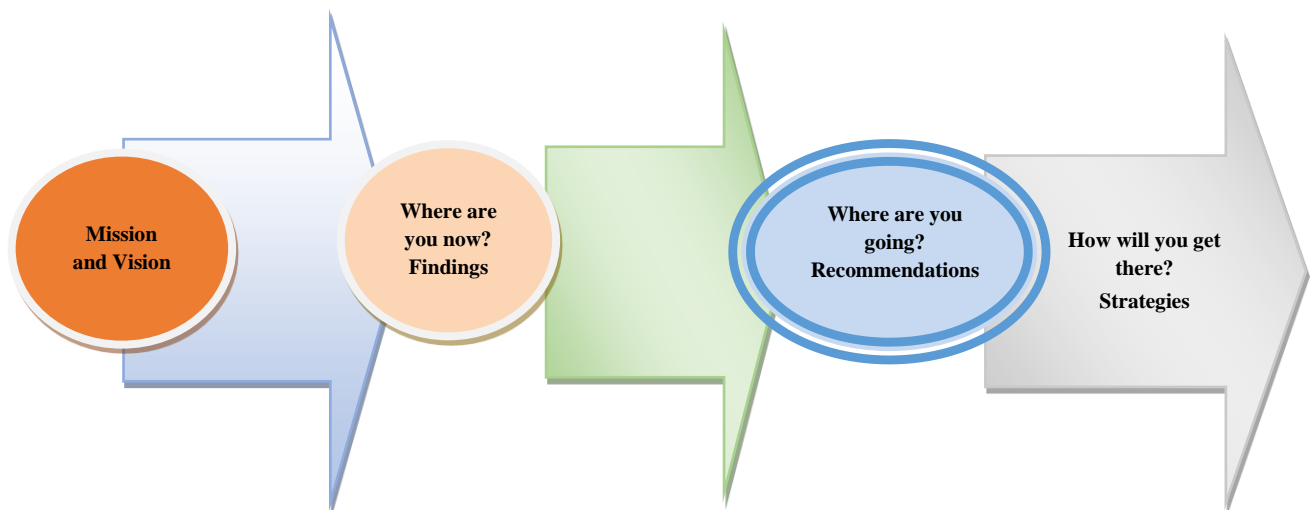
## 6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above-mentioned findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made with particular reference to solving the research problem. The recommendations presented relate to strategies that would ensure that learners' commitment in relation to their education, is promoted in the selected schools.

The researcher developed learner commitment strategies that are tailor-made for each school. The strategies are related to the sources of non-commitment present in each participating school.

### 6.5.1 Learner commitment management strategies

From the start, the researcher realised that adopting a learner commitment strategy could help schools to solve many problems. For example, managing problems related to (1) misconduct such as absenteeism, bunking of classes, gangs, not doing homework, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, which indicates non-commitment, (2) the reasons why learners are not committed such as, poor time management, drug abuse, misuse of social media, child-headed households and laziness, and (3) factors that hamper learner-commitment. Figure 9 below illustrates the guide that was used in developing management strategies to promote learner commitment for the four schools.



Source: Developed by researcher (M.M. Mabea)

**Figure 9: Guide used to develop management strategies to promote learner commitment**

### **Generic guidelines for all 4 schools**

- 1 Consider whether the Mission and Vision of the school sufficiently emphasise the importance of learners' own commitment to the realisation of their right to education. If not, formulate a Mission and Vision that place some emphasis on learner commitment / responsibilities. See examples below:

**Mission:** School A will strive to create responsible learners who are committed to the realisation of their right to education

**Vision:** A school with a learning culture where committed learners could experience a sense of belonging and be motivated to become the best that they can be

- 2 Add the promotion of learner commitment as a development goal. See example below:

**Development goal:** To promote learner commitment

- 3 Conduct a SWOT analysis: Consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to promoting learner commitment (see strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats which ensued from this study in Tables 32 to 35). Considering the literature review on management strategies to promote learner commitment as well as the data, I suggest schools focus on the following when doing a SWOT analysis:
  - School policies – how do the school policies address learner commitment?
  - Leadership approach and leadership style – do the principal's and SMT's leadership approach and style support the promotion of learner commitment?
  - Behavioural – does the school promote positive discipline? Which forms of misconduct that are indicative of non-commitment are prevalent in the school? How does the school address those?
  - Cognitive – does the school have enough, qualified, professional educators? What does the school do to create a culture of learning? Are the educators' teaching styles conducive to promoting learner involvement and participation?
  - Psychological – what does the school do to ensure a supportive relationship framework with school, family, peers and community? Is the SIAS policy fully implemented and its goals fulfilled? How does the school ensure and encourage parental involvement?
  - School and classroom rules – were learners involved in creating and developing the school and classroom rules?



- Educator professional conduct – what are the schools doing to ensure educators act in accordance with the SACE Code of Professional Ethics? What does the school do when an educator acts in an unbecoming, unprofessional manner?
  - Educator-learner relationship – what does the school do to foster strong educator-learner relationships?
  - Learner profiles – are learner profiles duly completed and up to date? Are learner profiles considered at the beginning of each year and the necessary processes followed to ensure barriers to realising a learner’s right to education are addressed?
  - Support systems – what does the school do to put support systems in place or to access existing support systems?
  - Motivation – What does the school do to motivate learners and to impress upon them the importance of an education?
  - Learner self-control and accountability – what does the school do to guide learners towards self-discipline and accepting responsibility for their own education? How does the school hold learners who fail to fulfil their responsibilities accountable?
  - Learners must adopt an intense commitment style – what does the school do to ensure learners understand both their rights and duties in relation to their right to education? What does the school do to support learners to develop self-discipline, accept responsibility for own well-being and develop time management skills?
- 4 Consider the recommendations on what can be done with regard to weaknesses, opportunities and threats - see recommendations in Tables 32 to 35.
- 5 Develop strategies to implement recommendations - see suggested strategies in Tables 32 to 35.

#### **6.5.1.1 Management strategy for School A**

Table 32 presents a strategy for managing learner commitment in School A and follows the guide in 6.5.1.

**Table 32: Learner commitment management strategy for School A**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p><b>Learners’ rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy and their perspectives on those rights and responsibilities.</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Motivational and information sessions are organised during which learners are reminded that they are not only right-holders but also duty holders with regard to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.1)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> The perception that learners have rights, ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.1)</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners the opportunity to enjoy their right to education as stipulated by the Schools Act and the Constitution (<i>cf.</i> section 5.2.3.1a).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Misconceptions amongst learners about their right to education ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.1).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a learning culture.</li> <li>• The school management must ensure that learners are informed of both their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and sustain learning, where a learning environment, learning culture or learning climate is well informed and where learning to learn is essential for everyone involved.</li> <li>• Make learners aware of their legal responsibilities by including learners’ rights and responsibilities as a cross-curricular theme or by developing a pledge for learners to take.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transgressions that are indicative of non-commitment</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> The SMT and educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners’ commitment in relation to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> 5.3.2.1.1)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Not taking learners as partners and members of the school population (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.1).</p>	<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledging learners as partners and members of the school population.</li> <li>• Minimizing disciplinary behaviour/ unbecoming behaviour amongst learners – focusing on transgressions, which are indicative of non-commitment.</li> <li>• Educators should not act in an unflattering manner if they are constantly under attack or they should not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school.</li> <li>• Develop a democratic classroom where a democratic educator will assist learners to acquire self-discipline and self-motivation.</li> <li>• Develop a language that appropriately fits situations and feelings, finding alternatives to negative disciplinary measures, preventing oneself from judging learner’s character.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b> To place the obligation on learners to attend school, do their homework, not absenting themselves from school without reasons and respecting their educators as well as other learners (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.1).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Unbecoming behaviour escalating into conflict (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.1).</p>	<p>lose their tempers, offend others, opt for name calling, be rude, cruel or irritational.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School A should focus on the responsibilities which their learners fail to meet (for example, failing to attend school or not doing their homework).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refrain from using the “You” message instead of the “I” message.</li> <li>• Make it a point to praise and acknowledge learners when they do something correctly, both in private and in front of their peers. Learners who do not have a lot of confidence tend to focus on only the negative aspects of what they are doing.</li> <li>• Maintain discipline at all times so that the education of learners proceeds without troublesome behaviour and offences.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to learners not attending the school:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class educators having a look at the Learners’ Profiles who are regularly absent to check whether there are barriers present that hamper the learners’ attendance and to then address the problem if possible or refer the matter to get the learner the necessary support.</li> <li>• The principal to call a staff meeting where educators can discuss the more common barriers to school attendance and decide on generic solutions. Perhaps it could be a transport problem and then the principal can take it up with the Department.</li> <li>• Create an inclusive school context. Here, educators should define clear minimal level for behaviour, enforce those levels consistently, deal with children who disobey in a sensitive way, create opportunities to listen to all children and develop a ‘scaffolded’ approach to learning.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<p><u>Strategies with regard to learners not doing their homework, studying for test or examination:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach learners about time management.</li> <li>• Address responsible use of social media and watching television.</li> <li>• Arrange a community member that have turned his or her life around to talk to the learners about choosing people to mix with that would improve their life for the better.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to learners not looking after their own well-being:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gang and related problems – ban everything connected to gang community including weapons, violence, illegal activity and gang-identified clothing. Share information on gang activity with other administrators and authority and initiate community gang interference programs. Reduce the time between classes and discourage lingering. Emphasise self-esteem. Many of these learners do not have self-esteem.</li> <li>• Learners being sexually promiscuous and resultant pregnancy – Perceive all rules aimed at preventing behaviour which may generate a danger of HIV/AIDS. Take operational interest in obtaining counselling on any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Make use of health care, guidance and support services offered by community service organisation. Invite professional nurses to school where they will make learners, especially girls, about</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<p>the danger of unprotected sex and the importance of abstaining. Make learners aware of sex-related diseases such as STIs and HIV/AIDS. Raise cognisance with regard to the importance of the universal precautionary measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drug abuse - Invite professionals from the Health Department and the South African Police Service to do awareness on substance and drug abuse amongst young people or learners. Assign RCL members to report learners who are using drugs or gangs to their TLOs. Make use of Adopt a cop to minimise drug abuse and gangs around the school premises. Adopt a cop is a police officer who is assigned for a specific school in dealing with crime related issues at that particular school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Factors hampering learners’ commitment at the school</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> There are existing practices to involve parents such as parent meetings, parents being informed and invited when learners face serious disciplinary action (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.1)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Parents do not attend meetings and do not come to school when invited (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.1).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Parental involvement will have a great influence on their children’s behaviour by ensuring that they arrive on time at school, behave correctly, wear relevant clothing, are in possession of required books and equipment and complete tasks on time (<i>cf.</i> section</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>The school should address the following factors hampering learners’ commitment in the school such as lack of parental involvement and support, lack of motivation, poor relationship between educators and learners). This can be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging parents to be involved in the education of their children.</li> <li>• finding ways to involve parents or guardians in school activities and learners’ schooling.</li> <li>• adopting a behaviouristic model whereby sensible behaviour is reinforced while unacceptable behaviour is ignored.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Come up with the activities through which parents could be involved in the education of their children. Such activities could include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information-giving activities, such as newsletters, where parents receive information passively.</li> <li>• Information-sharing activities, such as educator-parent conference, where information is shared between parents and educators.</li> <li>• Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to implement specific goals, objectives or educational activities.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p>5.3.2..3.1). Information on parents' experience, interests, etc is available in learner profiles.</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Child headed households (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.1).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementing some form of award like merit or some form of acceptance should be put into place to reinforce good behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration in the school community, where parents serve as volunteers or tutors, or prepare instructional materials.</li> <li>• Parent education, in which efforts are made to increase parents' knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Parent leadership, policy and advocacy efforts.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies to reduce negative impact of child headed households:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange in-service training or information sessions for educators on SIAS and their responsibilities in regard to that.</li> <li>• Identify learners and put them in contact with the SBST, which should also involve community support services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies on the lack of motivation amongst learners</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional motivational speakers to be continuously invited at the school to motivate learners in taking responsibility for their own learning.</li> </ul> <p><u>Create a supportive relationship framework to promote learner commitment based on the following principles:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Openness or transparency where each one is able to risk being honest with the other one.</li> <li>• Caring where each knows that he or she is valued by the other one.</li> <li>• Separateness. This will allow each to develop his or her uniqueness, creativity and individuality.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual meeting of needs, so that neither's needs are met at the expense of the others.</li> </ul> <p><u>Create a sense of belonging amongst learners so as to take their education seriously by:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritising high-quality educator-learner relationships.</li> <li>• Being sensitive to learners' needs and emotions.</li> <li>• Creating a supportive and caring learning environment.</li> <li>• Making introductions immediately and get started on the right foot.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies on poor relationship between educators and learners</u></p> <p>Come up with activities through which learners could feel that they belong to their class. Such activities must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing their learners' names. Educators must get a list of their learners' names with pictures before the first class and memorise their names.</li> <li>• Greet each learner. Educators could stand outside the door, greet each learner and say their name while shaking their hands. They could even come up with a fun way to make it more personal by creating their own special handshake that they want learners to memorize.</li> <li>• Create Outside-Inside. Educators could have each learner create a drawing or mirroring of themselves. Learners could be asked to write on the left side what</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<p>people see and know about them. On the right side, they could be asked to write what they believe about themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage voice. Educators must invite their learners to deliberate together what they believe is their Bill of Rights and Rules for the classroom. Learners could also be asked to come up with their own handshake to teach their educators. Educators must also encourage their learners to be open to voice concerns, so they can learn from mistakes instead of feeling like a failure.</li> <li>• Provide journals. Educators must give learners a journal, so they can reflect on their feelings, how they learn or have trouble learning, and how they interact with others in class. Educators must make sure that their learners know the journals are for them only and it is up to them if they want to share them with anyone.</li> <li>• Schedule meeting times. Educators should invite each learner to schedule time on the calendar for them to meet one-on-one with each of them to reflect on their Outside Inside, and, if the learners are willing to share their journals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> SMT and educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMT and educators come up with intervention techniques to promote learners’ commitment in relation to their right to education.</li> <li>• The school should adapt leadership theories to promote learner commitment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use learner self-management to promote learner commitment. Positive behaviour is designed to bring learner behaviour under educator control, it thus constitutes a method of reducing inappropriate learner behaviour and increasing appropriate behaviour.</li> </ul>



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p>learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.1).</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Intervention strategy is a challenge to promote learners' commitment to their education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.1)</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners to enjoy their stay at school and to perform better in their studies (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.1).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Unbecoming behaviour escalating into conflict (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.2.1).</p>		<p><u>Adapt a leadership theory that will promote learner commitment in relation to their right to education. Such theory must include (<i>cf.</i> section 3.3.1):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom management theory. In this theory, the A-B-C model is ideal to analyse learner behaviour and inform classroom management interventions.</li> <li>• The human relations theory. The specific characteristic of this type of theory is that learner commitment will be supported when there are good relationships between educators and learners.</li> <li>• Behavioural scientific theory. In this theory, attention would be given to the specific behaviour that learners show and not the reason why they demonstrate these behaviours.</li> <li>• Non-directive intervention theories. The theory will equip both the SMT and educators to assist learners to take on more responsibility for themselves, as well as assisting them to evolve greater control over their own behaviour.</li> <li>• Van Niekerk's leadership theory. Educators as leaders, are responsible to influence the situation under which leadership is provided by creating an environment within which the learners can learn to the best of their ability and takes actions to empower the learners to develop adequately.</li> <li>• Make learners aware or know precisely what is expected from them and they should then be intentionally guided to achieve that.</li> </ul>

### 6.5.1.2 Management strategy for School B

Table 33 presents a strategy for managing learner commitment in School B as directed by the findings from the data.

**Table 33: Learner commitment management strategy for School B**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will we get there? (Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners)</b></p>
<p><b>Learners’ rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy and their perspectives on those rights and responsibilities.</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Motivational and information sessions are organised during which learners are reminded that they are not only right-holders but also duty holders with regard to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.2)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> The perception that learners have rights, ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.2).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners the opportunity to enjoy their right to education as stipulated by the Schools Act and the Constitution (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.2).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Misconceptions amongst learners about their right to education ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.2).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a learning culture.</li> <li>• The school management must ensure that learners are knowledgeable of both their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education.</li> </ul>	<p>Support and sustain learning, where a learning environment, learning culture or learning climate is well informed and where learning to learn is essential for everyone involved.</p> <p><u>Make learners aware of their legal responsibilities by:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• including learners’ rights and responsibilities as a cross-curricular theme</li> <li>• by developing a pledge for learners to take.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transgressions that are indicative of non-commitment</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners’ commitment in relation to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.2)</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking learners as partners and members of the school population.</li> <li>• Minimising disciplinary behaviour/unbecoming behaviour amongst learners - focusing on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school. Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will we get there? (Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners)</b></p>
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Not taking learners as partners and members of the school population (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.2).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> To place the obligation on learners to attend school, do their homework, not absenting themselves from school without reasons and respecting their educators as well as other learners (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.2).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Unbecoming behaviour escalating into conflict (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.2).</p>	<p>transgressions which are indicative of non-commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators should not act in an unflattering manner if they are constantly under attack or they should not misplace their tempers, offend others, opt for name calling, be discourteous, cruel or irritational.</li> <li>• School B should focus on the responsibilities which their learners fail to meet, for example, taking drugs, girls falling pregnant at tender age, misusing the school infrastructure and boys belonging to gangs).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a democratic classroom where a democratic educator will assist learners to acquire self-discipline and self-motivation.</li> <li>• Develop a tranquil language that appropriately fits situations and feelings, finding alternatives to negative disciplinary measures, preventing oneself from judging learner’s character.</li> <li>– Refrain from using the “You” message instead of the “I” message.</li> <li>• Make it a point to praise and acknowledge learners when they do something correctly, both in private and in front of their peers. Learners who don’t have a lot of confidence tend to focus on only the negative aspects of what they are doing.</li> <li>• Maintain discipline at all times so that the education of learners proceeds without troublesome behaviour and offences.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies in regard to girls falling pregnant at a tender age:</u></p> <p>Perceive all rules aimed at preventing conduct which may create a risk of HIV/AIDS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take operational interest in obtaining any information or knowledge on HIV/AIDS.</li> <li>• Make use of health care, guidance and support services offered by community service organisation.</li> <li>• Invite professional nurses to school where they will make learners, especially girls, about the danger of unprotected sex and the importance of abstaining.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will we get there? (Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners)</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make learners aware of sex-related diseases such as STIs and HIV/AIDS</li> <li>• Raise cognisance with regard to the importance of the universal protective measures.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to the misuse of the school infrastructure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interact with the local Police Department. Most police departments will gladly work with the school to protect the school infrastructure. For an example, the principal can call to request regular patrol during the evening and nights when the school property is unoccupied.</li> <li>• Set up video surveillance monitoring system inside and outside the school premises. Installing a video surveillance system will assist to protect the school infrastructure.</li> <li>• Install an alarm system. A professional grade alarm system will create an invisible barrier of protection around the school.</li> <li>• Connect with the community. The community can play a key role in protecting the school infrastructure. The community can also report to the principal about who is responsible for misusing the school infrastructure during the afternoons or weekend where the majority of people are not at school.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to boys belonging to gangs and those who are using drugs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite professionals from the Health Department and the South African Police Service to do awareness on</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will we get there? (Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners)</b></p>
		<p>substance and drug abuse amongst young people or learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign RCL members to report learners who are using drugs or gangs to their TLOs.</li> <li>• Make use of Adopt a cop to minimise drug abuse and gangs around the school premises.</li> <li>• Involve all the stakeholders such as SBST and QLTC, to curb gangs and drug abuse on the school premises.</li> <li>• Invite Professional Motivational speakers and former prisoners who has spent long sentences in jail due to drugs or gangs to motivate learners to abstain from associating to gangs or using drugs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Factors hampering learners’ commitment at the school</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> There are existing practices to involve parents such as parent meetings, parents being informed and invited when learners face serious disciplinary actions (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.2).</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Parents do not attend meetings and do not come to school when invited (<i>cf.</i> 5.3.2.3.2).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Parental involvement will have a great impact on their children’s behaviour by ensuring that they arrive on time at school, behave correctly, wear relevant clothing, are in possession of required books and equipment and complete tasks on time (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.2). Information on parents’ experience, interests, etc is available in learner profiles.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>The school should address the following factor that hamper learners’ commitment in the school (that is, lack of parental involvement and support and educators as poor role models). This can be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging parents to actively take in the education of their children.</li> <li>• finding ways to involve parents or guardians in school activities and learners’ schooling.</li> <li>• Educators’ unprofessional conduct must be addressed so that learners will see them as role models and the relationship between educators and learners can be improved.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Come up with the activities through which parents could be involved in the education of their children.</u></p> <p>Such activities must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information-giving activities, such as newsletters, written notes and periodic report cards, through which the parents receive information passively.</li> <li>• Information-sharing activities, such as educator-parent conference, where information is shared between parents and educators.</li> <li>• Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to implement specific goals, objectives or educational projects.</li> <li>• Collaboration in the school community, where parents serve as volunteers or tutors, or prepare instructional materials.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will we get there? (Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners)</b></p>
<p><b>Threats:</b> Child-headed households (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.2).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent education, in which efforts are made to increase parents' knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Parent leadership, policy and advocacy efforts.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies on educators as role models</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that educators are able to accomplish necessary skills to perform their duties successfully.</li> <li>• Educators as disciplinarians to set good examples so that learners can treat them with respect.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies to reduce negative impact of child headed households:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange in-service training or information sessions for educators on SIAS and their responsibilities in regard to that.</li> <li>• Identify learners and put them in contact with the SBST, which should also involve community support services.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> The SMT and educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.2).</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Parents are not attending meetings and the school has a challenge on how to make parents to attend (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.2)</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners the opportunity to enjoy their stay at school and to perform better in their studies (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.2).</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMT and educators to come up with strategies/techniques on how to make parents to attend meetings and finding ways to involve parents or guardians in school activities and learners' schooling.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Use Zoom or Microsoft Teams to meet with parents that cannot attend meetings.</u></p> <p><u>Come up with the activities through which parents could be involved in the education of their children. Such activities must include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information-giving projects, such as newsletters, written notes and periodic report cards, through which the parents receive information passively.</li> <li>• Information-sharing activities, such as educator-parent conference, where information is shared between parents and educators.</li> <li>• Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will we get there? (Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners)</b></p>
<p><b>Threats:</b> Failure to manage learner commitment effectively (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.2.2).</p>		<p>implement specific goals, objectives or educational activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration in the school community, where parents serve as volunteers or tutors, or prepare instructional materials.</li> <li>• Parent education, in which efforts are made to increase parents' knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Parent leadership, policy and advocacy efforts.</li> <li>• Design and present a series of practical, continuous workshops for educators on how to manage learners' commitment in relation to their right to education.</li> </ul>

### 6.5.1.3 Management strategy for School C

Table 34 presents a strategy for managing learner commitment in School C as directed by the findings from the data.

**Table 34: Learner commitment management strategy for School C**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p><b>Learners’ rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy and their perspectives on those rights and responsibilities.</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Motivational and information sessions are organised during which learners are reminded that they thus not only right-holders but also duty holders with regard to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.3)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> The perception that learners have rights, ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.3).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners to enjoy their right to education as stipulated by the Schools Act and the Constitution (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.3).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Misconceptions amongst learners about their right to education ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.2.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a learning culture.</li> <li>• The school management must ensure that learners are informed of both their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and sustain learning, where a learning environment, learning culture or learning climate is well informed and where learning to learn is essential for everyone involved.</li> <li>• Make learners aware of their legal responsibilities by including learners’ rights and responsibilities as a cross-curricular theme or by developing a pledge for learners to take.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transgressions that are indicative of non-commitment</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking learners as partners and members of the school population.</li> <li>• Minimising disciplinary behaviour/unbecoming behaviour amongst learners – focussing on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school. Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school.</li> </ul>



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p>Educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners' commitment in relation to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> 5.3.2.1.3)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Not taking learners as partners and members of the school population (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.3).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> To place the obligation on learners to attend school, do their homework, not absenting themselves from school without reasons and respecting their educators as well as other learners (<i>cf.</i> Section 5.3.2.1.3).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Unbecoming behaviour escalating into conflict (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.2.1).</p>	<p>transgressions which are indicative of non-commitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators should not act unbecomingly if they are constantly under attack or they should not misplace their tempers, offend others, opt for name calling, be discourteous, cruel or irritational.</li> <li>• School C should focus on the responsibilities which their learners fail to meet; for example, fail to attend the school, not doing their homework, using drugs and boys belonging to gangs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a democratic classroom where a democratic educator will assist learners to acquire self-discipline and self-motivation.</li> <li>• Develop a tranquil language that appropriately fits situations and feelings, finding alternatives to negative disciplinary measures, preventing oneself from judging learners' character.</li> </ul> <p>Refrain from using the "You" message instead of the "I" message.</p> <p>Make it a point to praise and acknowledge learners when they do something correctly, both in private and in front of their peers. Learners who don't have a lot of confidence tend to focus on only the negative aspects of what they are doing.</p> <p>Maintain discipline at all times so that the education of learners proceeds without disruptive behaviour and offences.</p> <p><u>Strategies with regard to learners not attending the school:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class educators having a look at the Learners' Profiles who are regularly absent to check whether there are barriers present that hamper the learners' attendance and to then either to address the problem if possible or to refer the matter to get the learner the necessary support.</li> <li>• The principal to call a staff meeting where educators can discuss the more common barriers to school attendance and decide on generic solutions. Perhaps it</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<p>could be a transport problem and then the principal can take it up with the department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an inclusive school milieu. Here, educators should define clear minimal level for behaviour, enforce those levels consistently, deal with children who disobey in a sensitive way, create opportunities to listen to all children and develop a “scaffolded” approach to learning.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to learners not doing their homework:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach learners about time management.</li> <li>• Address responsible use of social media and watching television.</li> <li>• Arrange a community member that has turned his or her life around to talk to the learners about choosing people to mix with that would improve their life for the better.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to learners using drugs in the school premises and boys belonging to gangs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite professionals from the Health Department and the South African Police Service to do awareness on substance and drug abuse amongst young people or learners.</li> <li>• Assign RCL members to report learners who are using drugs or gangs to their TLOs.</li> <li>• Make use of Adopt-a-Cop to minimise drug abuse and gangs around the school premises. Adopt-a-Cop is a police officer who is assigned for a specific school in</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<p>dealing with crime related issues at that particular school.</p>
<p><b>Factors hampering learners’ commitment at the school</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> There are existing practices to involve parents such as parent meetings, parents being informed and invited when learners face serious disciplinary actions (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.3).</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Parents do not attend meetings and do not come to school when invited (<i>cf.</i> 5.3.2.3.3).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Parental involvement will have a great impact on their children’s behaviour by ensuring that they arrive on time at school, behave correctly, wear relevant clothing, are in possession of required books and equipment and complete tasks on time (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.3). Information on parents’ experience, interests, etc is available in learner profiles</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Child headed households (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.3).</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p>The school should address the following factor that hamper learners’ commitment in the school, such as lack of parental involvement and support. This can be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging parents to be involved in the education of their children.</li> <li>• finding ways to involve parents or guardians in school activities and learners’ schooling.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Come up with the projects through which parents could be involved in the education of their children.</u></p> <p>Such activities must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information-giving projects, such as newsletters, written notes and periodic report cards, through which the parents receive information passively.</li> <li>• Information-sharing projects, such as educator-parent conference, where information is shared between parents and educators.</li> <li>• Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to implement specific goals, objectives or educational projects.</li> <li>• Collaboration in the school community, where parents serve as volunteers or tutors, or prepare instructional materials.</li> <li>• Parent education, in which efforts are made to increase parents’ knowledge and skills.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies to reduce negative impact of child headed households:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange in-service training or information sessions for educators on SIAS and their responsibilities in regard to that.</li> <li>• Identify learners and put them in contact with the SBST, which should also involve community support services.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p><b>Strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> The SMT and educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.3).</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Failure to attract the majority of parents to attend meetings (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.3)</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners to enjoy their stay at school and to perform better in their studies (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.3).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Failure to manage learner commitment effectively (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.2.3).</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMT and educators come up with strategies/ techniques on how to make parents to attend meetings.</li> <li>• finding ways to involve parents or guardians in school activities and learners’ schooling.</li> </ul>	<p>Use Zoom or Microsoft Teams to meet with parents that cannot attend meetings.</p> <p>Come up with the activities through which parents could be involved in the education of their children. Such activities must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information-giving activities, such as newsletters, written notes and periodic report cards, through which the parents receive information passively.</li> <li>• Information-sharing activities, such as educator-parent conference, where information is shared between parents and educators.</li> <li>• Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to implement specific goals, objectives or educational activities.</li> <li>• Collaboration in the school community, where parents serve as volunteers or tutors, or prepare instructional materials.</li> <li>• Parent education, in which efforts are made to increase parents’ knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Parent leadership, policy and advocacy efforts.</li> <li>• Design and present a series of practical, continuous workshops for educators on how to manage learners’ commitment in relation to their right to education.</li> </ul>

### 6.5.1.4 Management strategy for School D

Table 35 presents a strategy for managing learner commitment in School D as directed by the findings from the data.

**Table 35: Learner commitment management strategy for School D**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p>Learners' rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education in terms of law and policy and their perspectives on those rights and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Motivational and information sessions are organised during which learners are reminded that they thus not only right-holders but also duty holders with regard to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.4)</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> The perception that learners have rights, ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.4).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners to appreciate their right to education as stipulated by the Schools Act and the Constitution (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.4)</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Misconceptions amongst learners about their right to education ignoring the responsibilities thereof (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.1.1.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a learning culture.</li> <li>• The school management must ensure that learners are informed of both their legal rights and responsibilities in relation to their right to education.</li> <li>• School D should focus on the responsibilities which their learners fail to meet, for example, fail to attend the school, not doing their homework, girls falling pregnant at a tender age, learners who are damaging the school infrastructure and boys belonging to gangs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and sustain learning, where a learning environment, learning culture or learning climate is well informed and where learning to learn is essential for everyone involved.</li> </ul> <p><u>Make learners aware of their legal responsibilities by:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• including learners' rights and responsibilities as a cross-curricular theme</li> <li>• developing a pledge for learners to take.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies in regard to learners not attending the school:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an inclusive school milieu where learners will feel part of the classroom by following instructions, questioning directions and exploring possibilities.</li> <li>• Class educators having a look at the Learners' Profiles who are regularly absent to check whether there are barriers present that hamper the learners' attendance and to then either to address the problem if possible or to refer the matter to get the learner the necessary support.</li> <li>• The principal to call a staff meeting where educators can discuss the more common barriers to school attendance and decide on generic solutions. Perhaps it could be a transport problem and then the principal can take it up with the department.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<p><u>Strategies with regard to learners not doing their homework:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach learners about time management.</li> <li>• Address responsible use of social media and watching television.</li> <li>• Arrange a community member that have turned his or her life around to talk to the learners about choosing people to mix with that would improve their life for the better.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies with regard to boys belonging to gangs and those who are using drugs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite professionals from the Health Department and the South African Police Service to do awareness on substance and drug abuse amongst young people or learners.</li> <li>• Assign RCL members to report learners who are using drugs or gangs to their TLOs.</li> <li>• Make use of Adopt a cop to minimise drug abuse and gangs around the school premises.</li> <li>• Involve all the stakeholders, such as SBST and QLTC, to curb gangs and drug abuse on the school premises.</li> <li>• Invite Professional Motivational speakers and former prisoners who has spent long sentences in jail due to drugs or gangs to motivate learners to abstain from belonging to gangs or using drugs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transgressions that are indicative of non-commitment</b> <b>Strengths:</b> Educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners' commitment in relation to their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.4)</p>	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking learners as partners and members of the school population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school. Make a point that RCL is democratically elected and it is functional at the school.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Not taking learners as partners and members of the school population (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.4).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> To place the obligation on learners to attend school, do their homework, not absenting themselves from school without reasons and respecting their educators as well as other learners (<i>cf.</i> 5.3.2.1.4).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Unbecoming behaviour escalating into conflict (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.1.4).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimising disciplinary behaviour/unbecoming behaviour amongst learners – focussing on transgressions which are indicative of non-commitment.</li> <li>• Educators should not act unbecomingly if they are constantly under attack or they should not misplace their tempers, offend others, opt for name calling, be discourteous, cruel or irritational.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a democratic classroom where a democratic educator will assist learners to acquire self-discipline and self-motivation.</li> <li>• Develop a tranquil language that appropriately fits situations and feelings, finding alternatives to negative disciplinary measures, preventing oneself from judging learners’ character.</li> <li>• Refrain from using the “You” message instead of the “I” message.</li> <li>• Make it a point to praise and acknowledge learners when they do something correctly, both in private and in front of their peers. Learners who don’t have a lot of confidence tend to focus on only the negative aspects of what they are doing.</li> <li>• Maintain discipline at all times so that the education of learners proceeds without disruptive behaviour and offences.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Factors hampering learners’ commitment at the school</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> Knowledge of applicable motivational theories (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.4).</p> <p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Ineffective classroom management (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.4).</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Learners will be able to perform competently well on academic tasks (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.4).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Child headed households (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.3.4).</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school should address the following factor that hamper learners’ commitment in the school (i.e. lack of parental involvement and support, lack of motivation amongst learners). This can be done by:</li> <li>• encouraging parents to be involved in the education of their children.</li> <li>• finding ways to involve parents or guardians in school activities and learners’ schooling.</li> <li>• adopting a behaviouristic model whereby desirable behaviour is reinforced while undesirable behaviour is ignored.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Come up with the activities through which parents could be involved in the education of their children. Such activities must include:</li> <li>• Information-giving activities, such as newsletters, written notes and periodic report cards, through which the parents receive information passively.</li> <li>• Information-sharing activities, such as educator-parent conference, where information is shared between parents and educators. Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to implement specific goals, objectives or educational activities.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing some form of reward like merit or some form of approval should be put into place to reinforce good behaviour.</li> <li>• Promoting learners’ relationships with all relevant stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative support for school programmes, in which the parents work together with the school to implement specific goals, objectives or educational activities.</li> <li>• Collaboration in the school community, where parents serve as volunteers or tutors, or prepare instructional materials.</li> <li>• Parent education, in which efforts are made to increase parents’ knowledge and skills.</li> <li>• Parent leadership, policy and advocacy efforts.</li> </ul> <p><u>Child headed households</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify learners and put them in contact with community support services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies on lack of motivation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Motivational speakers to be continuously invited at the school to motivate learners in taking responsibility for their own learning.</li> <li>• Create a supportive relationship framework to promote learner commitment.</li> <li>• Create a sense of belonging amongst learners so as to take their education seriously.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategies school managers and educators currently employ to promote learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education</b></p> <p><b>Strengths:</b> The SMT and educators understand their managerial responsibilities to promote and manage learners’ commitment to the realisation of their right to education (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.4).</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must make copies of the school code of conduct for learner.</li> <li>• School DI should adapt leadership theories to promote learner commitment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise funds to make sure that each learner has his or her copy of the code of conduct for learners.</li> <li>• Attach the code of conduct for learners to learners’ diaries so as to save money of doing them separately.</li> <li>• The school code of conduct must be read to learners once a week, preferably during the assembly so that they can familiarise themselves with its contents</li> </ul>



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
<p><b>Weaknesses:</b> Learners do not have duplicates of the school code of conduct for learners (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.4)</p> <p><b>Opportunities:</b> Affording learners to enjoy their stay at school and to perform better in their studies (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.3.1.4).</p> <p><b>Threats:</b> Failure to manage learner commitment effectively (<i>cf.</i> section 5.3.2.2.4).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and present a series of practical, continuous workshops for educators on how to manage learners' commitment in relation to their right to education.</li> </ul> <p><u>Adapt a leadership theory that will promote learner commitment in relation to their right to education.</u> Such theory must include (<i>cf.</i> section 3.3.3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom management theory. In this theory, the A-B-C model is ideal to analyse learner behaviour and inform classroom management interventions.</li> <li>• The human relations theory. The specific characteristic of this type of theory is that learner commitment will be supported when there are good relationships between educators and learners.</li> <li>• Behavioural scientific theory. In this theory, attention would be given to the particular behaviour that learners show and not the reason why they demonstrate these behaviours.</li> <li>• Non-directive intervention theories. The theory will equip both the SMT and educators to assist learners to take on more responsibility for themselves, as well as assisting them to evolve considerable control over their own behaviour.</li> <li>• Van Niekerk's leadership theory. Educators as leaders, are responsible to impact the situation under which guidance is provided by creating an environment within which the learners can learn to the best of their potential and takes actions to empower the learners to develop optimally.</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you now?</b> <b>Findings used to do SWOT analysis</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Where are you going?</b> <b>Recommendations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>How will you get there?</b> <b>Strategies to promote commitment on the part of learners</b></p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make learners aware or know exactly what is expected from them and they should then be intentionally guided to achieve that.</li> </ul>

## **6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Learner commitment in these four schools is of such a necessity that if it is not properly managed, it may leave these schools dysfunctional. Related problems such as non-commitment to their education may also be experienced in other schools that were not part of this study. For this reason, the researcher has put together a proposal for further research within a broader context.

### **6.6.1 Training in managing learner commitment**

More research should be conducted on training of the SMT and educators on managing learner commitment and develop a set of indicators of non-commitment on the part of learners. The exercise is of paramount importance as it will assist both the SMT and educators in managing non-commitment before it escalates into conflict.

### **6.6.2 Participants involved in the research**

The focal point on learner commitment management in this study was on learner commitment to their education within the school. Future research could ensure that other participants such as principals, grade heads, disciplinary committee members and educator component of the liaison officers (TLOs) are involved to develop a wider view of the problem.

### **6.6.3 The right to education**

The study found that parents or guardians are not involved in the learners' schooling and activities. Research could be conducted of how parents become involved in supporting their children's education. Research could also be conducted with learners to find out whether they could identify ways in which they could become more involved in ensuring their "right to education".

### **6.6.4 Improved learner performance**

Taking cognisance of learner performance in the annual National Matriculation Certificate, research could be conducted with high performing schools to ascertain how a learning culture is created, natured and maintained.

### **6.6.5 Discipline at school**

Taking into account the finding that some schools are troubled with ill-discipline, for example, taking drugs, girls falling pregnant at tender age, misusing the school infrastructure and boys belonging to gangs, research could be conducted on the implementation and maintenance of discipline within the school.

### **6.7 ASSUMPTIONS**

The assumption is that all participants were conversant about their rights and responsibilities to the realisation of their right to education was accurate, as participants had the understanding of their rights and responsibilities to education. Principals, grade heads, members of the disciplinary committee and the TLOs were able to mention the factors affecting learners' non-commitment to their education. Some participants did not give truthful responses, as they gave the researcher the responses that they thought the researcher needed, and these were not truthful description of actual events. Such responses were picked up during triangulation.

### **6.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a summary of the study and outline the synopsis of the research findings. Findings were discussed with the intension of answering the research sub-questions. The recommendations derived from the findings were discussed whereby the researcher developed learner commitment strategies that are tailor-made for each school. The chapter concluded with recommendations derived from the study and mentioned a number of specific recommendations for further research.

### **6.9 A FINAL WORD**

The researcher was motivated by his work as a Life Orientation educator to undertake this study. In this day and age, vulnerable groups of children such as learners who are involved in gangs are orphans and or heads of homes are often compromised by the social situation within which they find themselves. Everyone has the right to education – learners know their rights but are hesitant in claiming that right. It is our responsibility as educators to inspire learners to realise their full potential by taking up the responsibility of that right.

***Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world***

(Nelson Mandela)

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: Contribution to the Education Charter

**MM Mabea** *SPTD (Sefikengcoed) FDE (RAU) B ED Hons (UP) ABET (UNISA) Labour Relations (UNISA) M Ed (UNISA)*

Address: 3067/8 Sea Point

Mamafubedu

9640

Email: [mbeammm@gmail.com](mailto:mbeammm@gmail.com)

Tel: 0568176688 (W), Mobile: 0842454527/0731463790

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The Head of Education Charter

#### RE: CONTRIBUTION TO THE EDUCATION CHARTER

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a registered DEd student at the University of South Africa. I am engaged in a research project developing management strategies for promoting learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to a basic education in secondary schools. The research topic is: **“Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to a basic education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province”**.

I read through your draft document entitled **“Draft 2016 Education Charter”** that was held in Johannesburg on the 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June 2016. What I found interesting about the draft is though it emphasized that learners were involved in compiling this draft charter, there is no mention made of how they (learners) should contribute to their education. They are again seen as inactive participants who are just receiving teaching instead of active participants that learn and behave and take responsibility for their own education.

I am of the opinion that part of the problem is that the most important stakeholders in education, the learners, were and still are left out of the equation. In fact, the Department of Basic Education itself does not include any problems relating to learners' own commitment or input in its list of key factors contributing to the failure of the education system. Reports are silent on learners' lack of commitment to their education, thereby negating learners their responsibilities. How can we expect learners to be committed to their own education if we do not take them into account as the main role players in the realisation of their right to an education?

I merely suggest that the use of interactive teaching methods is not enough. These methods are impossible to use if learners do not behave well and participate in a meaningful way.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours faithfully

Moshe Moses Mabea

## APPENDIX B: Response



**National Council:** Yoliswa Dwane (Chair), Tracey Malawana, Doron Isaacs, Tshepo Motsepe, Ntuthuzo Ndzomo, Daphne Erosi, Dumile Runwana, Zintle Tomose, Niek Marutha, Fanelesibonge Shezi, Thato Mashego, Lindokuhle Mnguni, Lerato Mothiba, Fanele Hadebe, Thoko Qalanto, Thabang Mabuza, Bafana Mranugo, Eugene Ramashala, Samukelisiwe Kunene, Michelle Adler, Brad Brockman, Yana Van Leeve

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27 October 2016

Attention: Moshe Moses Mabea  
[mabeamm@gmail.com](mailto:mabeamm@gmail.com)  
**PER EMAIL**

Dear Mr Mabea,

**RE: CONTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION CHARTER**

Thank you for your contribution to the Education Charter. It will be forwarded to the charter committee for consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Bailey'.

Kyle Bailey

Equal Education - Chief of Staff

## APPENDIX C: Permission letter (notification) from Free State Department of Basic Education

Enquiries: KK Motshumi  
Ref: Notification of research: MM Mabea  
Tel. 051 404 9221 / 079 503 4943  
Email: K. Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za



District Director  
Thabo Mofutsanyane District

Dear Ms Mabaso

### NOTIFICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY MM MABEA

The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district as follows:

1. **Topic:** Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province

**List of schools involved:** Ikaheng Zakheni Secondary School, Kwetlisong Secondary School, Kgotso Uxolo Secondary School, Leifo, Iziko Secondary School, Phukalla Secondary School, Leratswana Secondary School and Lindley Hoer Skool

**Target Population:** 4 School principals, 4 Deputy Principals, 12 Grade Heads, 8 Members of Disciplinary Committee, 8 TLOs and 120 Grade 10-12 learners.

2. **Period:** From date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2019. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.
3. **Research benefits:** This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in this particular field. It is also relevant to policy-makers and researchers with regard to promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education. The researcher will make the findings of the study and the new strategies available to the Free State Department of Basic Education and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District.
4. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.
5. Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researchers to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in the district.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 24/07/2019

## APPENDIX D: Permission letter (approval) from Free State Department Of Basic Education

Enquiries: KK Motshumi  
Ref: Notification of research: MM Mabea  
Tel. 051 404 9221 / 079 503 4943  
Email: K. Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za



District Director  
Thabo Mofutsanyane District

Dear Ms Mabaso

### NOTIFICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY MM MABEA

The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district as follows:

1. **Topic:** Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province

List of schools involved:

**Target Population:** 4 School principals, 4 Deputy Principals, 12 Grade Heads, 8 Members of Disciplinary Committee, 8 TLOs and 120 Grade 10-12 learners.

2. **Period:** From date of signature of this letter until 30 September 2019. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.
3. **Research benefits:** This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in this particular field. It is also relevant to policy-makers and researchers with regard to promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education. The researcher will make the findings of the study and the new strategies available to the Free State Department of Basic Education and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District.
4. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.
5. Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researchers to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in the district.

Yours sincerely

  
DR JEM SEKOLANYANE  
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE: 24/07/2019

RESEARCH APPLICATION MM MABEA NOTIFICATION EDITED 20 JULY 2019 THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT  
Strategic Planning, Research & Policy Directorate  
Private Bag X20565, Bloemfontein, 9300 - Old CNA Building, Room 318, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Charlotte Mexeke Street, Bloemfontein  
Tel: (051) 404 9283 / 9221 Fax: (086) 6678 678

## APPENDIX E: Ethical clearance certificate



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/05/15

Ref: **2019/05/15/8767963/11/MC**

Dear Mr Mabea

Name: Mr MM Mabea

Student: 8767963

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2019/05/15 to 2024/05/15

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr MM Mabea  
E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com  
Telephone: +27 73 146 3790

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof SA Coetzee  
E-mail address: Coetzsa1@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 12 361 0392

**Title of research:**

**Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province**

**Qualification:** PhD in Educational Leadership and Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/05/15 to 2024/05/15.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/05/15 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za



2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/05/17**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2019/05/15/8767963/11/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlhabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

## **APPENDIX F: Letter to schools requesting permission to conduct research**

### **DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Request to conduct research at XXXXXXXXXX Secondary School

The Principal

Address

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. I hereby request permission to carry out this study entitled: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. The aim of the study is to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment.

The study will entail conducting interviews with principals and deputy principals, qualitative questionnaires with Grade Heads, members of the disciplinary committee, TLOs and learners respectively. The following documents will be analysed: minutes of the SMT meetings, the book wherein transgressions are recorded, school's Code of conduct for learners, quarterly learner attendance, school's disciplinary policy and the school's year plan.

I undertake not to divulge the names of the schools and individual participants in my final report as pseudonyms will be used. I plan to conduct my field work as soon as I get permission from all the relevant stakeholders.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD student)

Cell No. 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

## **APPENDIX G: Letter requesting principal to participate in an interview**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Dear Principal

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education and will apply for ethical clearance from College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the study is to research management strategies for promoting learners' commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment.

Your participation will entail taking part in a 60-minutes face-to-face interview. The interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points.

I undertake not to divulge your name in y final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause to protect yourself.

The benefits of the study are improved management strategies in the selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD student)

Cell no.: 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

## **APPENDIX H: Consent form for the principal**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure accurate recording responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print) : \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX I: Letter requesting deputy principal to participate in an interview**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Dear Deputy Principal

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education and will apply for ethical clearance from College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the study is to research management strategies for promoting learners commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment.

Your participation will entail taking part in a 60-minutes face-to-face interview. The interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points.

I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause to protect yourself.

The benefits of the study are improved management strategies in the selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD student)

Cell no.: 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

## **APPENDIX J: Consent form for the deputy principal**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure accurate recording responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print) : \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX K: Letter requesting parents / guardians to allow their children to participate in the study**

DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE

Dear Parent/Guardian

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education, schools and I will apply for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethics Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request your child to part in this study.

The aim of the study is to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment. Your child participation will entail completing a questionnaire. I undertake not to divulge your child's name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your child participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign the consent form to protect yourself. The benefits of the study are improved management strategies in the selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District.

Potential risks of your child participation would be no greater than any other life risk. Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD student)

Cell No. 0731463790 or 0842454527)

E-mail address: [mabeamm@gmail.com](mailto:mabeamm@gmail.com)

**APPENDIX L: Consent form for parents / guardians to allow their children to take part in the study**

DEVELOPINING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that my child may withdraw his/her assent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. I full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own, my child to participate in this study.

Parent's/Guardian's name (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's/Guardian's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **APPENDIX M: Letter to request requesting participation from grade heads**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Dear Grade Head

I, Moshe Moses Mabea , am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education, schools and will apply for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the is to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment. Your participation will entail completing a questionnaire. I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause to protect yourself. The benefit of the study are improved management strategies in selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD Student)

Cell No.: 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

## **APPENDIX K: Consent form for the grade heads**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure accurate recording responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print) : \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX L: Letter requesting participation from members of disciplinary committee**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Dear Disciplinary Committee Member

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education, schools and will apply for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the is to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment. Your participation will entail completing a questionnaire. I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause to protect yourself. The benefit of the study are improved management strategies in selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD Student)

Cell No.: 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

**APPENDIX M: Consent form for the disciplinary committee**

DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure accurate recording responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print) : \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX N: Letter requesting participation from TLO members**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Dear TLO Member

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education, schools and will apply for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the is to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment. Your participation will entail completing a questionnaire. I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause to protect yourself. The benefit of the study are improved management strategies in selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD Student)

Cell No.: 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

**APPENDIX O: Consent form for the TLO member**

DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure accurate recording responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print) : \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX P: Letter requesting participation from RCL members and learners**

### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Dear Learner

I, Moshe Moses Mabea, am doing research towards a PhD degree, at the University of South Africa, under the supervision of Professor S.A. Coetzee, a professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management. My research topic is: Developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province. I have obtained permission from Free State Department of Basic Education, schools and will apply for ethical clearance from the College of Education Ethics Review Committee (CEDU REC). I hereby humbly request you to take part in this study.

The aim of the is to research management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State Province and to use the findings to develop generic management strategies for promoting learner commitment. Your participation will entail completing a questionnaire. I undertake not to divulge your name in my final report as pseudonyms will be used and reiterate that your participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal will be accepted. Please note that you will be asked to sign a confidentiality clause to protect yourself. The benefit of the study are improved management strategies in selected schools and other schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Potential risks of participation would be no greater than any other life risk.

Feedback procedure will entail sharing the results and recommendations with the selected schools and the Free State Department of Basic Education.

I hope you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely

MM Mabea (PhD Student)

Cell No.: 0731463790 or 0842454527

E-mail address: mabeamm@gmail.com

## **APPENDIX Q: Assent form for learners**

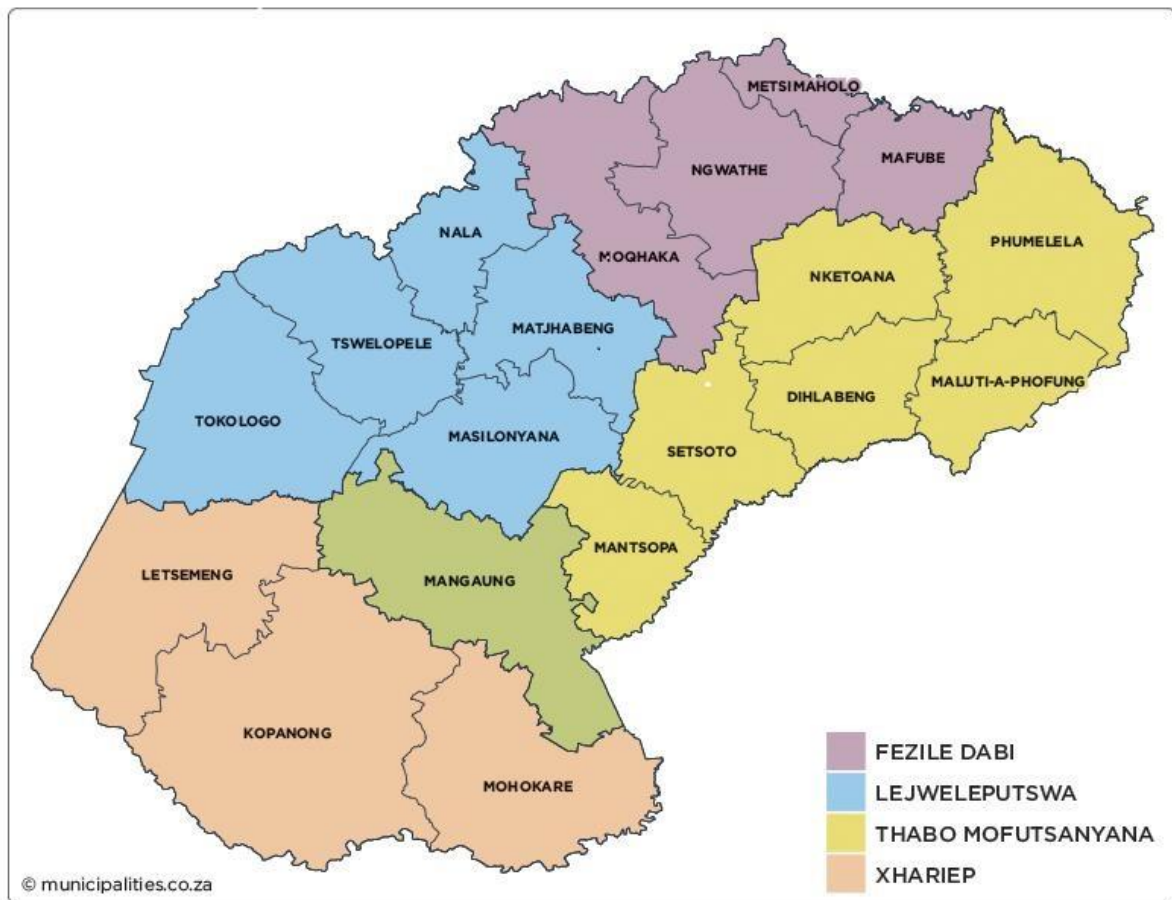
### **DEVELOPING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING LEARNER COMMITMENT TO THE REALISATION OF THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT, FREE STATE PROVINCE**

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on developing management strategies for promoting learner commitment to the realisation of their right to education in secondary schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State province. I have had the opportunity to ask questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio-recorded to ensure accurate recording responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my assent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own will, to participate in this study.

Participant's name (Please print) : \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name : \_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature : \_\_\_\_\_  
Date : \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX R: Geographical MAP of the Free State Province



## APPENDIX S: Turnitin report

turnitin

Document Viewer

### Turnitin Originality Report

Processed on: 26-Feb-2021 19:01 SAST  
 ID: 1515162445  
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**APPENDIX T: Proof of editing**

**To whom it may concern**

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

**Moshe Moses Mabea**

Leadership and Management  
University of South Africa

**Doctor of Philosophy in Education:**

Developing Management Strategies for Promoting Learner Commitment to the Realisation of their Right to Education in Secondary Schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District, Free State  
Province



Cilla Dowse  
18 January 2021

Cilla Dowse	Rosedale Farm
PhD in Assessment and Quality Assurance in Education and Training: University of Pretoria 2014	P.O. Box 48
Programme on Editing Principles and Practices: University of Pretoria 2009	Van Reenen
Basic Editing and Proofreading: McGillivray Linnegar Associates 2008	Free State
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