SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR THAT LEAD TO ENCOUNTERS WITH TEACHERS

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that **Secondary school learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour that leads to encounters with teachers** 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.

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SANDRA NAICKER DATE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late dad Teddy Tadden and my late brother Lennie Tadden

I miss you both immensely!

I also dedicate this thesis to all learners with broken wings and heavy spirits –

allow yourself to glide with the wind –

you will find success in your own special way in unexpected places along this journey called LIFE!

SUMMARY

The study was undertaken to explore learners' perspectives of disruptive behaviour in schools. The aim of the study was to gain insight and understanding of how learners experienced disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers. The supporting conceptual frameworks underpinning this study were Habermas's theory of communicative action highlighting the significance of validity claims, life-worlds and language in speech acts; Weber's theory of social action focusing on the dynamics of authority, power and legitimacy in social and bureaucratic relationships; a theory of resistance conceptual framework by Einwohner and Hollander and a theory of resistance in education conceptual framework supported by the study *Learning to Labour* by Willis as a context in which disruptive behaviour occurs.

The study was conducted in one secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. The purposive sample comprised of 16 learners who experienced disruptive behaviour with teachers and were referred for disciplinary intervention. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The data was analysed and thereafter interpreted by means of the three theoretical frameworks. The main conclusion of this research was that encounters with teachers impacted negatively on the emotional and psychological well-being of learners, particularly when learners were not believed, singled out, smacked, treated unjustly or spoken to rudely by teachers. The emotional and psychological impact of the encounters with teachers manifested as anger, embarrassment and helplessness in learners.

Learners' views on the desired teacher responses in managing disruptive behaviour and how discipline could be improved in schools were also revealed in the empirical investigation. One of the recommendations of the study was the establishment of a school-based support facility with a multi-disciplinary approach to assist learners with coping skills. Pointers were provided on how to approach this. In addition, the study recommended training (e.g., a workshop) for teachers to develop emotionally and socially

intelligent behaviour needed to manage emotions and relationships in challenging classroom situations. To this end, the training programme was designed and explained. Recommendations were made for further research. Finally, the contribution of the study and some limitations were pointed out.

Key words: disruptive behaviour; Habermas's theory of communicative action; positive discipline; secondary school learners; theory of resistance in education; Weber's theory of social action; teacher training for discipline

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DoE: Department of Education

ELRC: Education Labour Relations Council

KZN: KwaZulu-Natal

PAD: Positive alternative discipline

PID: Positive invitational discipline

RSA: Republic of South Africa

SGB: School Governing Bodies

SMT: School Management Team

SNES: Special Needs Educational Services

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The maintenance of discipline in the classroom is a challenge in post-apartheid South Africa. Prior to 1994, discipline was widely maintained through the medium of corporal punishment. After the adoption of a new South African Constitution in 1996, corporal punishment was viewed as being cruel, inhumane and degrading to the child according to the Bill of Rights 12 (1) (e) and was consequently banned (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996a). The banning of corporal punishment presented a dilemma in the classroom as alternatives to deal with indiscipline without infringing on the rights of the learner had to be sought. This shift in the law has led to challenging encounters between teachers and unruly learners. Teachers reportedly feel incapacitated and helpless as learners flagrantly challenge their authority fully cognisant that teachers are unable to administer any punitive measures in the absence of corporal punishment (Maphosa & Shumba 2010: 389). Learner's awareness of their rights and their sense of liberation have also evoked feelings of powerlessness and humiliation in teachers (Maphosa & Shumba 2010: 393). According to Pienaar (2003:262) the abolition of corporal punishment has created an irreplaceable gap that has resulted in multiple disciplinary problems at schools.

Samuel (2014: 19) posits that the learner-teacher relationship has undergone a reversal of power since the outlawing of corporal punishment. Learners appear to engage the institutional and organisational forms of authority belligerently by subtly intimidating teachers into bowing to their "whims and caprices" (Samuel 2014: 19). Rules and routines are often disregarded as learners engage in power battles with teachers. Perhaps most disconcerting for teachers, are incidents when they are bullied by learners (Naicker 2014: 34). When learners engage in verbal outbursts with teachers, they make derogatory comments aimed at humiliating and or intimidating the teacher (Naicker 2014: 85).

Teachers revealed that they felt depressed, demoralised, demotivated and saddened when the learners continually misbehaved, despite their best efforts at maintaining discipline (Naicker 2014: 105).

The conceptualisation of a School Code of Conduct according to the South African School's Act (in Education Labour Relations Council [ELRC] 2003a: B-2) was intended to assist teachers to maintain discipline after the abolishment of corporal punishment. All School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are mandated to develop and adopt a School Code of Conduct according to Section 8 and Section 20 of The South African School's Act (in ELRC 2003a: B-7-12). The School Code of Conduct which must be collaboratively developed by the teachers, learners and parents, embraces the values, ethos, mission, rules and regulations of the school (Department of Education [DoE] 2000: 20-27). It also espouses the values of the South African Constitution and legislates the procedures that a school should follow to maintain discipline at the institution. The rights and responsibilities of learners, types of misconduct and the resultant disciplinary measures are detailed in the policy so that learners may have a clear understanding of acceptable standards of behaviour at the school.

The effectiveness of the School Code of Conduct was critically analysed by Khumalo and Mestry (2012: 104) who cited challenges in its enforcement and the incapacity of the SGB to understand the dynamics of the Code of Conduct. Much criticism is also levelled at the non-involvement of learners in the development of the policy which concurs with the general disregard shown by learners towards its implementation. Often it is the principal and staff who develop the School Code of Conduct which is simply rubber-stamped by the student governing body (SGB) (Lekalakala 2007 80-81). The School Code of Conduct is intended to be a preventative disciplinary measure but its effectiveness is compromised when the rules, expectations and sanctions are not clearly formulated, communicated and enforced by the relevant stakeholders (Khumalo & Mestry 2012 104-105).

In 2000, the DoE published a document entitled "*Alternatives to Corporal Punishment: a Practical Guide for Educators*" (DoE 2000: 7) to assist teachers to deal with disciplinary problems in the classroom. It outlined various strategies that teachers could employ both preventively and reactively in respect of classroom control and management. The successful implementation of the suggested strategies hinged on the complete removal of corporal punishment in the classroom. This change in mindset was not well-received by teachers. They argued that instant justice being meted out to ill-disciplined learners helped maintain discipline and they felt disempowered in the absence of corporal punishment (Maphosa & Shumba 2010: 387). Many teachers express frustration at the lack of support from the educational departmental systems in assisting with classroom discipline (Bester & Du Plessis 2010: 212).

Teachers bemoan the fact that the DoE is unsupportive, usually upholds the constitutional rights of learners and sometimes overturns court-rulings to expel learners despite cases of extreme violence and trauma being experienced by the teacher (Bester & Du Plessis 2010: 215-220). The post-apartheid South African learners appear to be highly aware of their rights whilst teachers are hamstrung in their choice of suitable disciplinary measures resulting in power-battles in the classroom (Naicker 2014: 95-96). Samuel (2014: 2) likens these schoolyard battles to sites of "political struggle" within the "liberation" of the South African education system. This change in the teacher-learner relationship has evidently impacted on the dynamics of the classroom control and management.

Katz, Lewis, Romi and Qui (2008: 715) state that the search for effective techniques to prevent discipline problems and to create positive and productive classrooms is a stressful factor in the professional lives of teachers. They posit that aside from being viewed as "leaders" and "knowledge dispensers", teachers regard being a "disciplinarian" as an integral metaphor of their professional identity. As disciplinarians, teachers employ various mechanisms to control and manage the instructional and social interactions in the classroom. According to Mokhele (2006: 148-149), during the pre-1994 era when

teachers used the cane as a mechanism to maintain control, the atmosphere in the classroom was formal, tense and hostile. The teacher's power and authority in the teacher-learner relationship was perceived as a foundation for control and discipline in the classroom. Unsurprisingly after the abolition of corporal punishment, classrooms were expected to be friendly and relaxed and teachers were encouraged to form positive teacher-learner relationships (Mokhele 2006: 149). This paradigm-shift heralded fears of the loss of power and control among teachers and issues of trust among learners. The study by Mokhele (2006: 157) surmised that disciplinary problems in the post-1994 era occurred as a consequence of teachers experiencing difficulty in nurturing relationships of mutual trust and respect whilst simultaneously being expected to maintain control in the classroom.

Many studies on learner indiscipline in the post-1994 era have been conducted by and large through the perspective of teachers to better understand the plight of the teacher in fractious teacher-learner relationships (De Wet 2006; Gasa 2005; Kruger 2011; Masekoameng 2010; Monareng 2003; Naidoo 2011; Naong 2007; Ramdan 2009; Ramsamy 2006; Rangraje 2002). The causes of students' misbehaviour are hence often reflective of the perspectives of teachers. The reasons for learners' misbehaving are categorised according to the various relationships within the life-world of the learner with particular emphasis on the home, peer influences and socio-economic factors. Fractious relationships within these environments are frequently cited as reasons for misbehaviour in the classroom.

The voice of the learner thus emerges as a powerful alternative medium in understanding indiscipline and management in the classroom. Learners often complain that teachers do not listen to them or that they cannot understand why they have to obey when questioned about their indiscipline. Explanations of why they behave in a particular manner are often rejected by teachers who are attached to idealistic views of how learners "should behave" (Porter 2000: 85). The resistance by teachers to listen sympathetically and empathetically often exacerbates the tension prevalent during disruptive encounters.

As a School Management Team (SMT) member, I constantly seek strategies to capacitate teachers to cope with disciplinary problems in the classroom. It has been observed that current disciplinary measures have become ineffective in light of the challenging behaviour presented by the learners. An increase in cases of violence against and bullying of teachers is particularly worrying since it has resulted in conflict and tension in the teacher-learner relationship (Jacobs 2014:1-16; Ncontsa & Shumba 2013:1-15). The decision to understand the phenomenon of learner indiscipline from a *learner's* perspective is thus viewed as an opportunity to gain insight into the learner's life -world. My interest is piqued as to *why* learners choose to display resistance to learning which conflicts with the expectations of all stakeholders in education and is ultimately self -defeating. I am particularly interested in unravelling whether learners consciously engage in power-battles with teachers when they disrupt lessons and if so, *why?* If a solution to the present disciplinary crisis in schools is to be found, it is imperative that the voice of the learner be heard. The knowledge gained from listening to the learners' perspectives is likely to present a deeper understanding of how learners view the teacher, the instructional processes and the impact thereof on the social relations in the classroom.

McFarland (2001: 613) asserts that when learners disrupt classrooms and defy teacher authority, they halt the instructional processes and resist the educational goals and functioning of schools. Disruptive behaviour also changes the nature of the teacher-learner relationship. Kapueja (2014: 59) asserts that when teachers experience power struggles and adversarial relationships with learners, they are unable to establish successful and rewarding learning environments. Teachers are also unable to gain respect and establish positive relationships in the classroom when learners work against them. If teachers are able to maintain discipline in the classroom, order and harmony are likely to prevail in the teacher-learner relationship (Kapueja 2014: 58).

Kim (2010:4) purports that the analysis of learner resistance to the process of teaching and learning offers a communicative medium for teachers and learners to understand

conflict and tension and to forge meaningful teacher-learner relationships. When learners display resistance to learning, the profound question is: *why are they defiant?* It is only when the reasons underpinning learners' opposition are thoroughly understood, that teachers can engage in changing instructional and social processes at school. In undertaking this study, I am contributing to the empirical knowledge of this profound question. Others (DeFosset, Gase, Kuo & Perry 2016: 299) also declare that an in-depth understanding of the youths' perspectives could inform programme and policy implementation. The primary focus in this study is hence the learners and their perspective on disciplinary problems at school.

1.2 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

Disruptive learner behaviour challenges the functionality of a school (Nyang'Au 2013: xii). According to Tiwani (2010: 16) the increased prevalence of disciplinary problems in South African schools is a concern to all stakeholders. The culture of teaching and learning is reputedly disintegrating owing to classroom disciplinary problems such as the possession of weapons and physical fights on the school premises. The increase in reports of learner violence against teachers in the current South African system indicates that learner disruptions have resulted in volatile classrooms (Bester & Du Plessis 2010: 215; Jacobs 2014:1-16; Ncontsa & Shumba 2013:1-15). Despite the voluminous knowledge available on learner indiscipline, the reasons underpinning learner disruptions remain varied. Ndamani (2008: 177) postulates that the causes may be categorised into physiological, physical and psychological factors. Naicker (2014: 34- 47) concurs with Ndamani's (2008: 177-178) view of there being varied but interrelated causes of learner indiscipline.

According to Ndamani (2008: 182), teachers perceive the learners to be the source of disciplinary problems and sometimes do not acknowledge that their poor organisational structures may be contributory to the disruptive behaviour. I am of the view that it is the culpable learner who holds the key to understanding learner disruptions. Research conducted through the lens of the learner is likely to offer a refreshing view of factors that

trigger non-compliance in the classroom, perhaps leading to innovative strategies in addressing this issue.

In view of the above exposition, the main research question of this study is:

- *How do learners in a selected secondary school experience disruptive behaviour that leads to encounters with teachers?*

The subquestions to espouse the theoretical framework of learner disruptions are:

- *What are the implications for this study of relevant behavioural theories applicable to learner indiscipline?*
- *What knowledge have international and South African researchers contributed to an understanding of learners' experiences of indiscipline?*

The following subquestions will guide the empirical investigation of the study:

- *What do learners perceive as disciplinary problems at schools?*
- *According to the learners, what are the reasons for learner misbehaviour?*
- *How do they experience poor behaviour at the school and in the classroom?*
- *How do they experience teachers' responses to disciplinary problems?*
- *What do they recommend with regard to improving discipline at school?*

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this study is to understand the phenomenon of disruptive behaviour in a secondary school from the learner's perspective.

In line with the research problem and research questions stated above, the aims of this research study are to:

- Identify and explain a relevant conceptual framework for investigating learners' views on disciplinary problems at school
- Determine, by means of a literature review, the findings of other researchers on learners' experiences of disruptive encounters with teachers
- Determine empirically learners' views on the nature and causes of disruptive encounters with teachers in selected secondary schools
- Suggest recommendations for coping strategies to deal with disruptive encounters between learners and teachers

The data emerging from the abovementioned questions are analysed to present an understanding of how learners experience disciplinary problems in the classroom.

Teachers are expected to order their classrooms in a manner that facilitates constructive learning by using productive instructional processes. Rules, routines and regulations that are in synchrony with the policies and practices of the institution are mechanisms that are used to maintain appropriate social relations with learners.

The next section explains the conceptual framework selected for the study.,

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, I employ critical theory to analyse the social relations that typify disruptive encounters between teachers and learners. The aim is to unravel oppressive structures that may overtly or covertly be impacting on the social relations in the classroom. I focus in particular on the structures of verbal communication and social actions in the teacher-learner relationship. Three theoretical frameworks underpin the discussions on disruptive behaviour in this study, namely Habermas's (1987) theory of communicative action, Weber's (1946; 1968;1978) theory of social action and a theory of resistance in education underpinned by the studies of Einwohner and Hollander (2004) as well as Paul Willis (1977).

A brief discussion on the salient aspects of the above-mentioned conceptual frameworks and their relevance to this study is presented below. (A more detailed discussion follows in Chapter 2.)

1.4.1 Habermas's theory of communicative action

Habermas's (1984;1987) theory of communicative action presents a conceptual framework to contextualise the speech utterances that are constantly defined and redefined to reach consensual interpretation in the social relations between teacher and learner in the classroom (Habermas 1987:121). The thoughts and actions of both the teacher and the learner are mediated through the speech utterances that are subjected to claims of truth and sincerity (Habermas 1984: 278). Gregory and Ripski (2008: 345) postulate that in order for the learner to respect the authority of what the teacher says, a degree of trust in the teacher is necessary. It is inferred that if the speech utterances of the teacher are accepted as true, righteous and sincere, trust and understanding will prevail in the social interaction.

Similarly, insight into the objective, social and subjective worlds of the learner will help steer the speech utterances of the teacher in the "mediating process" towards mutual understanding and productive social relations (Habermas 1984: 278; May & Powell 2008: 163). When both the teacher and learner reach a mutual understanding of the speech utterances, they proceed to coordinate their actions accordingly resulting in communicative action (Habermas 1984: 274). When disruptive encounters occur in the classroom, it may thus be inferred that an understanding of the speech utterances between the teacher and learner cannot be attained due to the truth, justice or sincerity claims of the utterances being doubted.

The analytic constructs of validity claims and lifeworlds in Habermas's (1984; 1987) theory of communicative action present an interpretive framework for a discussion on the

constant definition, negotiation and renegotiation of the speech acts towards mutual understanding and coordinated action between teacher and learner in the classroom.

1.4.2 Weber's theory of social action

Weber's (1946; 1968;1978) theory of social action presents a conceptual framework for a discussion on social actions between teacher and learner in the classroom. The relevance of *understanding* and the subjective meanings attached to social actions form the background for a discussion on the conceptualisation of the interaction between teacher and learner in a social relationship (Weber 1978: 22-28). It is purported that *understanding* may be attained either intellectually or emotionally (Weber 1978: 5) and that all social actions are orientated in four ways, namely instrumentally, value-rationally, affectually and traditionally (Weber 1978: 24-25). I espouse social actions in the classroom as instrumentally orientated since the social actions are predominately focused on goal setting, systematic planning and goal attainment which are the characteristic features of instrumentally orientated social actions.

The mutual orientation of the actions between teacher and learner towards the process of teaching and learning forms the context of the relationship between the two interacting parties (Weber 1978: 28). The orientation of their meaningful behaviour and cognisant actions towards each other is viewed as a social relationship (Weber 1978: 28). I place particular focus on the manifestation of *conflict* in the social relationship that emanates when actions are intentionally orientated according to one's own will despite resistance from the interacting parties (Weber 1978: 38). I contend from a Weberian perspective that disruptive behaviour may be symptomatic of a social relationship in conflict when learners intentionally orientate their actions according to their own will despite resistance from the teacher and despite being in contravention of the school's code of conduct.

I present a discussion on the dynamics of the Weberian constructs of authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships (Weber 1978: 212-216) as an interpretive framework for an analysis of the teacher as the authority figure. The discussion of these

constructs preambles a description of the types of authority that occur in social relationships, namely, traditional, rational, substantive-rational, professional and reflexive authority. Mokhele (2006: 148) elaborates on the integral relevance of authority in the teacher-learner relationship by stating that a teacher's inability to establish authority in the classroom may result in the teacher losing control to the learner. I also discuss the relationship between the policymakers who determine the policies and regulations in the education system and the implementation of these policies and regulations in schools as a bureaucratic social relationship. According to Hoogenboom and Ossewaarde (2005:612) social actions in bureaucracies are triangulated between authority, power and legitimacy directed at the attainment of goals through the enactment of rules and regulations.

The analytic constructs of *understanding*, authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships, according to Weber's (1978: 22-28; 212-216) theory, affords a conceptual framework for the discussion of the teacher-learner relationship as a social relationship. In this relationship social actions are orientated either instrumentally, value-rationally, affectively or traditionally. Weber's (1946; 1968;1978) theory of social action presents a contemporary lens into the teacher-learner relationship as a bureaucratic social relationship by expounding the perceptions of legitimate order and formal and informal rules as determinants of stable social relationships (Rubinstein & Maravic 2010: 28).

1.4.3 Theory of resistance

A theory of resistance presents a broad framework to contextualise the synthesis of the experiences of people and the structures of domination and restraint (Giroux 1983: 107). In this study it presents an incisive framework to explore the disruptive behaviour of learners as acts of resistance in the classroom. The core elements of action and opposition conceptualised by Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 538) as resistance form the foundational argument of disruptive behaviour as resistance. The study of resistance among school boys in Paul Willis's (1977) classic study *Learning to Labour* also forms a broad conceptual framework for the interpretation of oppositional behaviours of learners

in the classroom.

Lilja and Vinthagen (2007: 1) describe resistance as a sporadic reaction that may be destructive or unsophisticated within networks of productive social interactions whilst Yü ksel (2006: 94) argues that resistance includes conscious and pre-planned behaviours. When learners disrupt a lesson, they position themselves in opposition to the teacher. Teachers react by exerting their power and authority to persuade learners to comply. The consequence is an ongoing battle in the teacher-learner relationship typifying resistant activity. According to Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 538) and Schulze (2012: 7) the manifestation of resistant activity in the presence of power in a relational situation implies a cyclical relationship between resistance and power. Resistance may hence be described as an oppositional act that is directed at someone or to something, whereby domination and resistance lead to the further exertion of power (Einwohner & Hollander 2004: 538).

In this study, I endeavour to conceptualise the disruptive behaviour displayed in the classroom as an act of resistance against the teacher. The overt disruptive behaviour such as the rejection of rules, opposition to authority, laughing and anti-social practices categorised in the Willis (1977) study presents a broad interpretive framework of resistance for this study.

The next section explains the research methodology.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research approach

In this study, I endeavour to understand how disciplinary problems manifest in a particular context, in this case, the classroom. The merit of choosing a qualitative approach is postulated by Boeije (2010: 11) who identifies three key elements of the approach. She cites the search for meaning, the enabling of contact through flexible methods and the

provision of qualitative findings as being the three defining features of qualitative research. The quest for meaning in a qualitative analysis focuses on understanding the meanings that people attach to their social environment and their social behaviour. It is therefore incumbent on the qualitative researcher to collect data that succinctly captures the participant's view on the phenomenon being researched and to extract only what is relevant during analysis.

According to Mason (2002: 1), qualitative research affords insight into the dynamics of the social world focusing on the pulse of everyday activities, the experiences of research participants as well as the dynamics of social processes, institutions, discourses and relationships. Through the choice of appropriate methodologies, qualitative research presents the potential to extrapolate richness, depth, nuance and context, which allow for persuasive arguments about *what, how* and *why* phenomena occur in particular contexts.

1.5.2 Research design, sampling and data collection

Qualitative researchers employ an emerging design that enables the researcher to plan the research on an ongoing basis depending on the findings of the previous step (McMillan & Schumacher 2014: 2). Thus, a flexible and creative approach is used both during the data collection and the analysis phases to enhance the richness of the data.

The research site of this research is one secondary school in the South Durban District of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and this study is thus a case study of that school. In qualitative research a case study "examines a bounded system (i.e., a case) over time in detail, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting" (McMillan & Schumacher 2014: 1). The reason why the focus is on one school only is because qualitative research is influenced by context which is only applicable to other schools if their contexts are similar. Accordingly, Gerring (2004: 341) describes a case study as "an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalise across a larger set of units". The selection of one school for this study represents a single unit that is identified for intense research with the possibility of the findings being generalised to schools with similar contextual factors. Gerring (2004:

348) elaborates that a case study is a preferable research strategy if the researcher is seeking to describe a phenomenon in depth to yield an analysis that is detailed, rich, complete, whole and exhibits a degree of variance. In this study I aim to explore and to present an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of disruptive behaviour in a single school.

Purposive and extreme case sampling will be used. Purposive sampling in qualitative research refers to the selection of people or cases for a specific purpose (Remler & Van Ryzin 2011: 58). It allows the researcher to choose participants who are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the topic of interest (McMillan & Schumacher 2014: 5). Purposive sampling will be used in this study because learners will be selected who are informative about disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The sample consisted of 16 learners who exhibit extreme disruptive behaviour, and in that sense, the sampling is also an example of extreme case sampling.

Through the appropriate choice of methodology, the emerging data encapsulates the dynamics of social relations within the classroom, the school and social interactions on a micro-level. The primary data collection instrument in qualitative research is the researcher (Airasian, Gay & Mills 2000: 381). Document analysis will be used as a data collection method because documents offer valuable historical insights, identification of trends and explanation of events (Airasian *et al*. 2000: 389). The School Discipline Record Book that records the transgressions of students will be used to record the frequency and types of transgressions of the sample in this study.

Interviews are often used as a data collection method in qualitative research because it affords the researcher the opportunity to explore and probe the participants' responses to assimilate in-depth data about their experiences, feelings, attitudes and interests (Airasian *et al.* 2000: 386). In this study graphic elicitation interviews will be used in addition to semi-structured interviews with an interview guide, to elicit information from the participants. These two forms of interviews will enable the researcher to probe the experiences of ill-disciplined learners and to understand the meanings that they attach to their behaviour. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.

During the data analysis process, the researcher ensures that the participant's view is preserved during interpretation. The data elicited will be analysed for the generation of theory on disruptive behaviour as an act of resistance in the classroom. In so doing the researcher achieves the aim of not only describing the happening but is also able offer explanations of how and why the phenomenon occurs. The essence of *why* learners misbehave in the classroom may be inferred through the analysis of the learners' accounts of their experiences within the context of the classroom. According to Boeije (2010: 11), such findings contribute to theoretical knowledge and practical use of the researched phenomenon.

1.5.3 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the truth value or the degree of confidence attributed to data, interpretation and methods used in ensuring the quality of a study (Connelly 2016: 435). Loh (2013: 4) posits that a list of criteria is necessary to establish the worth of narrative studies that contribute to the development of knowledge in a discipline. Connelly (2016: 435) asserts that the most widely accepted trustworthiness criteria among qualitative researchers is credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 290-327).

The credibility of a study hinges on the congruence between the findings and reality (Shenton 2004: 64). A researcher establishes credibility in a study by ensuring that there is adequate representation of the constructed social world being studied and that the participants are accurately identified and described (Wildemuth & Zhang 2009: 6; Elo, Kä ä riä inen, Kanste, Kyngas, Pö lkki & Utriainen 2014: 2). Transferability refers to the potential for the reasoning's and findings of a study to be extrapolated to other settings or groups and is established by the provision of sufficient contextual information of the site to allow other researchers to make judgements about the findings' transferability to different settings or contexts (Elo *et al.* 2014: 2; Shenton 2004: 69-70). The accountability of the researcher in maintaining coherence of the internal processes and in

contextualising the changing conditions of the phenomenon ensures the dependability of a study (Wildemuth & Zhang 2009: 7). Conformability refers to the objectivity of the data's accuracy, relevance or meaning (Elo *et al.* 2014: 2). Both dependability and conformity are established through the audit trails of the research process and findings by checking the consistency of the study processes and the internal coherence of the data, the findings, the interpretations and the recommendations (Wildemuth & Zhang 2009: 7)**.**

The provision of thick descriptions of the settings, participants and themes, member-checking in which the transcripts of the dialogues are verified with the participants for accuracy of data, the triangulation between data elicited from documents and interviews and debriefing sessions with my supervisor are strategies used to establish credibility in this study (Shenton 2004: 65-69). These strategies also increase the transferability, dependability and conformability of the study.

1.5.4 Ethical considerations

I applied for ethical clearance from the Unisa College of Education Ethical Clearance Committee (see Appendix B). After gaining ethical clearance I sought permission from the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) DoE to conduct this study before entering the field (see Appendix A). Using the ethical clearance certificate, I approached the principal of the school at which I teach for permission to conduct the research (see Appendix C). The reasons for the study, the letter of consent to conduct the study and the criteria to choose the participants were presented to the school principal.

All ethical measures were adhered to in respect of the participants. Informed consent from the participants as well as from their parents or guardians was attained by detailing my position as a doctoral student and the reasons and procedures for the study (see Appendices D, E and F). The participants were informed about the potential risks, benefits and the procedures to ensure anonymity and confidentiality before they agreed to participate in the study. Only participants who indicated a voluntary willingness to participate were asked to sign an assent form as participants. Before conducting the interviews, all participants were reminded about the agreement of informed consent and

the option of refusing to answer a question or withdrawing from the study. The dignity and privacy of the participants were ensured at all times.

More detail about the research method and data collection, as well as ethical issues are explained in Chapter 4. The next section explicates the significance of the study,

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study investigates disruptive encounters between learners and teachers in a selected secondary school. It seeks to highlight the experiences of learners as a perceived act of resistance against the authority of the teacher in the classroom and other structures of the educational system. When disruptive behaviour occurs in the classroom the instructional process is halted resulting in tension between the teacher and the defaulting learner. Repetitive disruption and the resultant tension also affect the social interactions in the classroom.

The aim in this study is to understand the learner's interpretation of their disruptive behaviour and to probe the trigger factors of such behaviour. The study is based on the premise that all classrooms are governed by rules and routines and that such misbehaviour occurs despite the presence of these preventative measures. The profound question is hence *why does disruptive behaviour occur?* An investigation into learners' responses would unravel the dynamics of how disruptions occur and provide understanding of the underlying causes that trigger such behaviour. The emerging data is useful for the development of preventative and reactive disciplinary strategies.

In a study conducted with school managing teams (SMTs), Samuel (2014: 53) cites numerous challenges that hinder the development of frameworks to deal with disruptive behaviour. The non-existence of safety and security measures in schools prevent the SMTs from arresting the problem of violence and disruptions. According to Samuel (2014: 53-54) SMTs are not equipped with tools to deal with the issue. He also posits that many cases of disruptive behaviour are criminal acts that permeate a school with fear.

Socio-economic challenges, including unemployment and moral degeneration in communities as well as socio-political factors such as racial, ethnic and political divides, hinder the development of disciplinary frameworks (Samuel 2014: 55). It is envisaged that this study will generate insightful findings from the learners' perspective and thereby add to the existing body of knowledge from which disciplinary frameworks maybe developed. The main concepts of the study are clarified next.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

1.7.1 Secondary school learner

The *Oxford South African Concise Dictionary* (2010: 665) defines a learner as "a person who is taught by another, especially a school pupil". The definition infers a relationship of dependence between the one being taught and the person offering the tuition. An inference is also implied that the tutor or teacher is accorded the "position of power" since the learner is dependent on the tutor or teacher for the tutelage. The South African Schools Act (in ELRC 2003a: B-4) espouses a similar definition by referring to the learner as "any person receiving education or obliged to receive education" whilst the South African Council for Educators (in ELRC 2003b: E-17) regards a learner as "a pupil or a student at any early learning site, school, further education and training institution or adult learning centre". A secondary school in the South African context refers to the second phase of a 12-year schooling system in which a learner completes grades eight to 12. In this study, the *learner* is contextualised as one who receives tutelage from a teacher in a secondary school.

1.7.2 Disruptive behaviour

Disruptive behaviour is defined as "behaviour that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect and to learn" (Mabeba & Prinsloo 2000: 34). Many concur that any action or attitude of a learner that is directed at harming or intimidating either the teacher or other learners and compromises their safety may be conceptualised

as disruptive learner behaviour (Samuel 2014: 15). Antisocial behaviour such as resistance, argumentativeness, defiance and swearing also disrupts the process of teaching and learning (Masekoameng 2010: 13). Such learner activities that disturb the order and ethos of the classroom and school resulting in an unsustainable learning environment are viewed as disruptive learner behaviour.

1.7.3 Communicative actions

According to Habermas's (1984:274) postulation in the *Theory of Communicative Action,* communicative action refers to the coordinated plans of action that people undertake by using language as a communicative medium to reach an understanding with an interacting individual. Speech acts facilitate the mediation function of language in communication (May & Powell 2008: 163). Consensual understanding is dependent on the negotiation of three validity claims; namely, truth claims referring to the factual content of the speech utterance, justice claims referring to the competence of the proposed interpersonal relation and sincerity claims referring to the authenticity of the utterance (Dietz & Widdershoven 1999: 239). When consensual understanding is attained by the interacting parties, they are able to coordinate their social actions and relate their intentions (Habermas 1984: x). In this study the speech utterances between teacher and learner in the classroom are contextualised as communicative action that is subjected to the three validity claims for the attainment of consensual understanding leading to coordinated plans of action by the both interacting parties.

1.7.4 Social actions

The Weberian conceptualisation of social action refers to actions of interacting individuals as *social* action when an individual attaches a subjective meaning to the intended action and then orientates her or his action purposively whilst being fully cognisant of the other's reaction (Weber 1968: 53). In this study the actions between teacher and learner in the classroom are contextualised as social actions. Both teachers and learners engage each other with specific subjective meanings attached to their intended actions and an

awareness of each other's consequential behaviour. For example, a learner may whistle in the classroom, fully aware of the classroom rules and the prospect of sanctions whilst a teacher may act reciprocally; the teacher may impose a sanction on the whistling learner fully cognisant that the learner may resist the sanction. Such interactions between teacher and learner are contextualised as social actions because of the subjectivity attached to the action and the awareness of the consequences of the intended action.

1.7.5 Social relationships

According to Weber (1978: 26) a social relationship is defined as the meaningful behaviour of a plurality of actors in which each would orientate his or her own actions in cognisance with the actions of others. The interacting parties also mutually consent to the meaning of a social relationship by agreeing on anticipated behavioural responses to each other (Weber 1978: 28). The teacher-learner relationship in this study is contextualised as a social relationship in which both parties meaningfully orientate their actions towards the process of teaching and learning. Each is fully aware of his or her own actions and an agreement on the anticipated behavioural responses towards each other is facilitated by a consensually developed School Code of Conduct (Khumalo & Maestry 2012: 98). The interaction between teacher and learner in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom is regarded as a social relationship in this study.

1.7.6 Resistant behaviour

An activity that occurs as oppositional towards someone or something in a relational situation is regarded as *resistance* in resistance studies (Einwohner & Hollander 2004:538). The core elements of resistance are thus *activity* and *opposition.* When learners refuse to adhere to the instructions of a teacher, they may be perceived as engaging in an *oppositional activity* directed at the teacher or towards the school. The resultant tension and conflict that emerge alter the social relation between teacher and learner. The oppositional behaviour that occurs within these strained social relations is referred to as resistant behaviour. The behaviour that disrupts the instructional processes

in the classroom is also categorised as resistant behaviour in this study. Therefore the term resistant behaviour and disruptive behaviour shall be used interchangeably.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In Chapter 1 the study was introduced and the background to the investigation was explained. The chapter also detailed the main research questions, the aims of the study, a brief overview of the conceptual framework, the research methodology and the significance of the study. A definition of the key concepts was also included.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of the study in detail, with in-depth discussions on Habermas's theory of communicative action (Habermas 1987), Weber's theory of social action (Weber 1946; 1968;1978) and the theory of resistance in education (Einwohner & Hollander 2004; Willis 1977).

Chapter 3 encapsulates a review of the literature pertinent to the study. Apart from reviewing the work of other researchers on lack of discipline in school, documents and policies governing discipline, causes of disciplinary problems and disciplinary strategies are discussed.

Chapter 4 details the research methodology used in this study. The ethical considerations, sampling techniques, data collection methods and data analysis methods are presented.

Chapter 5 focuses on the findings of the study. These findings are interpreted in the light of the conceptual framework of the study,

Chapter 6 presents the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of the study in the light of the previous chapter. The contribution of the study to new knowledge is also highlighted.

1.9 SUMMARY

An overview of the study was presented in chapter 1. In this regard the following was addressed: the background to the study was explained; the main research questions and aims of the study were stated; the conceptual framework was explained; the research methodology was described; and the significance of the study was pointed out. A definition of the key concepts was also included.

In the next chapter the conceptual framework of the study is explained.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An overview and the background to the research was presented in Chapter 1. The manifestation of disruptive behaviour in the classroom was broadly contextualised as an act of resistance emanating from tensions in the social relations between learners and teachers in the classroom. The supporting conceptual frameworks of Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984; 1987), Weber's theory of social action (1946; 1978) and the theory of resistance in education was also briefly discussed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 begins with an explanation of critical theory, its origin, its basic tenets and an overview of the critical theoretical perspectives of Jurgens Habermas (1984; 1987) and Max Weber (1946; 1978). **Figure 2.1** outlines the theoretical frameworks used in this study. An in-depth discussion on Habermas's theory of communicative action focusing on the use of language in social actions is followed by Weber's theory of social action focusing on the concepts of *understanding*, authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships. The chapter concludes with an overview of the theory of resistance particularising the core elements of resistance by Einwohner and Hollander (2004) and a theory of resistance in education supported by the paradigmatic study *Learning to labour* by Paul Willis (1977).

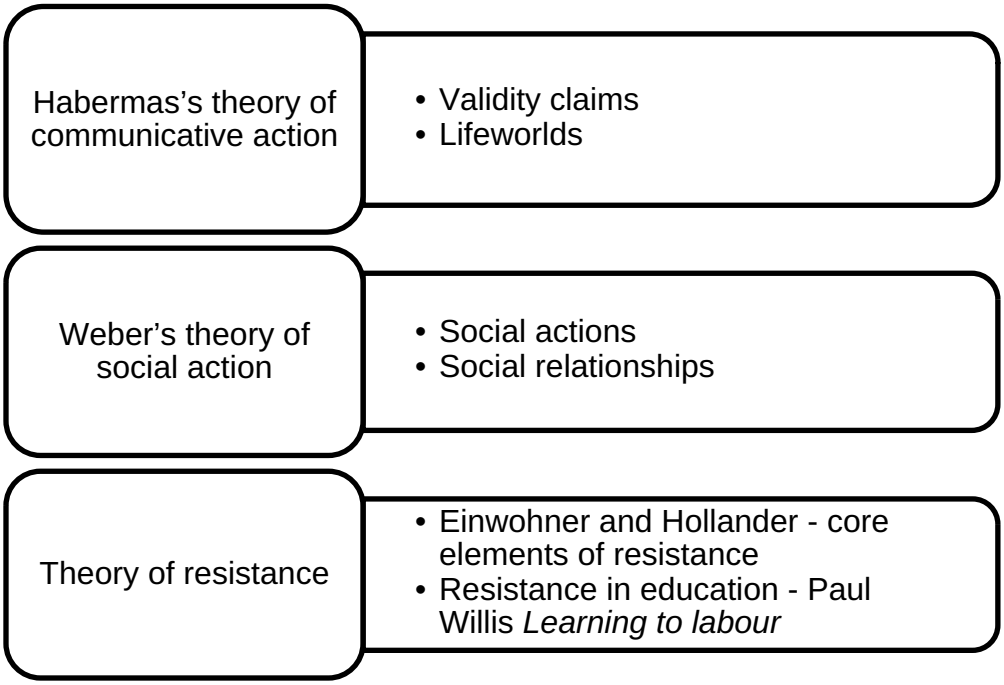


Figure 2.1 Outline of theoretical frameworks

The three theoretical frameworks outlined above will frame discussions on the contextualisation of disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers.

2.2 CRITICAL THEORY

The term *critical theory* manifests in a multitude of contexts with many different meanings but always in reference to the probing of everyday social reality aimed at exposing the hidden dynamics beneath the surface (May & Powell 2008: 43). It is a mechanism of enquiry that presents in-depth meanings and understandings of social reality by creating an awareness of oppressive structures existing in society. Such awareness often leads to resistance and the transformation of the existent systems of domination and exploitation. According to Johnson (2008: 397), critical theorists evaluate how all types of social systems affect an individual's well-being. He elaborates that the prioritisation of the welfare and the maximal potential development of the human being often requires major social transformation.

Kincheloe and McLaren (2002: 286) allege that studies framed in critical theory elicit "undeniably dangerous knowledge" that "upsets institutions and threatens to overthrow sovereign regimes of truth". It is envisaged that this study will produce knowledge that would challenge the narratives surrounding disruptive learner behaviour in the classroom since it focuses on the critique of teacher-learner social actions and social relationships and situates disruptive behaviour as an act of resistance instead of the usual social pathologies associated with learner indiscipline. The use of critical theory in this study is intended to evaluate how the social systems in education affect the teacher-learner relationship and also to seek transformative ways in which both teacher and learner may attain the highest level of contentment from their classroom interaction. This study aims to raise an awareness of the dynamics of speech utterances as a communicative act as well as the relevance of authority, power and legitimacy in the teacher-learner social relationship. The study also endeavours to situate disruptive behaviour as an act of resistance in the teacher-learner social relationship.

A brief discussion on the origin and basic tenets of critical theory and the critical theoretical perspectives of the two theorists used in this study, namely Jurgen Habermas (1984; 1987) and Max Weber (1946; 1968; 1978) follows.

2.2.1 The origin of critical theory: Frankfurt school

The term *critical theory* is reputed to have originated in 1937 as a type of code used by members of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany (Bronner & Kellner 1989: 1). The term was used to refer to the Marxian critique of capitalism and the theory of revolution to veil the hostility associated with Marxism prevalent at that time. However, the term stuck as social theorists used it to describe the general theory of the prevailing contemporary society.

Theorists at the Institute for Social Research sought theories that would interrogate the oppressive structures of society and afford opportunities for the recommendation of less restrictive options (Turner 1998: 553). The common school of thought on these discussions among the members of the Institute for Social Research became known as the *Frankfurt School*. The essential focus of the Frankfurt School was the pursuance of an understanding of the historical and social development of contemporary society and the search for contradictions in the present that afforded the possibility for transcending the built-in pathologies and domination of contemporary society (Devetak 2005: 138). Critical theory hence emerged as a mechanism of inquiry aimed at analysing, understanding and overcoming oppressive social structures.

2.2.2 Basic tenets of critical theory

According to Devetak (2005:143), critical theory interrogates the dogmatism of traditional theories by revealing the unexamined assumptions that direct traditional modes of thought and by exposing the complicity of such modes of thought in contemporary social conditions. The espousal of critical theory by How (2003: 2-8) expands on the salient characteristics of critique and reason cited by Brenner (2009: 201). How (2003: 2-4) asserts that despite the speculative thread that runs in critical theory, there also exists a significant emphasis on the importance of facts in critical theory. The network of relations within which facts are embedded imputes explanatory significance different to statistical significance. He elaborates further that it is the task of critical theory to interrogate the facts to unravel their potentiality and to rationalise the relatedness of oppositional facts in social structures.

The application of critical theory in this study is aimed at revealing the unexamined assumptions that guide the traditional modes of thought underpinning disruptive behaviour in the contemporary classroom. The traditional mode of thought that learner causal factors may better inform discussions on disruptive behaviour than teacher causal factors is an unexamined assumption as many studies are primarily viewed through the

lens of the teacher (De Wet 2006; Gasa 2005; Kruger 2011; Masekoameng 2010; Monareng 2003; Naidoo 2011; Naong 2007; Ramdan 2009; Ramsamy 2006; Rangraje 2002). By employing critical theory and expounding disruptive behaviour via the lens of the learner, there exists the probability of exploring teacher causal factors in the manifestation of disruptive behaviour. The assertion by How (2003: 4) that through critical theory the potentiality and relatedness of oppositional facts in social structures may be unravelled and rationalised also presents the opportunity to explore the oppositional relatedness of teacher authority, power and legitimacy in the social structure of the classroom. Social control mechanisms such as teacher authority and classroom rules may present oppositional consequences if core characteristics such as trust and respect are absent in the social structure (Hawdon 2008:184; Pace 2003: 38). The exploration, analysis and critique of such paradigms of thought will be informative in establishing strategies to deal with disruptive behaviour.

In this study, I employ the mode of immanent critique to discuss the traditional modes of thought buttressing disruptive behaviour. According to Stahl (2013a: 7) immanent critique is a "form of social critique that evaluates both the empirical behaviour constituting social practices and the explicit self-understanding of their members according to standards that are, in some sense, internal to those practices themselves". It is aimed at transforming the practices through actions and self-understanding. The behaviour of disruptiveness as a social practice among adolescents in the current social setting of the classroom is the evaluative focus in this study. Through a rigorous interrogation of the disruptive learner's self-reflection expounded in the empirical phase, the self-understanding and standards inherent in the social practice of disruptive behaviour among adolescents are critiqued. Since normative standards for social control usually prevail in the classroom, the profound questions on *which* standards are relevant and *why* a person engaged in a particular social practice should be encouraged to change her or his behaviour, is worthy of critique (Stahl 2013a: 7). An elucidation of these questions will elicit information on the normative standards and motives underpinning learners' perceptions of social control in the classroom. An understanding of these perceptions will also inform transformative practices and restorative disciplinary programmes.

A detailed overview of the critical theoretical perspectives of Habermas's theory of communicative action and Weber's theory of social action contextualising disruptive behaviour is presented below.

2.2.3 Critical theoretical perspective of Habermas

Habermas (1971: 317) proclaims that his theory of knowledge is rooted in his belief that the truth of statements is linked to the intention of a "good and true life". He supports his belief by asserting that language and communication are entwined and that from this premise emerges the goal of critical theory as a quest for a free life and for the truth that is embodied in all acts of communication (McCarthy 1981: 273).

Habermas (1984: ix) postulates in the *Theory of Communicative Action* that language-in-use or speech informs the rationality present in communicative action in society. Communicative action is elucidated as a form of social coordination that is dependent on the binding force of normative context-bound validity claims (Stahl 2013b: 538). In drawing on the dependence of the validity of claims, Habermas (1984: ix) purports that communicative action is invariably dependent on rationality, a core feature of critical theory. The rationality for an understanding and agreement of communicative utterances is subject to four validity claims, namely, comprehensibility, factual correctness (*truth*), normative acceptance (*rightness*) and sincerity (*truthfulness*) (Mingers 2000: 224).

A critical application of Habermas's theory of communication in this study creates the framework to critique the social practice of disruptive behaviour among learners in a classroom as a communicative action between teacher and learner. The relevance of validity claims and life-worlds in the understanding of speech utterances present the foundation from which the rationality of disruptive behaviour as a communication action may be argued. It affords insight into the disjuncture between the actual and the possible behavioural practices that develop in classrooms should incongruence exist between validity claims and speech utterances.

2.2.4 Critical theoretical perspective of Max Weber

Weber's (in Gerth & Mills 1946: 17) criticism of modern society is rooted in his early awareness of "corrupt practices" in Germany and America. Weber (1946: 78) elucidates that states are established through the legitimate use of physical force and the ascribing of rights to individuals and institutions to exert such force as permitted by the state. He elaborates that states are structured on the principles of legitimisation and domination that order obedience to those in authority.

Weber (1946: 211- 216) asserts that the modern state is technically dependent on a bureaucratic structure that extends to a bureaucratised social structure that prioritises negotiated rules and the elimination of personal, irrational and emotional elements in modern technical and economic structures. The pursuance of impersonal and rational social structures depends on the process of rationalisation which is surmised as a process in which one does introspection into one's own intentions and attempts to interpret the motives that underpin the professed intentions of those with whom one interacts in order to attain an understanding of one's own actions (Gerth & Mills 1970: 56). This Weberian conceptualisation of rationalisation highlights the subjective meanings attached to actions and an awareness of the consequences of one's own actions as the salient features of Weber's theory of social action (Weber 1968: 53). According to Letseka and Pitsoe (2013: 26), rationalisation serves as an instrument to critique social actions in bureaucratic organisations such as schools where authority, power and legitimacy are prevalent in social relationships.

A critical application of Weber's theory of social action in this study thus creates the framework to critique the social actions between teacher and learner in the bureaucratic structure of the classroom. The ability of the teacher to mediate understanding and agreement with the learner in respect of the social structures in the classroom may be critically analysed through the process of rationalisation. According to Hawdon (2008:184) and Pace (2003: 38) the congruence between perceptions of legitimacy and

the display of justice, dignity, respect and trust by those in power forms an integral aspect of bureaucratic social structures such as those existent in schools. The manifestation of disruptive behaviour may be critiqued by analysing the learner's perceptions of the dynamics of authority, power and legitimacy in the teacher-learner social relationship.

An overview of the critical theoretical perspective of this study has been presented. A detailed discussion on Jurgen Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action follows.

2.3 HABERMAS'S THEORY OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTION

I present a discussion on Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action particularising the impact of validity claims and the lifeworld on the speech utterances that occur in the classroom. A brief overview of the theory of communication shall be followed by a discussion on validity claims and the lifeworld, concluding with a contextualisation of disruptive behaviour as a communicative action.

2.3.1 Overview of Habermas's theory of communicative action

Habermas (1984: ix) postulates in the *Theory of Communicative Action* that language-in-use or speech informs rationality and is a communicative mechanism that serves mutual understanding between interacting persons. He argues that the consensus reached by the participants in attaining mutual understanding determines the social action coordination of the participants. Habermas (1984: x) elaborates that communicative action allows us to relate our intentions, feelings and desires to others and to the world around us. He also states that we constantly make claims that are contested, criticised, defended and revised in relation to the objective world in relation to the rightness, appropriateness or legitimacy of speech acts regarding the norms and values of our social life-world and in relation to sincerity and authenticity claims regarding our intentions and feelings. Criticisable validity claims are recognised through the application of reasoning to reach understanding between the participants and the objective world,

speech acts in the normative world and intrinsically into one's intentions and feelings.

The focal point of interest in the theory of communicative action is the use of language as a medium to coordinate action (Habermas 1984: 274). Speakers and hearers who engage in the use of language must understand the meanings of sentences and the conditions under which they are validated (Habermas 1984: 276). The presupposition of this notion is that acting and speaking subjects reach an understanding with each other by relating in more than one world and by basing their communication on a familiar system of worlds (Habermas 1984: 278). The internal world is a complimentary conceptualisation of the external world that arises from the differentiation of the external world into the objective and social world. Once the hearer and speaker meet in a common world, the corresponding validity claims of truth, rightness, and sincerity guides the function and the classification of the speech acts according to the individual languages. In the regulative use of language, both participants subject their utterances to normative validity claims in a common social world whilst in the imperative use of language, the participants meet in a common objective world whereby the speaker raises a claim to power that forces a particular action from the hearer (Habermas 1984: 276). According to the theory of communicative action, the coordination of actions that arise from speech acts facilitates understanding between the participants.

Speech acts that lead to actions that are viewed as disruptive between teacher and learner in the classroom may be interpreted according to Habermas's (1984) theory of communicative action. A deeper understanding of the speech utterances as a communicative act between the speaker and the hearer in the classroom may provide a window into the thoughts and actions of both parties by bringing to the fore the validity claims and life-worlds within which language functions in the classroom. The speech acts between the participants also expose the social interaction of the teacher-learner relationship. A more enunciated discussion of the theory of communicative action follows.

2.3.2 Communicative action

Communicative action may be defined as the coordinated plans of action of people using language as a communicative exchange to reach a mutual understanding (Habermas 1984: 274). This definition may be exemplified by a classroom scenario in which a teacher rationalises that in order to deter the vandalism of desks, all learners will be seated in register order, thereby allowing for the easy identification of the perpetrator of a vandalised desk. Learners are responsible to alert the teacher to any graffiti immediately upon reaching their seat. If the vandalised desk is reported at the end of the lesson, it is presumed that the learner seated at the desk during the lesson is responsible and relevant disciplinary measures as per the code of conduct will apply. The teacher engages in a communicative act of verbalising this thought with the understanding that learners will comply with the request to avoid possible disciplinary action. Upon hearing this request, learners apply rationalisation and then choose to engage in the communicative act of sitting in register order and searching for graffiti on the desk at the beginning of the lesson to avoid disciplinary action. A coordinated plan made by both the teacher and learner to minimise the vandalism of desks may be simplistically understood as an exchange of communicative acts defined as communicative action.

There are two types of action, namely, communicative action and strategic action that are sociologically significant because they are instrumental in action-coordination (Van Heerden 1994: 310). Strategic action is success orientated and is aimed at the manipulation of another's actions to achieve action-coordination. Communicative action achieves action-coordination through consensus from both parties in the realisation of their mutual plans of action. Strategic action is typified by rules of rational choice whilst mutual and co-operative achievement of understanding between the parties typifies communicative action. In reference to the aforementioned classroom scenario, the teacher's request for the learners to be seated in register order is a strategic action aimed at manipulating the actions of the learners to accept accountability for their desks. However, both parties engage in communicative action when the coordinated plans of action of both the teacher and learner result in the prevention of vandalism of the desks.

An explanation of the key constructs of validity claims and lifeworld is necessary for a more enunciated understanding of Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984; 1987). A discussion of these constructs is presented below.

2.3.2.1 Validity claims

When a thought takes root in the consciousness and a subsequent desire to communicate this thought unfolds, a communicative medium is required to execute this thought. These thoughts may originate during interactions whereby one may wish to share this thought with another. Linguistic communication via performatory utterances or speech acts often fulfils this "mediating function" (May & Powell 2008: 163). However, the successful execution of the thought into action and consequent understanding is dependent on certain assumptions. Three validity claims are proposed for a consensually negotiated understanding of such performatory utterances, namely, truth claims, justice claims and sincerity claims (Dietz & Widdershoven 1999: 239). For agreement to be reached between the speaker (e.g., the teacher) and the hearer (e.g., the learner), these claims must prevail in the linguistic interaction. Truth claims presuppose that the speaker presents the factual content of the utterance as it is; the justice claim regards the competence of the proposed interpersonal relation between hearer and speaker to process the utterance and the sincerity claim surmises that there is authenticity in the performatory utterance of the speaker. If these validity claims prevail in the linguistic interaction between speaker and hearer, it is envisaged that communicative action would result as depicted in Fig 2.1.

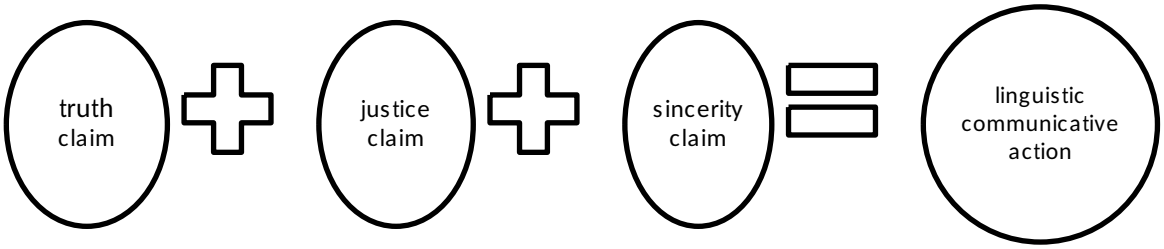


Figure 2.2: Representation of linguistic communicative action

An exemplification of this theory of communicative action, citing the aforementioned classroom scenario, may be illustrated as follows: the teacher rationalises that the possibility of disciplinary action will deter learners from vandalising the desks and would also help foster accountability. He or she articulates the statement: “If graffiti is reported at the end of the lesson, learners seated at the desk during the lesson will be accountable and subjected to disciplinary action” (*truth claim*); both the teacher and the learner possess the capacity to process the merits of the teacher’s request (*justice claim*); the teacher is sincere in the request made and the learners accept the sincerity of the teacher’s request and report any graffiti immediately upon reaching their designated (*sincerity claim*). Under the prevailing validity claims both the teacher and the learners reach consensus and understanding which results in a coordinated action, namely, the learners being seated in register order and accepting accountability for the designated desk.

According to Habermas (1996: xiv-xv), language is a facilitator of social coordination. He posits that language is constitutive of more than just the semantic and syntactic analysis of grammatical sentences. Linguistic communication is usually followed by coordinated action surmising that the speaker’s claims are valid and that the hearer accepts the

sincerity of the claims. When both parties are in consensus on reaching an understanding, communicative action is deemed to have occurred. Habermas (1996: xv) elaborates that when claims are contested, a discourse on the rational acceptance of the claims is argued with the aim of reaching a mutual understanding. Habermas (1996: xv) presents three prerequisites for the facilitation of such conflict resolutions, namely, both parties must agree on the meanings of the same words and expressions, both parties must accept rational accountability and both parties must accept the mutually negotiated resolution as being devoid of deception and falsity.

2.3.2.2 Lifeworld

Habermas (1987: 119) contends that agreements and understanding are also dependent on the lifeworld background of the parties that are involved in the social interaction. According to Habermas (1987: 119) there are three worlds that encapsulate the common definitions of situations that subjects draw on when seeking consensus on social interactions, namely, the objective world, the social world and the subjective world. The relation between the subject and these worlds are referred to as actor-world relations. An explanation of the three worlds and the associated aspects of situation definition, situation management and language knowledge follows.

a) Actor-world relations and language

Habermas (1987: 120) draws a correlation between the three pragmatic actor-world relations and the use of language aimed at mutual understanding. The objective actor-world relation referring to things that are achievable or obtainable correlates with the possible true statements of the objective world of speech acts; the social actor-world relation referring to recognisable obligatory objects shared by collective members correlates with the regulated interpersonal relations of normative speech and the subjective actor-world relations referring to the aspects of the actor's subjective world correlates with the privileged accessibility and public expression of the speaker's own experiences in subjective speech acts (Habermas 1987: 120).

Habermas (1987: 120) elaborates that the three world relations provide an interpretive framework that is used by both the speaker and hearer to contextualise their speech acts. He further postulates that communicative action is reliant on the cooperative interpretive processing of the simultaneous relation that the actors have with the objective, social and subjective worlds. He surmises that communicative utterances are always rooted in the interrelated world relations. Actors reach an understanding in a social interaction when they agree on the validity of an utterance and simultaneously recognise its validity claim. When an utterance is made, it may appear thematised towards one validity claim, but all three validity claims are internally related to the corresponding modes of communication. When a hearer particularises one validity claim during a speaker's utterance, it is implicitly acknowledged that the other two claims are also valid. For example, a consensual understanding is not possible when a hearer (e.g., a learner) views the speaker (e.g., the teacher) as sincere but doubts the truth validity of the speaker's utterance.

Similarly, a speaker may accept the normative validity of a command but not doubt whether the addressee will act on the command (Habermas 1987: 121). For example, before an examination, a teacher may issue a command to a learner to sit at an assigned place like the other learners have done as per the rules of the school (*normative world*); the teacher may not issue the command and simultaneously doubt whether the learner will follow the command if the teacher accepts the truth validity of the command as being orientated towards the mutual understanding that both actors have regarding learners sitting in assigned places during examinations. The background to this communicative action maybe illustrated as follows: the *theme* of this utterance is seating during the examination; sitting in the assigned places is the *goal* related to the theme; the teacher formulates a *plan* to facilitate seating by assigning seats to each learner. The formal structure of the seating plan is the *normative framework* in which the teacher is allowed to assign seats to learners during examinations. The action situation is defined *temporally* by the immediate examination and *spatially* by the distance to the learner's assigned

seat.

b) Situation definitions

The background to communicative action is formed by *situation definitions* that to a certain extent have to overlap to orientate towards mutual understanding (Habermas 1987: 121). Should the learner reply that the assigned chair is broken (*objective world*), the *situation definitions* will be redefined – the *theme* will change to finding another chair. Should there be no problem with the chair and the learner refuses to be seated, the teacher may opt for strategic action by stating that the learner will not receive a question paper until he/she is seated at the assigned seat on the understanding that the learner wishes to write the examination like the other learners (*subjective* world).

New utterances between subjects are always tested; the definition of the situation projected by the speaker is subjected to confirmation, modification, partial suspension or questioning (Habermas 1987: 121). The definition and redefinition of the situation is a continual process of correlation between the three actor-worlds, either as an element of consensual interpretation in the objective world, as an inter-subjectively recognised normative element of the social world or as a private component of the subjective world which is accessible to one of the participants in the interaction. The redefinitions of the situation between the speaker and the hearer are based on a search for commonality in the objective, social and each participant's own subjective world.

Situations have a horizon which is the segment of the lifeworld relevant to the situation for which mutual understanding is necessary for actions to occur (Habermas 1987: 123). Situations are underpinned by themes, goals and plans of action against the background of the contexts of relevance as explained in the example of the learner being asked to be seated. Themes and horizons constantly shift according to utterances and the contexts of relevance for which the participants seek mutual understanding so that they may actualise their actions (Habermas 1987: 123-124).

c) Situation management

According to Habermas (1987: 126), actions emanate from situations and he posits that there are two aspects to managing a situation between the speaker and the hearer, namely, the teleological aspect and the communicative aspect. The teleological aspect pertains to the realisation of one's aims or the execution of one's plan of action whilst the communicative aspect is focused on the interpretation of the situation and the attainment of consensus between the subjects.

In communicative action the subjects share a common definition of the situation and work towards achieving their plans cooperatively (Habermas 1987: 127). The prerequisite for reaching consensus and the attainment of goals between the subjects is an agreement on the shared definition of the situation. Should the subjects not agree on the definition of the situation, consensus would not be possible resulting in the termination of the communicative act. A successful situation occurs when teleological action and consensus has been reached.

A situation is a section of the lifeworld that migrates towards a theme (Habermas 1987: 127). When subjects engage in speech acts, a theme emanates from the interests and aims of at least one subject. This theme creates the domain of relevance for a shared definition of the situation between the subjects. It is against this background that subjects develop their plans, interpret the situation and pursue their goals. In communicative action it is imperative that the subjects work cooperatively to avert disagreement and misunderstanding which would hinder the subjects from achieving their goals.

When the subjects seek an interpretation of the situation to formulate their plans, it is necessary that they understand their "lifeworld to the degree necessary to be able to act in it and operate upon it" (Habermas 1987: 128). All situations to which the subjects are exposed are constituted in their life-worlds from which they must extract themes and domains of relevance in relation to other situations and experiences they may have

encountered in the past. These experiences form the *stock of knowledge* that is always already in the subject's lifeworld that assists the subjects in interpreting the situation and developing their plans of action.

This stock of knowledge presents the participants with a common background for the process of attaining consensus, the processing of familiar situation definitions and for the negotiation of new situation definitions (Habermas 1987:125). The relations between the objective, social and subjective worlds within which the participants constantly navigate when the horizon of a situation shifts, are always pre-interpreted by the participants. The participants are exposed to unfamiliar situations in their daily communicative practices; new situations evolve in the "always already" lifeworld constituted by the cultural stock of knowledge. Speakers and hearers constantly transverse within the horizon of their life-worlds; it is a transcendental space in which they meet to mutually raise claims of relevance between their utterances and the actor-worlds, where validity claims are criticised and confirmed and where disagreements and agreements are settled (Habermas 1987:126).

Habermas (1987:121) concludes that communicative utterances are constantly defined, redefined and mutually interpreted according to the objective, normative and subjective elements of the actor's world.

2.3.3 Situating disruptive behaviour within Habermas's theory of communicative action

In this study I explore the narrative that disruptive behaviour may emanate from an incongruence between speech utterances, validity claims and the lifeworld of the teacher and learner in the classroom. A discussion of these constructs is presented below.

2.3.3.1 Validity claims

Mercer (2010: 3) posits that the nature and function of talk form an integral aspect of classroom education and meanings are continually renegotiated through talk and interaction. According to Dietz and Widdershoven (1999: 239), interpretation and understanding between interacting individuals is facilitated by subjecting speech utterances to three validity claims, namely, the truth, justice and sincerity claim. Dissonance may emanate when any of the validity claims of the utterances between the interacting individuals is doubted. A teacher who is regarded as insincere based on prior verbal utterances, may be doubted by a learner when told to be attentive to the section being taught because it was important for the examination. The coordinated action of the learner being attentive and the teacher being trusted may be illusive resulting in non-consensus between teacher and learner.

Dissonance may also similarly arise when a teacher doubts the justification put forth by an insincere learner for incomplete homework. If the speech utterances between teacher and learner cannot be renegotiated to reach a consensual interpretation and understanding, the ensuing speech exchanges may lead to conflict in the classroom. Barnes, Kelly, Seaberry and Vogel (2003: 1) assert that such conflicts perpetuate feelings of anger, frustration, aggression, distrust and rejection. The manifestation of such emotions in the classroom often escalates to a repeated exchange of speech utterances between learner and teacher without consensual interpretation and understanding. Such exchanges create tension resulting in disruptive encounters between teacher and learner.

2.3.3.2 Lifeworld

During speech acts between teacher and learner both assume dual roles of speaker and hearer at different points in the communicative act. During the speech acts both parties seek common ground to meet to enable mutual understanding and successful communication. According to Habermas (1987: 119), the lifeworld consisting of the objective, social and subjective worlds of both parties forms the common meeting space

to contextualise the speech acts.

When a teacher makes a speech utterance in the classroom, it is envisaged that the teacher is cognisant of the lifeworld of the learner and seeks commonality on reaching consensus in the interrelated objective, social and subjective worlds of the learner. For example, when a teacher requests reasons for non-submission of homework from a defaulting learner and is told that the learner forgot, the teacher meets the learner in the subjective world space but the interrelated factors of a sick parent (objective world) and lack of pastoral support at home (social world) may also be relevant to the speech utterance of the learner. The teacher has the option of accepting the validity claim of the learner curtailing further discussions or to redefine the situation and renegotiate the reasons for the non-submission of the homework (justice claim/subjective world). Discussions that probe into the subjective world of a learner in the presence of other learners may lead to a defensive or confrontational response from the learner, resulting in a constant redefinition of the situation.

Each utterance of the speaker is constantly tested for validity and the theme of the situation is accordingly redefined as both the speaker and the hearer negotiate consensus. Habermas (1987: 126) posits that there are two aspects of managing a situation; namely the teleological aspect and the communicative aspect. The teleological aspect focuses on the attainment of one's aims and the execution of one's plan of action whilst communication is focused on interpretation and consensus of the situation. When a teacher is confronted by a defaulting learner, the teacher also seeks contexts of relevance of the situation in *his or her own* lifeworld. The teacher is likely to draw on past experiences (subjective world) to manage the situation by choosing speech acts that can be validated in the normative world (according to the school rules) and which will not deviate from the plan of action for the lesson as the teacher endeavours to lead the situation towards interpretation and consensus.

By contextualising disruptive behaviour within Habermas's theory of communicative action (1984; 1987), I endeavour to highlight the impact of speech acts in social relations.

The relevance of validity claims and the lifeworld in enabling mutual understanding and successful communication in the teacher-learner relationship is also elucidated through this conceptual framework.

A discussion on Habermas's (1984; 1987) theory of communicative action has been presented. A discussion of Weber's (1978) theory of social action follows.

2.4 WEBER'S THEORY OF SOCIAL ACTION

I present a discussion on Max Weber's (1978) theory of social action particularising *understanding* and the impact of authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships that occur in the classroom. A brief overview of the theory of social action shall be followed by a discussion on the types of social actions, the conceptualisation of social relationships, the dynamics of authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships, the types of authority in social relationships and the presence of social relationships in bureaucracies. The discussion shall conclude with the contextualisation of disruptive behaviour within Weberian theory of social action.

2.4.1 Overview of Weber's theory of social action

Weber (1978: 4) espouses the conceptualisation of social action by focusing on the subjective meanings that the interacting parties attach to their proposed overt or covert behaviours. He also highlights the awareness of other's behaviour in determining the orientation of one's own actions. Despite criticisms of Weber's theory of social action being underdeveloped, complex and ambiguous, its relevance is important in interpretive sociology (Etzrodt 2005: 95; Roscigno 2011: 351). The formulation of Weber's theory of social action is important in modern sociology because the ideal types espoused by Weber in his interpretation of action in society is unique to his theory and is not included in any other specific modern theory (Etzrodt 2005: 103).

Weber (1978: 4) devotes particular attention to the foundation of the term *understanding* by emphasising that the subjective meaning relevant to *understanding* refers to the attributable meaning given by the interacting actors to a particular intended action and does not refer to "correct" or "true" meanings underpinning *understanding.* The interpretation of *meaning* aims at ascertaining clear and accurate insight and comprehension of an action or behaviour (Weber 1978: 5). *Understanding* is achieved either rationally through a clear intellectual grasp of the contextual meaning of the proposed action-elements or emotionally or appreciatively through an emotional grasp of the emotional context of the action through sympathetic participation. An *understanding* of one's actions is clear when it is reasoned logically according to a recognised mode of thinking. Weber (1978: 5) simultaneously acknowledges that not all human actions may be understood intellectually, nor can they be understood empathetically if they differ radically from one's own values.

In circumstances when the actions cannot be understood either intellectually or emotionally, they may be accepted as given data (Weber 1978: 5). When one observes intense emotional reactions with which one cannot empathise, it is possible that the meaning underpinning such actions may be *understood emotionally* and the course of the action may be *interpreted intellectually*. *Understanding* may also be attained through direct observation such as observation of verbal utterances (Weber 1978: 8); for example, a teacher may state "write a composition" which communicates the understanding of writing sentences about a given topic or theme. *Observational understanding* is also attained through the observation of emotions such as a frown on a teacher's face which may be understood as disapproval or confusion. *Explanatory understanding* occurs when the motive of the meaning attached to a particular action is articulated by the actor, for example, a teacher stating "Write a composition for the first quarterly English test" attaches the motive to the meaning that only a composition is accepted as a task for the first quarterly English test.

Weber (1978: 22) elaborates that social actions are inclusive of the failure to act and passive compliance directed to the past, present or expected future behaviours of others. Only actions constituted by subjective attitudes that are directed to the behaviour of others are regarded as *social*. However, not all human contact may be interpreted as social*;* only meaningfully orientated actions towards another individual's past, current or future behaviour exemplifies human contact with social character. For example, two learners accidently colliding with each other in the corridor may be viewed as a natural event but the attempt to avoid the collision or a verbal exchange after the collision encapsulates action with a social character.

The meaning attached to the action is not reliant on linguistic communication but originates from the beliefs and intentions embedded in the consciousness of the acting individual (Habermas 1984: 279). Individuals may seek to pursue their own personal interests, specific value orientations or they may seek to satisfy their personal feelings or desires by engaging in specific actions. The goals and situations in which individuals pursue actions form part of the subjective meaning that the individuals attach to the actions.

Etzrodt (2005:94) argues that this explanation of social action with a meaningful orientation is suggestive of an anticipatory expectation that coordinates the social action between (two) people. One of the criticisms of Weber's theory of social action is his lack of discussion on the reasons for the formation of anticipatory expectations. Habermas (1984: 280) expounds this underdevelopment of Weber's conception of social action by stating that Weber should have included both the intentions and reciprocal actions of the interacting subjects into the conception of social action as a model of purposive activity. According to Weber's narrative all social actions may be determined either by purposive-rationality, value-rationality, affectual rationality or traditional rationality (Weber 1978: 24-25). A detailed explanation of these four types of social actions is presented below.

2.4.2 Types of social action

Weber (1978: 24) purports that all social actions are orientated in four ways, namely instrumentally, value-rationally, affectually and traditionally.

2.4.2.1 Instrumentally orientated social action

Instrumentally rationalised or purposive action refers to social actions in which all alternatives to achieve a particular end are simultaneously considered based on the desire for positive results that eliminate the undesired secondary results (Weber 1978: 26). The rationalisation of alternative strategies to attain a specific outcome, the relation of the outcome to the secondary consequences and the relevance of the alternative outcomes are classified as instrumentally orientated social actions. For example, a learner who attends class rather than be absent without permission after weighing the possibility that he may be caught and subjected to a demerit that would jeopardise his chances of being elected a prefect, is regarded as performing an instrumentally orientat ed social action. Naidoo (2014: 203) elaborates that in instrumentally rationalised social action the individual is clearly cognisant of the desired goals and plans systematically towards the attainment of the goals. The learner who decides to be in class rather than absent without permission may be interpreted as working systematically towards the goal of being elected a school prefect.

2.4.2.2 Value-orientated social actions

Value-orientated social actions refer to behaviour that is intrinsically guided by a specific ethical, aesthetic or religious belief regardless of the success of the result (Weber 1978:24-25). The action of a learner to report his best friend for copying may be guided by the ethical belief in honesty. Whether the friend refutes the claim of copying or ceases the friendship is an irrelevant consequence of the decision to report the copying on the grounds of honesty. The actions are formulated according to clear self-conscious values that direct the course of the action. Etzrodt (2005: 97) asserts that value-orientated

behaviour is aligned with commands, demands and “rule-following”.

2.4.2.3 Affectual-orientated social actions

Affectual-orientated social actions are rooted in sentiments (Gerth & Mills 1946: 56) and the uncontrolled reaction to an exceptional stimulus (Weber 1978: 25). Etzrodt (2005:98) elaborates that affectual-orientated social actions are associated with spontaneous and emotionally motivated behaviour. The behaviour of learners flinging books or swearing at teachers when angered may be interpreted as an affectually orientated social action.

2.4.2.4 Traditionally orientated social actions

Weber (1978: 25) classifies actions that occur as automatic reactions to habitual stimuli as traditionally orientated social actions. Traditional actions are also identifiable by a lack of intention in questioning the habitual social order (Etzrodt 2005:100). For example, engaging in prayer at the start of a school day is traditionally orientated social behaviour.

The four abovementioned orientations of social action impact on the perceptions of authority in social relationships (see section 2.4.3.2).

2.4.3 Social relationships

Weber (1978: 26) defines a *social relationship* as the meaningful behaviour of a plurality of actors in which each orientates her or his own actions cognisant of the actions of the other. He purports that *social relationships* are also defined by a mutual orientation of actions and an imputed meaning of the context of the relationship by the acting parties. Weber (1978: 28) elaborates that the acting parties mutually consent to the meaning of a social relationship by agreeing on anticipated behavioural responses to each other. Such social relationships that are founded on a rational agreement of mutual consent based on one’s own value-rational belief or the rational expectation of the other party to abide by the value is termed an *associative* social relationship (Weber 1978: 28).

A *social relationship in conflict* manifests when one intentionally orientates one's action according to one's own will despite resistance from persons with whom one interacts (Weber 1978: 38). Although there may exist a mutually understanding engagement between interacting individuals in a social relationship, the notion of probability exists that an individual may not always respond according to uniform and recurrent behaviours observed in social actions (Wrong 1970: 24). When such tensions enter into a social relationship, the context and consent upon which the relationship is founded, changes and the conflictive social actions elicit resistance.

Candela and Rockwell (2004: 693-694) posit that a network of social relationships exists in classrooms in which teaching is regarded as a social relationship between teacher and learner involving a distinctive discourse. When teachers and learners meet in the classroom, each is fully cognisant of the context of the relationship and expectations of each other: teachers are expected to teach and learners are expected to learn. Hemmings and Pace (2007: 4-5) assert that teachers are entrusted with the formal right and responsibility to take charge of classrooms and the expectation is nurtured that teachers will impose some form of social control on the learners in a quest to foster intellectual and moral development (Pace 2003: 39). The success of the relationship hinges on the mutual understanding of an agreement that teachers will apply social control mechanisms such as rules and sanctions to maintain a degree of uniformity of social behaviour in the classroom (Letseka & Pitsoe 2013: 26).

When learners seek to orientate their actions according to their own will, they act in resistance to the teacher and the social control mechanisms of the classroom. Within the Weberian context such a teacher-learner relationship exemplifies a *social relationship in conflict* since despite a mutual understanding and agreement on the context of their relationship, the learner wilfully orientates his or her actions against the rational agreement with the teacher (Weber 1978: 38). Such conflicts in a social relationship are termed "peaceful conflict" or "social selection" since it is latent and does not involve physical violence but may be comparable to a "competition" for the control of advantages

or opportunities desired by others (Weber 1978: 38). The disruptive encounters that manifest between teachers and learners may be perceived as “competitions” in which learners seek control of the teacher’s desired opportunity to capture the attention of the learners. The factors that motivate one to act according to one’s own will against the agreements of a social relationship presents an interesting perspective for the exploration of disruptive behaviour in classrooms.

The Weberian constructs of authority, power and legitimacy provide an insightful perspective into the dynamics of social actions and social relationships (Weber 1978: 212 -216). A discussion of these constructs in social actions, social relationships and in bureaucratic social relationships is presented below.

2.4.3.1 Authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships

Weber (1947: 152) defines authority as “the probability that a command with a specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons, despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which that probability rests” which supports the premise that commands and obedience are integral aspects of authority. Weber (1978: 212; 299) also asserts that the term *domination* may be used interchangeably with *authority* based on the diverse motives that foster obedience to commands. The motives may be based on custom, personal advantage, or purely affective or ideal motives of solidarity (Guzman 2014:3). Weber (1978: 213) lends further clarity to the concept of authority by stating that a *belief in its legitimacy* should exist in a group in order to foster compliance by persons within the group. The decision to obey a command may hence be dependent on whether or not the authority of the person issuing the command is legitimately recognised as a person in authority. Hemmings and Pace (2007: 6) surmise that authority is *a social relationship* in which legitimacy is granted by some people to lead, and agreement is reached by others to follow.

Hemmings and Pace’s (2007: 6) assertion of authority being a *social relationship* is also supported by Letseka and Pitsoe (2013: 26) who conceptualise the authority of the

policymakers or bureaucrats who determine the rules and regulations applicable to the education system and the implementation of these rules and regulations in schools as a social relationship between the parties. Policymakers possess discretionary powers to implement professional development programmes as well as the power to enforce obedience in the education system. Authority and power are therefore perceived as intricately woven constructs in social relationships epitomised by rules and compliance since they influence the social conduct of the individuals in the social relationships. Hemmings and Pace (2007: 8) assert that authority is a resource that is used by teachers to maintain social control in the classroom.

Weber's (1978:946*)* conception of authority also espouses the concept that the social conduct of a person may be influenced by the imposition of a command to such an extent that the content of the command becomes the maxim for the social conduct for the person on whom the command is imposed. The adherence to a command that influences social conduct is termed *obedience* (Weber 1978: 946). For example, a teacher may command that a learner raises a hand and then stands up when answering a question. When the learner responds at all times in the same manner when the teacher raises a question, the learner is deemed to be obeying the command of the teacher. The imposition of the teacher's will to command the learner to respond in a specific manner influences the social conduct of the learner to the extent that it becomes a maxim when answering a question. The ability of the teacher to influence the social conduct of the learner in such a manner demonstrates the domination and/or authority of the teacher in the social relationship.

According to Lawrence, Malhotra and Morris (2012: 105), power also manifests as behaviour, attitudes and opportunities in relationships between individuals, structural systems and technology. They elaborate that power is not a dormant phenomenon but rather an *action* that occurs within a relationship. For example, a learner may behave disruptively towards the teacher as a power-figure or may adopt a negative attitude to the school system and may act destructively to the implementation of cameras as a safety measure. Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006: 191) concur with this view of power

being an enacted phenomenon by particularising the “power to” and the “power over” conceptions of power. The “power to” conception of power suggests a facilitative nature that creates the opportunity for engagement in something that one would previously be precluded from doing, for example, the power to elect a SGB. The “power over” conception of power is suggestive of a restrictive nature that is synonymous with the potential control of one person’s actions by another, for example, the power of a principal over a learner.

Weber (1978:31) elucidates that social actions in a social relationship are regarded as valid if their execution is guided by a belief in the existence of a legitimate order that is orientated to determinable maxims. The *legitimacy* of an order may be guaranteed subjectively, that is, affectively, religiously or by a value-rational belief or it may be guaranteed by the expectation of specific external outcomes (Weber 1978:33). Externally guaranteed legitimate orders are categorised into conventional and lawful orders (Weber 1978: 34). The validity of conventional orders is guaranteed by the probable deviation from the social group resulting in disapproval whilst lawful orders are guaranteed by the probable application of physical or psychological coercion being instituted by a *staff* of people to elicit compliance or the punishment of the violation. Consent and acceptance are major factors in the recognition of legitimacy (Barata, Calheiros & Graç a 2013: 1066). Studies also indicate that perceptions of legitimacy are increased when justice, dignity, respect and trust are displayed by those in power (e.g., by teachers) (Hawdon 2008:184; Pace 2003: 38).

Weber (1946: 79) characterises three types of legitimacy based on the manner in which authority and obedience is justified in the normative patterns of society. Traditional legitimacy is recognised when domination and obedience occur as a result of habitual behaviour; in charismatic legitimacy compliance is evoked by the extraordinary personal aura of the person in authority, and in legal legitimacy rules and statutes justify obedience to the commands of those in authoritative roles. Du Toit, Oosthuizen and Wolhuter (2003: 463) assert that power is associated with forced obedience whilst authority elicits a sense of belonging and accountability in learners.

The legitimacy assigned to authority is motivated by various factors in social relationships. A discussion on the types of authority and the manner in which they manifest in social relationships is presented below.

2.4.3.2 Types of authority in social relationships

Weber (1946: 295-300) maintains that the classification of authority is determined by the claims of legitimacy and the manner in which those in positions of power relate to their subjects, namely, traditionally, charismatically and rationally. Naidoo (2014: 203) extends Weber's classification of the three types of authority to types of leadership in social organisations such as schools. A discussion on these authority types together with rational-substantive, professional and reflexive authority follows.

a) Traditional authority

Traditional authority is associated with habitual behaviour whereby the commands of a person is obeyed daily or routinely during the course of a work day (Weber 1946: 296). Traditional authority is also associated with patriarchal authority and an irrational loyalty to the authority figure (Weber 1946: 295). Traditional authority in organisations is typified by a common belief in certain customs and traditions of the organisation developed over a period of time (Naidoo 2014: 203). Leadership is usually inherited and positions of power are maintained through customary practices that nurture loyalty and submission.

b) Charismatic authority

Charismatic authority is defined by the person in command exuding *charisma* and extraordinary qualities that persuade one to obey his or her commands (Weber 1946: 295). The obedience stems from the belief that the person possesses superior and inspirational knowledge of need for the command and the reason why it should be

followed. Charismatic authority occurs in organisations where the leader appeals to the emotions of the members by evoking devotion, dedication and loyalty as a means of control (Naidoo 2014: 203). Such organisations are usually poorly structured, lack laws and rules, have no fixed hierarchical officials and no properly organised financial support.

c) Rational authority

Rational authority, also termed *legal authority* derives from authority emanating from rules, official functional duties, rationally established norms, enactments, decrees and regulations (Weber 1946: 299). Rational authority is also referred to as legal or formal rational authority (Guzman 2014: 5). Rational-legal authority in an organisation is maintained through the adherence to a set of impersonal rules that are rationally developed by members of the organisation (Naidoo 2014: 203). These rules are directed towards the accomplishment of specifically defined goals. This form of rational-legal authority is present in bureaucracies.

d) Substantive-rational authority

It is noted that Weber's typology of authority is premised on the corresponding legitimacies of tradition, charisma and rationality but many critics have stated that Weber omitted the classification of a non-formal rational authority that corresponded with value-rational legitimacy (Guzman 2014: 77). It is argued that value-rationality cannot be legitimised as authority since obedience based on the rationality of normative values is directed to an ideological outcome and not to anyone personally (Guzman 2014: 77). Guzman (2014: 79-80) presents an argument for the classification of a fourth typology of Weber's authority as substantive-rational authority based on Weber's *Sociology of Law*.

Guzman (2014: 79-80) substantiates this typology by arguing that legitimacy in substantive-rational authority is based on the belief in the correctness of the authority to mediate between abstract values and concrete practical norms and in the belief that "an authority is a correct mediator between ultimate goals and concrete means". This is

exemplified in how doctors' authority is legitimised due to their credentials but their authoritative advice is accepted on its claim of substantive rationality and not their credentials which is of secondary importance. Similarly, a teacher's authority is legitimised due to one's qualification as a teacher but assuming the authoritative position in the classroom is dependent on one's ability to mediate between abstract values such as intellectual and moral development using appropriate practical normative methods and the ultimate goal of promoting the learner to the next successive grade (Pace 2003: 39).

e) Professional authority

Guzman (2014: 10-11) also presents another typology of substantive-rational authority by combining substantive-rational and formal-rational transformations of charisma. Of particular relevance to this study is *professional authority* in which Guzman (2014:15) asserts that the defining element in accepting professional authority is the "professional's capacity to realise a goal or value on rational grounds"; for example, a teacher's capacity to build a learner's self-esteem must be achieved through methods that do not humiliate or denigrate as these methods would not justify the goal. Credentials obtained through expert training recognise the rational technical knowledge and sometimes the value orientation or ethical standards of professionals but the acceptance of *professional authority* is primarily dependent on the capacity to achieve a particular goal or value through rational means.

Within the context of *professional authority*, the acceptance of a teacher's *professional authority* is largely dependent on *how* the teacher influences the beliefs and behaviour of the learners in an effort to complete the established curriculum and pursue academic goals (Barata *et al.* 2013: 1066). The conception of *professional authority* aligns with the diminishing influence of traditions and institutions in the formation of social values in evolving Western societies (Barata *et al.* 2013: 1065). It presents an alternative lens to the pure typologies of traditional, charismatic and rational authority.

f) Reflexive authority

Hoogenboom and Ossewaarde (2005:613-614) contend that emergent bureaucracies evolve from legal-rational authority to *reflexive* authority in response to the constant renegotiation of rules and fixed rationality. *Reflexive authority* refers to the belief that individuals and institutional authorities possess the ability to engage in the negotiation, reconciliation and representation of arguments, interests, identities and abilities (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005: 614). The difference between *reflexive authority* and legal-rational authority is that in *reflexive authority* rationality is not fixed. Instead of issuing commands as in legal-rational authority, in *reflexive authority* leaders embrace the arguments and interests of all participatory individuals in attaining *socially rational goals. Reflexive authority* compares favourably to charismatic authority in that power is dependent on the "aura" of the dominant individual but differs in that the rules and goals are not commanded but are evolved through processes of negotiation, reconciliation and representation (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005: 614). The emphasis in *reflexive authority* is on the state of services in which trust of members is more highly valued than obedience to rules (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005: 616).

The discussion on authority in social relationships expounded how authority is legitimised traditionally, charismatically, rationally, professionally and through reflexivity. A further elucidation of the manifestation of power, authority and legitimacy in social relationships in bureaucratic structures such as the educational system is presented below.

2.4.3.3 Social relationships in bureaucracies

The presence of power in social relationships invariably involve social inequality which impacts on the manner in which individuals interact in a specific social unit (Cuff and Sharrock 2006: 47). This assertion by Cuff *et al.* (2006: 47) concurs with the system of super- and subordination espoused in Weber's characterisation of ideal-type bureaucracies (Weber's 1946: 212). Weber (1946: 228) refers to bureaucracy as a "power instrument" that is used as a tool to transform the actions of the community into

societal action. Ritzer (2010: 129) asserts that bureaucracies are regarded as the most rational means of exercising authority over human beings with a high degree of efficiency.

Maravic and Rubinstein (2010: 28) contend that the Weberian conceptualisation of social relationships in bureaucracies is founded on the social interaction between ruler and the ruled and expounds perceptions of legitimate order and formal and informal rules as determinants of stable social relationships. Legitimately formalised authority occurs in the rational bureaucratic structures of modern society (Roscigno 2011: 351). Weber's image of the "iron cage" affords a metaphor for modern bureaucratic structures that are synonymous with endless rules and regulations that constrain individual social actions through goal-orientated rationality (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005: 601-602). Bureaucratic organisations envision individuals as *prisoners* who are trapped in the belief of the legitimacy of bureaucratic decisions.

Social actions in bureaucracies are triangulated between authority, power and legitimacy (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005:612). Since bureaucracies are hierarchically structured with a system of super- and subordination, it may be deduced that social actions are contextualised within the paradigm of the dominant and the dominated (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005:612). The dominant is able to exert authority through the legal-rationality of enacted rules orientated towards bureaucratic goals and the right to issue commands (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005:612). The dominated abide by the commands because the power exerted by the dominant is recognised as legitimate. The constant presence of authority in the form of those tasked to uphold the rules and regulations and the exertion of power through commands lends stability to social actions in bureaucracies.

Letseka and Pitsoe (2013: 26) posit that control is an essential component for the effective and efficient monitoring of the achievements and objectives in bureaucratic organisations such as schools. They cite authority, power, persuasion and exchange as mechanisms that can be used by teachers as social influence and control in the classroom. Since teachers are formally entrusted with the right and responsibility to take

control of classrooms, they assumingly exert *power* and *influence* in the teacher-learner relationship (Hemmings & Pace 2007: 4-5; Letseka & Pitsoe 2013: 26). By occupying the position of the dominant in the social relationship, teachers are capable of maintaining social control and influence over their learners. Rules, procedures and sanctions are tools that are used by teachers to maintain their power and influence.

However, for learning to occur, teachers must be capable of persuading learners to cooperate and learners must willingly consent to being purposely taught (Hemmings & Pace 2007: 4). This persuasion is supported by the acknowledged legitimacy that the teacher presents to the learner (Letseka & Pitsoe 2013: 26). Teachers are legitimately tasked with the right and responsibility to employ persuasive methods to teach learners, but it is imperative that learners trust teachers enough to allow themselves to be persuaded to learn. Passing into successive grades is the chief form of value at the teacher's disposal which the teacher is able to use in exchange for compliance with the system's demands and as a demonstration of academic ability and effort (Pace 2003: 39). It is presumed that if trust exists in the teacher-learner relationship, the teacher will be able to persuade the learner to accept this exchange and in so doing the teacher is enabled to exercise control over the social actions in the classroom.

The discussion on social relationships in bureaucracies encapsulates how the social actions between teacher and learner are triangulated between authority, power and legitimacy (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005:612).

2.4.4 Situating disruptive behaviour within Weber's theory of social action

In contextualising disruptive behaviour within Weber's theory of social action, I explore the existence of possible *conflicts of actions* between learners and teachers in the classroom. Weber (1954: 38) describes actions that are wilfully and intentionally orchestrated by actors against the resistance of others as *relationships in conflict.* The tension between cognitive-instrumentally rationalised actions and the constraints of rules and procedures (Habermas 1984:244; Weber 1968: 53), such as learners intentionally

resisting the School Code of Conduct, may be interpreted as conflict of actions resulting in the teacher-learner interaction being interpreted as a relationship in conflict. I particularise the constructs of understanding and authority and expound their dynamics in conflictive teacher-learner social relationships.

Weber (1978: 4-5) asserts that *understanding* is ascertained through the subjective meaning that interacting parties attribute to their intended actions. It is attained through the intellectual or emotional grasp of the context of an intended action. Within the context of disruptive behaviour, the exploration of *how* the understanding of intended social actions between teacher and learner is ascertained is worthy of empirical investigation. The manner in which learners ascertain an *understanding* of a teacher's request should be insightful in analysing the learner's response. It is presumed that disruptive behaviour may be embedded in an emotionally grasped context that may lack the intellectual grasp of the context of the intended request; thereby leading to an emotional response.

Mokhele (2006: 148) asserts that teacher authority in the teacher-learner relationship is integral in managing discipline. He elaborates that teachers are likely to lose control to learners if the authority of the teacher is not established in the classroom. According to Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 224), one of the main reasons for acts of violence against teachers is learners' attempts to exert control over teacher authority and to win favour among peers. They also postulate that teachers are the easiest targets when learners react angrily. Bester and Du Plessis (2010: 226-227) propose that the conflict management strategies and disciplinary support mechanisms used to instil discipline be investigated in an attempt to understand the acts of violence against the authority of the teacher. __

The manifestation of disruptive behaviour in the classroom may also be contextualised in the difference between reflexive authority and legal-rational authority. In noting Maphosa and Shumba's (2010: 393) reference to learners' awareness of their rights and their sense of liberation, classrooms that are structured around legal-rational authority do not afford learners the opportunity for negotiation, reconciliation and representation of

decisions and actions (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde 2005: 614). When teachers issue commands and expect unchallenged obedience, they appear to pit themselves against the learner absorbed in a culture of overemphasis on human rights (Naicker 2014: 95). The ensuing tension in the teacher-learner relationship changes the dynamics of authority and power in the classroom. According to Du Toit *et al.*, (2003: 463), if the teacher-learner relationship lacks trust, the teacher has to coerce the learner into obedience since the teacher will occupy a position of power rather than authority. This struggle for authority in the classroom may be a determinant of disruptive behaviour that requires empirical exploration.

Khumalo and Maestry (2012: 98) posit that learner behaviour in the classroom is governed by a set of rules that are deemed to be consensually determined by teachers, learners and parents in synchrony with the school code of conduct. When rules and regulations are accepted as valid and are consistently followed by learners, discipline prevails in the classroom. It can thus be hypothesised that disruptive behaviour may occur in classrooms where the validity of rules and regulations are being challenged. Whilst some learners may be compliant even though they may disagree with the validity of the rules and regulations, others may choose to resist the rational-legal authority represented by the teacher by disobeying the rules. This theoretical perspective is insightful in determining the validity of classroom rules and regulations and is expounded in the empirical investigation.

By contextualising disruptive behaviour within Weber's theory of social action, I endeavour to expound the impact of authority, power and legitimacy in the teacher-learner social relationship.

2.5 THEORY OF RESISTANCE

I present a discussion on the theory of resistance as a preamble to a discussion of disruptive behaviour as resistance in the classroom. In contextualising disruptive behaviour as resistance, I also synthesise the dissonance and conflict emanating from

speech acts as explained in Habermas's (1984; 1987; 1996) theory of communicative action and the social actions detailed in Weber's (1946; 1968; 1978) theory of social action into a paradigm of resistance in social relationships. It is premised that resistance in the teacher-learner relationship occurs within the context of speech acts and social actions against the backdrop of the teacher as authority.

An overview of the theory of resistance is underpinned by the study of Einwohner and Hollander (2004) and is followed by a discussion on a theory of resistance in education framed by the classic study *Learning to Labour* by Paul Willis (1977).

2.5.1 Overview of theory of resistance

Vinthagen (2007: 7), after a comprehensive study of resistance literature, argues that resistance encapsulates any activity that denies, challenges or undermines power relations or claims of power in social interactions. Vinthagen (2007: 8) expounds that resistance is executed either publicly in the form of revolts, strikes and boycotts or in disguise such as low profile "infrapolitics", everyday resistance in the form of evasions, hidden transcripts of anger or disguised discourses of dignity. Vinthagen (2007: 2) also asserts that types of resistance vary according to the motivating ideas and ideologies underpinning resistance and depends on who acts, where, with what means and organisational forms, and against what.

Giroux (1983: 107) contends that resistance is an important construct for the theoretical and ideological analysis of the connection between school and society. According to Kim (2010:3), an understanding of student resistance allows schools to transcend zero-tolerance policies and informs discussions on strategies to listen, communicate and assist resistant learners to succeed scholastically. Oppositional behaviours in schools have traditionally been argued from social and individual pathologies existent in the various interrelationships of the learner (Ndamani 2008: 177; Naicker 2014: 34-47). According to Giroux (1983: 110-111), the construct of resistance should not be a category for all expressions of oppositional behaviour. He states that the theoretical assumptions

of oppositional behaviours must be precise and critically analysed to verify its interpretation as resistance.

The term *resistance* expands over a vast continuum of explanations with little consensus of its definition among scholars (Einwohner & Hollander 2004: 534-538). Individual, collective and institutional actions and behaviours across diverse spheres of human social life, from politics to entertainment to revolts against hairstyles, have been defined as resistance. Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 535) present a dependable analytical framework of a theory of resistance based on a rigorous review and analysis of the vast and diverse literature on the phenomenon since 1995. Their conceptualisation of resistance is based on political science and anthropological debates by social scientists and the prevalent themes underpinning social movements and protest behaviour. They posit that the conceptualisation of resistance contributes to aspects of sociological inquiry such as power and social change.

A discussion on the core elements of action, opposition, recognition and intent that underpins Einwohner and Hollander's (2004: 538-541) conceptualisation of resistance is presented below. A discussion on oppositional behaviour by Raby (2005: 157-159) is included in the development of a theory of resistance framework for this study so as to present a more enunciated understanding of the interpretation of resistance as an activity and the identification of the targets of resistance.

2.5.1.1 Action and opposition

Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 538) identify the consensual core elements of action and opposition as a common thread among scholars in the conceptualisation of resistance. Scholars in various disciplines appear to use the term to encapsulate a verbal, cognitive or physical action directed to reject, contradict or challenge something. Based on these common elements of action and opposition, Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 539) conceptualise resistance as activity thereby leading to discussions and debates on the intent and recognition of such activities as acts of resistance.

2.5.1.2 Recognition and intent

Despite the common elements of action and opposition being prevalent in resistance articles, significant disagreements still exist on the conceptualisation of resistance (Einwohner & Hollander 2004: 539). The central issues of recognition and intent are identified as contestable arguments defining these disagreements. The interpretation of an action as resistance is a highly debatable point. The recognition of a resistant act is confounded by the argument around ordinary acts of *everyday* resistance. Common acts of resistance among the powerless (e.g., learners) such as foot dragging, pilfering and slander against the powerful (e.g., teachers) are sometimes unrecognised by the target but still qualify as resistance similar to conventional forms of resistance such as political mobilisation. Hence visibility is regarded as a necessary prerequisite for the recognition of resistance. However, recognition is also dependent on the goal of the resister (e.g., the learner) as to whether he or she intends for the resistance to be recognised or for it to be purposefully concealed. Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 541) elaborate further that the recognition of resistance also depends on who identifies an act as resistance. Identifiers of resistance are categorised into two groups; namely, the targets against whom the acts are intended (e.g., the teachers) and the observers who view the acts as resistant (other teachers or learners). The authors conclude that the recognition of resistant acts remains a contentious issue in scholarly debates on resistance.

The issue of consciousness is equally debatable among resistance scholars. Much contention exists as to the intent underpinning resistant action. Resistance theorists classify intent in three ways. According to Leblanc (1999: 18), the conceptualisation of resistance must detail the subjective intent of the resister by identifying the oppression, the intent to defy the oppression and an action to challenge the oppression. A second group of theorists claim that it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify intent behind resistant acts because the actors may be unable to articulate their intent or may lie to the interviewer or may perhaps wish to hide their intent (Einwohner & Hollander 2004: 542;

543). The concept of “hidden transcripts” relates to the hidden intent of those actors who fear public expressions of opposition and who may choose to resist covertly. The third school of thought centres on the argument that intent is not necessary for the understanding of resistance. This argument stems from the cultural differences that may exist between the researcher and the resister prohibiting consensus on the constitution of resistance. Resistant action may be culturally contextualised and may hence not be regarded as resistance by an observer outside the culture. Similarly, the interpretation of intent may differ among different parties such as the actors (e.g., learners), targets (e.g., teachers), observers and scholars.

2.5.1.3 Oppositional behaviour

Raby (2005:157) contends that depending on the interest of the researcher, youth resistance may also be viewed as typical teenage rebellion, deviance or delinquency. According to Raby (2005:158) the prerequisite for the conceptualisation of resistance must encapsulate how an activity is interpreted by the actor and the identification of the target by the actor.

Raby (2005:158) argues that the target and the manner in which an oppositional action is articulated, determines the categorisation of resistance activity. He espouses the theory of power and domination in which oppressed groups target dominant authorities either individually or institutionally. A learner who challenges the authority of the teacher and does not comply with the school rules is directing opposition to the teacher as an individual as well as towards the school as an institution. Such resistance can be categorised into thick and thin opposition by identifying resistance directed at organisational structures and wider power relations as thick opposition and the contestation of principles of control and everyday practices as thin opposition. Raby (2005:159) also brings into focus the presence of “hidden transcripts” in reference to masked or suppressed anger in power relations. When it is not possible to display resistance for fear of reprisal, one may subvert the anger into subtle but oppositional action. Mocking a teacher behind her or his back may exemplify a hidden transcript of

suppressed anger towards the authority of the teacher or towards the school structure. A discussion of Einwohner and Hollander's (2004: 544) typology of resistance is presented below.

2.5.1.4 Types of resistance

Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 544) present a typology of seven types of resistance and elaborate that the acts of resistance may be judged by three distinct groups; namely the actor, the target and observers in different combinations. Table 2.1 summarises their typology of the seven types of resistance:

Table 2.1: Typology of seven types of resistance (Einwohner & Hollander 2004: 544)

Type of resistance	Is act intended as resistance?	Recognised as resistance by target?	Recognised as resistance by observer?
Overt resistance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Covert resistance	Yes	No	Yes
Unwitting resistance	No	Yes	Yes
Target-defined resistance	No	Yes	No
Externally-defined resistance	No	No	Yes
Missed resistance	Yes	Yes	No
Attempted resistance	Yes	No	No

Regarding Table 2.1:

- *Overt resistance* is characterised by behaviour that is visible and immediately recognisable by both targets and observers as exemplified when learners swear at teachers. The actor expresses clear intent in overt resistance.
- When acts are intentional but unnoticed and therefore unpunishable, such acts are regarded as *covert resistance*. Learners who gossip about teachers may be displaying covert resistance to the teacher. The identifiable features of intentional and unintentional intent in Einwohner and Hollander's (2004: 544) typology of resistance concurs with McCrew's (2011:253) postulation of conscious and unconscious resistance.
- *Unwitting resistance* occurs when the actor acts unintentionally but targets and observers view the act as threatening such as when girls behave in a boyish manner. Though the mannish girls may not intend to target anyone with their behaviour, other learners may feel threatened and teachers may disapprove of their unfeminine behaviour.

- *Target-defined resistance* occurs when an actor or observer is unaware of an action which is only identified by the target as resistance. For example, an Islamic teacher may regard the act of a learner covering his or her book with a picture of a pig as an act of resistance since the consumption of pork is against the Islamic religion.
- *Externally-defined resistance* refers to behaviour that is unintentional and not recognised by the actor or the target but is regarded by others as resistance. Nose-piercing by male learners may be viewed as resistance to conformity by both the school and the parent.
- Intentional acts that are recognised by the target and not by others, such as a secret meeting of learners engaging in satanic practice at a cemetery, is typified as *missed resistance* since it occurs out of view and knowledge of others.
- When an actor acts intentionally but the act is unnoticed by the target or others, it is typified as *attempted resistance.* An example is when a learner seated at the back of the class shows the teacher the middle-finger whilst the teacher is writing on the board. The act of resistance by the learner may be unnoticed by the teacher and other learners who may be engrossed in their work.

An overview of the theory of resistance has been presented. A discussion on theory of resistance in education follows.

2.5.2 Theory of resistance in education

Resistance in education is a collision between a culture of authority and legitimated knowledge represented by the teacher, and a culture of opposition represented by the learner (Abowitz 2000: 882). Resistance in educational research particularises the tensions, as well as the oppositional and rebellious learner behaviours that interrupt the schooling process (Server 2012: 658). McFarland (2001: 613) advocates that the study of student resistance in classrooms reveals how instructional and social processes in the classroom are constructed, maintained and ordered. He also very explicitly states that

teaching is halted when classrooms are disrupted and teacher authority is defied.

The paradigmatic study, *Learning to labour* by Paul Willis (1977) is regarded as the origin of resistance theory in education (McCrew 2011: 239). The study of how youth from the working class resist the conformity in schools as a preparation for harsh jobs on the factory floors done by the working class, offers an insightful perspective into the theory of resistance founded on the battle between power and resistance. McFarland (2001: 613) asserts that the social processes fuelling learner defiance in the classroom are similar to the social processes leading to the generation of factory strikes. Learners who disrupt and challenge the authority of teachers in the classroom may in fact be presenting hidden transcripts of resistance.

The Willis (1977: 50) study on resistance conceptualises the emergence of a culture that counters the formal and conformist culture of the school as anti-school or semi-delinquent behaviour. The resistant behaviour of the non-conforming *lads* and their opposition to the teacher and the conforming *'ear'oles* embodies a counter-school culture similar to a culture of disruptiveness levelled against the teacher and the social processes in current classrooms. The characteristic resistant behaviours of opposition and disrespect to teacher authority, refusal to follow instructions and perform assigned tasks and the teasing of peers in current classrooms resonates with the anti-school behaviour displayed by the *lads* in the Willis (1977: 11-42) study (Mammen & Maphosa 2011: 186).

The positioning of disruptive behaviour as resistance in this study intends to offer a conceptual framework for the interpretation of oppositional behaviours in the teacher-learner relationship. The point of departure in conceptualising resistance in this study is the recognition of the teacher as the authority figure in the classroom. Disrespecting instructions by the teacher and acting in defiance of the classroom rules is perceived as resisting the authority of the teacher. It is against this backdrop that I expound disruptive behaviour in the classroom as an act of resistance. The study of resistance by Willis (1977) hence offers a broad interpretive framework for the discussion of disruptive behaviour as resistance in education. Opposition to authority, rejection of conformity and rules, laughing and anti-social practices are conceptualised as acts of resistance. A

discussion of these characteristic elements of resistance is presented below.

2.5.2.1 Opposition to authority and the rejection of the conformist

The *lads* in the Willis (1977: 11-21) study display obvious and direct opposition to the authority of the teacher and the conformist *'ear'oles* in the classroom. This opposition is displayed through pranks, fidgeting, daydreaming, unnecessary walking, feigned sleeping, rude outbursts, foot-dragging, giggles and sexual innuendos. The conforming learners are targeted by being laughed at for their pursuance of excellent results and are perceived as not enjoying school. Opposition to the authority of the teacher is also displayed by defying the uniform rules, smoking cigarettes and drinking. Such oppositional acts lead to direct confrontation and arguments in which blatant disrespect is shown to the authority of the teacher and the school.

2.5.2.2 Rejection of rules

Another element of counter-school culture is the formation of an informal group of like-minded *lads* who oppose all formal structures of the school and develop their own set of rules (Willis 1977: 22-26). They generally bond together to share the fun and excitement of contravening the rules of the school. Perhaps the most defining feature of counter-school culture is the refusal to work. The *lads* engage in truancy from class by walking about in school unnoticed by the staff, entering the wrong class, lingering in the hallways or sitting in unsupervised rooms where they can engage in illicit activity. Wasting time away from the formal teaching process shows a rejection of the formal timetable of the school and the rejection of a formal qualification.

2.5.2.3 Laughing and anti-social practices

Humour is used as an extraordinary tool by the *lads* in displaying a counter-school culture (Willis 1977: 29-42). The *lads* constantly seek opportunities to amuse, subvert and incite each other thus challenging the ability of the teacher to maintain control and authority over the situation. Engaging in anti-social practices such as fighting, stealing and rowdy

partying is seen as a form of excitement that counteracts the boredom of abiding by the rules of the school. A heightened sense of superiority and excitement is experienced when the school is the target of theft since such acts are a direct assault on the staff and the conforming learners.

The abovementioned resistant behaviours displayed by the resisting *lads* in the Willis (1977: 11-42) study broadly encapsulates the activities that are regarded as disruptive behaviour in the classroom and presents a theoretical framework for the contextualisation of disruptive behaviour as acts of resistance.

2.5.3 Situating disruptive behaviour as resistance

In this study, I theoretically contextualise disruptive behaviour as resistance based on the interpretation of oppositional behaviours displayed by the *lads* in the Paul Willis (1977 11-42) study.

Classrooms are generally perceived as the place in which teachers should hold the most power but, as posited by Foucault (1978: 95), “where there is power, there is resistance”. The oppositional behaviours displayed by learners may be interpreted as resistance to the presence of power in the classroom. Teachers apply many strategies to exert their power and authority when managing discipline in the classroom. When discipline is maintained, it is interpreted as the teacher having *power over* the learner; when chaos reigns in a classroom it must therefore be inferred that the teacher concedes *power to* the learner. The focal point of the theory of resistance in this study rests on ascertaining *how* and *why* power shifts occur in the teacher-learner social relationship.

In the context of the classroom the learner is subjected to the authoritative influence of the teacher “in authority” as a superordinate (Letseka & Pitsoe 2013: 26). This inequality affords the teacher the right to specific decisions and actions in the classroom. However, the decisions and actions of the teacher are based on the policies and rules that apply to the educational system as a social relationship (Letseka & Pitsoe 2013: 26). The

dynamics of power then shifts to the teacher being “under authority” of the bureaucratic educational system which indirectly cascades its social control and influence over the learner to the classroom. The theoretical context of disruptive behaviour as resistance stems from this paradigm of power-shifts in the teacher-learner social relationship. If the construct of resistance is to be used to analytically conceptualise oppositional behaviours as resistance, intense critical analysis, dialogue and exploration of emancipatory interests should be conducted by the researcher (Giroux 1983: 110-111). Incidents such as violence against teachers is best understood by gaining insight into and understanding of the experiences of the learners who transgress the disciplinary system daily (Bester & Du Plessis 2010: 227). In this study, the contextualisation of learners’ oppositional behaviours as resistance shall be critically analysed from the learner’s perspective with the aim of formulating conflict management strategies and disciplinary support measures that would emancipate both teachers and learners enmeshed in conflictive social relationships in bureaucratic classrooms.

2.6 SUMMARY

Three conceptual frameworks contextualising disruptive behaviour were presented in this chapter. The following figure presents a brief synopsis of the three conceptual frameworks:

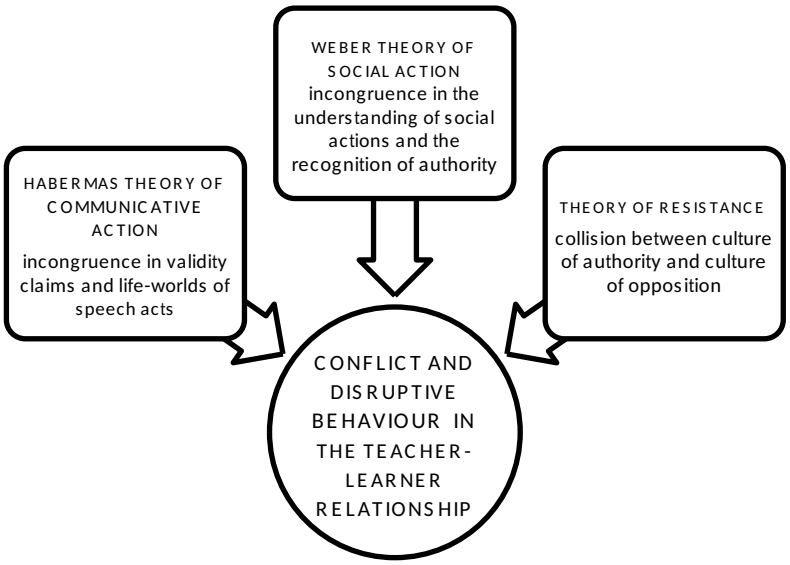


Figure 2.3: Representation of a synopsis of the three conceptual frameworks underpinning disruptive behaviour in the teacher-learner relationship.

The discussions on Habermas's (1984; 1987; 1996) theory of communicative action highlighted the significance of validity claims, life-worlds and language in speech acts as a context in which disruptive behaviour occurs. The lack of congruence in the truth, justice and sincerity claims of speech utterances between teacher and learner as well as the constant redefinition of situations for consensual understanding was elucidated as possible causes of conflict in the teacher-learner relationship. The discussion on Weber's (1946; 1968; 1978) theory of social action focused on an overview of social actions, types of social actions, the conceptualisation of social relationships, the dynamics of authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships, types of authority in social relationships and social relationships in bureaucracies. It was postulated that conflictive actions between teacher and learner may be embedded in the manner in which intended actions are grasped and understood by the interacting parties. It was also theorised that the non-recognition of teacher authority and the school code of conduct may also lead to resistance in the teacher-learner relationship. A discussion on disruptive behaviour as resistance included a theory of resistance conceptual framework by Einwohner and Hollander and (2004) and a theory of resistance in education conceptual framework underpinned by the study *Learning to Labour* by Willis (1977). It is theorised that a collision between a culture of authority and a culture of opposition manifests as oppositional behaviours and power battles in the teacher-learner relationship.

Chapter 3 encapsulates a review of the empirical research on discipline in schools. A review of the most important policies governing discipline; findings related to the prevalence of a lack of discipline in school; causes of disciplinary problems; and disciplinary strategies are discussed, with particular reference to the South African context.

CHAPTER 3
POLICIES, STUDIES, CAUSES AND STRATEGIES GOVERNING DISCIPLINE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2 the theoretical framework of disruptive behaviour was discussed. Speech acts, social actions and resistant behaviour in social relationships were deliberated using Habermas's (1987) theory of communicative action, Weber's (1946; 1968;1978) theory of social action and a theory of resistance underpinned by the studies of Einwohner and Hollander (2004), as well as Willis (1977).

In Chapter 3 the focus is on policies governing discipline; findings related to the prevalence of a lack of discipline; causes of disciplinary problems; and disciplinary strategies used in schools with particular relevance to the South African context.

3.2 POLICIES GOVERNING DISCIPLINE IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Policies broadly encapsulate written statements or sets of statements that guide the principles, requirements and limitations of *what* is to be done in institutions (Bilatyia 2012: 16). The following Acts and their relevance to the control and discipline of learners in schools are discussed, namely The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996a); The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, The South African Council of Educators Act 31of 2000 (in ELRC 2003b:2) and The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (in ELRC 2003c:1); The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC 2003a:2).

3.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996

Prior to 1996 discipline in South African schools was largely maintained through corporal punishment practices such as caning, spanking, pinching, or threatening, pleading, bribing, yelling, commanding, name-calling and forced labour (Kone, Mashau & Mutshaeni 2015: 285). It was believed that children should endure some form of 'suffering' in order to deter them from repeating the offence (DoE 2000: 1). After the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in1996, administering any form of physical or emotional suffering to learners became problematic as it conflicted with section 12(1)(e) of the Constitution of the Republic of South African (RSA 1996a:7) which prohibits the inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment of persons. In the landmark case of *Christian Education versus the Minister of Education*, the Constitutional Court ruled that corporal punishment is a form of cruel and degrading punishment that violates a person's human dignity (Smith 2013: 346). Consequently, corporal punishment was banned in schools in order to promote respect for the dignity and physical and emotional integrity of all children.

3.2.2 The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996

According to The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, the Minister of Education offers stipulations for the discipline and control of students in education institutions (ELRC 2003d: 4). Clause 3(4)(n) stipulates that corporal punishment is prohibited and no person at an education institution shall be subjected to psychological or physical abuse.

3.2.3 The South African Council of Educators Act 31of 2000

The South African Council of Educators Act 31 of 2000 governs discipline in schools through the stipulation of a Code of Professional Ethics for teachers (ELRC 2003b: 17). Clauses 3(4); 3(5); 3(6) and 3(10) relate to the manner in which teachers interact with learners, particularly when dealing with indiscipline. It stipulates that a teacher must act with compassion; avoid any form of humiliation; refrain from any form of physical or psychological abuse; and refrain from improper physical contact with learners. The Act

stipulates that teachers should endeavour to elicit respect from learners by adopting appropriate language and behaviour when interacting with them.

3.2.4 The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998

The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (ELRC 2003c: 2) governs discipline in schools through the clause on educator misconduct. A teacher may be charged for misconduct according to clause 17 1(d) for assaulting a learner 18 1(k) for discriminating against a learner, 18 1(r) for threatening to assault a learner and 18 1(u) for intimidating and victimising a learner.

3.2.5 The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 refers to the adoption of a Code of Conduct for learners in schools (ELRC 2003a: 7). According to Section 8(2), the aim of a Code of Conduct is to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment that upholds the quality of learning processes. The Act stipulates that the Code of Conduct must be established in consultation with learners, parents and educators of a school. The Act also details the procedures for disciplinary hearings whilst Section 10 distinctly states that corporal punishment is prohibited in schools.

The school code of conduct is supportive of the democratic principles of the values of human dignity, equality and freedom enshrined in the Constitution (RSA 1996b). It is a document that dictates the rules governing learner behaviour in schools (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 98).

The following table (Table 3.1) provides a brief synopsis of the above-mentioned policies governing discipline in South African schools.

Table 3.1: Policies that govern the disciplinary measures in school

Policy	Sections	Legal parameters
The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996a:7)	Sections 12(1) (e)	Prohibits inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment of learners
The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996	Clause 3(4)(n)	Prohibits corporal punishment, psychological abuse and physical abuse in education institutions.
The South African Council of Educators Act, Act 31of 2000 (in ELRC 2003c:17)	Act 31 of 2000 clauses 3(4); 3(5); 3(6) and 3(10)	Stipulates that a teacher must act with compassion; avoid any form of humiliation; refrain from any form of physical or psychological abuse; and abstain from improper physical contact with learners. Teachers should engage in appropriate language and behaviour that elicits respect from learners.
The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (in ELRC 2003a:9)	Clause 17 (1) (d) Clauses 18 (1) (k); 18(1) (r); 18 (1) (u)	Categorises the assault of a learner or employee as a serious misconduct. Forbids all forms of discrimination against any member of the

		school.
The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC 2003a:7-8)	Section 8 (1) and (2)	Refers to the adoption of a Code of Conduct by the School Governing Body aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 (RSA 1996a); The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996; The South African Council of Educators Act 31of 2000 (in ELRC 2003b:2); The Employment of Educators , Act 76 of 1998 (in ELRC 2003c:1) and The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC 2003a:2) offer clear stipulations on how teachers must manage discipline in schools. They stipulate that any form of corporal punishment, physical or psychological abuse or discrimination is prohibited as a disciplinary measure. Teachers need to operate within the legal parameters shown in Table 3.1 when choosing disciplinary measures to deal with disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

A discussion on empirical findings related to a lack of discipline in schools follows.

3.3 FINDINGS RELATED TO THE PREVALENCE OF A LACK OF DISCIPLINE

Three theoretical frameworks guide discussions on disruptive behaviour in classrooms in this study, namely Habermas's (1987) theory of communicative action; Weber's (1946; 1968;1978) theory of social action; and a theory of resistance underpinned by the studies of Einwohner and Hollander (2004), as well as Willis (1977).

I present an interpretation of the findings related to the prevalence of a lack of discipline in a South African context using the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks.

3.3.1 Habermas's theory of communicative action

3.3.1.1 Language, validity claims and lifeworlds

Linguistic communication via performatory utterances fulfils a "mediating function" when communicating a thought rooted in one's consciousness with another person (May & Powell 2008: 163). In the process of teaching and learning, both teachers and learners continually engage in the process of linguistic communication as means of expressing their thoughts towards mutual understanding of each other. Validity claims of truth, justice and sincerity as well as the contextualisation of utterances in the objective, social and subjective worlds of both parties are integral in the endeavour to reach consensual understanding (Dietz & Widdershoven 1991: 239; Habermas 1987: 120).

Githui (2013: 25-27) substantiates the "mediating function" of language by stating that the language used by teachers to communicate with learners impacts on how a teacher's message is perceived by a learner. The use of appropriate language improves the teacher's credibility, encourages feedback and develops a trustworthy climate in the teacher-learner relationship. Mgijima (2014: 205) supports the view that learners feel they are not treated with respect and dignity when they are subjected to derogatory personal comments and name-calling by teachers and regard such teacher practices as more hurtful than corporal punishment. Harber and Mncube (2012:71) state that teachers' " verbal violence" whereby teachers use "vulgar language" or call learners "nasty words" is a common phenomenon that often leads to school violence.

Githui (2013: 3-5) also postulates that a teacher's communication strategy impacts significantly on the control of learner behaviour. Teachers who nurture a relationship of trust and respect with their learners contribute to a positive classroom environment. When learners are prevented from expressing themselves, a climate of mistrust develops, which results in learners resorting to disruptive behaviour as a means of

expressing themselves. He elaborates further that teachers who are rude, confrontational and high-tempered may be unintentionally contributing to learner indiscipline since learners view teachers as role models and consequently imitate the actions of their teachers. Mabea (2013: 162) contends that it is the teacher's responsibility to create a positive teacher-learner relationship based on mutual respect by adopting a humanistic approach when speaking and striving to understand learners.

During speech acts both teacher and learner seek common ground to facilitate mutual understanding and successful communication. Habermas (1987: 119) purports that the lifeworld (consisting of the objective, social and subjective worlds of interacting individuals) forms the common meeting space to contextualise speech acts. The creation of a positive classroom climate in which trust and respect is prevalent is theorised to emerge from a congruence of truth, justice and sincerity in the speech acts of teachers and learners. When both parties share a common definition of the situation in which their speech acts are contextualised, and when they understand their "lifeworld to the degree necessary to be able to act in it and operate upon it", they are able to attain consensual understanding and engage in communicative action (Habermas 1987: 127-128).

3.3.2 Weber's theory of social action

3.3.2.1 Social relationships

Weber (1978: 26-28) defines a *social relationship* as the meaningful behaviour of a plurality of actors in which one orientates one's own actions in cognisance with the actions of the other. Weber elaborates that the acting parties mutually consent to the meaning of a social relationship by agreeing on anticipated behavioural responses to each other. A *social relationship in conflict* manifests when one intentionally orientates one's action according to one's own will despite resistance from persons with whom one interacts (Weber 1978: 38). The teacher-learner relationship is a social relationship in which both parties agree and share a mutual understanding of the teacher's role in applying social control mechanisms to regulate social behaviour in the classroom

(Letseka & Pitsoe 2013: 26). Teacher-learner *social relationships in conflict* manifest when either party deviates from the agreed anticipated responses or acts according to his or her own will despite resistance from the other party.

Dube and Hlalele (2018: 75) postulate that a breakdown in the teacher-learner relationship, as well as failure in the principal-teacher, teacher-teacher and principal-SGB relationships may be the cause of disciplinary problems escalating to acts of violence in schools. The loss of trust and the manifestation of anger in the teacher-learner relationship are symptomatic of a breakdown in communication between teacher and learner. Dube and Hlalele (2018: 77) also criticise the demonstration of power and bureaucratisation in relationships and argue that consensus through dialogue nurtures healthy relationships.

Mthiyane (2013: 21, 39) describes schools as social spaces within which power relationships and domination occur. The strict hierarchies prevalent in schools hinder efficient communication between teachers and learners. Harber (2004: 36) supports this view by elaborating that the lack of communication between school authorities and learners leads to misunderstandings and suspicion which is exacerbated when learner complaints are met with high-handedness and an unwillingness to provide explanations. Mthiyane (2013: 40) purports that learners engage in confrontational behaviour when they perceive rules as being unfair, arbitrary, unclear and inconsistently applied. Mthiyane (2013: 41) therefore levels criticism against school authorities and SGBs for their lack of consultation with learners and parents in developing school codes of conduct despite learners being bestowed with rights and responsibilities in respect hereof according to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (ELRC 2003a). The authoritarian teacher-learner relationship in which the teacher maintains control and the learner is powerless in decisions such as the school curriculum and organisation often triggers alienation and aggression in learners (Mthiyane 2013: 41).

The above studies indicate that conflict in the many social relationships in the educational system arises from a lack of communication or consultation in the implementation of

policies, codes of conduct and rules. The manifestation of disruptive behaviour in the classroom may be attributable to conflictive teacher-learner social relationships since the interacting parties may not orientate their behaviour in cognisance with each other or one may act according to their own will despite resistance from the other party.

3.3.2.2 Authority, power and legitimacy in social relationships

Weber's (1947:152) definition of authority broadly encapsulates the probability of a command with a specific content being obeyed by a specific group of persons irrespective of resistance or the basis upon which the probability exists. Weber (1978: 213) also states that there should be present a belief in the legitimacy of the authority in order to foster compliance by persons within the group. Failure to obey or comply with the requests of the authority figure impacts negatively on the social relationship between the interacting parties.

Teachers are vested with legitimate power and authority in the classroom by society, through legislation and through customs, but they are often faced with difficulty in exercising and maintaining this power and authority (Makaye, Ndofirepi & Ndofirepi 2012: 84). The legitimacy and authority of a teacher in the classroom are impacted by the learner's perceptions of authority (Brasof & Peterson 2018: 833). Learner's perceptions of fairness in the implementation of rules foster the acknowledgement of a teacher's authority as legitimate. Learners are likely to obey the rules and demands of teachers who are perceived as being fair. Tiwani (2010: 28) concurs that the equal application of rules in a fair but firm manner in the classroom helps foster trust in the teacher-learner relationship.

The manner in which teachers as authority figures communicate discipline standards to leaners impacts on the working relationship between teacher and learner (Maphosa 2011b: 243). Teachers as authority figures should engage in consistent and informative communication when interacting with learners. Learners accept the views of authority figures if it is believed that the authority figures' own behaviour is commensurate with

their appraisal of the behaviour of the learners. If teachers are perceived as being too hard, cruel and unfair, the teacher-learner relationship becomes negatively affected.

Learners often assertively stand up for their human rights by exaggerating or misconstruing their rights to justify an inappropriate purpose or to obtain a questionable entitlement (Kone *et al.* 2015: 287, 288). Disruptions in the classroom cause roadblocks to student achievement and teachers become easily annoyed and frustrated with students who defy, ignore or refuse to listen to them.

3.3.2.3 Bureaucratic social relationships

South African schools are traditionally authoritarian institutions with particular emphasis on obedience, conformity and passivity (Harber & Mncube 2011: 240). In the pre-1994 era, authoritarianism manifested as corporal punishment, which was officially sanctioned as means of maintaining discipline. Harber and Mncube (2011: 242-243) argue that authoritarianism is sustained in the current era via the bureaucratic decisions taken on behalf of learners in respect of "what is taught and learned, how it is taught and learned, where it is taught and learned and when it is taught and learned". They elaborate that learners are powerless in choices pertaining to their education since decisions on these matters are undertaken by government officials, principals and teachers. Control and compliance which are characteristic elements of a global authoritarian model of schooling is also deeply embedded in modern bureaucratic structures in South African schools. Against the backdrop of South Africa as a democracy, such authoritarian structures highlight the contradiction in South African schools.

Magaba (2018: 23) elaborates that disciplinary systems at school subject both teachers and learners to socially constructed hierarchies of domination. Standards of proper conduct and suggested corrective measures for deviation and non-conformity are socially constructed hierarchies in which the implementers of the policies occupy the ranks of power and dominance over those who are expected to comply with the imposed standards of proper conduct. However, some learners nurture a need for power and may

resort to arguing or refusing to follow rules because they feel defeat or a sense of loss if they behave according to adult expectation (Mabea 2013: 60). Mabea (2013: 162) also states that principals and teachers are vested with disciplinary power according to the *in loco parentis* principle and the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (ELRC 2003d: 4) which empowers the Minister of education to determine policies related to discipline and control of learners.

The above studies indicate that the traditional teacher-learner relationship in which teachers occupied the position of power and authority is evolving. Learners are questioning and challenging the legitimacy of teacher authority as an awareness of learner rights filters into the teacher-learner relationship. The unfair and inconsistent application of formal and informal rules nurtures perceptions of mistrust which hinders the obedience and compliance to commands in the teacher-learner social relationship. The hierarchical bureaucratisation of social relationships in the educational system prevents robust dialogue on pertinent issues such as curriculum and school organisation which leads to high levels of frustration and aggression in the teacher-learner relationship. Such tensions in the classroom are likely to trigger disruptive behaviour at the slightest provocation.

3.3.3 Theory of resistance

Resistance in educational research particularises the tensions, as well as the oppositional and rebellious learner behaviours that interrupt the schooling process (Server 2012: 658). This view is supported by the Willis (1977: 50) study on resistance which conceptualises the emergence of a culture that counters the formal and conformist culture of the school as anti-school or semi-delinquent behaviour. The study by Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 538) conceptualising the core elements of action and opposition as resistance also reinforces the assertion by Server (2012: 658).

Venkataramani (2012: 94-95) states that when learners consistently break the rules and disobey instructions, they are interpreted as resisting the teacher's authority and power.

Defying the school dress code and regarding detention as a joke is perceived as resistance to teacher authority. The oppositional behaviour displayed by learners is indicative of the current age of resistance. It is teachers' perception that learners choose to use their power either individually or collectively as a class to offer resistance rather than compliance. Such resistant behaviours change the dynamics of the teacher-learner relationship. Teachers are forced into engaging in negotiation strategies such as "bargaining and promises" with learners in return for cooperative behaviour (Venkataramani 2012: 96).

Compliance to obey a teacher is dependent on learners' recognition of the right of the teacher to issue the command (MacAllister, Macleod & Pirrie 2012:497-499). The authors' study in schools in the United Kingdom, resonates with the current disciplinary issues in South African schools. Learners are no longer passively compliant with what is asked of them. Instead, they engage in questioning and resisting commands. Their behaviour that challenges teacher authority may be attributable to children's awareness of their rights. This concurs with Serakwane's (2007:65) postulation that learners in South African schools resist the authority of the teacher by insisting on their rights when they wish to do as they please or when they wish to engage in disapproved behaviour. MacAllister *et al.* (2012: 497) also state that learners' awareness of their rights presents a shift in power in the teacher-learner relationship as it questions the teacher's ability to maintain authority and control within the relationship. Serakwane (2007:29) rebuts this view by stating that a learner's claim to rights and freedoms cannot justify the learner's misconduct as the adoption of a code of conduct in schools is a lawful way of limiting fundamental learner rights.

Teachers who adopt an authoritarian approach to discipline are least effective in managing discipline problems in the classroom and when challenged by learners they often argue that learners are defiant and unruly (Mkhize 2002: 25-27). Authoritarian approaches in the classroom evoke short-temperedness, hostility and resistance in learners.

Oppositional behaviour in the classroom or anti-school behaviour may be interpreted as *resistance* if viewed through the lens of power struggles in the teacher-learner relationship. South African learners appear emboldened by a heightened awareness of their rights which enables them to display resistance towards teacher authority. Learners often rationalise their oppositional behaviour and defiance of school rules by interpreting their legal rights as an opportunity to act according to their own will despite the existence of school codes of conduct that lawfully limit such rights. Oppositional anti-school behaviours disrupt schooling processes and create tension in the teacher-learner relationship.

I have presented an interpretation of studies on disruptive behaviour in South African schools against the backdrop of Habermas's (1987) theory of communicative action, Weber's (1946; 1968;1978) theory of social action and a theory of resistance underpinned by the studies of Einwohner and Hollander (2004) and Willis (1977).
A discussion on causes of disciplinary problems in South African schools follows.

3.4 CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM

The causes of disciplinary problems in the classroom are discussed using Bronfenbrenner's (1999) ecological theoretical model. According to Hays (2009: 11), the Bronfenbrenner theoretical framework embraces the complex social and environmental factors that provide a greater understanding of our interactions at the micro as well as macro levels of society. This increased understanding empowers the various role-players to identify strengths and needs in the various systems of an individual's interactions in society.

I present a brief overview of the theoretical framework of the Bronfenbrenner (1999) ecological model to support a discussion on the causes of disruptive behaviour.

3.4.1 The Bronfenbrenner ecological model

Bronfenbrenner (1999: 4-5) expounds a critical distinction between the conceptualisation of the environment and processes that occupy a central position in the interrelationship between the environment and the developing person. He elucidates that human development occurs through progressively complex reciprocal interactions which occur regularly and over extended periods of time between the person, objects and symbols in the immediate external environment.

Bronfenbrenner (1999: 6-10) explains human development using the concepts of proximal process, person, context and time. Proximal processes describe the developments that occur between individuals and the environment over a period of time. Personal factors such as the physical, physiological and psychological attributes determine the growth potential of a developing individual. The environmental context in which the individual interacts is fluid and impacts on the interactions and personal attributes of an individual over a period of time. According to Bronfenbrenner (1999: 7), proximal processes impact more significantly on growth development than the environmental contexts within which interactions occur.

The principle structural features of the Bronfenbrenner ecological model are the environmental contexts. These backgrounds impact on the child's growth. The ecological environment is viewed as a set of nested systems that range from the micro to the macro level (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 10-11). Although these systems operate separately, there are also dynamic interrelationships between them. Figure 3.1 diagrammatically represents the nested systems ranging from the micro to the macro.

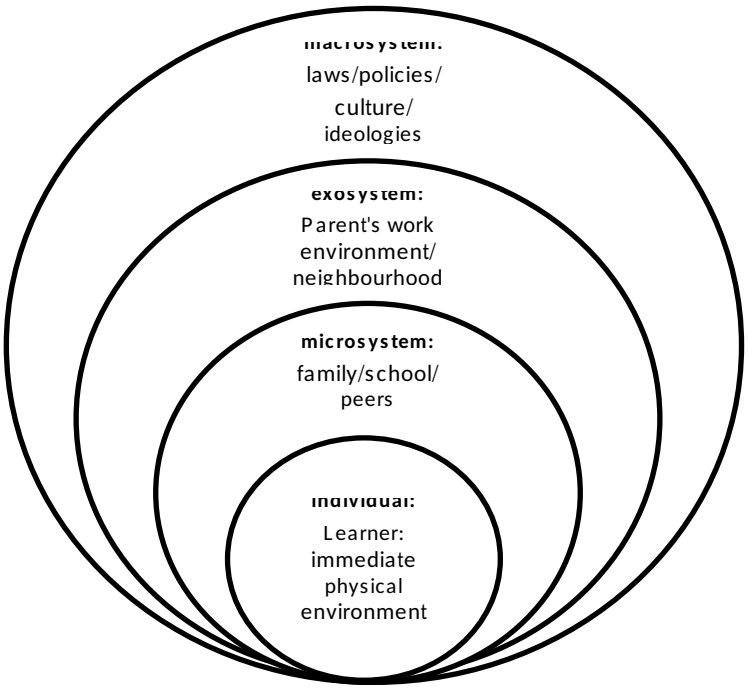


Figure: 3.1 Diagrammatic representation of the Bronfenbrenner (1999) Ecological Model depicting the contexts that play a role in causing disruptive behaviour

According to the Bronfenbrenner model, there is a significant correlation between the physical environment, and the cognitive and psychological development of an individual (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 15). The Bronfenbrenner (1999: 15-16) study describes the association between the environment and the cognitive growth of a developing child.

The innermost circle: The innermost circle in Figure 3.1 represents the developing child who forms relationships within the immediate physical environment. Aspects of the immediate physical and material environment affect cognitive development both negatively and positively. Areas and objects in the physical environment that invite exploration impact constructively whilst lack of stability, structure and unpredictability of events impact negatively on proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner 1999:16). Hays (2009: 22) states that intrinsic factors (e.g., intellectual impairment), and extrinsic factors (e.g., emotionally based behavioural problems) impact on the development of a child. It is

surmised that proximal processes involve complex interaction between people, objects and symbols in the physical environment.

The second circle: The pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relationships in a given setting within the immediate experiential field of the developing person is conceptualised as the microsystem which is represented by the second circle in Figure 3.1 (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 22). The relationships formed with family, teachers and peers occur within the immediate social environment of the developing child. The networking between the parents and teachers as well as the interactions with the peers' families form a further relationship within the microsystem. Bronfenbrenner (1999: 19) conceptualises the relationships existing between two or more settings within the microsystem as mesosystems. Mesosystems encompass the relationship between family experiences and school experiences, between school experiences and neighbourhood experiences, and between family experiences and peer experiences (Collins, Frels & Onwuegbuzie 2013: 4). Demographic factors such school size and levels of poverty in the microsystem are factors that should be considered when examining disruptive behaviour in schools (Masitsa 2011: 164). Bronfenbrenner (1986: 727) also elucidates that homes and classrooms that exhibit greater opportunities for communication and decision-making encourage initiative and independence in learners. Disruptive behaviour may be interpreted within the dynamics of interactions and social relationships that the developing child experiences with the immediate family, teachers and friends.

The third circle: The exosystem represented by the third circle in Figure 3.1 conceptualises the relationship and processes that occur between two or more settings; one of which does not contain the developing individual but events of which indirectly influence the processes in the immediate environment of the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 19). The social integration of children, their peers and their families within a community is conceptualised as the exosystem that impacts on the academic performance and behaviour of a developing adolescent (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 19). The social integration of families within a community nurtures psychological social structures. Disruptive behaviour in the classroom may be contextualised within the socio-

economic factors that impact on the interactions and relationships that developing children form with their friends, their families, community-based organisations and indirectly with the parent's work environment in the exosystem.

The outermost circle: The macrosystem which is represented by the outermost circle in Figure 3.1 refers to "consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems (micro-, meso-, and exo-) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such inconsistencies" (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 26). Collins *et al.* (2013: 5) summarise this definition of the macrosystem as the highest level of interactions and relationships that includes societal belief systems, cultural norms, ideologies, policies or laws that indirectly influence the person. Disruptive behaviour in the classroom may be interpreted via an understanding of the culture and ideologies of society that shape the manner in which learners form relationships at school and the manner in which they engage in the process of teaching and learning. Both the teacher-learner relationship and the process of teaching and learning are also influenced by governmental laws and policies.

The Bronfenbrenner (1999) ecological model offers a broad comprehensive framework to encapsulate the myriad factors that impact on the developing individual. A broad overview of the causes of disruptive behaviour within the Bronfenbrenner ecological framework is presented below.

3.4.2 Causes of disciplinary problems within the Bronfenbrenner ecological framework

According to the Bronfenbrenner (1999) ecological framework, innate characteristics, frequent interactions in the immediate influential settings, community settings and the broader cultural and socio-economic settings impact on the development of the young individual (Dawes, Matzopoulos & Ward 2013: 1). The discussion that follows seeks to highlight possible causes of disruptive behaviour by analysing the various relationships formed by the learner as a developing individual in the nested influential settings in which the learner interacts.

3.4.2.1 Innate factors and relationships in the immediate physical environment

A range of individual attributes permeate the social contexts within which developing individuals interact (Dawes, Van der Merwe & Ward 2013: 55). Among these risk factors are hyperactivity, impulsivity, risk-taking, attention deficit, early onset conduct problems (aggression, oppositional, disruptive and destructive behaviours) and substance abuse, which are counternormative behaviours. The continuous interactions between the developing individual's innate risk factors and contextual or environmental risk factors significantly impact on the learner's behaviour (Dawes *et al.* 2013: 65).

The above may be illustrated in an example of a learner with a physiological disposition towards hyperactivity, being reared in an unsupportive family, with a lack of exposure to cognitive stimulation compounded by contextual factors such as poverty and unemployment (Dawes *et al.* 2013: 66). When exposed to a combination of such individual and contextual factors, it is highly possible that such a learner will experience fractious social relationships with peers and teachers which may manifest as disruptive behaviour. This assertion is substantiated by Paterson (2012: 2) who states that continued exposure to adversities in the physical environment of a developing child presents a unique clinical picture of the stressful and traumatic experiences of the child. She posits that learners displaying disruptive behaviour in the classroom are often diagnosed with conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative identity disorder, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, substance abuse disorder, major depressive disorder or conduct disorder. Children with emotional and behavioural disorders experience difficulties in maintaining constructive and productive relationships because of their inability to comprehend social cues such as non-verbal communication and the inability to establish and maintain socially responsible behaviour (Botha & Kourkoutas 2015: 789).

3.4.2.2 Microsystemic relationships

The family, school and peers are primary influences in the microsystem of the developing individual (Dawes *et al.* 2013: 69-73). The microsystemic relationships hence play a pivotal role in shaping how the developing individual acquires the skills necessary for social interactions. Exposure to antisocial interactions, such as harsh disciplinary strategies, inform the social cognition of a developing individual by either facilitating or inhibiting aggressive behaviour. A discussion of the parent-learner, teacher-learner and peer relationships in the microsystem follows.

a) The parent-learner relationship

Learners who are exposed to verbal and physical aggression between their parents often carry the negativity of such experiences into the classroom (Nene 2013: 21-22). Physical and mental abuse, divorce and poverty are factors that impact on the learner's school relationships. Damage to self-concept, attention deprivation, and love deprivation are aspects of dysfunctional families that influence the learner's school relationships. I ronically, children often receive attention from their parents mainly when they misbehave. These negative behavioural patterns fostered in the home are transferred to the teacher-learner relationship in the classroom. Learners often seek to remedy the deprivation of love and attention from their parents by engaging in disruptive behaviours in the teacher-learner relationship.

b) The teacher-learner relationship

Teachers are duty-bound by law and profession to maintain discipline and to act *in loco parentis* in relation to the learner in schools (Masitsa 2011:166). This postulation is suggestive of a teacher-learner relationship akin to a parent-child relationship in which respect for the authority of the parent forms the foundation of a nurturing relationship.

According to Prinsloo (2005:10), acting in *loco parentis* includes the right to maintain authority and the obligation to provide caring supervision of the learner. Good order, discipline and mutual respect are fundamental attributes of a supportive teacher-learner relationship (De Wet, Oosthuizen & Rossouw 2004:2-3). The lawful expectation is that the teacher as a trained professional possesses the necessary skill to fulfil the role of attending to the physical, psychological and spiritual well-being of the learner.

Serakwane (2007: 65) states that the learner's behaviour is expected to emulated that of the teacher. Teachers who model high levels of frustration and intolerance are likely to evoke such behaviours in their learners. Learners observe their teachers as "significant others" from whom attitudes, mannerisms, speech patterns and prejudices are indirectly learnt. Disruptive behaviour may also manifest in classrooms where teachers experience poor health, personality defects, faulty teaching methods and poor classroom management (Suping 2008: 25).

South African teachers experience serious challenges in maintaining discipline and authority in a democratic environment (Mammen & Maphosa 2011: 219). Teachers are expected to create democratic learning environments in which learners should be active participants but teachers are also paradoxically expected to be authority figures in the classroom. The use of punitive measures in dealing with minor forms of indiscipline conflicts with the democratic environment that is supposed to be nurtured by the teacher. Rossouw (2003: 424) points out that the dilemma of the teacher-learner relationship in the democratic classroom stems from the learners' awareness of their rights and their lack of responsibility in meeting their obligations. Teachers report to being afraid, confused and uncertain how to deal with learners' misconduct without infringing on the learners' rights. Teachers are not fully knowledgeable about human rights and are therefore handicapped by legislation (Rambuda & Segalo 2018:3). Teachers are unable to address disciplinary challenges because they lack behaviour management skills and do not possess the necessary skills to develop alternatives to punitive disciplinary measures (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 108).

c) Peer relationships

Masingi (2017: 66) asserts that teachers regard peer pressure as a contributory factor to undisciplined behaviour. According to Dawes *et al.* (2013: 73), affiliation to peer groups that engage in delinquent behaviour increases the likelihood of relationships being formed by the need for peer approval. Just as learners model the conflictive behaviour experienced in families, they similarly develop self-efficacy for disapproving behaviour and set standards that approve such behaviours in peer groups. Whilst delinquent groups such as gangs are often cited as social contexts where approval and affiliation are sought, disruptive behaviour in the classroom may also be motivated by such factors. Learners may resist school regulations and defy teachers as a result of peer pressure (Naidu & Schulze 2014: 8). The learners' perceptions of school and their sense of belonging to the institution and its norms may also be influenced by peer relationships.

3.4.2.3 Mesosystemic relationships

Mesosystemic relationships are conceptualised as overlapping interactions between the microsystems (Dawes *et al.* 2013: 74). Risk factors that occur in one microsystem may impact on another. For example, a learner who is subjected to emotional and physical abuse at home may snap at the slightest provocation of a verbal reprimand by a teacher in the classroom. In mesosystemic relationships, the risk factors in one relationship are carried into another, particularly between the microsystems of the home and the school. Venter (2016: 68) substantiates this narrative by stating that risk factors such as environmental pressure, ineffectual parents and the influence of the media increase the prevalence of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Parents contribute to their children's behavioural problems by being poor role models, failing to establish discipline structures and routines at home and failing to instil social skills in their children (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 106-107). Teachers perceive a lack of parental support as contributory to disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

It may be theorised that the causes of disruptive behaviour in the classroom are a combination of factors in the home and the school setting.

3.4.2.4 Exosystemic relationships

The characteristic feature of exosystemic relationships is the interaction of the developing individual in two or more settings in one of which the developing individual is not present but the events of which indirectly influence the processes in the immediate environment of the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner 1999: 19). A parent's work environment indirectly impacts on the developing child in circumstances such as parents experiencing work-related stress or irregular hours which impact on the parent-child contact time. The lack of parent-child contact time invariably leads to a fractious parent-child relationship which may filter into relationships in other settings such as the school or the neighbourhood. Hence, a parent's work environment may indirectly cause a child deprived of parental attention to act disruptively in a class setting or be the cause of learners joining neighbourhood gangs. Masekoameng (2010: 17) concurs with this postulation by stating that rapid changes in the economic, political and social arenas affect the ability of adults to give their children adequate care.

3.4.2.5 Macrosystemic relationships

Macrosystemic relationships are conceptualised as those interactions between the developing individual and the culture, ideologies and beliefs predominant in the developing individual's immediate settings (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 26). The culture, ideologies and beliefs that define particular settings such as the home, school, neighbourhood and society in which the developing individual interacts define the relationships within those settings. A discussion on school codes of conduct, a culture of violence and a 'rights' culture and its impact on the teacher-learner relationship follows.

a) School code of conduct

A code of conduct developed by the SGB of a school is a mandatory requirement that is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment (RSA 1996a). Relationships between the learner, teacher and parent and school are underpinned by the enactment of such a school code of conduct. Khumalo and Mestry (2012: 105-107) elucidate many reasons why the school code of conduct fails to establish discipline at schools. They state that teachers experience difficulty in enacting the code of conduct because learners regard the document as “just a piece of paper” that has no value because they are unlikely to experience painful consequences in its implementation. Teachers also lament that there is a lack of parental support in upholding the rules and regulations of the code of conduct as parents believe that schools are responsible for discipline. The ineffectiveness of a school code of conduct is symptomatic of an era of civil disobedience and the display of arrogance by learners in both teacher and parent relationships.

b) *Culture of violence*

Venter (2016: 69) ascribes the disturbing learner conduct in schools to the “culture of violence” prevalent in society. When learners experience conflict in relationships in the microsystem such as schools, they model the conduct of society in which violent acts are a means of resolving societal issues. Pileggi (2017: 66) concurs with the view of the South African youth being raised in a culture of violence. Peers, caregivers and society appear to socialise the youth into a lifestyle of aggression that appears to be the norm of society. The culture of a violent society is also perpetuated by the lack of inculcation of values such as self-control, compassion, respect and kindness by adults (Venter 2016: 69). Developing individuals form relationships on perilous guidance from peers and the media. A communication gap between adults and the youth prevents teachers from understanding their learners. Disagreements and complaints may remain undetected and unsettled until the eruption of violent outbursts during which such latent factors are

brought to light.

c) Rights culture

A study by Hammett and Staeheli (2011: 3; 19) that focusses on developing respect and responsibility in South African high schools, provides profound insight into the culture of society. They posit that there is a perceived absence of respect among politicians, teachers and community leaders and a perceived 'rights culture' among learners. The assertions of a lack of respect and an emerging rights culture impact significantly on macrosystemic relationships, in particular the teacher-learner relationship.

Teachers tasked with teaching good citizenship, regard respect as the fulfilment of duties and a conformance with social norms and with the law (Hammett & Staeheli 2011: 15). Since schools are viewed as a microcosm of society, such expectations are also nurtured in the classroom through the conformance to governmental policies that promote the ideals of democracy and human rights (Hammett & Staeheli 2011: 10). Teachers perceive learners' fulfilment of their responsibilities as an indication of respect and the basis upon which learner rights are granted. Learners who do not display responsible behaviour are often not accorded respect and are denied their rights to which they feel entitled (Hammett & Staeheli 2011: 17-19). This has evoked a 'rights culture' among learners. Learners maintain that if they were allowed to access their rights, they would be likely to reciprocate by respecting the teacher and fulfilling their responsibilities. The triangulated battle between respect, responsibility and rights has added tension to the teacher-learner relationship fuelling disruptive encounters in the classroom.

Disciplinary problems that manifest in the teacher-learner relationship arise from a combination of innate, physical, environmental, social and societal factors existent in the various interrelated settings within which the learner interacts. I have presented a discussion on the causes of disciplinary problems by using the Bronfenbrenner ecological model as framework and have substantiated research findings in a South African context.

A discussion on strategies used to maintain discipline follows.

3.5 DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES USED IN SCHOOLS

The teacher is primarily responsible for maintaining discipline and ensuring that learners are protected from harm and danger during the process of teaching and learning in the classroom (Rambuda & Segalo 2018: 1). Indiscipline problems that manifest in South African schools form a disproportionate and intractable part of every teacher's experience (Bayaga, Khewu & Moyo 2014: 2). It is therefore inevitable that teachers are constantly in search of appropriate strategies to maintain discipline in the classroom. A discussion on disciplinary strategies used in South African schools is presented with a brief discussion on corporal punishment which was used as a discipline measure in the pre-democracy era in South Africa followed by a discussion on reactive and proactive strategies used to maintain discipline in the classroom. The presentation concludes with a discussion on recommendations for the management of learner behaviour.

3.5.1 Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment is defined as the infliction of physical force on an individual (Cicognani 2004: 3). Corporal punishment in a school refers to any form of pain that a teacher or other educational official inflicts upon the body of the student as a punishment for engaging in behaviour which has been disapproved of by the teacher or official (Morrell 2001: 293). It is a medium that is used to correct and control certain social behaviours which, when administered on a child, is intended to cause physical pain.

Spanking, slapping, hitting, grabbing or shoving a child roughly is viewed as corporal punishment. Verbal abuse and deprivation of basic needs such as food and the use of the toilet also constitute corporal punishment as it causes emotional and psychological harm to the child (Bayaga *et al*. 2014: 2). Corporal punishment in a school context also includes teachers screaming, isolating or unfairly discriminating against learners; refusing to communicate or respond to learners over a prolonged period of time; encouraging other

teachers and learners to isolate and ignore undisciplined learners; encouraging learners to hurt each other emotionally by ridiculing each other; issuing threats or humiliating learners using shaming words (Makaye *et al*. 2012: 85). Corporal punishment includes the use of bands, canes, paddles, yardsticks, belts or other objects to hit various parts of the learner's body to cause pain or induce fear (Naong 2007: 285).

According to Van Niekerk and Venter (2011: 244) corporal punishment was a strategy used by teachers to instil discipline in the pre-democracy era when teachers were deemed to have authoritarian power to control their classrooms. Learners appeared to accept the need for corporal punishment during this period because they perceived that "the teacher knows best and to learn about what is right and wrong, one has to suffer" (Morrell 2001: 296). A contrasting paradigm shift occurred in the post-democracy era. After the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa in1996, corporal punishment in schools was a widely debated topic as it conflicted with the clauses prohibiting the inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment of persons (see section 3.2.1) (RSA 1996a:7). Corporal punishment was subsequently banned as the post-democratic era heralded the establishment of a human rights culture (Tiwani 2010: 22).

Teachers feel that their power has been significantly weakened after the abolishment of corporal punishment (Ngubane, Mkhize & Singh 2019: 94). Tiwani (2010: 22) states that it is not the banning of corporal punishment that teachers complain about, but rather the lack of effective alternative disciplinary measures. In 2000, the Department of Education published a document on the alternatives to corporal punishment to assist teachers in maintaining discipline in the classroom. However, research indicates that indiscipline in schools continue to escalate despite the document emphasising effective communication, respect and positive educational exchanges in the teacher-learner relationship and the recommendation of disciplinary measures such as verbal warning, detention, demerits, community work and small menial physical tasks as disciplinary measures (Bayaga *et al*. 2014: 2-9). However, teachers regarded the document as "ineffective, inadequate and a waste of time" lamenting that they were not consulted on their views which may be the reason for their conflict, refusal or reluctance to implement

the recommendations. Despite training, teachers in general seem unable to understand and implement the recommended alternative disciplinary measures (Maphosa 2011a: 84; Rampa 2014: 22). Any measure that removes the learner from the process of teaching and learning may be viewed as discriminatory and may lead to disciplinary or criminal action against the teacher.

In the absence of corporal punishment, teachers have the option of employing either proactive or reactive strategies to maintain discipline in the classroom (Clunies-Ross, Kienhuis & Little 2008:695). A discussion on reactive and proactive disciplinary strategies used to maintain discipline in the classroom follows.

3.5.2 Reactive disciplinary strategies

Reactive strategies refer to measures that the teacher implements after a learner displays undisciplined behaviour. Reactive disciplinary strategies are thus used in a retributive approach when teachers employs disciplinary measures after misconduct, for example detention (Matthews 2016: 23-24). It is intended to cause discomfort or pain to the misbehaving learner and to serve as a deterrent to other learners with inclinations to behave in a similar manner. A criticism of this approach is that it does not focus on the consequences of actions and fosters negativity and rebelliousness in learners.

The various reactive disciplinary measures for offences that range in magnitude from minor to criminal fall within the ambit of the recommendations of the DoE (2000: 25-27). These were summarised by Maphosa (2011a: 79) is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Reactive disciplinary measures for various offences (Maphosa 2011a: 79)

Category	Offence	Recommended disciplinary action	Action by
Minor cases of indiscipline	Learners failing to be in class on time; playing truant; failing to finish homework; failing to obey instruction; being dishonest	Verbal warning, community service, demerits, small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom and detention	Class teacher
Major offences	Inflicting minor injury on another person; gambling; being severely disruptive in class; forging documents or signatures with minor consequences; exhibiting racist, sexist or other discriminatory tendencies; possessing or distributing pornographic, racist material; possessing dangerous weapons; theft; vandalism; cheating during exams	Written warning of the possibility of suspension from school; referral to a counsellor or social worker; community service, once permission is granted by the Provincial DoE .	Head of Department/ Grade Head/ Principal/ parent/ SGB
Severe case	Threatening another person with a dangerous weapon; causing intentional limited injury to another person; verbally	Referral of the learner to an outside agency for counselling; applying to the Provincial DoE for limited	Principal in consultation with the DoE

	threatening the safety of another; engaging in sexual abuse; such as grabbing; engaging in sexual activity; selling drugs; possessing or using alcohol or drugs or being drunk or under the influence of narcotics; disrupting the entire school e.g., organising boycotts; forging documents or signatures with serious consequences	suspension from school activities.	
Criminal cases	Assaulting another person; intentionally using a dangerous weapon; sexual harassment; sexual abuse, rape; robbery; major theft; breaking and entering locked premises; and murder	Expulsion	Principal/ DoE/ South African Police Services

Regarding Table 3.2 the following should be noted:

- **Minor cases of indiscipline**

These offences are generally committed in the classroom and are in conflict with the classroom rules, such as learners failing to be in class on time; playing truant; failing to finish homework; failing to obey instruction and being dishonest. The recommended disciplinary measures are verbal warning, community service, demerits, small menial tasks like tidying up the classroom and detention which is usually administered by the class teacher.

- **Major offences**

These offences are generally in direct conflict with the school code of conduct such as learners inflicting minor injury on other persons; gambling; being severely disruptive in class; forging documents or signatures; exhibiting racist, sexist or other discriminatory tendencies; possessing or distributing pornographic, racist material; possessing dangerous weapons; theft; vandalism and cheating during exams. The recommended disciplinary measures are written warnings of the possibility of suspension from school; referral to a counsellor or social worker and community service, once permission is granted by the Provincial DoE. The discipline measures are usually administered by the head of department, grade head or principal together with the parent and SGB.

- **Severe cases**

These offences are in direct conflict with the school code of conduct and are criminal acts, such as threatening another person with a dangerous weapon; causing intentional limited injury to another person; verbally threatening the safety of another; engaging in sexual abuse, such as grabbing or engaging in sexual activity; selling drugs; possessing or using alcohol or drugs or being drunk or under the influence of narcotics; disrupting the entire school, e.g. organising boycotts and forging documents or signatures with serious consequences. The recommended disciplinary measures are referral of the learner to an

outside agency for counselling or applying to the Provincial DoE for limited suspension from school activities. It is administered by the principal together with the DoE.

- **Criminal cases**

These offences are in direct conflict with the school code of conduct and the law such as inflicting major physical injury on another person (assault); intentionally using a dangerous weapon; sexual harassment; sexual abuse, rape; robbery; major theft; breaking and entering locked premises and murder. The recommended disciplinary measure is expulsion which is administered by the principal, DoE and the South African Police Services.

According to a study (Maphosa 2011a: 81-82), the common disciplinary strategies used by teachers for minor offences are verbal reprimands, talking to learners, demotion from leadership positions, manual tasks, kneeling on the floor, sending learners out of class, denial of privileges, menial tasks, corporal punishment, verbal insults, ignoring and not marking learners' work. The common disciplinary strategies used by teachers for major offences are guidance and counselling, talking to learners, suspension, detention, demotion, manual labour, use of anger management techniques, use of stress management techniques, expulsion, referral to psychologist, community service and transferring. The study evidences that teachers continue to ignore the ban on corporal punishment as the majority of the disciplinary measures used for minor offences appear to be inhumane, degrading or discriminatory. The disciplinary strategies used for major offences appear to be in synchrony with the recommendations of the DoE. Maphosa and Shumba (2010: 396) allude to the narrative that teachers perceive the alternatives to corporal punishment as ineffective in curbing learner indiscipline which may possibly account for the continuance of corporal punishment as a reactive disciplinary measure despite its banning.

3.5.3 Proactive disciplinary strategies

Proactive disciplinary strategies are used in a preventative or co-operative approach to learner indiscipline in the classroom (Matthews 2016: 24). Proactive strategies are measures such as classroom rules that the teacher implements to prevent learners engaging in undisciplined behaviour. It is intended to afford learners the opportunity to make smart choices and to develop positive behavioural patterns. The approach also allows learners to build their self-esteem, develop social skills to interact successfully, to accept responsibility for their actions and to initiate problem-solving. Proactive disciplinary measures are generally set in policies and structures that are applicable throughout the academic year (Narain 2015: 60).

Kapueja (2014: 30) states that school policies are effective in correcting offending behavioural patterns of learners if the behavioural expectations for learners are reasonable, clearly understood and actively enforced. A learner code of conduct together with other environmental, educative and structural strategies create a context for the fair and consistent application of behavioural expectations which simultaneously promotes a culture of teaching and learning, mutual respect, accountability, tolerance, co-operation and personal development in the whole school (Bilaytia 2012: 39). The school code of conduct and classroom discipline plan is a preventative disciplinary strategy used in schools (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 105).

A discussion of the school code of conduct and school discipline plan as proactive disciplinary strategies follows in the next sections.

3.5.3.1 School code of conduct

A School Code of Conduct is a legislative requirement according to Section 8(1) and Section 20(1)(d) of The South African Schools Act (in ELRC 2003a: B-7-12). A school's code of conduct must be inclusive of the values enshrined in the Constitution of the

Republic of South Africa and the National and Provincial Code of Conduct (Bilaytia 2012: 36). The code of conduct is legislated to assist schools to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment after the abolishment of corporal punishment. It is also legislated that the code of conduct for learners must be adopted after consultation with the learners, parents, teachers and non-teachers of the institution. This consultative process is intended to ensure that the rules and processes in the school code of conduct is robustly discussed in a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory manner to promote ownership of and compliance with the document (Bilaytia 2012: 37; 39). Because codes of conduct function like laws in the broader community, they must be drafted within specific legal parameters whereby learners for whom they are set up, shall be liable to be subjected to 'legal measures' for disobedience of the stipulations outlined in the document (Zondo 2016: 33). The 'legal measures' refer to the agreed disciplinary sanctions contained in the document. In order to remain contemporarily relevant, the code of conduct must be regularly revised to include changing contexts (De Wet & Russo 2009: 16; Narain 2015: 301).

The document *Guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners* (in ELRC 2003e. B-35-40) recommends the following guidelines for the drafting of an effective code of conduct:

- The preamble to the code of conduct should be commensurate with the principles, philosophy, and ethos contained in the South African Schools Act (Act 27 of 1996) and directed towards the implementation of a culture of reconciliation, teaching and learning, mutual respect, peace and tolerance.
- The policy must be directed at advancing and protecting the fundamental rights of all persons and should include the prescribed behaviour that respects the rights of learners and educators.
- The moral values, norms and principals of the school community must be contained in the policy.
- The policy must be cognisant of the principles and values in respect of democracy, non-discrimination and equality, privacy, respect, dignity, non-

violence, security and freedom of expression of learners.

- The code of conduct must be communicated in the official language of teaching and learning to learners and parents on admission and should be displayed prominently in the institution to promote compliance.
- The policy should be worded in positive terms listing acceptable and unacceptable learner behaviour, communication channels, grievance procedures and due processes in conducting a fair hearing.
- The code of conduct should communicate to learners the understanding that no learner is exempt from complying with the code of conduct and that disciplinary action may be taken against learners found guilty of any contravention of the agreed rules.
- The rights and responsibilities of learners in respect of classroom discipline should be included in the document.
- The code of conduct should clearly and concisely communicate the corrective measures for minor offences, the offences leading to suspension and expulsion, the due processes to be followed as well as the offences leading to criminal prosecution.

Research indicates that there are many challenges in the drafting of school codes of conduct. SGB's experience challenges in designing learner codes of conduct because they are not trained and are not knowledgeable about legislation (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 109). As a result of this incapacity, teachers generally dominate decisions during SGB discussions resulting in the SGB simply rubber-stamping the decisions (Masekoameng 2010: 42). Parents also appear uninformed of their democratic rights in the drafting of codes of conduct resulting in many becoming frustrated and relinquishing their positions on the SGB before their term expires (Sebisha 2015: 51). Evidence of incapacity is also noted in school codes of conduct that are often outdated or incomplete with omissions such as the mission, vision and purpose of the code of conduct, learner responsibilities and disciplinary hearing procedures (Sebisha 2015: 19).

Zondo (2016: 40, 42) asserts that active learner participation in drafting codes of conduct is problematic because learners lack the requisite skills and knowledge of the South African Schools Act. Learners are further incapacitated by being disregarded by parents and teachers who view them as being “too young and immature” to make “good and sound” decisions. For the approval of the SGB and DoE, schools often allow limited learner participation as “window dressing” (Coetzee & Mienie 2013: 91). However, Reyneke (2013: 235) believes that learners are able to contribute to codes of conduct with age- and developmentally-appropriate decisions by expressing their opinions.

Designing a good policy does not ensure its effectiveness but it is the proper implementation thereof that helps to achieve its objectives (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 104). Teachers have failed to implement robust and effective school codes of conduct because they lack knowledge and skills in implementing democratic processes in learner disciplinary investigations, hearings and appeals which is a critical aspect in the administration of sanctions for misbehaviour (Rampa 2014: 24-25). Moreover, teachers do not have confidence in the effectiveness and enforceability of disciplinary strategies of their schools’ codes of conduct (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 109). This assertion is substantiated by the lack of parental support displayed by parents who are required to attend disciplinary hearings but abdicate this responsibility to the school (Sebisha 2015: 52). Learners disrespect the code of conduct when it is observed that sanctions are inconsistently implemented; for example, the SGB may impose a sanction for a misconduct but a teacher may choose to ignore the same misconduct by a favoured learner (Sebisha 2015: 54). Such inconsistencies impact on the creditability of learner codes of conduct. The effective implementation of the code of conduct is also impeded when there is tension in the principal-SGB relationship due to both parties experiencing a lack of understanding and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities (Mgijima 2014: 202).

The cited research supports the narrative that schools experience challenges in adopting and implementing learner codes of conduct as a proactive disciplinary measure. Du

Plessis (2015: 385) believes that teachers, learners and parents must interact collaboratively to negotiate, develop, implement and manage the code of conduct in schools. An assertive discipline model involving the whole school capacitates teachers with the power to apprehend offensive and disruptive behaviour immediately (Nene 2013: 65-66). It motivates teachers emotionally and integrates a positive disciplinary system into the classroom atmosphere.

3.5.3.2 Classroom discipline policy

According to the document, '*Guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners'* (in ELRC 2003e. B-27) a classroom discipline policy is designed to effectively manage the teacher-learner relationship, classroom interactions and classroom organisation. The document legislates that the classroom discipline policies must be formulated by class teachers in consultation with learners and should be consistent with the overall school code of conduct. Lumadi (2013: 65) postulates that the use of classroom rules is an effective proactive strategy in organising and managing classroom plans as it specifies the expected behaviour from learners, the behaviour that will be reinforced and the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. Teachers and learners reportedly view a system of classroom rules as an effective disciplinary measure (Oosthuizen, Serame, Wolhuter & Zulu 2013: 4). The following factors should be noted when designing classroom discipline policies:

- Learners must understand the logic of a classroom discipline policy (DoE 2000: 12).
- The classroom discipline policy should outline the purpose of the policy, behaviour expectations, communication channels and discipline procedures (Tiwani 2010: 43).
- The policy should also specify how learners should conduct themselves during learning activities, change of classes, and during visits of members of staff or senior personnel (Tiwani 2010: 43).

- The classroom rules must be established at the beginning of the year and re-evaluated at the beginning of each term (DoE 2000: 12).
- The policy may be used as a written agreement by presenting learners with individual copies and requesting learners to sign the copies (DoE 2000: 12).
- The classroom rules should be positively worded in simple language that is appropriate for the level of the learners (Lumadi 2013: 65).
- The rules should be kept to a minimum and should be developed for various contexts and situations as needed (Lumadi 2013: 65).
- The policy should be prominently displayed in the classroom (DoE 2000: 12).

Teachers should offer clear rules and boundaries and avoid inconsistent and contradictory discipline techniques. Teachers who implement the classroom rules seriously, consistently and fairly nurture trust in the teacher-learner relationship (DoE 2000: 13). Tiwani (2010: 42) surmises that if teachers develop and implement the classroom discipline policy effectively, they are likely to regulate the behaviour of their learners and create classroom conditions where learning may occur without any disruption.

A discussion on the role of the teacher in managing discipline in the classroom follows.

3.5.4 The role of the teacher as a manager of discipline in the classroom

It is the task of the teacher to manage the classroom and to create a culture of positive behaviour that facilitates learning within the framework of the school's code of conduct (Western Cape Department of Education 2007:1). Teachers are responsible to create a classroom climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. Tiwani (2010: 39) describes the classroom climate as the collective perception that learners have of a particular teacher's class and the manner in which those perceptions motivate learners to perform optimally. It also embraces the emotional and social classroom context in which learners accept their peers as members of the class group, the spirit and meaningfulness of

individual and group activities in the classroom, the nature of interpersonal interactions as well as the structure of order in the classroom. A conducive classroom climate is influenced by the interrelationships between the teacher, the learners, the learning material, the teaching methods, the presence of order and discipline, the physical classroom environment and the interpersonal relationships that prevail in the classroom (Tiwani 2010: 39). Research indicates that teachers have a pivotal role in managing discipline in the classroom.

Teachers must choose a classroom discipline approach that provides for the correction and prevention of discipline problems (Tiwani 2010: 43). Maphosa (2011b: 243) advocates that teachers re-examine their positions of dominance and authority in the classroom and equip themselves with high-level behaviour problem diagnostic skills to avert indiscipline in classrooms. He recommends that teachers explore strategies that will allow them to “ignore less serious behaviour problems, manage those that cannot be ignored and resolve those that cannot be managed”. Joubert and Serakwane (2009: 135) and Lapperts (2012: 49) maintain that educators must abandon their autocratic and permissive teaching styles and invite learners into the decision-making processes to encourage shared responsibility and self-discipline among learners. Learners who join gangs or engage in other negative behaviour are often deprived of a power base at home (Mabea 2013: 62). Such learners also benefit from shared decision making as the power in making decisions affords them a sense of ownership. This democratic approach creates peaceful classrooms because learners understand and respect the rules, principles and expectations governing discipline.

Disruptive behaviour in the classroom is minimised when teachers are able to read the behavioural patterns of learners and adopt appropriate managerial skills to address issues that are likely to lead to disruptiveness. Some learners have an innate disposition towards aggression which forces them into unfounded confrontational behaviour in their social relationships (Mabea 2013: 61). It is recommended that such learners be included in decisions and planning of activities as listening and considering the learners’ views satisfies the aggression need. Moreover, some teachers have replaced corporal punishment with humiliation, sarcasm and neglect (Mabea 2013: 86-87). It is

recommended that teachers nurture a climate of mutual trust in which learners feel safe and affirmed thereby reducing the need for disciplinary action. Teachers should be alert and vigilant and should emulate the positive behaviour that they wish to foster in their learners (Bilatyia 2012: 29-30). Through eye-contact, body language, facial expression and by walking between the learners, teachers can exercise order and limit the movement of learners in the classroom. Mabea (2013: 87) proclaims that teachers who employ a humanistic approach by listening and understanding individual learner needs develop mutual respect in the teacher-learner relationship.

A discussion on recommended proactive strategies for classroom behaviour management follows.

3.6 RECOMMENDED PROACTIVE STRATEGIES FOR CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

According to Joubert and Serakwane (2009: 126), the greatest challenge to upholding order, compassion and understanding in the classroom is the implementation and maintenance of disciplinary measures. They assert that most teachers have difficulty in finding alternatives that allow them to feel in control of their learners (Joubert & Serakwane 2009: 129). The following recommendations may capacitate teachers in the maintenance of discipline in the classroom.

3.6.1 Benchmarking universal values

There is a need for robust reflection and dialogue among teachers on a firm value base to underpin positive discipline in the classroom (Du Preez & Roux 2010: 24-25). Contradictions between cultural values and human rights values must be robustly argued so as to establish a benchmark of universal values acceptable to all societies before allowing the practice of unique principles and values. This would obviate confusion among learners as to what constitutes universal human values and will afford teachers clarity on how to respond to disciplinary problems without confusing human rights and

cultural values. Bayaga *et al*. (2014: 12-13) concur with the before mentioned. They indicate that there is a need for dialogue among all stakeholders to establish benchmarking not only within societies but also with other schools, provinces and countries. They argue the need for all stakeholders to cultivate a school culture based on values such as self-discipline and for the need to capacitate critical role-players in understanding, policy-drafting and implementing normative disciplinary measures.

3.6.2 Forming supportive networks

There should be a collaborative partnership between school, family and community to address disciplinary problems in schools (Maphosa 2011b: 246). By forming a supportive relationship with the parents and the community, schools become enabled to understand and support their learners. Teachers must foster a caring and supportive relationship with troubled learners by empowering them with coping strategies (Kourkoutas & Wolhuter 2013: 4-5). Teachers must also form collaborative partnerships with trained professionals such as psychologists and social workers to develop intervention strategies to assist both teachers and learners with coping mechanisms. Maphosa (2011b: 246) proposes the implementation of anger management courses for learners who manifest their stress and anger as indiscipline. He proclaims that anger management is a skill that students can learn and should therefore be included in the school curriculum.

Teachers also need to position themselves as educator-researchers and keep abreast of the changing needs of their learners (Joubert & Serakwane 2009: 134). The teachers need to network with colleagues within their school and in other schools in the district to discuss effective and ineffective practices and disciplinary measures. Teachers must be trained and retrained in developing skills at identifying learners with behavioural problems (Maphosa 2011b: 246). By attending training workshops teachers become empowered with skills and knowledge to handle the changing needs of their learners. District Management should be supportive in developing, implementing and monitoring a school discipline policy (Bilatyia 2012: 45). They should also engage in programmes to capacitate principals to establish partnerships with the community and other relevant

stakeholders.

3.6.3 Two creative models of behaviour management

3.6.3.1 The Maphosa behaviour management model

Maphosa (2011b: 246) proposes a behaviour management model in which the teacher occupies the crucial role in managing discipline. Figure 3.2 reflects the behaviour management model proposed by Maphosa (2011b: 247).

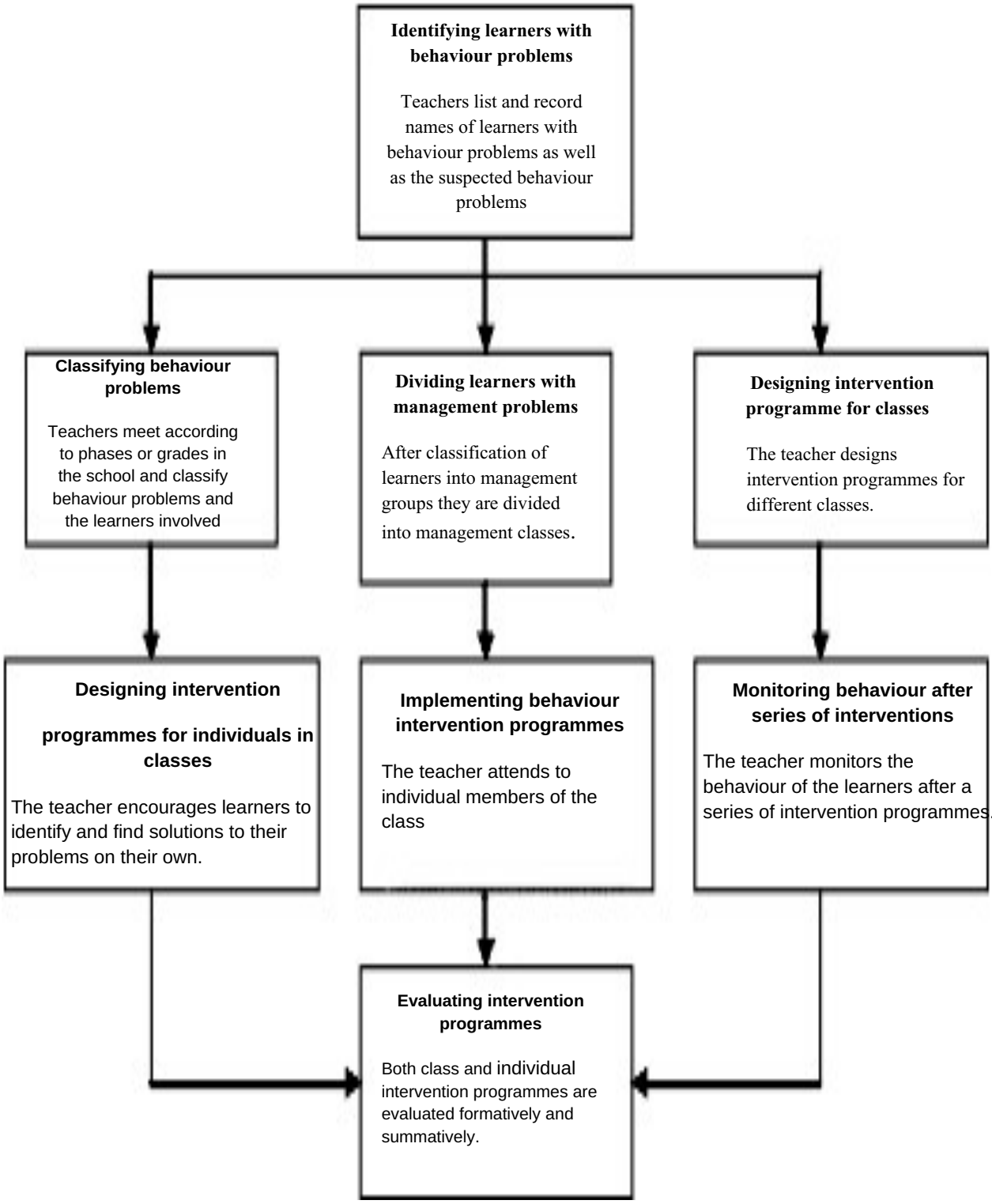


Figure 3.2 Proposed behaviour management model (Maphosa 2011b: 247)

Maphosa (2011b: 246) strongly advocates the implementation of preventative disciplinary measures as opposed to reactive disciplinary measures as the latter are regarded as impractical in stemming the disciplinary problems in schools. As indicated by Figure 3.2, the behaviour management model proposed by Maphosa (2011b: 247) focuses on identifying learners with behavioural problems and addressing the issues before the cases of indiscipline manifest thus serving as a preventative disciplinary measure.

In this model (Figure 3.2), teachers first ***compile a list of learners with behaviour problems*** as well as the suspected behaviour problems. In step two, ***teachers meet according to phases or grades in the schools to classify behaviour problems and the learners involved*.** For example, the teachers in the General Education and Training phase may meet and classify the identified learners from the list into separate behaviour categories, for example, learners with anger problems may be separated from learners with drinking problems. In step three, ***after the learners have been classified into management groups, they are then divided into management classes*.** These classes are constituted according to the identified behaviour problems; for example, there may be a class for learners with anger issues and a class for learners with drinking problems. In step four, the ***teacher designs intervention programmes for different classes*** by engaging the learners in discussions on general indiscipline and then particularising the identified problem. The learners in the anger management class will focus on anger issues while the learners in the drinking class will focus on drinking issues. In step five, ***the teacher designs intervention programmes for individual learners in the behaviour management class*** by encouraging learners to identify and to seek solutions for their problems on their own. ***The teacher implements the individual programmes for the learners in the class*** through one-on-one discussions on how each learner may be empowered to deal with her or his behavioural problem. For example, individual learners in the anger management class may be guided on identifying trigger factors that lead to their respective bursts of anger. Each learner may then be encouraged to seek relevant personal strategies to counteract the trigger factors

based on their personal contextual factors. During the period that the learners are engaged in individual coping strategies decided and agreed upon in their respective behaviour management classes, ***the teacher monitors their behaviour*** in the class. After a period of time, ***the teacher conducts both a formative and summative assessment of the intervention programmes*****.** The formative evaluation of the success of the individual learner's intervention programme is shared with other teachers.

The Maphosa (2011b: 247) behaviour management model is a recommendable model because it is underpinned by the principles of a constructive model approach to discipline. It equips learners with skills to think for themselves and to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour through their own experiences (Bilatyia 2012: 32). Learners are also guided on the exploration of the consequences of negative actions and the development of caring and respectful relationships with their peers and with adults. Learners are encouraged to develop personal individualised coping strategies for behavioural problems. Such coping mechanisms are likely to be sustained since solutions to deal with the behavioural issues are evolved from the learner's personal commitment to change.

The behaviour management model is also recommendable because it destigmatises the learner as the problem and focuses on the behaviour as the problem. However, it must be noted that the success of this model is dependent on the commitment of the teacher in developing, managing and sustaining such programmes. The implementation of this initiative also calls for teachers to be well-trained in skills to identify problem behaviour and to develop behaviour modification programmes.

3.6.3.2 The positive alternative discipline (PAD) approach to learner behaviour management

The positive alternative discipline (PAD) approach to learner behaviour management is recommended by Rampa (2014: 21) after a study conducted to ascertain whether South African teachers have the knowledge, skills and competence to implement alternative

disciplinary approaches. It emerged that South African teachers lack the capacity to identify and implement strategies to reverse the decline in the culture of teaching and learning. Rampa (2014: 21) proposes that schools employ a PAD approach to resurrect and improve the culture of teaching and learning. The PAD approach is operationalised within a positive invitational discipline (PID) framework. A PID programme exists where teachers use the pedagogy of care to make learners feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted, safe and trusted by caring teachers. Figure 3.3 reflects the PAD approach within a PID framework (Rampa 2014: 27):

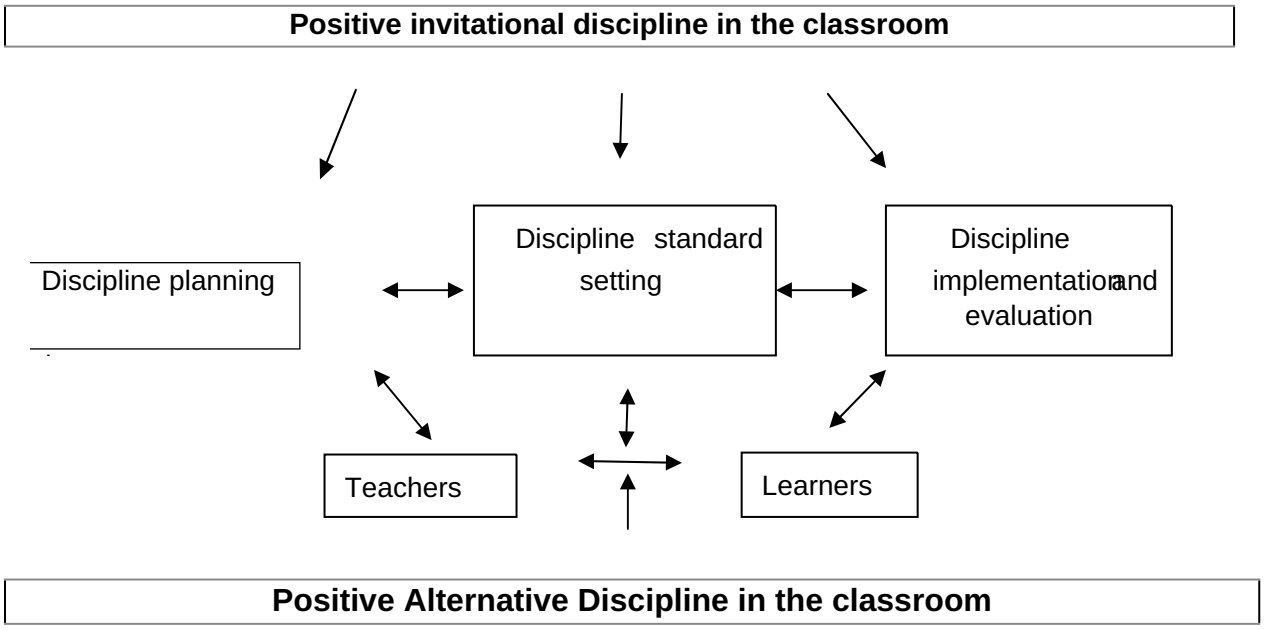


Figure 3.3: A Customised Positive Invitational Discipline Framework (Rampa 2014: 27)

The PAD approach is focused on the teacher since it is premised that if teachers maintain discipline in the critical teacher-learner interactive space of the classroom, it may extend a positive and powerful effect of discipline outside the classroom leading to an improved culture of teaching and learning (Rampa 2014: 27). The PAD approach focuses on the teacher designing a classroom discipline plan, setting behaviour standards and implementing the classroom discipline plan through delegation, open communication,

and a cooperative decision-making process with the learners.

According to Figure 3.3, the PAD approach commences with a ***discipline planning phase*** where the teacher positions a misbehaving learner at a desk where the teacher is able to always make quick contact with the learner for guidance and warnings. This is achieved through learner discussions and dialogue. During the ***disciplinary standard setting phase***, the teacher actively teaches the learners agreed-upon classroom rules, values and norms and sets behavioural standards collaboratively with the learners. The teacher teaches learners the principles of accountability and responsibility for one's actions by delegating classroom activities to the learners which enhances mutual trust and respect in the teacher-learner relationship. The teacher remains central in the PAD and PID approach but allows for the delegation of classroom authority through classroom activities.

In the ***implementation and evaluation phase*** (see Figure 3.3), the teacher is engaged in ensuring that the learners are actively involved in class activities in an attempt to minimise any disturbances in the classroom. The teacher observes the adherence to classroom norms and agreed behavioural standards instituting remedial consequences and teacher-learner dialogue if necessary. By adopting a PAD approach and assisting the learners through a PID programme, the teacher strategically prevents any misbehaviour. Rampa (2014: 28) advocates that the PID framework should be regularly reviewed because learners' observance of classroom rules and their engagement in classroom activities influences the teachers PAD re-planning.

The teacher must engage in the resetting of disciplinary standards if learners' misbehaviour and disobedience to rules persists. The process of adopting a PAD approach begins again with the planning phase where the end becomes the beginning of a PAD replanning approach. The PAD approach may be exemplified as follows: the teacher moves two misbehaving learners to the front of the class, sets the standards for the maintenance of discipline (they are not allowed to talk to each other whilst the lesson is in progress) and then monitors the learners' behaviour. The teacher observes that

whilst seated in the front, the learners observe the rule of not talking whilst the lesson is in session but observes that they are very disruptive at the end of the lesson. If the learners do not respond to repeated guidance and warning using the PID programme, the teacher must replan the PAD approach to alter the misbehaviour at the end of the lesson. The teacher now begins the discipline planning for the end of the lesson premising that the learners continue to be disciplined whilst the lesson is in session. The teacher begins by focusing on this misbehaviour by setting a disciplinary standard for the end of the lesson. For example, learners are not allowed to leave their chairs at the sound of the siren but to wait for the teacher's instruction at the end of the lesson. The plan for redirecting the disruptive behaviour at the end of the lesson is implemented and evaluated thus continuing the process of re-directing the learners' unacceptable behaviour through a PAD approach and PID programme.

The PAD approach is recommendable because it is flexible and accommodates differentiation for the implementation of proactive strategies based on the local conditions of classrooms within a school (Rampa 2014: 27). It is hence not a one-size-fits-all model because it necessitates the exploration of strategies that are workable within the contextual factors of the classroom. The PAD approach instils a culture of teaching and learning in the classroom because misbehaving learners are under constant supervision of the teacher thereby minimising the scope for disruptive behaviour. The teacher-learner relationship is also strengthened with the PID programme through the nurturing of mutual trust and respect. However, the success of this approach is greatly dependent on the knowledge, skills and competency of teachers to implement proactive strategies and to sustain the pedagogy of care required in the classroom. Initiatives to empower teachers with discipline management skills is necessary for the effective implementation of the PAD approach within a PID framework to address learner indiscipline.

I have presented a discussion on corporal punishment, disciplinary measures and recommendations in respect of disciplinary strategies used in South African schools.

3.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have discussed policies governing discipline, findings related to the prevalence of a lack of discipline, causes of disciplinary problems and disciplinary strategies used in schools with particular relevance to the South African context. The discussion concluded with recommended proactive strategies for classroom behaviour management.

A discussion on the research design and methodology follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4
THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three the literature on policies, studies, causes and strategies governing discipline in South African schools were discussed. In this chapter I detail the methodological processes used in this study to answer the main research question: *how do learners explain their views of the causes and nature of disruptive behaviour that leads to encounters with teachers in selected secondary schools?* I present a discussion on the research design; the ethical measures applied; measures taken to ensure trustworthiness (validity and reliability) in the empirical phase of this study; the data-collection methods; and the processes of data analysis.

The main purpose of this study is to understand the learner's experiences of disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers with particular focus on the dynamics of speech acts and the recognition of authority in the teacher-learner relationship. The manifestation of disruptive behaviour in the teacher-learner social relationship is theorised as acts of resistance. The chosen research design, data-collection methods and data analysis processes are intended to maximally extract, analyse, interpret and present the data to achieve the purpose of this study.

4.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

As a qualitative methodology was used, it followed the interpretivist approach using a phenomenological case study. research approach was used in this study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 4-5) qualitative research illuminates our observation of the world through the construction of the world "into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self". The qualitative research study is imbedded in natural settings in which the researcher

attempts to understand and interpret phenomena according to the meanings that people attach to them. A qualitative approach affords the researcher insight into the events, situations, experiences and actions of the participants including the particular contexts and processes within which the participants act (Maxwell 2013:30).

A qualitative research approach in this study provided the framework to understand the disruptive encounters experienced by learners with their teachers in their natural setting. Through qualitative interviews, the researcher was enabled to construct the phenomenon of disruptive behaviour as experienced in the world of the learner. It presented the medium to construct, interpret and understand the contexts and processes that underpin the phenomenon of disruptive behaviour as experienced by the learner.

4.3 ETHICAL MEASURES

Researchers begin their proposed research by asking core questions about the benefits and risks of the investigation and how potential harm may be mitigated in the study (Benton, Coppersmith & Dredze. 2017: 96). Ethical issues in the proposed research arise as a result of the tension that is created between the aim of the researcher to make generalisations for the well-being of others and the responsibility to protect the privacy of the participants (Eisenhauer, Orb & Wynaden 2001: 93). Three core principles underpin ethics in research; namely, respect for persons, beneficence and justice (Guest, Mack, Macqueen, Namey & Woodsong 2005: 9). *Respect for persons* refers to the commitment of the researcher to protect the vulnerability and prevent the exploitation of the participants; *beneficence* is a commitment to minimise the risks associated with the research and *justice* is a commitment to ensure a balance between the risks and benefits of the study (Guest *et al.* 2005: 9). Ethical principles pertaining to informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, avoidance of deception and privacy and the competence of the researcher are measures used by researchers to prevent harm and protect the participants in the study. A discussion of the ethical measures undertaken in this empirical investigation follows.

4.3.1 Informed consent

In this study, I ensured informed consent by participants. Informed consent is a fundamental tenet of ethical research referring to participants knowingly consenting to participate in a study without being subjected to elements of fraud, deceit, duress or manipulation (Berg & Lune 2017: 46). Informed consent is also associated with the researcher's obligation to inform participants of the potential risks and factors that may cause physical, psychological, legal or social injury and to seek strategies to mitigate these factors.

Researchers must respect the participants in a study by recognising their right to be informed of the study, to decide voluntarily whether to participate in the study and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty (Eisenhauer *et al.* 2001: 95). Informed consent is achieved by the negotiation of trust between the researcher and participant whereby the researcher endeavours to maintain a reasonable balance between over-informing and under-informing participants on the purpose and risks of the study. Informed consent is also achieved by allowing participants to act autonomously and to voluntarily decide to accept or refuse their participation in the study.

Participants who are children or adolescents are considered to be more vulnerable than adults in respect of their cognitive and emotional development, level of autonomy, and dependence on family influence (Bernhardt, Fraser, Geller, Tambor & Wissow. 2003: 261). The participants in this study were minors and it was therefore necessary that the researcher attained parental consent before engaging with the participants (Annexure D). Informed consent in this study was achieved by informing participants of the following:

- that the researcher was a postgraduate doctoral student;
- which procedures would be used during the research;

- what the potential risks and benefits of the research would be;
- that participation in the study was voluntary and participants could withdraw at any stage; and
- how confidentiality of the study would be ensured.

After all details pertaining to the study were fully explained and understood by the participants, an informed decision was made and the participants voluntarily acceded to participating in the study. The signed assent form (Annexure E) indicated the participant's willingness to participate in the study. Permission to conduct the research was also sought from the KwaZulu-Natal DoE (Annexure A), as well as the principal of the school where the participants were interviewed (Annexure C).

4.3.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity are important ethical principles that ensure that participants feel safe in sharing personal information with the researcher (Benson, Brand & Gibson 2013: 20). Anonymity refers to the absence of any identifiers that link the participants to the study whilst confidentiality refers to the researcher's commitment to ensuring the protection of information shared by the participant (Huberman, Miles & Saldana 2014: 63; Benson *et al.* 2013: 21). The researcher engenders trust in the researcher-participant relationship with the promise of confidentiality to protect the participant against any adverse consequences associated with participating in the research (Pollock 2012: 5).

Anonymity was maintained in this study by anonymising the names of the participants using codes. The identity of the participants quoted in the study was hence protected. The participants were assured that information shared during the interviews was for research purposes only and that their experiences of disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers would not be discussed with anyone.

4.3.3 Avoidance of deception and privacy

Deception in empirical research refers to the deliberate intention of a researcher to mislead the participants in a setting (Burr & Reynolds 2010: 131). Researchers may act deceptively in three ways; namely, when they do not fully reveal the purpose of the study; they do not fully disclose the procedures used to elicit data prior to the study; and when they covertly enter the setting by not revealing their true identity to the participants (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow 2018: 18). Such deception is regarded as unethical, disrespectful to the participants and in contravention of the principle of autonomy.

The privacy of participants may be distinguished into three aspects; namely, territorial privacy, privacy of the person and informational privacy (Kokolakis 2015: 123). Territorial privacy refers to the physical area pertaining to the participant; privacy of the person relates to the protection of the participant against undue harm whilst informational privacy refers to the gathering, storing, processing and the dissemination of data pertaining to the participant.

It is imperative that deception is avoided and the privacy of participants is protected in empirical research. In this study all participants were appraised of the purpose, the procedures and the identity of the researcher prior to their engagement in the study. The privacy of the participants was maintained by anonymising the participants and the setting of the study. Participants were also given the opportunity to withdraw from the study or seek counselling if they experienced emotional discomfort. All ethical considerations in respect of the informational privacy were maintained.

4.3.4 The competence of the researcher

Competence is understood as the possession of skills and abilities to perform a task or job expeditiously (Cabello-Medina & Morales-Sánchez 2013: 717). Worthy and beneficial research is dependent on researchers possessing the necessary skills and the guidance

from supervisors for the competent execution of the empirical study (Harding 2013:25). My competency to conduct this study is evidenced in my academic qualification as a Masters in Inclusive Education graduate as well as my professional role as a deputy principal of a secondary school. My competency skills in academic writing were developed through extensive reading of textbooks and scholarly articles on the phenomenon being studied. My competency as a researcher was also enhanced by the mentorship provided by a supervisor assigned by the registered university.

4.4 MEASURES TO ENSURE TRUSTWORTHINESS

The term *trustworthiness* conceptualises the evaluation of the qualitative content analysis of a study according to a set of criteria aimed at supporting the worthiness of the findings of the qualitative inquiry (Elo *et al.* 2014: 2). The commonly asked questions by researchers to subject empirical studies to the rigour of trustworthiness pertain to the establishment of confidence in the findings; the applicability of the findings to other settings or with other respondents; the consistency of the findings with similar participants in the same context and the authentication that the findings are representative of the participants' responses and free from any researcher bias (Anney 2014: 276). These questions are correspondingly encapsulated in the constructs credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability which are used to measure trustworthiness in qualitative research. A discussion of these trustworthiness measures follows.

4.4.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the establishment of confidence in the truth of research findings (Anney 2014: 276). It is a measure that is used to establish whether the plausible information represented in research findings are extracted from the original data of the participants and whether it correctly interprets the original views of the participants (Anney 2014: 276). Research evidence is deemed to be credible if it adequately represents the multiple realities represented by the participants (Liamputtong 2013: 25). Member-checking, peer debriefing and the citation of key scholars are measures that

were used to establish credibility in this study

Member-checking is a process in which the researcher returns to the participants with the final report to verify their interpretation of the context and details of their experiences of the phenomenon studied (Loh 2013: 6). The emphasis during member-checking is the verification of whether the researcher correctly captured the spoken words of the participants (Pandey & Patnaik 2014: 5749). Peer-debriefing refers to the process whereby the researcher seeks the support and scholarly guidance of academic staff in respect of the background information, data collection methods and process, data management, transcripts, data analysis procedure and research findings of the study (Anney 2014: 277). The credibility of this study was enhanced by engaging in member-checking and peer-debriefing.

4.4.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the research findings of a study are applicable to other individuals or groups, contexts, or settings (Liamputtong, 2013:25). The transferability of the findings of a study to other similar settings enhances the depth of understanding and explanation of the phenomenon being studied (Huberman *et al*. 2014:101). The transferability of this study was established through the use of thick descriptions which is a process whereby the setting, participants and themes are discussed in rich detail (Creswell & Miller 2000: 128-129). The provision of deep, dense and vivid information pertaining to the participants and setting evokes emotions and visualisations in the reader which allows for the applicability of the findings to other similar settings and contexts.

4.4.3 Dependability

The term *dependability* in qualitative research corresponds closely to the term *reliability* in quantitative research (Afzal, Azeem & Bashir 2008: 39). It is a reference to the stability of the data collated over time within the setting of the study (Connelly 2016: 435). An audit

trail and peer debriefings are two strategies that enhance the dependability of a study (Connelly 2016: 435). An audit trail is an inquiry process in which the researcher accounts for all the research decisions and activities pertaining to the collection, recording and analysis of the research data by keeping records of the raw data, interview and observation notes and other information from the setting (Anney 2014: 278). It is a strategy in which the researcher maintains a written record of the research process which elucidates concerns and increases the confidence of other researchers and reviewers in the conduct of the study (Lietz & Zayas 2010: 196). Peer-debriefings refer to consultations with experienced researchers who offer guidance on the enhancement of the methodology of the study (Lietz & Zayas 2010: 196).

A written audit trail documenting all aspects of the methodology of this study and peer debriefings with the assigned supervisor to the study were strategies used to increase the dependability of this study.

4.4.4 Confirmability

The term *confirmability* in qualitative research corresponds closely to the term *objectivity* in quantitative research (Liamputtong, 2013:26). Confirmability examines whether the data presented in the study attests to the findings, interpretations and recommendations of the study (Loh 2013: 5). It conceptualises the researcher's attempt to preclude personal bias, motivation, interest or perspective in the presentation of the findings and interpretations of the study (Liamputtong, 2013:26). Berger (2015: 229) argues that despite the researcher's attempt to obviate personal bias in the study, the researcher's bias, assumptions and personality cannot be separated from the activities of the study. Reflexivity is a strategy that addresses the presence of the researcher in the study whereby the researcher acknowledges all personal actions and decisions within the context of the study (Berger 2015: 229). Reflexivity also increases the credibility and trustworthiness of the study (Berger 2015: 229).

Reflexivity and auditing were two strategies that were used to enhance the confirmability of this study.

4.4.5 Tactics to ensure trustworthiness

Additional strategies were used to ensure trustworthiness in this study. Various data collection methods were used as explained in section 4.5. In this study, the data collection methods involved documents, interviews and field notes. In order to attain information-rich data, participants who repeatedly displayed disciplinary problems were purposively identified from the School Discipline File. A voice recorder was used to capture the verbatim transcription of each interview and all transcripts were checked for errors. The findings were presented to the interviewees to comment on their accuracy. The supervisor of the study also checked for accurate interpretation of the collected data.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

All researchers develop a detailed data collection plan that is aimed at producing exceptional quality data (Beck & Polit 2010: 377). All decisions and procedures pertaining to data collection are thoroughly critiqued in order to strengthen the study's capacity to answer the research questions. A discussion on the data collection plan used in this study follows.

4.5.1 Sampling

Qualitative studies are aimed at discovering meanings and uncovering multiple realities (Beck & Polit 2010: 318). Qualitative researchers therefore endeavour to source information-rich data and to select settings with high potential for information richness.

Purposive sampling is a strategy used to select participants who contribute to the informational needs of the study, for the development of theories and concepts of the phenomenon being studied and to enhance the understanding of ones' experiences of the phenomenon (Beck & Polit 2010: 320; Devers & Frankel 2000: 264). Purposive sampling was a suitable sampling strategy for this study as it allowed for the sourcing of information- rich data and the opportunity for in-depth investigation into learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour that led to encounters with teachers.

As stated by Beck and Polit (2010: 318), qualitative researchers often identify an eligibility criterion in sampling to establish the eligibility of participants. The focus of this study was learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour that led to encounters with teachers; hence the eligibility criterion was learners who had been cautioned for disruptive behaviour according to the school code of conduct. The source document for this information was the Learner Discipline File which is managed by grade coordinators who are teachers who manage the disciplinary issues in the grade. The following procedure was followed in the sampling process:

- A meeting was conducted with Grades 8-11 grade coordinators at which the purpose of the study and the request for the perusal of the Learner Discipline Files were explained.
- Grade 8-11 coordinators were asked permission to access the Learner Discipline Files for their respective grades.
- The files were perused to identify learners per grade who had most frequently been referred to the grade coordinator for disruptive behaviour with teachers.
- "Most frequent" was defined as learners being referred two times or more for disruptive behaviour.
- Four learners per grade who had been most frequently sent to the grade coordinator for disruptive behaviour and who were currently on observation for recurrent transgressions were identified.
- Sixteen learners were chosen as participants. They were chosen as follows:

GET Phase (GR 8 and 9): Eight learners comprising four from each grade
FET Phase (GR 10 and 11): Eight learners comprising four from each grade

The participants were purposively selected according to the eligibility criterion and were representative of both the junior and senior phases.

A meeting was arranged with the identified learners to inform them of the study and the process by which they were identified. All details pertaining to the interviews including the time, duration and the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. The learners were informed that because they were minors, parental consent was necessary. All parents and guardians were called and informed of the study and permission for the participation of their child or ward in the study was sought. The signing of the assent forms and parental consent forms endorsed the voluntary participation of all learners.

The research setting was a quintile five co-educational public school situated in an urban suburb within a ten-kilometre radius of two previously classified Coloured and Black townships. The learner population encompassed affluent and middle-class learners and learners from indigent socio-economic groups who were predominately from the immediate previously classified Indian residential area. The school offered a mainstream academic programme with limited sporting and recreational opportunities. The staff of 38 personnel comprised approximately 30 percent newly qualified and 70 percent experienced teachers and included three teachers of colour.

The gatekeepers (Das & McAreavey 2013: 116) of this study were the KwaZulu-Natal DoE and the principal who allowed access to the site, and granted permission for the research to be undertaken.

4.5.2 The researcher as instrument

The researcher as an instrument in qualitative inquiry enhances the credibility of qualitative research findings through the skilful application of appropriate methodologies and processes (Stewart 2010: 293-294). The researcher applies reflexivity as a tool to constantly authenticate and substantiate the evolving data, to explain one's perspective and to respond with in-depth understanding to the topic and the methodological processes used in the investigation (Stewart 2010: 293-294).

I was guided by my supervisor in the choice of methodologies and processes in the empirical phase of this study. All choices pertaining to the methodological processes were supported by scholarly articles. I positioned myself as a researcher in the study and substantiated the coding and theme-development processes in the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data by my experiences and perspective as a secondary school manager.

4.5.3 Data-collection methods

The following data-collection methods were used in this study:

4.5.3.1 Documents

Document analysis is a qualitative research method that involves the systematic procedural review or evaluation of documents (Bowen 2009: 27). Data ascertained from documents inclusive of printed and electronic material are examined and interpreted for meaning, understanding and the development of empirical knowledge. The use of documents is an advantageous data-collection method because it is easily accessible and saves the researcher time (Harding, 2013:21).

In this study document analysis was used to derive information pertaining to learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour that lead to encounters with teachers. The Learner Discipline File (Annexure G) is an administrative referral document that a teacher

experiencing disciplinary problems completes and forwards to the grade coordinator for disciplinary intervention. The Learner Discipline File was examined for the selection of participants according to the established eligibility criterion of learners who had two or more disciplinary referrals.

4.5.3.2 Interviews

Interviews are used by qualitative researchers to understand central themes of specific experiences in the life world of the interviewees (Dumay & Qu 2011: 242-243). It is often chosen as a primary data-collection instrument because its flexibility and adaptability afford researchers the opportunity to ask probing questions to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied as well as to understand the participants' emotions (Harding, 2013:22).

I chose interviews as a primary data-collection method in this study because it encourages the revelation of "authentic experiences", the expression of feelings and the presentation of a realistic picture of the phenomenon being studied (Dumay & Qu 2011: 241-242). Through the application of interviews, I was able to elicit information-rich data pertaining to the "authentic experiences" of learners who experienced disruptive behaviour that led to encounters with teachers. The participants' expressions of their feelings during the encounters afforded me the opportunity to present a realistic picture of disruptive behaviour as experienced by learners.

I chose semi-structured interviews by means of an interview schedule because it is a conversational technique that is effective and convenient in eliciting information about the social world of the interviewee (Dumay & Qu 2011: 246). Semi-structured interviews involve probing and elaboration around a prepared schedule of questions on identified themes that the researcher wishes to investigate on the phenomenon being studied. During the semi-structured interview, I was able to conversationally probe the participants' experiences, responses and interpretations of the identified themes related to disruptive behaviour.

The interview schedule comprised a set of predetermined questions and subquestions or probes that encapsulated the domain, categories and key questions of the topic under investigation (McIntosh & Morse 2015: 4-5). The interview schedule provided a guide on how the topic was approached and reminded me of the points to be covered during the interview (Tracy 2013:139).

The domain of the topic being investigated was ascertained by conducting a literature review and was informed by my intuition, experience and observations (McIntosh & Morse 2015: 5). The domain of this study was the learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour which was underpinned by my experience as a school manager and the observations made during my interactions with learners referred for disciplinary intervention. Categories were subdivisions of the domain which focused on particular characteristics of the phenomenon being investigated (McIntosh & Morse 2015: 5). The categories in this study were clustered around the causes of disruptive behaviour, disciplinary measures and the experiences of learners whose disruptive behaviour led to encounters with teachers. Key questions were then formulated to prompt relevant responses from the participants.

The interview schedule in this study comprised the following categorised questions:

- Explain how the school code of conduct is developed at this school.
- What are the discipline problems at this school?
- Explain what discipline measures are used at this school.
- Which of these measures are effective and which are not effective? Why?
- What are the reasons why learners misbehave in the classroom?
- Why do learners disobey certain class teachers?
- Describe an incident when you were referred to the grade coordinator for being disruptive in the classroom.
- How should teachers respond when learners misbehave in the classroom?

- How can discipline be improved at this school?

The interview schedule comprising the above-mentioned questions together with probes formed the guide to the interviews in the empirical phase.

4.5.3.3 Field-notes

Field-notes refer to unobtrusively taken keyword-based notes of the overarching nonverbal behaviours of the participants during the interviews and a description of the interview location (Lauderdale & Phillippi 2018: 385). Field-notes increased the rigor and trustworthiness of the study through the construction of thick, rich descriptions of the study context, interviews and the situation of the study within a larger societal and temporal context (Lauderdale & Phillippi 2018: 381-382). I maintained detailed field-notes of the interview setting and the nonverbal behaviours of the participants throughout the empirical phase of this study.

4.6 METHODS OF DATA-STORAGE

All the data were stored either digitally, electronically or as a hard copy. The recording of each completed audio-recorded interview was uploaded to a computer hard drive, labelled and copied on multiple hard drives. Each interview was transcribed immediately and stored electronically, together with the field notes.

All the documentation in respect of requests, permission and consent of participation were filed as hard copies. The transcriptions and additional notes made during the analysis were printed and also stored as hard copies to use for data analysis.

4.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis is aimed at describing a phenomenon in detail, comparing commonalities and differences of several cases and developing a theory of the phenomenon under study from the analysis of the empirical data (Gaure 2015: 8). During the data analysis process, the qualitative researcher describes, classifies and interconnects phenomena with the researcher's conceptualisations of the phenomenon. The researcher develops a conceptual framework and classifies the data to enable the interpretation and explanation of the data in depth and detail (Gaure 2015: 8). In this study content analysis was used to describe the phenomenon of disruptive behaviour as experienced by learners and to develop a theory of the phenomenon through the analysis of the empirical data.

Coding and memos were two strategies that were used to analyse the data. A discussion of these strategies follows.

4.7.1 Coding

Coding is a strategy that is used to label and group data according to categories which on subsequent readings are compared within and between categories (Maxwell & Miller 2008: 465). The first step in analysing the data is to read and to engage in the process of *unitising* relevant data identified for analysis (Maxwell & Miller 2008: 465). Such units of data are highlighted and coded. For example, all words pertaining to the participants' feelings during encounters with the teachers were highlighted in a specific colour and coded PF (Participant's Feelings).

The coded units of data were then analysed for *themes* that connected the categories of data. For example, the analysis of the Participants' Feelings was connected to the category of Trigger Factors that lead to the encounters with teachers. The respective themes were analysed for causal relationships and contextual factors leading to disruptive behaviour.

According to Gaure (2015: 12), examining relationships whereby the researcher explains "*why things are the way they are*" is the core of data analysis.

During intensive and repeated readings of the transcribed interview data, I elicited words and phrases that encapsulated the descriptions of the participants' experiences of disruptive behaviour that correlated with the relevant literature. A deductive top-down approach determined by the literature review and interview guide was used to analyse the data.

4.7.2 Memos

Memos are informal notes kept by the researcher for insight and information during the analysis of the data (Stuckey 2015: 9). It is a strategy that is used to record how codes are developed and how decisions are made about coding. Memos enhanced the audit trail of the data analysis process and helped the researcher to understand choices and decisions made at the beginning of the study (Stuckey 2015: 9-10).

I kept a diary in which I regularly wrote memos of all choices and decisions made during the data analysis process. I recorded details of information that had to be revisited as well as my views on how I wanted the analysis to unfold. This strategy impacted on the way in which I approached and analysed the data.

4.7.3 Checking for reliability

The transcriptions of the recorded interviews were checked several times for mistakes and omissions. I constantly compared the raw data with the codes and regularly referred to the research questions to avoid a drift in the coding. The research supervisor oversaw that inter-coder agreement was maintained in the data analysis.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the empirical phase of the study detailing the basic research design, the ethical measures used to ensure trustworthiness and a description of the data -collection and analysis methods.

Chapter 5 encapsulates a discussion and interpretation of the findings of the empirical investigation within the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary research question in this study was: *How do learners explain their views of the causes and nature of disruptive encounters with teachers in a selected secondary school?* (See section 1.2.) The aim of the study was to explore learners' perspectives of their experiences of disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers. (See section 1.3.) The research study was undertaken to also inform the development and implementation of disciplinary policies and strategies to address disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

The data-collection strategies and methodology were explained in Chapter 4. The results of the empirical investigation are presented and discussed in this chapter. A brief summary concludes this chapter.

5.2 REALISATION OF THE SAMPLE

Purposive sampling was used in this research study. Sixteen participants from Grades eight to twelve were selected. Grade 12 learners were included in the sample selection due to certain identified learners in grades eight to eleven being unavailable as a result of the worldwide Covid-pandemic of 2020 and 2021 in particular during which this study took place. All purposefully selected learners had displayed disruptive behaviour in the classroom on two or more occasions and were referred to respective grade coordinators for disciplinary interventions. Table 5.1 illustrates the sample.

Table 5.1: Biographic background of the participants who experienced disruptive behaviour

LEARNER	RACE	GENDER	GRADE
1	I	M	8
2	I	F	8
3	C	F	8
4	I	M	9
5	B	M	9
6	C	F	9
7	I	F	9
8	B	M	10
9	C	M	10
10	C	F	10
11	I	M	10
12	I	M	11
13	B	M	11
14	I	M	12
15	I	M	12
16	B	F	12

I = Indian; B = Black; M = Male; F = Female

There were ten male and six female representatives across grades eight to twelve. The total participants comprised eight Indians, four Coloureds and four Blacks. Sixteen individual semi-structured interviews were conducted. All 16 participants agreed to a verbatim transcription of their responses. The codes that were used to indicate the biographic details of the participants who were quoted verbatim are given in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Biographic details and codes of the participants

Biographic details	Code
Male	M
Female	F
Indian	I
Black	B
Coloured	C

Table 5.2 represents the codes that were used during the discussion of the data. The grade of the participants was indicated after the corresponding codes of the participants' quotes. Two grade 12 participants shared similar codes. During discussion they were differentiated using roman numerals after their grades, namely participant 14 as IM (12i) and participant 15 as IM (12ii).

5.3 CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

The main research questions (see section 4.5.3.2) formed the categories under which the findings of the empirical research were discussed. The responses of the participants were divided into subcategories according to emergent themes. The findings were substantiated by the verbatim quotations of the salient points of the participants' responses, and by reference to the corresponding relevant literature.

The following table (Table 5.3) represents the categories and subcategories that were identified from the interview transcripts.

Table 5.3: Categories and subcategories from interview transcripts

Research question*: How do learners experience disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers in a selected secondary school?*	
Category	**Subcategory**
1. Learners' awareness of school discipline policies	• *The school code of conduct* • *Classroom discipline policy*
2. Learners' awareness of school discipline problems	• *Minor cases of indiscipline* • *Major offences* • *Severe cases*
3. Learners' views on discipline measures	• *Discipline measures viewed as effective* • *Discipline measures viewed as ineffective*
4. Reasons why learners misbehaved in the classroom	• *Innate factors and relationships in the immediate physical environment* • *Microsystemic relationships* ➢ *Peer relationships* ➢ *Parent-learner relationships* ➢ *Teacher-learner relationships* • *Macrosystemic relationships* ➢ *Culture of violence* ➢ *The right to be respected*
5. Reasons why teachers were disobeyed	• *Classroom dispositions of teachers who were disobeyed and disrespected* • *Classroom dispositions of teachers who were obeyed and respected*
6. Learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour that	• *Unbelieving teachers*

led to encounters with teachers and referrals to the grade coordinator	• *Teachers who singled out selected learners* • *Unjust teachers* • *Impolite teachers* • *Teachers who struck learners* • *Resisting teacher authority* • *How participants felt during encounters with teachers* ➢ *Anger* ➢ *Embarrassment* ➢ *Helplessness*
7. The desired teacher responses towards learners who misbehave in the classroom	• *Being polite* • *Communicating with the SMT and parents* • *Changing learners' seating positions*
8. Learners' views on how discipline could be improved in schools	• *Improved teacher communication strategies* • *Improved supervision and security measures* • *Counselling for learners* • *Maintaining emergency school structures*

Each of the categories and subcategories are discussed in the next sections. Findings are substantiated with direct quotes as examples.

5.4 DISCUSSION OF LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES OF ENCOUNTERS WITH TEACHERS

5.4.1 Learners' awareness of school discipline policies

5.4.1.1 The school code of conduct

Participants were asked whether they were aware of the school code of conduct and the rules contained therein. They were also asked whether they knew who developed the code of conduct.

All participants indicated that they were aware that the school had a code of conduct. The commonly cited rules from the code of conduct pertained predominately to the school dress code as encapsulated by the following participant:

> *"It's about what you must wear when you come to school… your hair … only school shoes … socks … pants … the minimum [length] and the maximum of the skirts".* BM (9)

Many participants also stated that they were aware that respect towards teachers was included in code of conduct. The common classroom rules that were cited pertained to disciplined behaviour during lessons and respect for teachers.

There were varied answers to the question about who developed the code of conduct. Most participants indicated that the code of conduct was developed by the government or the DoE. Participants were also of the view that the principal, HOD and teachers developed the code of conduct. A few participants had no knowledge as to who developed the code of conduct (CF (10; IM [11]).

All School Governing Bodies were mandated to develop and adopt a school code of conduct according to Section 8 and Section 20 of The South African School's Act (in ELRC 2003a: B-7-12). The act states that the school code of conduct must be collaboratively developed by the teachers, learners and parents and must embrace the values, ethos, mission, rules and regulations of the school (DoE 2000: 20-27).

The responses of the participants in the study clearly revealed that the code of conduct in the sample school was not developed consultatively with learners. The responses also indicated that the learners were unaware of the mandatory involvement of parents in the development of a school code of conduct as none of the participants indicated that they thought parents might be involved in its development. The responses of the participants perpetuated the narrative that learners were unaware of their rights in the development of a code of conduct. The opinion of most participants on the need to involve learners in the development of the code of conduct was encapsulated by the following participant:

> *"The code of conduct doesn't apply for the principal or the HODs … its actually something for the learners … I think they [the school] should hear from their [the learners] point of view and perspective on how they feel about it … and then they could then just come to one conclusion and make up certain rules that would benefit everybody".*
> BF (12)

The School Code of Conduct is intended to be a preventative disciplinary measure but its effectiveness is compromised when the rules, expectations and sanctions are not clearly formulated, communicated and enforced by the relevant stakeholders (Khumalo & Mestry 2012: 104-105). When the school code of conduct is consultatively formulated, robustly discussed with learners and parents in a transparent, fair and non-discriminatory manner, it promotes ownership of and compliance to the document (Bilaytia 2012: 37; 39).

5.4.1.2 Classroom discipline policy

Participants were asked whether they were aware that the school code of conduct also included classroom rules. They were also asked who they thought developed the classroom rules and what their opinion of the rules was.

All participants indicated that they were aware that classroom rules formed part of the school code of conduct. However, they did not know who developed the classroom rules. The majority of the participants thought that the principal, the HOD and the teachers developed the classroom rules, and that there were teachers who developed their own rules depending on their own needs.

With regard to their views of the rules, the participants had mixed feelings. Some expressed positive comments such as that rules made sense and gave clear indications of which behaviours were not acceptable. Others were emphatic that they did not follow the rules (IF [8]) and that some rules were not understandable (BM [10]). Two participants who expressed strong negative views on classroom rules stated the following:

> *"Well basically no one even follows those rules …. because it's in one corner … [teachers] don't talk about it … and the children basically don't really see it*". CM (10)
> *"I don't think the rules are [effective]… because judging by the way learners act in class, it's as if there were no rules that were actually set out for that specific classroom …. They [learners] belittle the teacher or their rules … or they just don't have any respect".* BF (12)

According to the document, '*Guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a code of conduct for learners'* (in ELRC 2003e. B-27) a classroom discipline

policy is designed to effectively manage the teacher-learner relationship, classroom interactions and classroom organisation. The document legislates that the classroom discipline policies must be formulated by class teachers in consultation with learners and should be consistent with the overall school code of conduct.

The responses of the participants in this study indicated that classroom discipline policies were formulated by teachers and that learners were non-participative in the process. Learners' responses that teachers formulated "*their own specific rules*" for their respective classrooms may be interpreted as the discipline policy not being consistent with the school code of conduct. Tiwani (2010: 42) surmises that if teachers develop and implement the classroom discipline policy effectively, they are likely to regulate the behaviour of their learners and create classroom conditions where learning may occur without any disruption.

5.4.2 Learners' awareness of school discipline problems

Participants were asked to share their views on the common discipline problems experienced at the school. The discipline problems were summarised according categorisation of offences by the DoE (2000: 25-27) (see section 3.5.2).

5.4.3.2 Minor cases of indiscipline

The school appeared to experience predominately *minor cases of indiscipline* such as late-coming, poor work ethic and dress code contraventions as stated by the following participant:

> *"Learners coming late to school … with the incorrect hair … boys and girls … maybe the incorrect dress code …. not going to class on time … not handing in assignments on the due date … ".* BF (12)

5.4.3.3 Major offences

Disrespect for teachers and fighting among learners were the two major offences quoted by the participants. For example:

> *"Children don't respect the teachers… there's fighting …and they argue back with the teacher… and swearing in the class…"* IM (8)

Stealing was also cited as a discipline problem at the school (CF [8]).

5.4.3.4 Severe cases

Smoking, drugs and bullying were three *severe cases* of offences listed by the participants. Examples are:

> *"One of them is drugs … like …marijuana ….* ". IM [12ii]).
> *"Bullying each other for money and stuff like that …". CF(10);*

In summary: participants' responses indicated that the school experienced minor cases of indiscipline, major offences as well as severe cases of disciplinary problems.

5.4.3 Learners' views on discipline measures

Participants were asked what discipline measures were used by the school. They were also requested to comment on the effectiveness of the discipline measures. Participant responses were categorised into discipline measures that were viewed as effective and ineffective. A discussion of the discipline measures follows.

5.4.3.1 Discipline measures viewed as effective

The discipline measure cited as most effective was parents being called to school. Calling parents to school was regarded as most effective because learners appeared to show obedience to their parents and it also afforded learners and parents the opportunity to discuss the problem with the school and to find workable solutions ((IM [11]); IM [10]). Calling parents to school was also viewed as a deterrent because learners feared their parents would punish them physically as stated by the following participant:

> *"Most of us only listen to our parents … when they scold us we pay more attention and listen to them …because we have that fear of them hitting us or reprimanding us…"* (IM [11]).

One participant (CF [10]) viewed being referred to a social worker as effective and cited her personal experience of being supported through regular visits with the social worker to help empower her with coping mechanisms to deal with discipline issues. Learners also regarded receiving pastoral care from teachers as effective because the disciplinary measure demonstrated that the teacher cared and wanted to support the learner towards improved behaviour (IM [12i]).

Calling parents to school and seeking assistance from social workers build collaborative partnerships between school, family and community which enable the school community to address disciplinary problems and to support learners (Maphosa 2011b: 246). Caring teacher-learner relationships offer support to troubled learners by empowering them with coping strategies (Kourkoutas & Wolhuter 2013: 4-5).

Another disciplinary measure cited as effective was removing learners from the classroom and asking them to sit on their knees and hold their ears (BM [10]). This disciplinary measure served as a deterrent to disruptive behaviour because learners were fearful of the physical punishment as encapsulated by the following participant:

> *"XXX tells us to sit outside for the whole period … YYY puts us on our knees and makes us hold our ears … to be honest … I think XXX and YYY are most effective … because if they say "We got ZZZ [subject]!" …we start rushing to go to class …because we scared of the punishment they give us…".* (BM [10].

However, a disciplinary measure that requires of learners to sit on their knees while grasping their ears is perceived as torture and an infringement on the learner's rights (Mammen & Maphosa 2011: 219). The prevalence of corporal punishment in current classrooms supports the narrative that teachers continue to use corporal and other physical means as a punitive disciplinary measure despite it conflicting with the democratic environment that is supposed to be nurtured by the teacher (Mammen & Maphosa 2011: 219). The existence of corporal punishment in current classrooms also supports the ideology that "the teacher knows best and to learn about what is right and wrong, one has to suffer" (Morrell 2001: 296).

5.4.3.2 Discipline measures viewed as ineffective

The majority of the participants cited suspension as a discipline measure that was least effective. Learners were not deterred from engaging in disruptive behaviour when they were suspended from the classroom or school as many continued behaving badly when they returned to school [IF [9)]. Suspension also evoked anger in learners because they felt victimised by the school which was reported by the following participant:

> *"Suspension doesn't work … to be honest … it just makes students angrier … I feel like the school is against me …".* (IF [8]).

Suspension was a reactive disciplinary measure (see 3.5.2) which was intended to cause discomfort or pain to the misbehaving learner and to serve as a deterrent to other learners with inclinations to behave in a similar manner (Matthews 2016: 23-24). Suspension used as a retributive disciplinary measure fostered negativity and rebelliousness in learners as indicated by the display of anger against the school and the learners; it also resulted in continuation with the disruptive behaviour upon return from suspension.

Asking learners to remain standing for the full duration of the lesson was also not viewed as effective because the learners disturbed others around them (IM [8]).

5.4.4 Reasons why learners misbehaved in the classroom

Participants were asked to discuss their general views on why learners misbehaved in the classroom. The responses were summarised and categorised according to the Bronfenbrenner (1999: 4-5) ecological model (see section 3.4.1).

5.4.4.1 Innate factors and relationships in the immediate physical environment

Individual attributes such as attention deficit and early onset conduct problems (aggression, as well as oppositional, disruptive and destructive behaviours) permeated the social contexts within which developing individuals interacted as also found by others (Dawes, Van der Merwe & Ward 2013: 55). These innate risk factors manifested as counternormative behaviours that affected social relationships as depicted by learners who acted disruptively in class.

Learners reputedly behaved counternormatively in classrooms because they sought attention from their peers. Some learners also misbehaved because they were not interested in school work, they did not want to be in school or they appeared to harbour

negative attitudes towards school (IM [8]). The following participant described how learners sought attention in the classroom:

> *"They [misbehaving learners] act like they are bigger than everybody … they want to be the centre of attention … they want people to see that they can do what they want and nobody is going to do anything about it …"* CF (8)

Some learners also sought attention by bullying other learners as described below:

> *"I think it's all about who can do certain things … I can tell a child … I'll hit you and I hit him … everyone can see that I have done that … so they'll obviously be scared of me … they'll have that impression … not to touch me … not to do anything to me, because I'll hurt them".* CM (10).

Children with emotional and behavioural disorders experience difficulties in maintaining constructive and productive relationships because of their inability to establish and maintain socially responsible behaviour (Botha & Kourkoutas 2015: 789). Counternormative behaviours such as bullying and the display of anger alienate learners in the classroom sometimes forcing them to behave disruptively in order to mitigate these emotions.

5.4.4.2 Microsystemic relationships

The family, school and peers are primary influences in the microsystem of the developing individual (Dawes *et al.* 2013: 69-73). Peer relationships that influenced learners negatively, parent-learner relationships that lacked love and attention, as well as teacher-learner relationships that were deprived of caring supervision, impacted on learner behaviour in the classroom. This assertion is illustrated by the responses of the participants.

a) Peer relationships

Learners misbehaved in class because they were influenced negatively by their friends as stated by the following participant:

> *"It's all to do with who you join …they make you not want to come to class … or not want to learn … it's all to do with your friends …"* IF (8)

Learners sought comradeship with friends by bunking classes and becoming embroiled in petty arguments in the classroom (IM [11]). Other authors also found that peer pressure was a contributory factor to undisciplined behaviour (Masingi 2017: 66). Learners could resist school regulations and defy teachers as a result of peer coercion (Naidu & Schulze 2014: 8). Learners' perceptions of school and their sense of belonging to the institution and its norms may also be influenced by peer relationships.

b) Parent-learner relationships

Learners could misbehave in class because they might have had a poor upbringing and may have experienced problems at home (IF [9]; IM [11]). One participant related how his personal circumstances resulted in him becoming angry at school:

> *"Some of the learners … they have anger … they lose their parents … like me … my mother passed away when I was 4 years. Now I live with my father and stepmother … see there's this thing inside … that when I see some of the children walking with their parents … it's nice for them … but when I come to school … I want the teacher to be like my mother"* BM (9)

Learners with low self-esteem, attention deprivation and love deprivation in the parent-learner relationship carry negativity into the classroom which influences the learners' school relationships and behaviour (Nene 2013: 21-22).

c) Teacher-learner relationships

Teachers sometimes evoked anger in learners by not acting supportively as encapsulated by the following participant:

> *"When I come to school I want the teacher to be like my mother … but what she does …she only calls me stupid … everything … every name … that's why sometimes … I have that anger…"* BM (9)

Teachers appeared to target learners who repeatedly misbehaved whenever the class became noisy (IM [8]). Teachers often shouted at learners, called them names or made insinuations about their families (CF [9]). Teachers also seemed to treat academically smart learners differently and were not supportive when they saw improved learner behaviour but instead continued to judge learners by their previous behaviour (IM [10]).

Teachers act *in loco parentis* in the teacher-learner relationship and are obligated to exercise caring supervision of the learner (Prinsloo 2005:10). Teachers who failed to attend to the psychological and spiritual well-being of learners evoked negative feelings in learners which sometimes caused learners to misbehave in class. The loss of trust and the manifestation of anger in the teacher-learner relationship were also symptomatic of a breakdown in communication between teacher and learner.

5.4.4.3 Macrosystemic relationships

Macrosystemic relationships were conceptualised as those interactions between the developing individual and the culture, ideologies and beliefs predominant in the developing individual's immediate settings (Bronfenbrenner 1979: 26). The culture, ideologies and beliefs that define particular settings such as the home, school, neighbourhood and society in which the developing individual interacts define the

relationships within those settings. Participants' responses revealed that cultures of violence as well as the right to be respected prevailed in the selected school setting.

a) Culture of violence

A culture of violence was prevalent in the school setting that was the context of this study. Many participants quoted fighting at school as a discipline problem as evidenced by the following participant:

> *"Fighting is one of the problems…learners get into arguments …. one learner will pick on the other … they just get into fight after that …".* IM (12ii)

A participant indicated that due to his violent tendencies he chose to walk out of a teacher's classroom to avert the possibility of him striking the verbally abusive teacher who referred to him as "*rubbish*" (IM [9]). Another participant (CM [10]) stated that he physically attacked other learners to scare them so that they would not touch him. Participant IM (11) stated that some learners obeyed their teachers because they were fearful that if they did not do so their parents would assault them.

With regard to the above, Venter (2016: 69) ascribed the disturbing learner conduct in schools to the culture of violence prevalent in society. When learners experienced conflict in relationships in the microsystem such as schools, they modelled the conduct of society in which violent acts were a means of resolving societal issues. Participants' responses supported the perception that brawls were common means to resolve conflict issues among learners in the microsystem of the school. This view was also substantiated by a participant (IM [8]) who stated that he slapped a fellow learner who had made derogatory

comments about his mother on social media. Disturbingly, teachers appeared to perpetuate violence in the microsystems of schools by administering corporal punishment in the classroom. This assertion was evidenced by a participant (BM [9]) who stated that he was smacked by a teacher with a school bag when he attempted to shout out an answer.

It was postulated that a breakdown in the teacher-learner relationship could be the cause of disciplinary problems escalating to acts of violence in schools (Dube & Hlalele 2018: 75). When teachers as adults displayed a culture of violence in the classroom, the developing individual, namely the learner, was likely to imitate such behaviours in resolving conflicts at school and in other settings in society. The culture of a violent society is also perpetuated by the lack of inculcation of values such as self-control, compassion, respect and kindness by adults (Venter 2016: 69).

b) The right to be respected

Respect was perceived to be absent among politicians, teachers and community leaders whilst a 'rights culture' was perceived to exist among learners (Hammett & Staeheli 2011:3). Likewise, a lack of respect and an emerging rights culture among the youth was noted by the following participant:

> *"Teachers don't have respect for me … so why should I have respect for them if they don't have it for me … because it goes both ways".* CF (9)

Thus, learners appeared to perceive respect as something that was only reciprocated when teachers interacted respectfully with them. Learners who did not display responsible behaviour were often not accorded respect and were denied the rights to which they felt entitled, as also noted by other researchers (Hammett & Staeheli 2011: 17 -19). This has evoked a 'rights culture' among learners.

The *right to be respected* was also noted an emergent culture among teachers as evidenced by the data reflecting reasons why teachers referred learners to the grade coordinator for disciplinary intervention. Fifty percent of the participants were referred to the grade coordinator for being disrespectful towards the teacher which supported the view that teachers regarded being respected by the learner as their right. Swearing, back-chatting, arrogance and threatening a teacher were regarded as displays of disrespect. The battle between teachers and learners who viewed respect as an entitlement added tension to the teacher-learner relationship. This in turn, led to disruptive encounters in the classroom.

In summary: The reasons why learners misbehaved in the classroom were varied as indicated by the participants in this study. Innate factors, the nature of social relationships in the home and school, as well as the culture perpetuated in the various social settings in which the learner interacted could be viewed as contributory factors to disciplinary problems in the classroom.

5.4.5 Reasons why teachers were disobeyed

Participants were probed to explain why certain teachers were disobeyed and disrespected while others were obeyed and respected. The responses were categorised according to the classroom dispositions presented by teachers who were disobeyed and obeyed. A discussion of the responses follows.

5.4.5.1 Classroom dispositions of teachers who were disobeyed and disrespected

Participants indicated they disobeyed and disrespected teachers who displayed the following dispositions in the classroom: teachers who showed a lack of respect for learners by shouting at them or calling them names such as "*stupid*" "*dumb*" CF (10), IM (11). Added to these were teachers who continuously found fault and constantly made references to their past misdemeanours, or insinuations about their parents IF (8), CF (9).

Some of the learners also disliked teachers who favoured selected learners over others, for example by always trusting quiet learners who do well in their subject to run errands for them (IM [12i]0. Another stated:

> "*Teachers favour the academically smart learners and don't pay as much attention to other learners as they do to them."* IF (9)

Teachers who were disliked and therefore disobeyed also included those that did not give learners academic support such as positive advice and encouragement [IM (12i)] or who were curt when they sought assistance [IM (9)]. Other authors also found that teachers who displayed rudeness, were high-tempered and had a confrontational disposition in the classroom inadvertently contributed to learner misbehaviour (Githui 2013: 4). Learners perceived teachers as role models and often emulated the behaviour displayed by the teachers. Learners maintained that if they were shown respect by the teachers, they would likely reciprocate by respecting the teachers and fulfilling their responsibilities. Teachers who engaged in name-calling and favouritism and were not mindful of the manner in which they spoke to learners were generally not obeyed and respected by learners.

5.4.5.2 Classroom dispositions of teachers who were obeyed and respected

Participants indicated they obeyed and respected teachers who interacted with them in certain ways that they experienced positively. Included in these were teachers who were non-judgemental over learners' past misdemeanours [(IF [8])], who spoke professionally, friendly and politely [(IM [9], IF [8]) (IM [ii])], as well as teachers who cared, showed respect and took time to provide support when needed as elaborated by the following participant:

> "*A lot of teachers … when you come into their class … they'll greet you … they'll have conversations with you … they'll ask you if you need any work [as in homework]. If you don't have work, they make sure you get*

it and then you just get a good feeling from the teacher and you actually want to go to that class and learn from that teacher because the teacher is giving you a lot of respect and helping you to get to where you need to be. That's what I feel about respect for teachers … that's how I know they respect me… ". (IM [10]).

Teachers who created a positive classroom environment in which learners were allowed and encouraged to voice their opinions (BM [10]) and who elected not to reprimand learners in front of other learners, but alone at the end of lessons (BF [12]), were viewed positively by the participants. Participants also interacted positively with teachers who started lessons promptly upon entering the classroom (IM [12i]), who ensured that learners were gainfully occupied (IM [12i]) and who stood firmly on discipline by issuing warnings immediately when learners misbehaved (IM [9]).

It was the teacher's responsibility to adopt a humanistic disposition when speaking and striving to understand learners (Mabea 2013: 162). Such an approach created a positive teacher-learner relationship and helped nurture mutual respect. Teachers who strove to create caring and nurturing classroom environments with discipline and structure were obeyed and respected, and *vice versa*.

5.4.6 How learners experienced disruptive behaviour leading to encounters in the classroom

Participants were asked to recount an incident when they were referred to the grade coordinator for being disruptive in class. They were probed to ascertain their reasons for the disruptive behaviour. After the interviews the Learner Discipline File was perused to ascertain the disruptive behaviour that was noted by the teacher for the particular incident recounted by the participant. A tabulation of the participant's disruptive behaviour as reflected in the Learner Discipline File and the reasons forwarded by participants for their respective disruptive behaviour is presented in Table 5.4. The un-italicised disruptive behaviours were the reasons listed in the Learner Discipline File by the teachers. The

italicised statements in brackets were the reasons that participants forwarded for their respective disruptive behaviours in the classroom.

Table 5.4 Summary of participants' disruptive behaviour

Learner	Gender	Grade	Disruptive behaviour
1	M	8	Fighting with fellow learner
2	F	8	Cutting a learner's hair in class (*Teacher did not believe her*)
3	F	8	Swore at teacher (*Teacher did not believe her*)
4	M	9	Arguing with a teacher (*Teacher spoke offensively*)
5	M	9	Arguing with a teacher (*Teacher struck him*)
6	F	9	Arrogance towards teacher (*Teacher singled her out*)
7	F	9	Swore at teacher (*She refused to follow the teacher's instruction*)
8	M	10	Gambling in class (*Teacher did not believe her*)
9	M	10	Throwing paper during lesson
10	F	10	Unprepared for practical cookery lesson (*Teacher did not believe her*)
11	M	10	Disrespect towards the teacher (*Teacher spoke offensively)*
12	M	11	Talking and screaming in class
13	M	11	Disrespect towards the teacher
14	M	12i	Swearing in class (*Teacher did not act fairly*)
15	M	12ii	Threatening teacher *(Teacher singled him out)*
16	F	12	Late-coming *(Teacher did not act fairly)*

Table 5.4 shows that the common disruptive behaviours that led to encounters with teachers as reflected in the Learner Discipline File were swearing at a teacher, and showing disrespect towards a teacher (for example by arguing) and arrogant behaviour. Undisciplined and disruptive behaviour that included fighting with a fellow learner, cutting a learner's hair, gambling, throwing papers and late-coming were also regarded as behaviour that warranted disciplinary intervention from the grade coordinator.

The participants' accounts of disruptive behaviour leading to the encounters with teachers were summarised and categorised according to their perceptions of factors that

led to the encounters. According to the participants, the common factors that led to their disruptive behaviour were:

- *Teachers who did not believe the learners' versions of the disruptive incident;*
- *Teachers who singled them out;*
- *Teachers who were unfair;*
- *Teachers who were disrespectful in their use of language towards the learners.*

One participant reported that the disruptive behaviour was prompted by the teacher striking him whilst another participant stated that she was regarded as disruptive because she refused to follow the teacher's instruction. Some participants (IM [8], CM [10], IM [11], BM [11]) concurred with the teachers' reasons for referral as indicated in the Learner Discipline File. A discussion of the participants' experiences of disruptive behaviour as perceived by the participants follows.

5.4.6.1 Unbelieving teachers

Four participants (IF [8], CF [8], BM [10], CF [10) cited encounters with teachers that emanated from teachers not believing their versions of events or their explanations for their disruptive behaviour. For example, participant IF [8] related an incident in class where a fellow learner's hair was cut. The participant claimed that she was falsely accused by the teacher who perceived her as a badly behaved learner because of her numerous disciplinary referrals to the school principal. Participant CF (8) who wept whilst relating her encounter, claimed that the teacher had overheard someone swearing in classroom and presumed it was she that swore. She felt that neither the teacher nor the grade coordinator believed her because they were of the opinion that adults do not lie. Participant BM [10] effusively claimed the teacher refused to believe he was playing cards and not gambling in class. The following participant recollected how a teacher refused to accept her explanation that she had forgotten the items for a cookery practical test and responded without empathy to her attempts to contact her parents:

> *"I did not bring my stuff for the practical … it was for hospitality studies … and she kicked me out … sent me to XXXX …I told her I forgot my stuff at home … and she said she wasn't interested because it was due that day. I felt upset. I knew I left my stuff at home. I even tried to go up to the office to get hold of my mother but she was at work and I don't stay with both my parents … they are separated … so I tried to get hold of my father. My father works in breakdown… so he wasn't at home too… . She [the teacher] just gave me zero for my project"* CF (10)

It has been found that during linguistic communication, speech utterances are constantly subjected to three validity claims, namely, the truth, justice and sincerity claims (see section 2.3.2.1) in order to facilitate interpretation and understanding between interacting individuals (Dietz & Widdershoven 1999: 239). Participants who reported that teachers did not believe their explanations when dealing with disruptive behaviour substantiated the narrative that interpretation and understanding during linguistic communication were illusive where speech utterances could not be subjected to the validity claims of truth, justice and sincerity. Feelings of anger, frustration, aggression, distrust and rejection manifested in such conflictive classroom climates as also reported by others (Barnes, Kelly, Seaberry & Vogel 2003: 1).

Participants indicated that they felt extreme anger and hurt when teachers refused to believe their version of events leading to the disruptive behaviour. The frustration that manifested during the encounters was exacerbated by the participants' sense of helplessness in the face of the lack of empathy and understanding from the grade coordinator. The following excerpt substantiates this assertion:

> *"Whether I said yes or no … it's like my opinion didn't matter … what I had to say didn't matter …so … at that point I just gave up … so whatever was said … was being said".* IF (8)

Validity claims of truth, justice and sincerity as well as the contextualisation of utterances in the objective, social and subjective worlds of both the teacher and learner were integral in the endeavour to reach consensual understanding during linguistic communication (Dietz & Widdershoven 1991: 239; Habermas 1987: 120). Tension permeated the linguistic communication when teachers regarded the claims of learners to be false, unjustifiable and insincere. Learners often retaliated angrily by arguing with the teacher in an endeavour to convince the teacher of the validity of their claims.

5.4.6.2 Teachers who singled out learners

Two participants reported that they were provoked by teachers to act disruptively when the teachers singled them out from other learners. Participant CF (9) related that teachers who made insinuations about her parents and her upbringing caused her to act in anger and to speak out without thinking. Participant IM (12ii) related an incident when a teacher made insinuating remarks about his girlfriend which provoked him to make threatening comments to the teacher and to walk out of the classroom:

> *"She [the teacher] picked on me … she picked on my girlfriend which just triggered me and made me go off … it made me say things. When you get angry, you say things that you don't really mean. She picked on things that I didn't like that offended me … which made me wake up and leave the class and as I was leaving the class, I said something to her and I left…."* IM (12ii)

When teachers were critical of learners' personal lives, they evoked an uncontrolled, spontaneous and emotional reaction from the learners. Affectually-orientated social actions were rooted in sentiments and the uncontrolled reactions to exceptional stimuli (Gert & Mills 1946: 56; Weber 1978: 25). Affectually-orientated social actions were associated with spontaneous and emotionally motivated behaviour (Etzrodt 2005:98). Teachers who focussed on selected learners' personal circumstances could be

interpreted as providing an exceptional stimulus that provoked affectually-orientated social actions in the classroom. When the personal lives of learners became enmeshed in the linguistic communication between teacher and learner, the subjective world pertaining to privileged accessibility of experiences became operational, as pointed out by Habermas (1987: 120). Learners reacted spontaneously and emotionally when teachers chose to reveal privileged information or to make insinuations about learners' personal circumstances in the presence of other learners.

5.4.6.3 Unjust teachers

Two participants reported that they were treated unreasonably by the teacher. Participant IM (12i) indicated that he was treated unjustly by the teacher during an incident when there were many learners swearing in class. He admitted to the teacher that he had sworn but became angry and began arguing when the teacher did not investigate who were the other misbehaving learners. Participant BF (12) felt that she was treated unfairly on one occasion when she arrived late to school. Despite many learners arriving late, she felt that she was singled out because the other learners were not reprimanded:

> *"I came late to class in the morning … and it's not only me that came late but they just started shouting at me … and asking me why I came late … and it's something that I don't do very often … and I personally feel as if I'm being picked on …. because there's so many other learners that you could actually reprimand and discipline about that very same matter, but I'd be the focus on that specific matter ".* BF (12)

It was found that learners' perceptions of the fairness of discipline by the teacher were linked to the legitimacy of the authority of the teacher (Brasof & Peterson 2018: 833). When the policies used to discipline learners were considered to be reasonable by the learner, the authority of the teacher was regarded as legitimate. Learners were more likely to obey the rules and demands of teachers who were perceived as being just. The equal application of rules in a fair but firm manner in the classroom also helped foster

trust in the teacher-learner relationship (Tiwani 2010: 28). Learners engaged in confrontational behaviour when they perceived rules as being unfair, arbitrary, unclear and inconsistently applied, as also found by others (Mthiyane 2013: 40). Learners could react in anger when it was perceived that teachers were not acting fairly as evidenced by the participants in this study.

5.4.6.4 Impolite teachers

Participant IM (9) reported that he began arguing with the teacher when she acted impolitely by stating that he was behaving in an animal-like manner:

> "*We were all smiling … then she [the teacher] asked me why I am smiling. I said … its normal to smile … Then she said I'm being clever … I was back-chatting … She said I'm behaving like an animal … that's how I'm brought up …She was implying we live like animals ...My anger built up … and I just burst out and walked out".* IM (9)

Participant IM (10) admitted that he spoke disrespectfully to the teacher when she made insensitive references to his grandmother after the death of his grandfather. Many other participants also reported being offended by inconsiderate comments made by teachers. The most common references that offended learners were being called "*stupid*" "*dumb*" and "*idiot"* (BM (8), BM (9), CF (9);, CF (10), IM (11), BF [12]). Participants reported that teachers also offended them by referring to them as "*rubbish*" (IM [9]) and "*empty vessels* " (IF [9]). Participants reportedly felt humiliated when told that they were likely to fail and were destined to be unemployed (BM [9]).

The mediating function of language used by teachers in the classroom impacted on the manner in which teachers' messages were perceived by learners (Githui 2013: 25-27). Learners felt they were not treated with respect and dignity when they were subjected to derogatory personal comments and name-calling by teachers and regarded such teacher practices as more hurtful than corporal punishment (Mgijima 2014: 205). The use of

vulgar language and nasty words by teachers were regarded as verbal violence which was a common phenomenon that reputedly led to school violence (Harber & Mncube 2012:71). When teachers used offensive language, they made learners feel discouraged and disrespected (Harber & Mncube 2012:72-73).

5.4.6.5 Teachers who struck learners

The following participant (BM [9]) emotionally related his experience of being struck by the teacher in the classroom:

> *"I remember … I answered a question and the teacher took my bag and said I mustn't shout and hit me on the face … When I stood up and said I'm going to tell my parents that's what you are doing … she said she doesn't care … That's why I went to Mr xxx …. He gave me a warning … I mustn't come back to school until my parents come … (emotional / fighting back tears) … but she hit me with the bag … she didn't say that she hit me and I stayed at home because the teacher hit me …that was painful … The other thing she told Mr xxx… that I'm disrespectful and talkative in the class and I got into trouble for that but it wasn't my fault …She hit me with the bag and I stood up because of anger".* BM (9)

Discipline problems were among the most common problems that teachers encountered in the classrooms and it was therefore imperative that teachers found effective ways of dealing with discipline issues (Maphosa 2011: 76-77). Physical punishment was however, not considered as an effective disciplinary measure in dealing with learner indiscipline in schools. When teachers resorted to physical punishment such as striking learners, they caused physical, psychological, behavioural and developmental harm to learners. Such punitive disciplinary measures also elicited negative feelings of distress, anger, fear, shame, and disgust in learners (Maphosa 2011: 77). Participant BM (9) reportedly felt hurt and angered by the teacher's actions and appeared emotionally

distraught despite the incident having occurred during the previous year.

The participant's experience of being struck by the teacher supported the assertion that despite the banning of corporal punishment and the existence of legislation that made it an offence, teachers remained undeterred in the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure (Maphosa 2011: 79). The incident also supported the narrative that teachers perceived the alternatives to physical punishment as ineffective in curbing learner indiscipline which possibly accounted for the continuance of corporal punishment as a reactive disciplinary measure despite its banning (Maphosa & Shumba 2010: 396).

5.4.6.6 Resisting teacher authority

Participant IF (9) recounted the following incident when she refused to follow a teacher's instruction which led to her swearing at the teacher and being sent to the grade coordinator:

> *"I was eating a lollipop in the class … then he [teacher] told me to throw it away … I didn't do that … because I didn't want to waste it … Then he chased me out of the class … Then I swore at him and I walked out of the class"*. IF (9)

Oppositional and rebellious learner behaviours that interrupted the schooling process, disrupted classrooms and defied teacher authority were viewed as resistance in education (McFarland 2001: 613; Server 2012: 658). Parallels could be drawn between the non-conformist, anti-school behaviour in the Willis (1977: 50) study and resistant behaviours of opposition, defiance and disrespect to teacher authority prevalent in current classrooms (Mammen & Maphosa 2011: 186). The actions of participant IF (9) epitomised the presence of resistance in education in current classrooms.

The consistent contravention of rules and disobedience of instructions may be viewed as the manifestation of resistance towards the teacher's authority and power

(Venkataramani 2012: 94-95). Learners who insisted on their rights when they wished to do as they please or when they desired to engage in poor behaviour could also be interpreted as displaying resistance to the authority of the teacher (Serakwane 2007:65). Participant IF (9) demonstrated her non-conformist, anti-school behaviour and her wish to do as she pleased by stating:

> *"One time I wrote on the wall … and then I got in trouble for that because I wrote big with a permanent marker … I just felt like doing it and I did it ….*
> *I also don't like to do my schoolwork at school … so I just write whatever in my book … and I'll go home and ask somebody to send it to me … because I don't like to do work. I don't like to sit in a class and learn. If I like the teachers, then I'll do their work".* IF (9)

According to the typology of resistance by Einwohner and Hollander (2004: 544) participant IF (9) displayed *overt resistance* (see Table 2.1) towards the teacher by swearing, walking out of the class and refusing to do schoolwork. Such resistant behaviours may also be categorised as opposition to authority and counter-school culture (see sections 2.5.2.1;.2.5.2.2) as displayed by the *lads* in the Willis (1977: 22-26) study. The refusal to do work in the class by participant IF (9) resonated with the defining feature of counter-school displayed by the *lads* in the Willis (1977: 22-26) study. The non-conformist behaviour and defiance towards teacher authority displayed by participant IF (9) substantiated the perception of the emergence of a resistance to education in the current school system.

5.4.6.7 How participants felt during encounters with teachers

Participants were probed to describe their feelings during the encounter with teachers. Anger, embarrassment and helplessness were the commonly reported emotions. A discussion of their responses follows.

a) Anger

Many participants cited anger as the overwhelming emotion experienced during the encounters. The following participant encapsulated the feelings of the learners when they were angry:

> *"I was hurt…. I didn't know how to act out so I had to say something … not really understanding what I was saying but saying it because of how I felt at that moment …".* IM (10).

Participants reportedly argued with the teacher, threatened the teacher (IM [12ii]) or walked out of the classroom (IM [9]) as a consequence of their anger.

b) Embarrassment

Participants stated that they were embarrassed by the teacher's comments during the encounter because the comments were made in the presence of other learners:

> "*I didn't feel good but I had no choice … I felt very embarrassed … because the whole class could hear …"* IM (8)

Embarrassing comments made by teachers in the classroom often become topics of discussion among the rest of learner population which was hurtful to some learners, for example participant BF (12).

c) Helplessness

Participants also cited a sense of helplessness during the encounters (IM (8), IF (9), BF [12]). When the teachers refused to accept the explanations of the participants, they felt defenceless which forced them to endure the comments that were made. Participants also indicated that the teachers' comments sometimes evoked a reluctance to attend school (IF (9), BM [9]). The sense of helplessness was also evoked by learners being afraid to justify their actions during meetings because teachers could act vengefully by failing them or their actions could lead to further problems as stated by the following participant:

> *Sometimes teachers have bad hearts … they will fail you… she will do bad things … that's why we are scared … When there is a meeting … and we all know that the teacher is in trouble because she did something to you … she will say everything bad and you know you didn't do it … and that's the thing that scares me… because when you tell some of the teachers and the teachers go back and tell others you get into more trouble … and they say you are lying … you don't have enough proof to say anything …" BM (9)*

It was purported that understanding or appreciation between interacting persons may be attained either intellectually or emotionally (Weber 1978: 5) and that all social actions were orientated in four ways, namely instrumentally, value-rationally, affectually and traditionally (Weber 1978: 24-25). During encounters that emanated from disruptive behaviour, both teachers and learners endeavoured to attain an understanding of the situation; namely, teachers endeavoured to make learners *understand* that the disruptive behaviour was against the school rules, while learners strove to make teachers *understand* why they behaved disruptively. When learners experienced anger, embarrassment and helplessness in the quest to attain teachers' understanding of their behaviour, it could be surmised that learners reached their insight *emotionally* and orientated their consequent actions *affectually*. This postulation was supported by participant IM (10) who stated he reacted disrespectfully towards the teacher according to

how he "*felt at that moment*" without being fully cognisant what he was saying.

Teachers and learners shared a social relationship in which they orientated their meaningful behaviour and cognisant actions towards each other in the process of teaching and learning (Weber 1978: 28). When both parties were unable to orientate their meaningful behaviour and cognisant actions towards each other during disruptive incidents, the relationship could be viewed as a *social relationship in conflict* in which the authority of the teacher was disregarded. The defining element in accepting the professional authority of teachers was the "professional's capacity to realise a goal or value on rational grounds" (Guzman 2014:15). When teachers elicited anger, embarrassment and helplessness in their learners, they could be perceived as lacking professional authority to act on rational grounds. The acceptance of a teacher's professional authority was largely dependent on how the teacher influenced the beliefs and behaviour of the learners (Barata *et al.* 2013: 1066).

5.4.7 The desired teacher responses towards learners who misbehave in the classroom

Participants were asked how they thought teachers should respond when learners behaved disruptively in the classroom. A discussion of the themed and summarised opinions is presented below.

5.4.7.1 Being polite

Most participants indicated that teachers should speak politely to learners and endeavour to understand their personal circumstances instead of acting emotionally by screaming and shouting. Participants also indicated that teachers should listen objectively to the views of learners as related by the following participant:

> *"They should actually look into the situation more than being judgemental … because sometimes you don't know what's going on*

with the child”. IF (8)

Some learners had an innate disposition towards aggression which motivated them towards unfounded confrontational behaviour in their social relationships (Mabea 2013: 61). When learners behaved disruptively in class, teachers needed to respond empathetically and calmly to diffuse the aggression and confrontation. Learners responded positively to teachers who respected their opinions and endeavoured to understand their personal circumstances. They wanted to be treated politely.

5.4.7.2 Communicating with the SMT and parents

Participants indicated that teachers should seek the assistance of the SMT and parents when learners behaved disruptively as indicated below:

> *“I think the first thing to do is discipline … and if they [the teachers] still can’t control the learner then they should just be sent out to the HOD or the principal and they should call in their parents and let them [know] how their child has been behaving … and take matters from there … inform people about it”.* BF (12)

Collaborative partnerships between the school, family and community helped to address disciplinary problems in schools (Maphosa 2011b: 246). When parents were called to school to address disciplinary matters, it was envisaged that the parent would collaborate with the school to implement measures to curb the indiscipline and that the learner would be respectful and compliant to any suggestions made. This disciplinary measure was viewed as highly effective by the learners (see section 5.4.3.1).

5.4.7.3 Changing classroom seating arrangements

Participants reported that teachers should respond to disruptive behaviour by changing the seating places of the offending learners as stated by the following learner:

> *"Maybe separate them [the misbehaving learners] from the person who is talking …try and put them to opposite side of the class … then they can't communicate anymore…".* IM (11)

Learners could be distanced from other learners with whom they behaved disruptively or moved to the front of the class within sight of the teachers (CM [10]). Participants also stated that teachers should issue verbal warnings or suspend learners.

Teachers needed to choose a classroom discipline approach that provided for the correction and prevention of discipline problems (Tiwani 2010: 43). Classroom interactions and classroom organisation were a part of the classroom discipline policy which was a proactive discipline strategy intended to deter disruptive behaviour in the classroom (in ELRC 2003e. B-27). Teachers who took cognisance of the seating of potentially disruptive learners in the organisation of their classrooms acted proactively in addressing discipline in the classroom. Teachers could also respond to disruptive behaviour by issuing verbal warnings and suspending learners which were considered common reactive disciplinary strategies for minor offences (Maphosa 2011a: 81-82).
Strategies that could be used by teachers to respond to disruptive behaviour included teachers speaking calmly and empathetically to learners, forming supportive partnerships between parents and the school and by making organisational changes in the classroom in order to curb behavioural problems.

5.4.8 Learners' views on how discipline could be improved in schools

Participants were asked their views on how discipline could be improved in schools. The responses were categorised into common themes. A discussion of these themes follows.

5.4.8.1 Improved teacher communication strategies

Most participants indicated that discipline at school could be improved if teachers adopted better communication strategies as explicitly stated by the following participant:

> *"I think you [the researcher] should talk to the teachers … you should tell them how they should talk to us … so we can respect them back … because sometimes it's not nice what they say to us and that's why we hate the fact of being in school".* IF (8)

Teachers should adopt a firm but respectful disposition when communicating with learners because it helps build respect in the teacher-learner relationship (CF [9]). Teachers should be firm on discipline but simultaneously bond with learners as allies by setting boundaries that differentiate their roles as teachers in the classroom from being " *friends during the breaks*" (CM [10]). Learners were encouraged to speak about their pent -up emotions when teachers listened attentively as stated by the following participant:

> *"Listen to what the learners have to say … give them a voice … let them speak up about whatever they are bottling up and hear their side of the story* ". (BF [12]).

When teachers established a bond with learners, they were afforded the opportunity to understand the personal circumstances of learners that may be contributory to their disruptive behaviour at school (BM [9]). Teachers who assigned errands to disruptive learners, built trust and faith in the teacher-learner relationship; as such, learners felt motivated to respect the teacher and to behave positively in class (IM [12i]).

Teachers reduced the need for disciplinary action when a climate of mutual trust in which learners felt safe and affirmed was nurtured in the classroom (Mabea 2013: 87). Teachers who employed a humanistic approach by listening and trying to understand individual learner needs developed respect in the teacher-learner relationship. Discipline could also be improved if teachers empowered themselves with high behaviour problem

diagnostic skills and adopted strategies that help them “ignore less serious behaviour problems, manage those that cannot be ignored and resolve those that cannot be managed” (Maphosa 2011: 243).

5.4.8.2 Improved supervision and security measures

Participants indicated that discipline would improve if schools adopted better supervision and security measures (BM (10) IM (10), IM [12ii]). Learners would be deterred from bunking if the principal and teachers increased their visibility on the school premises as stated by the following learner:

> *“When Mr XXXX [principal] comes outside … everyone runs away if they see him… they get scared…”.* (BM [10]).

Learners were similarly deterred from behaving disruptively if teachers constantly supervised learners during lessons by walking around in the classroom and by enforcing the classroom discipline policy immediately when an infringement was observed (CF [10]). The use of cameras, regular search operations and security guards deterred learners from bunking, smoking and fighting (IM (10), IM [12ii]).

Teachers should be alert and vigilant and should emulate the positive behaviour that they wished to foster in their learners (Bilatyia 2012: 29-30). Through eye-contact, body language, certain facial expressions and walking between the learners in class, teachers could exercise order and limit the movement of learners in the classroom. It was the responsibility of the principal to care and to protect learners at school (Mgijima 2014: 198). By improving supervision and security measures at schools, learners were protected and deterred from behaving disruptively.

5.4.8.3 Counselling for learners

Participants believed that discipline would improve in schools if a school counsellor was available to assist learners with behavioural problems (IM (8), IF [9]). Learners perceived that counsellors could tactfully assist learners with behavioural issues and instil discipline in a calm manner as elaborated by the following participant:

> *"Get a counsellor … like every Friday or Monday … they can talk to the learners… and if they need a friend … make the friend go for counselling with them… and just discipline them properly without screaming and shouting … ".* (IM [8]).

Teachers needed to foster a caring and supportive relationship with troubled learners by empowering them with coping strategies (Kourkoutas & Wolhuter 2013: 4-5). Intervention strategies to assist both teachers and learners with coping mechanisms could be developed when teachers formed collaborative partnerships with trained professionals such as psychologists and counsellors.

5.4.8.4 Controlling learner movement

Participants indicated that discipline would be improved if the school maintained the emergency school structure that was put in place to curb the Covid-pandemic (BM (10), IM [11]). According to these measures, class units were smaller and learners were classroom-based with subject specific teachers moving from class to class. It was perceived that this structure limited learner movement and served as a deterrent to bunking lessons as elaborated by the following participant:

> *"If you kept the process that is happening now with Covid …. I think it would nice …we don't change classes … we just stay in the same classes … because you know as we changing classes … I may just decide … I'm having English … I don't want to go … you know the*

bunking … that's how it happens with the students …". (BM [10]).

Participant IM (11) stated that the signing of the compulsory attendance register on entry to school (as part of the Covid-pandemic protocols at schools) should be maintained because it helped track late-comers. Learners could be tracked weekly or monthly before parents were called to school to verify their awareness of the learners' late-coming.

It was postulated that discipline plans that were periodically reviewed improved the management of discipline at schools (Kone, Mashau & Mutshaeni 2015: 288). When learners' suggestions were included in structures at schools, it promoted ownership and compliance which reduced the need for disciplinary actions (Bilaytia 2012: 39). In summary: Participant's views on how discipline may be improved in schools included suggestions on improving teacher communication strategies; improving supervision and security measures; offering counselling to learners and maintaining the current emergency (Covid-pandemic) school structure.

5.5 SUMMARY

The findings of the empirical research were presented in this chapter. A description of the demographic profile of the participants was followed by a discussion of the findings from the semi-structured interviews. The findings included learner's awareness of school discipline policies and school discipline problems; learner's views on discipline measures; reasons why learners misbehaved in the classroom; reasons why teachers were disobeyed; how learners experienced disruptive behaviour leading to encounters in the classroom; how teachers needed to respond to learners who misbehave in the classroom and learner's views on how discipline could be improved in schools. The findings were discussed and interpreted within the theoretical framework of the study
The next chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the conclusions, contribution, recommendations and limitations of the research are presented. The conclusions serve to answer the main research question, namely, *how do learners in a selected secondary school experience disruptive behaviour leading to encounters with teachers?* To this end, the study aimed to determine what learners perceived as disciplinary problems at school; what their reasons were for misbehaviour; how they experienced their poor behaviour and the teachers' responses; and what they recommended to improve discipline at school.

Thus, this final chapter focuses on the following:

- the conclusions of the research findings;
- contribution of the study
- recommendations (based on this study and for further research);
- limitations that reflect the shortcomings of the study; and
- a brief conclusion that summarises the study as a whole.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

This section is presented according to the categories and sub-categories that were identified from the findings and presented in the previous chapter. All the conclusions aim to answer the main research question, as set out in Chapter one (see section 1.2). The conclusions that are derived from both the literature review and the empirical investigation will form the framework of the discussion.

6.2.1 Conclusions on learners' awareness of school discipline policies

Learner conduct in schools is managed through the implementation of effective school discipline policies. The school code of conduct and classroom discipline policies are two legislated documents that serve as proactive discipline strategies that outline acceptable behavioural standards and sanctions for deviant behaviour in an institution (see section 3.5.3). The conclusions drawn from the empirical investigation in respect of the learners' awareness of these policies is presented below.

6.2.1.1 School code of conduct

The conclusion drawn from the empirical investigation in this study revealed that learners are unaware of the legislation regarding learner and parental involvement in the adoption of a school code of conduct for learners. Learners are predominately of the opinion that the school code of conduct is developed by the principal and the DoE. Learners are unaware that the school code of conduct is a legislative responsibility of both learners and parents since none of the participants cited parents or learners as the developers of the code of conduct. Learners viewed their involvement in the development of the code of conduct as important since they regarded it as a document that is designed for learners, and if developed consultatively with them, its effectiveness would benefit all relevant stakeholders of the institution.

Learners had limited knowledge of the various rules and sanctions contained in the document. Most learners were aware of the school dress code and rules pertaining to respect for teachers as contained in the code of conduct. It may be concluded that learners' awareness of the dress code and the rules outlining respect for teachers was most cited because of the regular enforcement of these rules. Learners appeared to be made aware of the code of conduct and its legal enforceability primarily when the school justified the sanctions against misbehaving learners. The conclusion drawn from this finding conflicts with the school code of conduct being viewed as a *proactive* disciplinary

strategy that deterred learners from misbehaving due to their awareness of the sanctions for disruptive behaviour. Contrarily, learners were only made aware of the sanctions in the code of conduct *after* a misdemeanour to justify that the school was acting within legal perimeters to impose sanctions for the unacceptable conduct.

It is therefore concluded that schools should endeavour to operate fully within the legislative requirements pertaining to learner involvement when formulating the school code of conduct. Learners are likely to accept and respect policies if they are fully involved in their development (see section 5.4.1.1.). Learners respond positively to policies that include their views and opinions.

6.2.1.2 Classroom discipline policy

It is concluded that learners are not involved in the development of classroom discipline policies. The predominant view was that classroom discipline policies were developed by teachers, the HOD and the principal. Empirical evidence suggested that classroom discipline policies were developed according to individual needs of teachers and that all rules were not in synchrony with the school code of conduct.

Classroom rules evoked mixed views from learners. Whilst some rules were perceived as effective as they clearly outlined desirable and acceptable classroom behaviours, other rules were regarded as lacking clarity and were generally disobeyed by learners. There were also mixed views on the enforcement of classroom discipline policies. Some classrooms policies created positive classroom environments whilst other classrooms policies were placed inconspicuously in a classroom corner and ignored by both learners and teachers. There also appeared to be an absence or total disregard of discipline policies in some classrooms where teachers and rules were ridiculed and disrespected (see section 5.4.1.2). The conclusion drawn from this empirical evidence is that classroom discipline policies are not uniformly developed to create an environment of positivity and order *throughout* the institution. The maintenance of discipline differed from teacher to teacher. This conclusion is supported by the evidence that teachers developed

classroom policies to suit their individual classroom needs thereby creating opportunities for some teachers to act less stringently towards misdemeanours than others within the institution.

It can hence be concluded that teachers within a school must work together to establish basic standards of behaviour that are applicable in *all* classrooms within the school in order to restrict the opportunities for learners to misbehave. It may also be concluded that supervision by the SMT is necessary to ensure that teachers maintain the basic standards of learner conduct in classrooms. Teachers who experience difficulty in maintaining discipline in the classroom must be capacitated with skills and strategies to address specific classroom challenges.

The conclusion on learners' awareness of school discipline policies is thus that, whilst learners are aware of its existence, they are unaware of their legal rights in respect of their participation in its development. Learners appeared to accept the DoE, principal and teachers as being responsible for the development of school discipline policies (see s ection 5.4.1.1). This submissive acceptance of the discipline policies supports the paradigm of social relationships in bureaucracies in which the dominated abide by the commands of the dominant through the exertion of authority and the enactment of rules (see section 2.4.3.3). It may hence be concluded that learners accepted the hierarchical structure that rules were developed by either the DoE, principal and/or teachers and that these rules were to be submissively followed and not challenged. The conclusion that school systems embody bureaucratic social relations is reinforced by the view that school codes of conduct are often simply rubber-stamped by the SGB and that learner participation in development of codes serves merely as "window dressing" for the SGB and DoE as stated by others (Coetzee & Mienie 2013: 91; Masekoameng 2010: 42).

6.2.2 Conclusions on learners' awareness of school discipline problems

The conclusion based on the findings of this study is that the school in context experienced minor cases of indiscipline, major offences and severe cases of indiscipline (see section 5.4.2). The minor cases of indiscipline were late-coming, poor work ethic and

dress code contraventions; major offences were disrespect for teachers and fighting among learners. Severe cases of indiscipline included smoking, drugs and bullying. It may be concluded that the review of the school discipline structures to address the abovementioned discipline problems is necessary. Discipline problems such as disrespect for teachers, fighting, drugs and bullying are particularly challenging as these problems often escalate in severity leading to acts of violence against teachers, school murders and the infiltration of drug dealers into schools. The early detection and immediate formulation of intervention strategies enhance the management of discipline in schools.

6.2.3 Conclusions on learners' views of discipline measures

6.2.3.1 Conclusions on disciplinary measures that were perceived as effective

According to the empirical evidence (see section 5.4.3.1), the disciplinary measures that were perceived as effective were calling parents to school and counselling sessions with social workers. This finding concludes that collaborative partnerships between schools, parents and the community are effective in addressing learner behavioural problems at schools. The involvement of parents and trained professionals to assist learners with behavioural issues presented learners with individualised support that was cognisant of the home and school contextual factors that contributed to the learners' behaviour. Regular interactions with trained professionals were regarded as effective in assisting learners with coping mechanisms (see section 5.4.3.1). It may thus be concluded that working collaboratively with the relevant stakeholders is effective because solutions are individualised and regular interactions help to reinforce learner progress and the re-negotiation of unworkable solutions where necessary.

Another conclusion drawn from the findings on discipline measures that were perceived as effective was the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools (see section 5.4.3.1). Learners' reasons for complying with the rules of teachers who physically punished them when they deviated from the rules, substantiates the conclusion that the fear of physical

pain deterred learners from misbehaving. Participants who stated that they obeyed their parents because they feared being physically punished also leads to the conclusion that the fear of physical pain is perceived as an effective deterrent to poor behaviour. It may also be concluded that some learners continue to endure the physical punishment from teachers, fully cognisant of its illegality because they feared their parents' reactions to their misdemeanours more than they feared the physical punishment from their teachers.

The conclusion on the effectiveness of corporal punishment is however unhelpful to the teacher seeking innovative disciplinary strategies in the classroom. Although learners perceive physical punishment as an effective disciplinary measure, schools remain legally prohibited from inflicting any form of physical force on learners (Cicognani 2004: 3). Because of the existence of corporal punishment in current classrooms, it is further concluded that teachers often lack the ability to develop alternative disciplinary measures that are congruent with the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (see section 3.2.1). There exists a strong need for robust engagements between teachers and relevant stakeholders on the development of alternative disciplinary strategies to counteract the use of corporal punishment in the classroom.

6.2.3.2 Conclusions on disciplinary measures that were perceived as ineffective

The empirical evidence of the study (see section 5.4.3.2) revealed that suspension from school was perceived as ineffective by learners. Learners who were suspended were not deterred from repeating the undesirable behaviour. They also felt angry and victimised by the school when they were suspended (see section 5.4.3.2). The conclusion is that the removal of misbehaving learners from the classroom fosters negativity and rebellion in learners. It may be argued that suspended learners experience a sense of isolation and abandonment when removed from the company of their peers and when left to remediate their misdemeanours on their own without the assistance of their teachers. This sense of isolation may be why learners vengefully continue the undesired behaviour upon return from suspension.

The conclusion on learners' perceptions of disciplinary measures indicates that calling parents to school, working in partnership with qualified professionals, and the infliction of physical punishment were viewed as effective disciplinary measures. It is also concluded that suspension of learners was perceived as ineffective in addressing disciplinary issues because it nurtured anger and rebellion.

6.2.4 Conclusions on reasons why learners misbehaved in the classroom

From this study, it can be concluded that many factors within the various settings in which learners interact impact on their behaviour in the classroom. The conclusions, based on the findings and interpreted according to the Bronfenbrenner's (1999: 4-5) ecological model (see section 5.4.4) are presented below.

6.2.4.1 Conclusions on innate factors and relationships in the immediate physical environment that caused learners to misbehave

The findings of this study indicated that learners with innate risk factors such as attention deficits manifested counternormative behaviour in the classroom. They often experienced fractious social relationships in classroom by acting disruptively and by bullying their peers (see section 5.4.1.1). The findings affirm the conclusion that learners who display attention-seeking behaviour disrupt teaching and learning when they act counternormatively to prove their superiority to their peers or to gain the attention of teachers.

6.2.4.2 Conclusions on microsystemic relationships that cause learners to misbehave

The conclusions on microsystemic factors that caused learners to misbehave pertain to peer, parent-learner and teacher-learner relationships. The empirical findings revealed that learners were influenced by their friends to bunk lessons and become embroiled in petty arguments as a form of kinship (see section 5.4.4.2). This finding substantiates the

conclusion that when learners form strong bonds with their peers, they are likely to participate in counternormative activities with their peers to gain approval and to maintain the relationship. Misbehaving learners who share strong peer relationships in the classroom were difficult to discipline as such learners often acted collectively against the teacher. It can thus be concluded that it is necessary for teachers to be aware of learner friendships that may impact negatively on classroom discipline and that teachers should organise their classrooms accordingly to mitigate the issue. Peer influence in the classroom can be reduced if teachers acted proactively by organising their classrooms through strategic seating plans that place potentially problematic learners away from each other or closer to the teacher (see section 5.4.7.3).

According to the empirical findings on parent-learner relationships, it was established that learners present behavioural challenges in the classroom when they experience problems at home. Learners who are deprived of love and attention at home expect their teachers to substitute these deprivations with care and empathy at school (see section 5.4.4.2). From this empirical evidence it can be concluded that teachers play a pivotal role in offering pastoral care to learners with emotional needs. Teachers who are alert, perceptive and caring are likely to identify at-risk learners through their behaviour. To this end, it is imperative that teachers are empowered with high behaviour problem diagnostic skills so that misbehaving learners are correctly identified and diagnosed for disciplinary intervention.

It was established from the teacher-learner relationships that teachers' responses to learners impact significantly on the learner's emotional wellbeing in the classroom. Teachers evoke anger in learners when they act unjustly, call learners names and make insinuations about their families (see section 5.4.4.2). These findings conclude the need for teachers to engage in appropriate communication strategies that promote the emotional wellbeing of learners in the classroom. Teachers must be empowered with skills to act calmly and in a fair and just manner towards misbehaving learners.

The conclusions on the microsystemic relationships that caused learners to misbehave indicate that intervention programmes are necessary to improve peer, parent-learner and

teacher-learner relationships in schools. Teachers are the central figures that hold all relationships together which justifies the need for schools to train and empower teachers to deal with challenges in the various microsystemic relationships.

6.2.4.3 Conclusions on macrosystemic relationships that caused learners to misbehave

The empirical investigation revealed that the macrosystemic relationships in the school in context characterised a culture of violence and an entitlement to be respected among learners, teachers and parents. Fighting among learners and being physically struck by teachers and parents was a commonly cited manifestation of violence. Learners reported that they did not respect teachers who did not treat them respectfully and most learners were referred for disciplinary intervention as result of being disrespectful towards teachers (see section 5.4.4.3). Learners with violent tendencies and teachers with low tolerance levels to classroom challenges experienced disruptive encounters at the slightest provocation (see section 5.4.6.4). This finding substantiates the conclusion that intervention strategies to address societal issues such as the perpetuation of violence and the reciprocity of respect is necessary at school level.

Programmes on conflict resolution and respect for person and the law must form part of the school discipline structure so that learners are empowered with skills to deal with conflict according to socially acceptable norms. Such programmes indirectly address the culture of violence and reciprocated respect among teachers and parents since teachers and parents may also be involved in these intervention programmes. Teachers and parents of learners identified for disciplinary intervention are likely to form a better contextual understanding of violence and respect from a learner's perspective when engaged in collaborative programmes. Teachers and parents who physically punish learners may also benefit from such programmes as individuals and thereby facilitate positive change in society.

In summary: It may be concluded that programmes addressing the culture of violence and the need to respect and be respected initiated at school level may be beneficial to

both the school and society.

6.2.5 Conclusions on reasons why teachers are disobeyed

The conclusion drawn from the empirical evidence on reasons why teachers are disobeyed indicate a need for teachers to be trained on communication strategies in the classroom. Teachers who are disobeyed generally did not show respect to learners; engaged in name-calling; treated learners unjustly; made insinuations about learners' families; and did not offer academic support to learners (see section 5.4.5.1). The presence of such negative communicative interactions in the classroom necessitates the need for developing communication skills of teachers. Teachers must be capacitated with the ability to interact positively with learners, particularly with learners presenting behavioural or emotional challenges. Teachers must be empowered with a repertoire of skills and effective pastoral care strategies to diffuse potentially disruptive situations with minimal loss of teaching time. It may hence be concluded that teachers are obeyed when they nurture positive classroom environments in which behavioural challenges are successfully managed and in which all learners feel respected.

6.2.6 Conclusions on how learners experienced disruptive behaviour leading to encounters in the classroom

As noted, the pivotal question of this study was how learners experienced disruptive behaviour in classrooms. Incidents of disruptive behaviour often led to encounters between teachers and learners. The conclusions drawn from this study indicate that such encounters impacted negatively on the emotional and psychological well-being of learners. The conclusions on the various experiences of learners follow.

6.2.6.1 Conclusions on unbelieving teachers

One of the reasons why disruptive behaviour escalated to encounters in the classroom related to the lack of understanding between the interacting parties (see section 5.4.6.1). It is concluded that the linguistic utterances between teacher and learner faulted on the validity claims of truth, justice and sincerity. The lack of trust and understanding in the teacher-learner relationship created hostile classroom environments in which explanations of disruptive behaviour and the personal circumstances of learners were ignored by teachers. Learners who repeatedly misbehaved were often not believed by their teachers because it was doubted that such learners could improve their behaviour. It is concluded that learners felt frustrated and helpless and reacted angrily when teachers were dismissive and refused to believe them.

The conclusion on unbelieving teachers points to the need for teachers and learners to jointly engage in intervention programmes to establish trust and understanding in the teacher-learner relationship. At-risk learners often present explanations for their misconduct which are not readily accepted by teachers. Intervention programmes aimed at deterring learners from repeating their misbehaviours will likely obviate repeated reprimands and the perpetuation of mistrust in the teacher-learner relationship. Learners who are assisted to understand the consequences of their disruptive behaviour and who are offered alternatives to deal with their negative behavioural tendencies are likely to improve their conduct in the classroom. Such intervention programmes which should include teachers experiencing challenges in managing learners with behavioural problems enhance the rehabilitative progress of at-risk learners.

6.2.6.2 Conclusions on teachers who singled out learners

From the empirical evidence, it is concluded that learners felt singled out when teachers made insinuations about their families or negative comments about their personal relationships with their peers (see section 5.4.6.2). Learners react spontaneously and emotionally when teachers tactlessly make references to privileged information from their subjective world in the classroom. The conclusion may be drawn that learners react

defensively when they feel betrayed by teachers who reveal sensitive information about their personal lives in the presence of other learners.

The conclusion also highlights the need for SMTs to conduct staff development workshops on the professional conduct of teachers. The confidentiality of privileged learner information is an integral aspect of a teacher's professional conduct which ensures that learners feel safe and comforted in sharing personal details with them. Such staff development workshops must be regularly facilitated to establish a standard of professionalism among all teachers within the institution.

6.2.6.3 Conclusions on unjust teachers

The conclusion drawn from the empirical investigation is that learners behaved in a confrontational manner when teachers did not act justly in applying the rules and regulations of the school. Defaulting learners reacted angrily when teachers acted with prejudice against them whilst overlooking the same offence by other learners (see section 5.4.6.3). When teachers act unjustly in the application of rules, it erodes the trust and respect in the teacher-learner relationship. Learners did not recognise the authority of unjust teachers as legitimate as such teachers were perceived to be unfair and inconsistent in the application of rules and disciplinary actions.

From this study, it can thus be concluded that the school code of conduct must be collaboratively constructed by *all* stakeholders namely; learners, parents and teachers in order to promote fairness. School authorities and SGBs must revisit their policies and align themselves with The South African School's Act (in ELRC 2003a: B-7-12) in an endeavour to encourage ownership and compliance of school discipline structures. Teachers are likely to apply the rules in a just manner when policies are formulated transparently and inclusively of their involvement.

6.2.6.4 Conclusions on impolite teachers

Impolite teachers impacted negatively on the emotional wellbeing of learners. From the empirical evidence it is concluded that name-calling and insensitive comments elicited extreme anger and feelings of humiliation in learners (see section 5.4.6.4). Learners feel disrespected when teachers use offensive and derogatory language. It is further concluded that impolite language used by teachers evokes anger and embarrassment in learners which result in aggressive arguments in the classroom. Such encounters indicate the need for teachers to be trained in the use of language that is perceived as polite and positive in the classroom. A list of derogatory names and terms that learners regard as deeply hurtful must be compiled and specified as prohibited language leading to disciplinary action against defaulting teachers because of the deep-seated psychological harm caused to learners. Teachers must be empowered with a repertoire of language skills that allows them to reprimand learners without damaging their self-esteem and which simultaneously allows the teacher to maintain control of potentially explosive situations in the classroom.

6.2.6.5 Conclusions on teachers who struck learners

It is concluded that teachers who strike learners affect the learners emotionally and psychologically. The learners in this research experienced anger, hurt and humiliation when struck by teachers (see section 5.4.6.4). It is also concluded that some teachers continue to fearlessly administer corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure despite its banning in schools. The continued used of corporal punishment in the classroom indicates the need for renewed robust discussions between the DoE and teachers on alternatives to corporal punishment. It is argued that teachers are frustrated by the lack of support from the DoE in assisting with classroom discipline (Bester & Du Plessis 2010: 212). The vital need exists for the DoE and other relevant stakeholders to engage teachers on strategies that would offer viable alternatives to corporal punishment. Such initiatives should include strategies on how teachers can remain calm and in control during learner rants and threatened violence in the classroom. Teachers who successfully manage learners with severe behavioural problems should be used as peer

mentors to ascertain practical workable solutions and to form supportive networks.

6.2.6.6 Conclusions on resistance to teacher authority

It is concluded that some learners resisted the authority of teachers by flagrantly disregarding the rules and the authority of teachers in classrooms. Learners displayed overt resistance by refusing to follow instructions, swearing and walking out the classroom (see section 5.4.6.6). The non-conformist behaviour of resisting learners highlighted how learners exercised their right to do as they pleased despite rules and policies restricting disorderly conduct.

The aforementioned reveals the need for school-based intervention programmes with trained professionals with the expertise to assist non-conforming learners. Such programmes should seek to identify the reasons for resistant behaviour present at school and home so that holistic intervention strategies may be developed with the learner, teacher and parent. Such school-based programmes should also aim to develop learners with behavioural patterns that are in keeping with societal norms in order to assist them in their various social relationships both in and out of school.

6.2.6.7 Conclusions on how participants felt during encounters with teachers

From the empirical evidence on how participants felt during encounters with teachers it is concluded that learners experienced extreme anger and embarrassment during the encounters with teachers (see section 5.4.6.7). Learners also experienced a sense of helplessness when teachers relentlessly admonished them and refused to listen to their views. It is hence concluded that an intensive intervention programme aimed at assisting learners to deal with the emotional and psychological impact of encounters with teachers must be developed as an integral aspect of the school discipline structure.

A proposed intervention programme based on the pivotal conclusions of this study is detailed under recommendations (see section 6.4).

6.2.7 Conclusions on the desired teacher responses towards learners who misbehave in the classroom

From this study, it is concluded that learners regarded polite teachers, communication with parents and classroom organisational changes as desirable responses to dealing with misbehaving learners in the classroom. This conclusion supports the view that schools must establish staff development sessions in which teachers are empowered on effective communication and classroom organisation strategies. SMTs may identify and use teachers with strong communication and classroom management skills as facilitators and mentors in staff development programmes. Schools could also strengthen their partnership with parents by establishing communication channels to regularly notify or update parents on learner behaviour.

6.2.8 Conclusion on learners' views on how discipline could be improved in schools

The study concludes that learners viewed teachers with respectful and empathetic dispositions, the installation of security systems and organisational planning that minimised the movement of learners as effective ways in which discipline could be improved in schools. Schools in which the Representative Council of Learners are actively involved in school matters generally incorporate learner input into the development of the school code of conduct which presents opportunities for discussions on innovative ideas on how discipline can be improved in schools. It is therefore concluded that schools acknowledge the merits of an active Representative Council of Learners and align their policy and decision-making structures accordingly to include robust discussions on school discipline.

From the conclusions, several recommendations are made. These follow in section 6.3. The main focus is on two aspects: a counselling facility for learners (section 6.3.1) and

training for teachers by means of workshops (6.3.2).

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The pivotal conclusion of this study is the need for a structured rehabilitative programme to assist learners and teachers in particular, to deal with disruptive behaviour in the classroom. According to the empirical evidence learners feel anger, embarrassment and helplessness during encounters with teachers. Such emotions create tension in the teacher-learner relationship which impacts negatively on the process of teaching and learning. It is therefore recommended that schools establish intervention strategies that are cognisant of the following:

- the diagnosis of factors affecting learner behaviour;
- the provision of individualised counselling sessions for leaners diagnosed with behavioural challenges;
- the empowerment of teachers with coping strategies to deal with disciplinary issues in the classroom;
- the inclusion of parents in rehabilitative programmes aimed at forming collaborative partnerships between home and school; and
- the inclusion of trained professionals in rehabilitative programmes aimed at forming collaborative networks between the school and the community.

In cognisance of the above factors, the study recommends (i) a school-based support facility and (ii) teacher training. These two issues are addressed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.

6.3.1 A school-based support facility

A discipline intervention model, namely a school-based support facility to assist learners, teachers and parents, is recommended for schools. Presently schools are largely

dependent on the Special Needs Educational Services (SNES) and community-based support structures to manage extreme disciplinary cases warranting professional assistance. Due to the high volume of cases being forwarded to the SNES, psychological counselling is often not immediately available. Such delays exacerbate the emotional and psychological trauma experienced by learners in need of professional assistance. It is against this backdrop that a school-based support service is recommended.

The recommended model is cognisant of The South African School's Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC 2003a: B14). Section 20(2) makes provision for the use of school facilities for community and social purposes and section 23 (5;6) allows for the co-option of members onto the SGB to assist with learners with special needs. These sections constitute the guiding legal parameters for the use of the school premises for the establishment of on-site school-based support services and the co-option of persons with professional expertise in psychological counselling onto the SGB.

The model of the support service is structured as an on-site counselling centre. Learners who are identified by the school as "at risk", are initially counselled by the relevant SMT member before being considered for referral to the onsite support centre. Written parental consent needs to be obtained before a learner is referred to the centre.

Counselling could be conducted at the school on Saturdays according to the times agreed upon by the SGB and the support service providers. A member of the SMT and/or the SGB could be present during the sessions. Learners identified for counselling need to be accompanied by the parent/guardian for the initial visit and thereafter as per request of the psychologist. Regular feed-back sessions should be conducted with parents and teachers to assess the effectiveness of the counselling service. Workshops to empower teachers and parents with skills to manage learners with behavioural challenges could also conducted by the service providers at the support centre.

An example of how the school-based support facility could be set up is presented in the next section.

6.3.1.1 School-based support facility set up

a) Presentation of concept to the SGB for approval

According to the South African School's Act 84 of 1996 (in ELRC 2003a: B7) the adoption of a code of conduct aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment is one of the functions of the SGB. The establishment of discipline intervention strategies enhances the effectiveness of a school code of conduct and simultaneously promotes a disciplined and purposeful school environment. It is therefore imperative that the SBG approves the concept of a school-based support facility with the aim of managing the referral of learners for disciplinary intervention into the school code of conduct.

b) Identification and preparation of suitable space for the school-based support facility

A suitable space on the school premises should be identified for the set-up of the counselling facility. The space may be an unused classroom which may be refurbished to create privacy and an ambiance conducive to counselling.

c) Identification of key skilled personnel

The identification of skilled personnel to serve at the counselling facility could be the most challenging aspect of the facility set-up. A clinical psychologist and/or social worker are the recommended key skilled personnel required to structure and facilitate the discipline intervention programmes at the counselling facility. The following options may be explored to source the key personnel:

- the recruitment of ex-learners who have professional expertise in the field of clinical or educational psychology or social work;
- the availability of parents of the school who possess the professional expertise in the requisite fields;
- sourcing key personnel from local social development agencies, health care facilities and community organisations;
- networking with local universities to explore the availability of final year clinical psychology, educational psychology and social work students.

Schools may also explore the option of engaging the SNES who are responsible for psychological services at schools. The SNES may be approached to also conduct teacher workshops on how to diagnose and assist learners with behavioural challenges. Teachers who are capacitated by the SNES may also serve as mentors to teachers who experience difficulties with classroom management.

d) Present model of counselling facility to DoE for approval

It is important to obtain permission from the DoE before the support service is operationalised by the school. A comprehensive proposal encapsulating all aspects of the proposed school-based support service must be forwarded to the district director for approval. The school principal, SGB and the key skilled personnel must be signatories to the proposal.

e) Establishment of support service advisory panel

A support service advisory panel (e.g., the SMT, SGB and support service providers) could be established to oversee the general management of the centre. Ways to evaluate the effectiveness of the facility need to be established by the advisory panel. The financial and human resource management of the facility could be challenging since fundraising will be needed.

f) Identification and referral of learners to the school-based support facility

Figure 6.1 outlines the identification and referral of learners for disciplinary intervention:

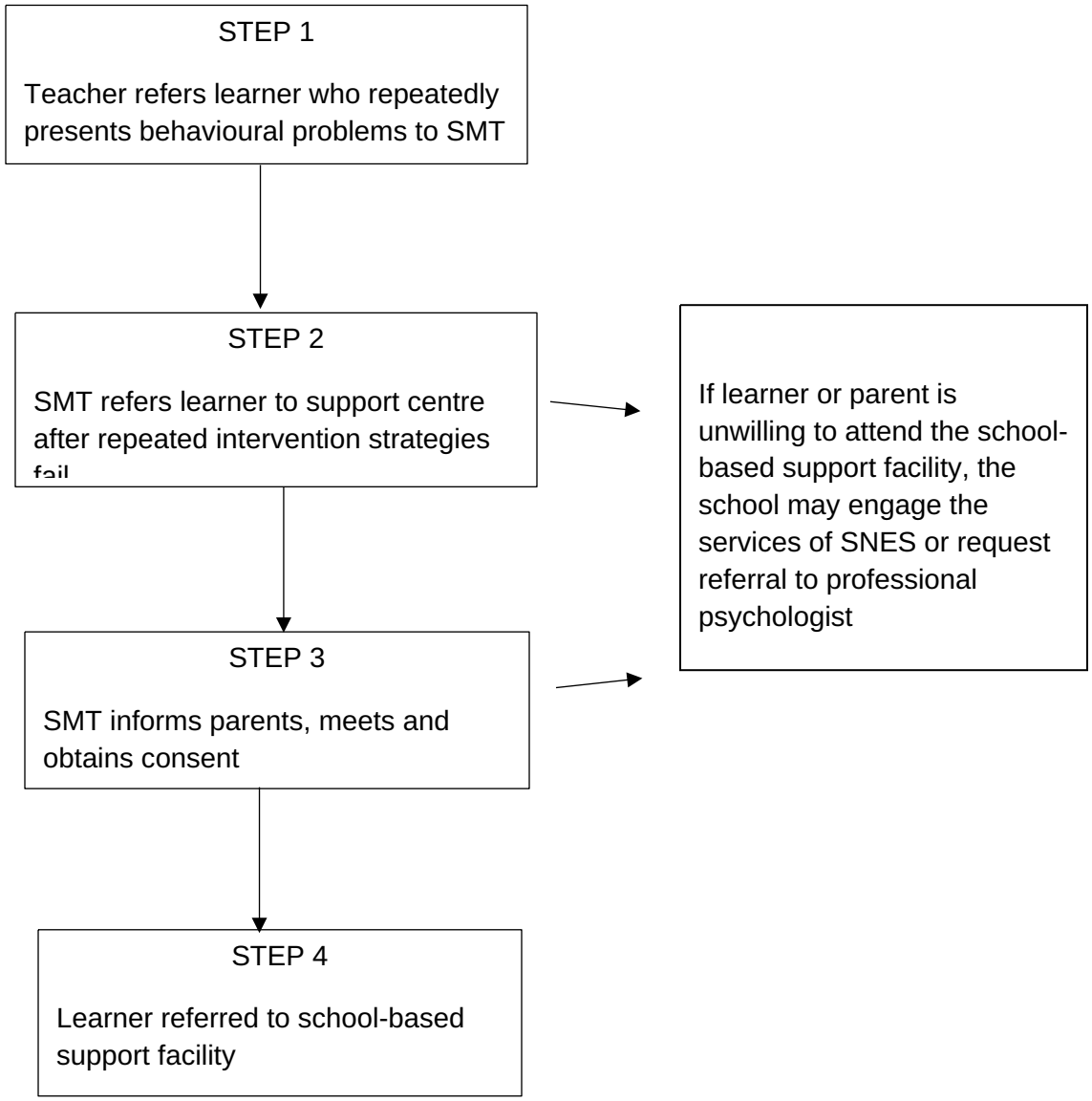


Figure 6.1: The identification and referral of learners for disciplinary intervention

STEP 1: When learners present disciplinary challenges in class, it is generally expected that teachers will attempt to discipline learners according to the classroom rules. When repeated attempts to discipline the learner fail, the teacher may refer the learner to the grade coordinator or SMT member for disciplinary intervention.

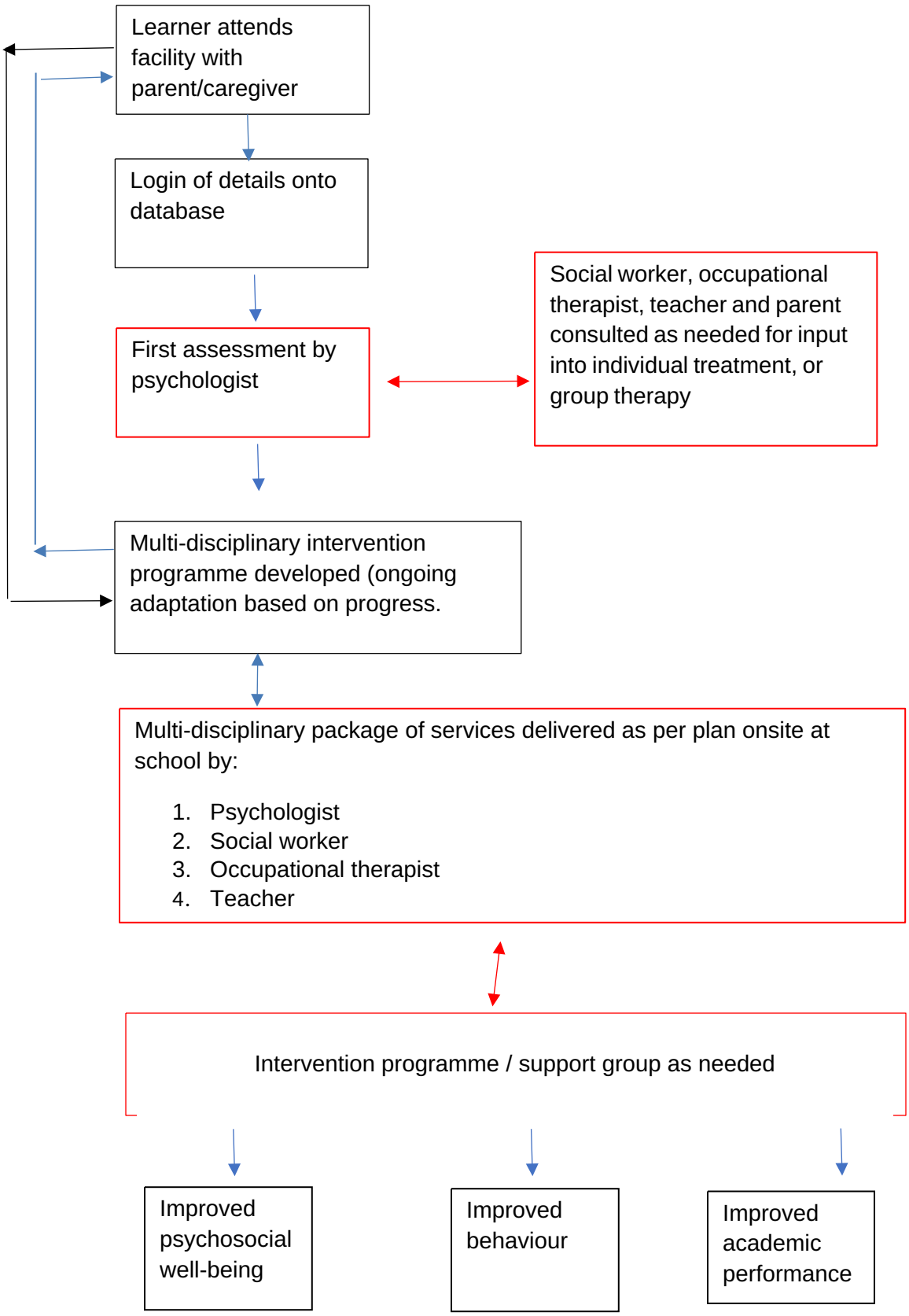
STEP 2: The SMT subjects the learner to further sanctions according to the school code of conduct, for example, detention or meeting with parents. After repeated attempts to assist the learner have failed, the SMT considers referring the learner to the school-based support centre.

STEP 3: The SMT arranges a meeting with the parent and outlines the option of attending the school-based support service. If the parent consents, he/she completes the necessary documentation. If the learner or the parent is not interested in participating in the school-based intervention programme, the school may engage the services of the SNES or professional person.

STEP 4: Both learner and parent attend the initial visit at the support centre and thereafter as per the request of the support centre advisor. Both learner and parent consent to the attendance for the duration of the intervention programme. Regular feed-back sessions are conducted with parent and teachers to assess the effectiveness of the intervention programme.

The above steps outline the identification and referral of learners with behavioural challenges to the school-based support facility after interventions at classroom level fail.

Figure 6.2, outlines the pathway that a referred learner undertakes at the school-based support facility.



Oversight provided by the support centre advisory panel with 3 monthly review of process and outcome measures for adaptation of strategy

Figure 6.2 Pathway through the school-based support facility

The first step in the pathway through the school-based support centre is an introductory appointment with both the learner and the parent or caregiver. This is facilitated by the SMT after the learner and the parent or care-giver have given written consent to engage in an intervention programme at the school-based support centre. Relevant information is captured on a database. During this visit it is envisaged that the psychologist will establish the nature of the learner's behavioural challenges and design an individual or group intervention programme to address the challenges. Ultimately the aim is to improve the psychosocial wellbeing, social relationships and behaviour of the learner. Regular reviews of processes and outcomes may be carried out by the support centre advisory panel.

The above serves as prototype of a school-based support team for troubled learners that can be adopted and customised by any school.

Teacher training to handle disciplinary problems is explained in section 6.3.2.

6.3.2 **Teacher training to handle discipline problems**

6.3.2.1 Preamble to a workshop on improving discipline in class

Teachers need to be trained for improved classroom practices. The recommendations for improved classroom practices are based on participants' views on desired teacher responses and suggestions on how discipline may be improved that emerged during the empirical study (see sections 5.4.7; 5.4.8). Learners indicated that teachers should engage politely and objectively when disruptions occur in the classroom and that teachers should nurture a firm but respectful bond with the learners. Based on these conclusions it is recommended that teachers attend workshops on communicative

strategies.

The recommended training for teachers is structured as an interactive workshop designed to engage teachers in introspecting their emotional responses and social competencies in managing challenging learners. The workshop is also designed to empower teachers with suggestions on how to manage their emotions during potentially explosive situations. In this regard, a study by Naicker (2014: 27) indicated the value of emotional intelligence to understand oneself, ones' relationships and ones' responses to the demands of the classroom. To this end, the Bar-On (2006:14) model of *emotional-social intelligence* is useful and therefore recommended for use during teacher training workshops of this nature.

Teachers need to discuss and debate the value of moving away from the old assumption that physical punishment was needed to maintain respect and authority to a positive discipline approach in which interactive lessons are enjoyed in a warm and structured environment (DoE 2012:14). Teachers should embrace the ideology of classrooms being vibrant spaces in which interactive learning occurs rather than silent classrooms in which learners are passive and of children as complete beings with similar feelings as those of adults. A prototype of a workshop that can be adapted to any school's needs, is explained next.

6.3.2.2 Objectives of the workshop

The recommended workshop for teachers is intended to facilitate knowledge and insight into the role of emotional Intelligence in dealing with challenging behaviour in the classroom. It is envisaged that this knowledge may motivate teachers to use improved social skills when interacting with troubled learners. The workshop/s could be structured around pertinent questions such as:

- *What are the necessary social competencies to manage challenging learners effectively in the classroom?*

An overview of the Bar-On model of *Emotional Intelligence* presented in Table 6.1 underpins the theorisation that emotionally and socially intelligent competencies assist teachers to manage challenging behaviour effectively.

- *How do teachers feel when learners misbehave?*
  Teachers could share their feelings regarding misbehaviour in the classroom with other teachers.
- *How can teachers handle explosive situations in the classroom effectively and ow does this impact on them?*

Table 6.2 illustrates some positive disciplinary actions and ways to filter destructive emotions.

The possible content of a workshop is explained in section 6.3.2.3.

6.3.2.3 Content of workshop on improving communication strategies in the classroom

The aim of the teacher training workshop is to raise awareness of how the emotional-social competencies of the teachers and the adoption of a positive discipline approach may improve communication and behaviour in the classroom. In deciding what to include as content, the findings and conclusions of this study were considered. These findings led to additional relevant literature such as Naicker's (2014) research that used the Bar-On model of emotional intelligence, as well as the positive discipline approach advocated by the DoE (2012:14) in a manual entitled *Positive Discipline and Classroom Management*.

A brief overview of the Bar-On model used as a theoretical framework in the Naicker (2014: 15) study is necessary in order to contextualise the content of the recommended workshop on communication strategies. Schools may also use other relevant documents to facilitate discussions on emotional-social intelligence.

a) An overview of the Bar-On model of Emotional Intelligence

The Bar-On (2006: 15) model of emotional-social intelligence is based on a self-report instrument designed to measure one's emotionally and socially intelligent behaviour. As the findings and conclusions have indicated, this is a crucial aspect of handling discipline in the classroom. Table 6.1 highlights the salient aspects of the model:

Table 6.1: The Bar-On Emotional Quotient scales and what they assess

Emotional quotient scales	**Competencies**	**The *Emotional Intelligence* competency assessed by each scale**
Intrapersonal	Self-regard	To perceive, understand and accept oneself
	Emotional self-awareness	To be able to identify and understand one's emotions
	Assertiveness	To be able to constructively express one's feelings
	Independence	To be emotionally independent of others
	Self-actualisation	To strive to achieve personal goals and actualise one's potential
Interpersonal	Empathy	To understand how others feel
.	Social responsibility	To be able to cooperate with others
	Interpersonal Relationship	To establish mutually satisfying relationships
Stress Management	Stress tolerance	To effectively and constructively manage emotions
	Impulse control	To effectively control one's emotions
Adaptability	Reality testing	

		To objectively validate one's feelings and thinking with external reality
	Flexibility	To adapt one's feelings and thoughts to new situations
	Problem-solving	To effectively solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature
General Mood	Optimism Happiness	To be positive and optimistic To feel content with life in general

Adapted from Bar-On (2006:4)

Regarding Table 6.1, the **intrapersonal** aspect of emotional intelligence encompasses the social competencies of self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualisation. These competencies are predominately responsible in determining how one understands, manages and demonstrates one's emotions intrapersonally. The **interpersona**l aspect of emotional intelligence embraces the social competencies of empathy, social responsibility and interpersonal relationships. These social competencies help to facilitate effective interactions with others. It assists in understanding other's feelings and one's own responsibility in the quest to develop mutually satisfying relationships. The **stress managemen**t aspect of emotional intelligence is demonstrated through stress tolerance and impulse control social competencies. These competencies assist in the effective and constructive management of emotions in social relationships. The **adaptability** aspect of social intelligence encompasses reality testing, flexibility and problem-solving aspects of social competency. The ability to assess one's own feelings in relation to external situations, being flexible and effecting changes to solve problems is associated with these social competencies. The **general mood** emotional quotient encompasses the optimism and happiness social competencies that determine people's positivity and contentment in life.

An overview and discussion of the Bar-On model of *emotional Intelligence* presents teachers with knowledge of the social competencies that constitute emotionally intelligent behaviour. It offers a lens through which teachers may review their own social competencies in a quest to unpack the emotional-social competencies that are necessary to manage challenging situations effectively in the classroom. The workshop should engage teachers into introspecting their *own* emotional responses and social competencies in managing challenging learners.

b) Using the Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence to introspect and change classroom communication practices

A common presumption is that acquiring more knowledge creates better managers (Boyatzis 2007: 156). It is however the ability to *use* this knowledge, defined as *competencies,* that is regarded as distinctive of effective and outstanding management. Two competencies that form components of the Bar-On model of *emotional intelligence*, namely intrapersonal abilities (such as adaptability and relationship management), and interpersonal abilities (such as networking), are integral to effective classroom management. Added to knowledge and competencies are attributes such as a sense of calling or mission and motivation. These attributes assist individuals to decipher what is to be done (knowledge); how it is to be done (competencies) and why it is to be done (motivational drive).

During the workshop, teachers should introspectively evaluate their *own* managerial skills in dealing with discipline problems. In other words, teachers should examine their current responses such as acting in anger and in frustration. The process of making the decision to intentionally change one's behavioural responses encompasses certain steps, namely:

Step 1: **Identify**: The teacher identifies what the challenge is that elicits the most frustration during teaching, e.g., late-coming of learners.

Step 2: **Visualise**: The teacher visualises that the ideal feeling she wishes to experience is of being assertive without acting aggressively and shouting.

Step 3: **Understand**: The teacher understands that an aggressive reaction to the challenging situation prevents her from experiencing the feeling of assertiveness in class.

Step 4: **Manage**: The teacher decides to manage late-coming by an alternative method (e.g., hand gesturing for latecomers to enter and take their seats).

During the workshop, the teachers compare the above to the Bar-On model of *emotional intelligence.* The following may be noted:

- **Intrapersonal component** of *emotional intelligence:*
  Emotional self-awareness: The teacher identifies and understands her anger when learners arrive late.
  Assertiveness: The teacher constructively expresses the anger by means of hand gestures for learners.
  Self-actualisation: By changing the response to late-coming, the teacher is able to achieve personal goals and actualise her potential.
- **Interpersonal component** of *emotional intelligence:*
  Empathy: The teacher understands that yelling at late-comers causes discomfort to other learners and refusing late-comers entry deprives them of learning.
  Interpersonal relationship: The teacher establishes a mutually satisfying relationship with all the learners in the class.
- **Stress Management** component of *emotional intelligence:*
  Stress tolerance: The teacher constructively manages anger by deciding to allow the learners into the class without shouting.
  Impulse control: The teacher controls the impulse to yell whilst continuing to teach.

- **Adaptability** component of *emotional intelligence:*

  Reality testing: The teacher realises that yelling and refusing entry to late-comers does not deter late-coming.

  Flexibility: The teacher was able to adapt her response of telling to using hand gestures for late-comers.

  Problem-solving: The teacher improved her relationships with the learners in her class
- **General mood** component of *emotional intelligence:*

  Optimism: The teacher is likely to be positive and optimistic about managing other disciplinary problems in the future.

  Happiness: The teacher will probably feel content and happy with the effective way in which she managed the problem and the stress caused by learner late-coming.

During the workshop, teachers can discuss various situations and how they can improve their reaction to it.

c) Positive discipline and classroom management

According to educational experts, negative behaviours may be categorised into four basic underlying causes, namely, attention seeking, showing power, revenge and feeling inadequate (DoE 2012: 17). The empirical findings of this study reveals that many teachers react to negative behaviours of learners by sometimes not believing them, singling them out, acting unjustly, speaking impolitely and/or striking them (see section 5.4.6). Learners experience anger, embarrassment and helplessness during such encounters (see section 5.4.6.7). It is important that teachers find suitable ways of addressing the various negative behaviours in the classroom.

Teachers need to attend workshops on positive ways to address disruptive behaviour of learners. Table 6.2 reflects examples of negative learner behaviour, suggestions on how

teachers may respond to the negative behaviour and a corresponding tabulation of emotional-social competencies shown by the teachers. These have been formulated from the findings of this study, but in consideration of the guidelines and rules of the DoE. This table could be used to facilitate discussion and debate during a teacher training workshop on how to handle discipline problems in class.

Table 6.2 Suggestions on how to respond to negative behaviour and its impact on the emotional-social competencies of teachers

Negative learner behaviour	Suggested ways to respond to negative behaviour	Emotional-social competencies shown by teachers
Seeking attention *Active behaviour:* joking and playing tricks on teachers or peers, noisy *Passive behaviour*: neglecting to do things	• Ignore negative behaviour • Look sternly at the learner • Redirect the learner towards more positive behaviour • Remind the learner about a task • Impose appropriate consequences	• **Interpersonal Intelligence: Empathy** The teacher shows empathy
Showing power *Active behaviour*: displaying aggression,	• Stay calm • Try to understand the learner's feelings • Support the learner to act constructively	• **Stress management intelligence: stress tolerance / Impulse-control**

teasing, being disobedient *Passive behaviour:* being stubborn		The teacher reflects on the situation and how the child can be helped
Revenge *Active behaviour:* harmful, rude, destructive behaviour *Passive behaviour*: glare at others	• Be patient and respectful • Support learner to solve problems	• **Stress management intelligence: stress tolerance** The teacher remains calm and friendly
Inadequacy Gives up on tasks easily, non-participation or absence in class; use of alcohol or drugs	• Avoid criticism. • Arrange time for extra classes or facilitate success • Encourage the strengths of the learner but avoid showing pity	• **Adaptability intelligence: managing problematic situations** The teacher manages difficult situations by assisting with tasks and developing strengths

Source: Adaptation from DoE 2012: 28; Naicker 2014: 121

Table 6.2 illustrates how teachers can react to disruptive behaviour in the classroom. This table can be used during workshops to develop teachers' skills in this regard. Teachers need to understand that **attention seeking** behaviour by learners may be managed with **empathy**. Teachers may ignore the negative behaviour by redirecting the learner to more positive behaviour or the task at hand. Teachers may also offer alternative choices or impose sanctions appropriate to the behaviour. Learners who act disruptively by **showing power** should be managed with high levels of **stress tolerance and impulse control** by teachers. Such learners must be managed with calmness and should be

assisted to use their power and strength more constructively. Learners who display **revengeful behaviour** should be managed with **stress tolerance** by being patient and avoiding punishment. Teachers should maintain a friendly and respectful disposition with the learner whilst waiting for the learner to calm down. Teachers should display **adaptability to managing problematic situations** when dealing with learners who display **inadequacy** in the classroom. Teachers should avoid criticising such learners. Rather, they should be assisted with extra tuition and encouragement to develop their strengths.

d) Filters to deal with potentially explosive situations and the enhancement of emotional-social competencies in teachers

The ability to diffuse potentially explosive teacher-learner encounters in the classroom is largely dependent on the teacher having high levels of stress tolerance and impulse control competencies. These competencies constitute the stress management component of emotional-social intelligence. Teachers may improve their stress tolerance by *filtering* their feelings and responses away from the challenging situation at hand. Such *filters* block out the negative feelings and responses that the teacher may experience and allow only the positive emotions to enter the conscious attention of the teacher.

During training, teachers could practice, discuss and debate various *filters* to empower them to manage challenging situations such as learners hurling verbal abuse or displaying aggression. Some examples of filters are:

- *Recitation of an affirmation or spiritual mantra*

The teacher could stop the lesson immediately when a learner displays aggressive beh calmly. The teacher should hold visual contact with the disruptive learner whilst diverting attention to the mental recitation of an affirmation or spiritual mantra. Examples of affirmations include: *I am strong; I am calm; I am in control of the situation.* The mental

recitation mitigates the impulse to act without reflection. This allows the teacher time to calm down whilst maintaining control of the situation. The teacher could then politely request the learner to remain after the lesson to discuss the behaviour.

- *Keeping a visually calming image at the back of the classroom*

When aggressive behaviour is detected, the teacher should stop the lesson and hold visual contact with a calming image at the back of the classroom to help deflect the teacher's negative emotions away from the relevant learner. This diverted visualisation of calmness affords the teacher time to deny the impulse to react immediately.

- *Keeping a picture of loved ones on the table*

When a teacher senses a potentially explosive situation developing, the teacher could stop the lesson. Although the teacher focuses on the class, he/she glances at a picture of loved ones on his/her table. Impulsive action in difficult situations holds the possibility of severe consequences that may cause emotional stress to highly valued relationships.

- *Refraining from shouting or yelling or getting into a row*

When teachers sense the urge to yell or to engage in an argument, they must stop the lesson immediately to avert a potentially explosive situation (Urry 2018: 64). An effective de-escalation tool for teachers is to lower their voice and address the perpetrator by name.

- *Establishing a script on how to respond to offensive behaviour*

Teachers should stop a lesson when learners display poor behaviour. The teachers should establish a script on how to respond, e.g., to reiterate the code of conduct. This script allows for the de-escalation of tension in the classroom.

The above suggestions require a conscious effort by teachers to focus introspectively for solutions. The advantage of such efforts to deal with disruptive behaviour enhances the emotional-social competencies of teachers and helps diffuse potentially explosive situations.

Section 6.3.3 presents recommendations for further research.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

This study explored disruptive behaviour from a learner's perspective. One of the conclusions of the study was that teachers' communication skills should be improved in order to improve overall discipline in schools. It was recommended that teachers should attend a workshop on improving their emotional-social competencies as a means of enhancing their communication skills with learners. A recommendation for further research is to implement the programme that was recommended by this study, and to evaluate it by means of action research. The data generated may be used to gain insight into how schools may assist teachers with stress management and positive classroom discipline and also inform policy development and implementation.

Another recommendation for study is to repeat the investigation with teachers as participants. Useful insights may be gained by examining the challenges that teachers face on a daily basis, from their own perspective. This could be done in various contexts.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study is uniquely positioned in the field of school discipline due to the sample choice. The sample offers detailed insight into the phenomenon of school discipline through the lens of the learner. Figure 6.3 illustrates the integral positioning of the learner in the spectrum of school discipline:

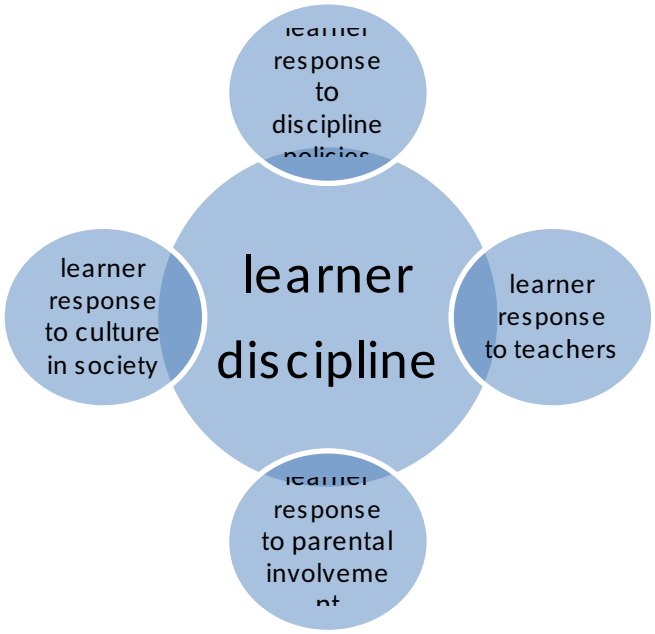


Figure 6.3: Diagrammatic representation of learner responses to discipline.

Learner discipline is an interlinked structure of a school which embraces the various relationships in which the learner interacts. **Learners' response to the rules and policies** of the school, impacts on the tone and discipline prevalent in the institution. Disregard for rules and policies create a climate of lawlessness in the institution. **Learners' responses to teachers** in the classroom are inextricably linked to school discipline. Fractious learner-teacher relationships increase the need for disciplinary interventions which divert human resources away from the core responsibility of teaching and learning. **Learners' response to parental involvement** in school matters impact either negatively or positively on school discipline. Learners whose parents are actively involved in school activities and the supervision of homework generally respond positively to school activities and are well disciplined. Learners whose parents are uninvolved in the academic and social wellbeing of their children often present disciplinary problems which affect the tone and discipline of the institution. The manner in which **learners respond to the cultural norms prevalent in society** often infiltrates their behavioural patterns at school. Exposure to high levels of violence and disrespectful conduct by adults in society impacts on the manner in which learners resolve conflict in school settings which consequently impacts on school discipline.

The strength of this study is the voice of the learner that captures the views, opinions and primary emotions of the learner's experiences of disruptive behaviour in school. The study particularises *how* and *why* learners react to circumstances in which they feel angry, embarrassed and defenceless in the various social settings of the school. The empirical evidence of this study presents a point of departure for robust discussions on classroom communication strategies, alternatives to corporal punishment and the inclusivity of learners in policy development and implementation. This study further contributes to the discussions on the need for collaborative networks between trained professionals, parents and the school.

Finally, the study contributed with regard to designing intervention programmes that could be implemented at school level to address the issue of disruptive encounters between learners and teachers. In this regard, the study proposed pointers for (i) a school -based facility for learners as well as (ii) teacher training by means of workshops.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample in this study was 16 learners from one urban school in KwaZulu-Natal. As a case study in one school, its findings may not be regarded as comprehensive and therefore not applicable to all other schools in South Africa. However, it could be applicable to similar South African schools.

The empirical investigation of this study was in many ways constrained due to the global Covid 19 pandemic. Learners attended school on alternate days in a week or chose to study from home owing to various circumstances. The non-availability of some learners who met the selection criteria for information-rich data was one of the main constraints of this study. Interviews were also conducted under strict Covid protocols which restricted a warm interaction between researcher and participants. Learners were unable to present themselves for prolonged sessions that would have allowed for more intense probing of

responses. Participants had been out of school for approximately six months prior to the interviews which in some cases hindered the comprehensive recall of encounters with teachers.

These factors may be regarded as limitations of this study.

6.7 SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE STUDY

This research was motivated by a concern about the negative impact of disruptive behaviour on the teacher-learner relationship. The main research question was: *How do learners in a selected secondary school experience disruptive behaviour that leads to encounters with teachers?* The aim of this study was to explore, understand and describe learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour with the view of informing policy formulation, implementation and sustainability by providing recommendations for the management of disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

A number of theoretical frameworks underpinned discussions in this study. They were Habermas's (1987) theory of communicative action highlighting the significance of validity claims, life-worlds and language in speech acts; Weber's (1968) theory of social action focusing on the dynamics of authority, power and legitimacy in social and bureaucratic relationships and a discussion on disruptive behaviour as resistance including a theory of resistance conceptual framework by Einwohner and Hollander (2004) and a theory of resistance in education supported by the study *Learning to Labour* by Willis (1977) as a context in which disruptive behaviour occurs.

The research adopted a qualitative approach. Within a case study design at one secondary school in Kwa-Zulu Natal, purposive sampling of information-rich participants was used. Sixteen secondary school learners across grades eight to twelve were chosen as participants. The Learner Discipline Files were perused to identify learners per grade who were most frequently referred for disruptive behaviour with teachers. Sixteen individual open-ended interviews were conducted to collect the data which was analysed

by first unitising and then coding the data according to emergent themes. The respective themes were analysed for causal relationships and contextual factors leading to disruptive behaviour.

The main conclusion of this research was that encounters with teachers impacted negatively on the emotional and psychological well-being of learners particularly when learners were not believed, singled out, struck, treated unjustly or spoken to impolitely by teachers. The emotional and psychological impact of the encounters, desired teacher responses in managing disruptive behaviour and learner views on how discipline could be improved in schools were also revealed in the empirical investigation.

Recommendations for the improvement of learner and teacher well-being were made. In this regard, the study recommended a school-based support facility for learners, as well as training for teachers. Recommendations were also made for further study. The unique contribution to the field of school discipline was highlighted, and the limitations of the study were also pointed out.

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APPENDIX A

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 392 1062 / 033 392 1051
Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za
Buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli **Ref:** 2/4/8/6013

Mrs S Naicker

50 Alamein Avenue

WOODLANDS
DURBAN
4000

Dear Mrs Naicker

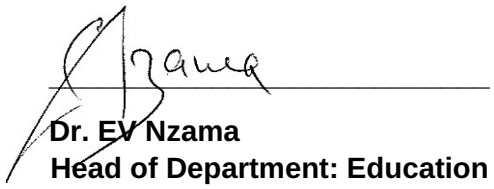
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS EXPERIENCES OF DISRUPTIVE ENCOUNTERS WITH TEACHERS",** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 11 August 2020 to 10 March 2023.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.

8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMLAZI DISTRICT



Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 13 August 2020

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2020/08/12

Ref: **2020/08/12/6035485/10/AM**
Name: Mrs S Naicker
Student No.: 6035485

Dear Mrs S Naicker

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2020/08/12 to 2025/08/12

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs S Naicker
E-mail address: sandnaicker@gmail.com
Telephone: 0842510282

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof S Schulze
E-mail address: Salome.schulze@gmail.com
Telephone: 0824472714

Title of research:

Secondary school learners' experiences of disruptive behaviour that lead to encounters with teachers

Qualification: PhD Inclusive Education

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 2020/08/12 to 2025/08/12.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2020/08/12 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 will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. 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

3. 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.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/08/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2020/08/12/6035485/10/AM** *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
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

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APPENDIX C : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT X SECONDARY SCHOOL

Secondary school learners' experiences of disruptive encounters with teachers

15 July 2020

The Principal
X Secondary School
P. O. Box 25
Y Central
Z
Durban

The Principal
KZN Department of Education
031 4611912 merebanksec@gmail.com

Dear Mr Bridgelal

I, SANDRA NAICKER am doing research under supervision of Prof Salomé Schulze, a professor in the Department of Psychology towards a PHD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Secondary school learners' experiences of disruptive encounters with teachers**.

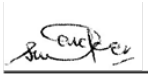
The aim of the study is to understand disruptive behavior at schools from a learner's perspective. Participation is voluntary and anonymity and confidentiality of all records of the participants will be maintained throughout the study. The data derived from this study may be used to inform school discipline policies and classroom discipline strategies. Your school has been selected because it is a secondary school and the focus of this study is secondary school learners' experiences of disruptive behavior.

The study is a qualitative research design (single case study). The data collection instruments are document analysis (learner Discipline Files) and in-depth interviews. The benefits of this study is that the data derived from this study may be used to inform school discipline policies and transformative classroom discipline strategies.

There are no great risks involved in this study. The participants are children under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback will be given to the participants in form of an informal meeting at the school. A presentation on the purpose, findings and recommendations of the study will be done with the principal and officials of the district in which the research was done.

Yours sincerely



APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT'S PARENT CONSENT FORM

SANDRA NAICKER (RESEARCHER)

CELL: 0842510282

sandnaicker@gmail.com

LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR MINORS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Parent

Your _____ is invited to participate in a study entitled:

Secondary school learners' experiences of disruptive encounters with teachers .

I am undertaking this study as part of my doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is gain insight into school discipline problems from a learner's perspective and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of discipline in schools. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because your child's experiences of discipline problems will help me understand the contextual factors within which disruptive behavior occurs in the classroom. I expect to have 15 other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to take part in an interview. The interview will be individually conducted with your child during the school day and shall be approximately 45-60 minutes duration. at school during the Life Orientation Sport period in which individual sport tasks are undertaken. Your child will be interviewed after the completion of his/her individual task on a day negotiated by the LO teacher and your child together. The self-study tasks or notes given during the lesson shall be made available to your child and if further assistance is needed, I shall personally assist your child. I seek your permission to audio-record the interview.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education is the insight into learner discipline problems from a learner's perspective which may inform transformative disciplinary strategies. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during during the Life Orientation Sport period in which individual sport tasks are undertaken with the prior approval of the school and your child's LO teacher. Your child will be interviewed after the completion of his/ her individual task on a day negotiated by the LO teacher and your child together. In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefit of this study is the knowledge that will be gained into how learners experience disruptive encounters with their teachers. Their experiences will provide a deeper understanding of the contextual factors within which discipline problems occur at school.

There are no great risks involved in this study. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof Salomé Schulze , Department of Psychology, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is

084 2510282 and my e-mail is sandnaicker@gmail.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is salomeschulze@gmail.com. Permission for the study has already been given by KZN Department of Education, the school principal and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

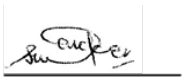
Name of child:

Sincerely

_____ _____

_____

Parent/guardian's name (print) Parent/guardian's signature: Date:

SANDRA NAICKER  _____

Researcher Researcher's signature Date:

APPENDIX :; ASSENT FORM

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…… (please print)

Participant Signature……..Date…….

Researcher's Name & Surname Sandra Naicker…….(please print)

Researcher's signature……..Date…….

APPENDIX F: EXAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPTION

Researcher XXX, thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with me… I appreciate it very very much ….. XXX can you tell me … how do you think the code of conduct is developed in our school … who puts the code of conduct together

Learnerthe principal and … the principal and maybe the teachers … er …

Researcher so tell me these rules that are there … do you think they are rules that are justifiable … because remember classroom rules are also part of the cod

Learner yes…

Researcher so do you think these are justifiable to be in the code of conduct

Learner yes mam… they are

Researcher explain why

Learner because its not like er … er … mmm… these are things that we should be doing… these things we should be doing but like most of our pupils in this school … we don't obey these rules

Researcher do you know whether learners have input into this … whether learners are supposed to have input the school rules … into the cod

Learner yes … cause we part of the school

Researcher but at this school?

Learner yes

Researcher do learners have participation in this cod

Learner o mam, you mean like …

Researcher when they put together … when they put it out in writing … do learners actually come in and give their input

Learner no… no they don't

Researcher and how do you feel about that… what do you think

Learner eer… I feel that … its more based on teachers … cause you'll like in this longer and you'll know what's supposed to be done and what's not supposed to be done … so it's better off with you'll just doing that

Researcher ok… tell me about some of the discipline problems at this school … what are some of the problems the school has

Learner mostly er … like what they children do … bunking classes … er … talking back to the teachers

Researcher why … why do you think they do this

Learner its mostly because like … you say now if we had a problem with the teacher before this .. its like when we go to their classes … like they don't know how to respect us … and that's what makes us not wanna go to their classes … so … that's probably the reason why children like skip classes and bunk

Researcher when you say they don't know how to respect us … what do you mean by that

Learner its like er.. er… they don't have no care in the world … sometimes …and they not even worried about school basically ..

Researcher the teachers are not worried about school?

Learner no…no… students

Researcher the students …o… okay … and other reasons why learners disobey the rules

Learner some of them just do it for fun … for like popularity … to make themselves known … mostly

Researcher ok … and what are some of the discipline measures that the school uses … in other words when the learners do something wrong , how does the school reprimand them

Learner suspension … er … im not to sure about expulsion … but I know those two m

Researcher what are the effective things that work in the school when learners do the wrong thing … like suspension .. detention …do these work

Learner no… it doesn't work … to be honest … it just makes … ok …from my point of view … it makes students more angrier … like … er … how can I say this …its like when they get expelled … they feel like you know what … the school is against me … but it depends on the situation basically

Researcher so some of the things are effective and some of it is not effective

Learner no its not yeah

Researcher and since we know that education is important , why do learners choose not to behave in the classroom … what makes them not behave … what goes on in their heads

Learner their friends mostly … its like its … its all to do with who you join … what you … you know what you've been up to and stuff that basically make you not want to come to class … or not want to learn … its all to do with your friends … basically

Researcher and when you are reprimanded …. When teachers tell you to listen and you don't … do you think its your right to listen … to not listen?

Learner it is because they older than us … we should have respect … but as I said …. We ..er … respect goes both ways

Researcher why do you think some children respect some teachers and don't respect other teachers

Learner its probably sometimes … like sometimes like its cause like … most teachers are friendlier …. It could be cause of that …. Teachers are more friendlier … and they feel like … you know this teacher like … its not er … it shouldn't be a big deal like … to have respect and not have respect … or maybe its because some teachers are new in this school …. And we don't know them and stuff … that's why the respect is low

Researcher so in your experience …. If you look at the teachers that you do respect and you look at the teachers that you don't respect …. How does the teachers that you don't respect engage with learners … how are they different from the teachers that you respect

Learner the teachers that I respect … its er … they not judgemental … they like … if you have done something wrong … they won't hold it against you… but the others …like just see…. Just find … always find faults in you and stuff … like they always want to be picking on what you did in the past and stuff … and during lessons like … er… once when I was in class … was … I think I was in the maths class and then I went to give my assignment in … and then my teacher told me …er … "there's no use in you giving it in because its not like you'll pass anyways"…

Researcher and how did you feel

Learner it wasn't a good feeling … like when I came to school I had the intention of passing … but like since you hear that … its like you don't … its like you just give up … you just don't want to come to school … that also one of the reasons why children don't like coming to school …

Researcher its because teachers don't ?

Learner watch what they say … sometimes

Researcher describe for me the recent incident when you were disruptive in the class and you had to be sent to the grade coordinator … explain to me how it started … how you felt during that whole incident

Learner when I was falsely accused of doing something in the class and then er… mmm … it was just like everyone just told on me … just cause I was … I was … I was like naughty …. I was being known for going to the office … all the blame was put on me … so then I had to go upstairs and I got expelled for something I didn't do … I mean suspended for something I didn't do

Researcher so this incident that you are telling me about … explain what was it about … were you talking or did you do something or what happened …

Learner it was an incident where this girl's hair got cut in the classroom and yeah …. They blamed it on me

Researcher and it was not you

Learner it weren't me

Researcher so at that point when this happened and you told the teacher its not me … how did the teacher react to that

Learner well she didn't believe me because … I er … as I said I was naughty and because of my past … they … they wouldn't

Researcher and how that make you feel

Learner I didn't er … ok … to be honest it was just like a normal thing …. Its like something that use to always happen … and whether I said yes or no … its like my opinion didn't matter … my so … what I had to say didn't matter …so … at that point it was like I just gave up … so whatever was said … was being said

Researcher again I want to ask you this question … how did you feel …

Learner I was angry at the teachers … that's another reason why I didn't want to come to school and why I felt I shouldn't even be in school

Researcher so are you saying that teachers are responsible for you losing interest in school … to a certain extent

Learner yes

Researcher so how do think teachers should behave when learners are doing the wrong thing

Learner they should actually look into the situation more …than being as I said judgemental … cause sometimes you don't know what's going on with the child but then you want to … you just like assume and that's not nice

Researcher so … what is some of the other ways in which you think teachers should respond better to learners

Learner they should talk more … they should talk more with their students … like personally

Researcher to get to understand them

Learner yes … yes

Researcher why … why must they make the time to understand you

Learner because … er … some … er …like most situations … not all children are the same … like it doesn't mean cause you had a … cause you did bad things you are a bad person … and stuff like that

Researcher M in our school …how do you think discipline can be improved … you do know that we do have discipline problems here … so how can we improve this … what can we do … what can the school do to improve … in your own experiences … what could we have done … or what can we still do to improve your behaviour or the students that have the same experiences like you

Learner they … I think like you'll should like … er … for bunking classes and stuff …there should be more people outside … like to watch whats going on … and

Researcher when you say more people … you talking about managers

Learner ja like

Researcher hods?

Learner not …. Like cornwell and stuff

Researcher security

Learner ja

Researcher explain that further to me … how do you think that's going to improve discipline

Learner because like if there's more people outside … children would be scared … in other words … they would be scared … and they wouldn't want to bunk because they know they would get caught … and in this school there's a lot of places like where they sit and do stuff … so

Learner ja

Researcher in that regard also … in a classroom situation … when do you think the disruptive behaviour takes place … because if a teacher is teaching … you focusing all the time …obviously learners should be paying attention … so in what kind of scenario … do they not pay attention… and it allows for then to do this disruptive behaviour

Learner sometimes its like when er … mmm … other children bunk … and then they come outside the classroom and then they call … maybe that's their friend or something … and they come and call them … that's like when they don't pay attention … and they don't want to pay attention … and they more worried about what's going on … what's going on outside … so

Researcher er ..in terms of teachers mannerisms of the way in which they talk to learners … what are some the words … what are some of the things they say to you which you think now is what causes learners to argue with the teachers

Learner like sometimes they say stuff like … er … you behaving like a rubbish … like … like some teachers do use words like that … and er that's what's make some children talk back … sometimes the quiet ones don't … but then on the other hand … the ones that have big mouths talk back

Researcher are there other things they may say that cause learners to actually argue

Learner like sometimes they say … you are the rotten one in this class ..that's why this whole class will end up like you … that's some of the statements I think …

Researcher and when that is being said to a learner how do think they feel

Learner they … sometimes … sometimes its … they feel er … they feel er angry … they angry at their teachers and at the same time they also don't care … cause … like I said if it's being said often … its er ..

Researcher you switch off

Learner ja

Researcher ok XXX, is there anything else you want to tell me about discipline, behaviour or your own experience

Learner mam, I just think you should talk to the teachers … like how … I think you should tell them like how they should talk to us … so then we can respect them back … cause sometimes its not nice like what they say … and that's as I said … the reason why they don't want to come to school … and why we hate the fact of being in school

Researcher thank you XXX , I really appreciate your input and also I appreciate the fact that you made this appointment to be here … and whatever information you've given me is confidential … it's not going to be discussed and if you should so feel though that there are things about your experiences you want to discuss , you welcome to come and discuss it with me

Learner thank you

APPENDIX G: LEARNER DISCIPLINE FILE

Learner Discipline File.pdf