THE EFFECTIVENESS OF VERBAL DISCIPLINE IN DEALING WITH CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

by

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DECLARATION

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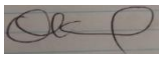
I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my maternal home for raising me up. Most importantly, my sincere appreciation goes to the departed – Mrs Sabina Orji (grandma); Mr Onyeama Orji (big uncle) and Mr Ephraim Orji (small uncle) for seeing me through primary school to bachelor's degree. May your souls continue to rest in peace - Amen.

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ABSTRACT

Classroom misconduct is a general problem in today's schools globally. After the abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools, teachers struggled to achieve discipline in the classroom. Verbal discipline is indicated as one of the most regularly used disciplinary strategies to deal with classroom misconduct in the Foundation Phase (FP). Hence, this study explored the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. The purpose was to examine teachers' verbal discipline practices or strategies to develop guidelines for effective verbal discipline in schools. The study was a qualitative study that adopted a phenomenological research design. A purposive sampling method was used to select ten FP teachers teaching in grades 1 – 3 from two schools – five from urban schools and five from rural schools – to participate in the study. Data were collected through recorded semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The interview recordings were transcribed and analysed using qualitative data analysis steps (content analysis) by Creswell and Creswell (2018). The school discipline policy documents collected were reviewed and analysed to obtain background knowledge on the current school disciplinary practices. Findings from the study established that teachers use verbal discipline to remind learners of the consequences of misconduct before exploring other disciplinary measures. Verbal discipline seems stressful, challenging, and repetitive, but it is effective in achieving discipline in FP classrooms. Fellow teachers, principals, parents, and other school stakeholders are partners in disciplining misbehaving learners verbally. Teachers engaged learners in private conversations to understand the reasons behind their misconduct and to praise them, when necessary, thereby encouraging good behaviour. The study further established the importance of understanding the learners' developmental phase and their home background, as some behavioural issues originate at home. Modelling good behaviour, disciplining with patience, and inviting respected community members to speak to learners are important ways to achieve effective verbal discipline in the FP. Based on the above, the study recommended numerous strategies and guidelines for effective verbal discipline. A total review of the national policy document is deemed necessary to integrate vital findings on positive discipline that have emerged since the year 2000. The DBE should involve researchers of school discipline in a series of workshops to assist in reviewing policy documents.

Keywords: alternatives to corporal punishment; classroom discipline; classroom misconduct; disciplinary strategies; verbal discipline; verbal discipline strategies; symbolic interactionism; Foundation Phase.

NGAMAFUPHI

Umkhuba wokungaziphathi kahle emagunjini okufunda uyinkinga eyejwayelekile ezikoleni zanamuhla zaseNingizimu Afrika emhlabeni wonke. Ngemuva kokuqedwa kosiko lokujezisa abafundi ngokubazwisa ubuhlungu emzimbeni (*corporal punishment)* ezikoleni zaseNingizimu Afrika, othisha sebedonse kanzima emizameni yabo yokuqondisa izigwegwe/ukukhalima ngasemagunjini okufunda. Indlela yokujezisa ngomlomo seyivezwe njengelinye lamasu eselivamise ukusetshenziswa ukunqanda umkhuba wokungaziphathi emagunjini okufunda eSigabeni esiyiSisekelo (*Foundation Phase (FP*). Kanti ngakwenye ingxenye lolu cwaningo seluvumbulule ukuphumelela kwendlela yokujezisa ngomlomo ukunqanda umkhuba wokuziphatha kabi emagunjini okufunda esigabeni sesisekelo (FP). Inhloso kwaye kuwukuhlola izindlela ezisetshenziswa ngothisha ukuqondisa izigwegwe ngomlomo noma amasu okwakha imihlahlandlela esebenzayo yokujezisa ngomlomo ezikoleni. Ucwaningo beluwucwaningo olwencike kwikhwalithi olulandele indlela yocwaningo yefenomenoloji (*phenomenological research design*). Umethodi wesampuli enenhloso *(A purposive sampling method*) usetshenziswe ukukhetha othisha abayishumi bezikole zeSigaba esiyiSisekelo (FP) abaphuma ezikoleni ezimbili. – othisha abahlanu abavela ezikoleni zasemadolobheni kanye nothisha abahlanu abavela ezikoleni zasemakhaya – ukuba bazibandakanye kucwaningo. Idatha iqoqwe ngokusebenzisa izinhlolovo ezehlukaniswe izigaba ezimbili ezirikhodiwe kanye nokuhlaziywa kombhalo. Amarikhodi ezinhlolovo abe esebhalwa phansi futhi ahlaziywa ngokusebenzisa izinyathelo zokuhlaziya idatha ngendlela yekhwalithi (kwahlaziywa ulwazi oluqukethwe) (*content analysis*) Creswell and Creswell (2018). Imibhalo yomgomo wezokuqondiswa kwezigwegwe ezikoleni eqoqiwe ibuyekeziwe futhi yahlaziywa ukuze kutholakale ulwazi oluwumlando mayelana nezingqubo ezilandelwayo zokuqondiswa kwezigwegwe ezikoleni. Ulwazi olutholakele kucwaningo luqinisekise ukuthi othisha basebenzisa indlela yokuqondisa izigwegwe ngomlomo. Ukukhumbuza abafundi ngemiphumela yokungaziphathi kahle ngaphambi kokubheka ezinye izindlela zokuqondisa izigwegwe. Ukuqondiswa izigwegwe ngomlomo kubonakala

kunegcindezi, kunenselele futhi kuyimpindwa, kodwa kusebenza ngempumelelo uma kuqondiswa izigwegwe emagunjini wezikole zeSigaba esiyiSisekelo (FP). Ozakwethu abangothisha, othishanhloko, abazali kanye nabanye abadlalindima ezikoleni basebenza njengembumba ekuqondiseni izigwegwe ngomlomo kubafundi abangamahlongandlebe. Othisha baxoxisene nabafundi ngasese ukuthola izizathu ezibangela abafundi ukungaziphathi kahle kwabafundi kanye nokubatusa/bakhuthaza, uma kunesidingo, ngokweze njalo bakhuthaza umkhuba wokuziphatha kahle. Ucwaningo luqhubeke lwathola ukubaluleka kokuzwisisa isigaba sabafundi sokukhula kanye nomlando wabafundi wasekhaya, njengoba eminye imikhuba yokuziphatha idabuka ekhaya.. Ukukhuthaza umkhuba wokuziphatha, ukuqondisa izigwegwe ngendlela yokubekezela kanye nokumema amalunga omphakathi ahloniphekile ukuba baxoxisane nabafundi, kuyizindlela ezisebenzayo ezibalulekile ekuphumeleleni ukuqondisa izigwegwe ngomlomo ezikoleni ze-FP. Ngokusebenzisa lolu lwazi olwendlalwe ngenhla, ucwaningo luncome/lunqume amasu ambalwa kanye nemihlahlandlela njengezindlela ezisebenza kahle ekuqondiseni izigwegwe ngomlomo. Ukubuyekezwa ngokuphelele kombhalo womgomo wezwe kubonakala kuyisidingo ukuhlanganisa ulwazi olubalulekile mayelana nendlela elungile yokuqondiswa kwezigwegwe ebonakele kusukela ngonyaka ka 2000. UMnyango weMfundo eyiSisekelo (DBE) kufanele ubandakanye abacwaningi bezokuqondiswa kwezigwegwe ezikoleni bangene kuchungechunge lwezinhlelo zokusiza ukubuyekeza imibhalo equkethe imigomo.

Amagama asemqoka: Ezinye izindlela zokujezisa ngokuzwisa umzimba ubuhlungu; ukuqondisa izigwegwe ngasegunjini lokufunda; ukungaziphathi kahle ngasegunjini lokufunda; amasu okuqondisa izigwegwe; ukuqondisa izigwegwe ngomlomo; amasu okuqondisa izigwegwe ngomlomo; izimpawu ezikhombisa ukuhlangana; ISigaba esiyiSisekelo.

KAKARETSO

Boitshwaro bo bobe phaposing ya ho rutela ke bothata bo akaretsang kajeno dikolong ka kakaretso. Kamora hore ho fediswe kotlo ya ho shapa dikolong tsa Afrika Borwa, matitjhere a sokola hore ho be le kgalemelo phaposing ya ho rutela. Kgalemelo ya molomo e bontsha e le le leng la maano a kgalemelo a sebediswang kgafetsa ho

sebetsana le boitshwaro bo bobe phaposing ya ho rutela Mokgahlelong wa Motheo (FP). Ke kahoo phuputso ena e hlahlobileng katleho ya kgalemelo ya molomo ho sebetsana le boitshwaro bo bobe phaposing ya ho rutela boemong ba FP. Sepheo e ne e le ho hlahloba mekgwa ya kgalemelo ya matitjhere ya molomo kapa maano a ho theha ditataiso bakeng sa kgalemelo ya molomo e sebetsang hantle dikolong. Phuputso e ne e le phuputso ya boleng e amohetseng moralo wa dipatlisiso tsa boiphihlelo. Ho sebedisitswe mokgwa wa ho etsa sampole ka sepheo sa ho kgetha matitjhere a leshome a FP dikolong tse pedi - a mahlano ho tswa dikolong tse ditoropong le a mahlano ho tswa dikolong tse mahaeng - ho kenya letsoho phuputsong. Dintlha di bokelletswe ka dipuisano tse rekotilweng tse hlophisitsweng hantle le manollo ya ditokomane. Direkoto tsa dipuisano di ile tsa ngolwa mme tsa manollwa ho sebediswa mehato ya manolo ya dintlha tsa boleng (manollo ya dikateng) ya Creswell le Creswell (2018). Ditokomane tsa leano la kgalemelo ya dikolong tse bokelletsweng di ile tsa hlahlojwa le ho manollwa ho fumana tsebo e seng e ntse e le teng mabapi le mekgwa ya hajwale ya kgalemelo ya dikolong. Diphumano tsa phuputso di bontshitse hore matitjhere a sebedisa kgalemelo ya molomo ho hopotsa baithuti ka ditlamorao tsa boitshwaro bo bobe pele ba hlahloba mehato e meng ya kgalemelo. Kgalemelo ya molomo e bonahala e le e sithabetsang, e nang le diphephetso ebile e pheta-pheta, empa e sebetsa hantle ho fihlella kgalemelo diphaposing tsa ho rutela tsa boemo ba FP. Matitjhere-mmoho, mesuwe-hlooho, batswadi le bankakarolo ba bang ba dikolo ke balekane ba kgalemelang baithuti ba sa itshwarang hantle ka molomo. Matitjhere a buisane le baithuti ka lekunutu hore ba utlwisise mabaka a etsang hore ba se ke ba itshwara hantle le ho ba babatsa, ha ho hlokahala, mme kahoo ba ba kgothalletsa boitshwaro bo botle. Phuputso e boetse ya tiisa bohlokwa ba ho utlwisisa mokgahlelo wa kgolo ya baithuti le bophelo ba bona ba lapeng, kaha ditaba tse ding tsa boitshwaro di simoloha lapeng. Ho bontsha boitshwaro bo botle, ho kgalemela ka mamello le ho mema ditho tse hlomphehang tsa setjhaba ho bua le baithuti ke ditsela tsa bohlokwa tsa ho fihlella kgalemelo ya molomo e sebetsang hantle boemong ba FP. Ho latela se boletsweng kahodimo, phuputso e kgothaleditse maano le ditataiso tse ngata bakeng sa kgalemelo ya molomo e sebetsang hantle. Kakaretso ya tlhahlobo ya tokomane ya leano la naha e nkwa e le ya bohlokwa ho kopanya diphumano tsa bohlokwa mabapi le boitshwaro bo botle tse hlahileng ho tloha ka selemo sa 2000. DBE e lokela ho kenyelletsa bafuputsi ba

kgalemelo ya dikolong letotong la dithupelo ho thusa ho hlahloba ditokomane tsa leano.

Mantswe a sehlooho: mekgwa e meng ho fapana le ho shapuwa; kgalemelo ya phaposing ya ho rutela; boitshwaro bo bobe phaposing ya ho rutela; maano a kgalemelo; kgalemelo ya molomo; maano a kgalemelo ya molomo; tshebedisano-mmoho ya tshwantshetso, Mokgahlelo wa Motheo.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DiSQ	Discipline in Schools Questionnaire
DoE	Department of Education
FP	Foundation Phase
FSDE	Free State Department of Education
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HOD	Head of Department
PSC	Problem-Solving Conversation
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SA	South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SI	Symbolic Interactionism
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study focused on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the Foundation Phase (FP). Classroom misconduct among learners is an area of ever-growing concern in different research contexts. Internationally, studies (Lwo & Yuan, 2011: 137-164; He, 2013; Sekiwu & Naluwemba, 2014: 20-26) have called for extensive research aimed at understanding the reasons for classroom misconduct and the development of effective strategies in dealing with such misconduct. In Iran, Rahimi and Karkami (2015: 57-82) explored the roles of teachers' classroom discipline in their teaching effectiveness. Similarly, Kelly and Pohl's (2018: 17-29) study in the United States of America assessed teachers' use of both positive and negative reinforcement as they attempted to change learners' behaviours in educational settings. A Polish study by Marciniak (2015: 53-72) aimed to check how teachers' disciplinary methods work in the classroom environment. Sekiwu and Naluwemba (2014: 20-26) sought to understand how Ugandan teachers use alternatives to corporal punishment to instil discipline in primary schools in a post-corporal punishment era. In the literature review chapter, I will deal with these studies, and many more, and will present a global perspective on classroom misconduct.

In South Africa, classroom misconduct became a massive problem for teachers after the abolition of corporal punishment in schools (Maphosa, 2011: 78; Moyo, Khewu & Bayaga, 2014: 2; Ntuli & Machaisa, 2014: 1781; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 1). An earlier study by Marais and Meier (2010: 41) has noted that classroom misconduct continues to be the most consistently discussed problem amongst FP teachers. Studies (Ntuli & Machaisa, 2014: 1783; Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011: 245) have shown that teachers who previously relied on corporal punishment felt disempowered and believed that without corporal punishment, discipline could not be maintained. This perception made teaching a stressful and challenging occupation (Moyo et al., 2014:2).

Classroom misconduct, according to Sun (2015: 94), includes unruly behaviour with the intention to upset classroom order and hamper teaching and learning. It also prevents the teacher from achieving the daily objectives of teaching. Misconduct in the

context of the classroom entails any behaviour that prevents other learners from feeling safe and secure while in the classroom (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 112). More serious classroom misconduct such as constant absenteeism, vandalism, theft, smoking dagga, bullying, examination dishonesty, assault, gambling and verbal assault on teachers are reported daily in both primary and secondary schools (Rossouw, 2003: 423; Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013: 5; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 2). Other forms of misconduct include incomplete homework, leaving school without permission, vandalism, and inflicting injuries to other learners (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2012: 35). Serame, Oosthuizen, Wolhuter and Zulu (2013: 2) have mentioned some of the most common forms of classroom misconduct South African teachers face in primary schools as disruptive behaviour, untidy or incorrect attire, neglect of duty, telling lies, bullying, disrespect, being ill-mannered, using obscene language, impertinence, absenteeism and tardiness. Studies (Makendano, 2011: 117-127; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 114; Singh & Steyn, 2013: 5) have also reported similar classroom misconduct in secondary schools. However, it should be noted that these incidences are peculiar to both primary and secondary schools, as cited above.

Studies (Molefe, 2011; Tlhapi, 2015) have shown that there are several reasons why learners engage in misconduct within the classroom. Molefe (2011: 21-24) and Tlhapi (2015: 31-40) identify classroom, family, educator, and school related factors. These factors will be discussed in Chapter Two. Misconduct may also be informed simply by the need to take revenge for some grievances (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2015: 38). According to Lekganyane (2011: 19-20) various intrinsic and extrinsic factors in combination instigate misbehaviour. Rossouw (2003: 424-426) has observed that while some of the prominent causes of misconduct exist in the schools, others originate outside of the school. Whether misconduct among learners is internally or externally motivated, it is important for teachers to understand why learners behave as they do. I believe that effective disciplinary strategies may become ineffective if teachers are not adequately informed about the reasons for learner's behaviour.

Teachers have the responsibility to ensure the prevalence of a well-disciplined classroom environment for effective teaching and learning. He (2013: 12) has suggested that an appropriate and effective approach to dealing with misconduct

enables learners to develop greater positive attitudes necessary for learning. Without achieving a conducive teaching and learning classroom environment, it will be difficult for teachers to achieve their learning objectives. Rahimi and Karkami (2015: 58) maintain that a sufficient degree of classroom discipline is required to create an appropriate learning atmosphere. In addition, Segalo and Rambuda (2018: 1) have noted that dealing with classroom misconduct by establishing effective disciplining measures is considered a norm, ensuring the functionality of education in both public and private schools in South Africa. The need for effective disciplining in dealing with classroom misconduct thus presents researchers with the responsibility of offering an empirically backed and effective approach that will enable teachers to achieve the appropriate atmosphere for learning. Given that teachers are facing numerous challenges and that discipline must be maintained in schools, the South African Department of Education (DoE) enacted the policy on alternatives to corporal punishment to assist teachers/schools (DoE, 2000).

Alternatives to corporal punishment include disciplinary measures such as verbal warnings/discipline, demerits, community service, additional work, small menial tasks, detention, talking to learners, talking to a learner's parents or guardians; written warnings, withdrawal of privileges, referral to a counsellor or social worker, suspension, and expulsion, amongst others (DoE, 2000: 25-27; Ngidi, 2007: 124; Maphosa, 2011: 80; DBE, 2012: 35; Serame et al., 2013: 5; Ntuli & Machaisa, 2014: 1788). Among these disciplinary measures, verbal discipline is seen as the most common and preferred disciplinary measure in dealing with classroom misconduct globally (Ngidi, 2007: 136; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 177; Ntshangase & Naidu, 2013: 657; Asare, Owusu-Mensah, Prince & Gyamera 2015: 6; Santos, Silva & Gandolfi, 2017: 4; Okeke, 2018: 129) because it seems more effective than other measures. According to Ngidi (2007: 136), teachers rank verbal discipline as the most popular disciplinary action in relation to learners' misconduct within the classroom. A study in Zimbabwe by Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 177) has claimed that verbal discipline is the most appropriate disciplining measure teachers use to prevent learners from acts of misconduct. Asare et al. (2015: 6), in Ghana, believe that reprimand is one of the most common disciplining measures teachers use in managing school indiscipline. Another study in Brazil (Santos et al., 2017: 4) has rated verbal discipline the most commonly and frequently used form of disciplining strategy, while Okeke (2018: 129)

maintains that on a daily basis teachers rely on verbal discipline to deal with learners' misconduct.

Verbal discipline or verbal warnings or reprimands are one of the examples of disciplinary actions for misconduct inside the classroom carried out by teachers (DoE, 2000: 25; DBE, 2012: 35; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 177; Okeke, 2018: 132). According to Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 177), verbal discipline is a reprimand to learners against minor acts of misconduct such as making a noise during lessons, using vulgar language, and wearing improper attire. Other classroom misconduct that may demand verbal discipline includes failing to be in class on time, bunking classes, failing to finish homework, not responding to instructions, and being dishonest (DoE, 2000: 25; Ngidi, 2007: 124; DBE, 2012: 35); making noise or chatting in class, fighting or quarrelling (Okeke, 2018: 132). Verbal discipline includes positive and negative verbal acts of the teachers that involves yelling, scolding, screaming at, name-calling, shouting, swearing, reprimand, warnings and verbal appreciation (Sadruddin, 2012: 36; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 117; Mumthas, Munavvir & Abdul, 2014: 303; Asare et al., 2015:10). A recent study (Santos et al., 2017: 4) categorised verbal discipline in terms of nonviolent verbal discipline, moderate verbal discipline, and harsh verbal disciplining.

Although research has noted an increase in teacher verbal disciplining or verbal warnings (DoE, 2000: 25; Ngidi, 2007: 136; Asare et al., 2015: 6; Santos et al., 2017: 4; Okeke, 2018: 129), the present study appears to be a first-time attempt to single out verbal discipline for proper empirical research. Given that Okeke (2018: 129) has noted that teachers on a daily basis rely on verbal discipline to deal with learners' misconduct, and given the existence of the various types of verbal discipline mentioned above, research on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in FP classroom becomes a matter of urgency. This move is necessitated by the fact that research has shown that primary school teachers are increasingly using and relying on verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct worldwide (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 115; Mumthas et al., 2014: 303; Wang & Kenny, 2014: 908; Asare et al., 2015: 6; Santos et al., 2017: 4; Okeke, 2018: 129). Understanding whether verbal discipline is effective in dealing with classroom misconduct can aid policies and training of initial teachers, as well as inform the development of courses for further professional development of teachers in handling classroom misconduct in the FP. It is worth noting

therefore that, whilst disciplinary strategies for dealing with learners' misconduct in South African schools have been receiving attention from researchers over the years, this study focused on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP.

So, while verbal discipline as a disciplinary strategy has been cited in most South African studies (Maphosa, 2011: 83; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 117; Ntshangase & Naidu, 2013: 657; Serame et al., 2013: 3), none of these studies have reported specifically on its effectiveness in handling classroom misconduct in the FP. Despite the reported reliance on verbal discipline by teachers in South African schools, there is currently no research that attempts to provide information on how teachers use it or how effective it is in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. The implication, therefore, is that while South African primary school teachers are reportedly subscribing to verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct, they do so in the absence of any clear empirically backed evidence on how this approach to disciplining could be implemented. Teachers and perhaps other stakeholders need to understand the dynamics of verbal discipline as a disciplinary strategy. Thus, the study of the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP was imperative.

1.2 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I present a preliminary review of literature. This is necessary in order to help place the present study within the context of existing research on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in FP classroom. More so, the outline presented below helps to give a bird's eye view of the larger literature review in the next chapter.

1.2.1 Classroom Misconduct

Classroom misconduct has been conceptualised in different ways by researchers the world over. In the literature review chapter, I will present a discourse on these different ways. It is, however, important to bear in mind that researchers like Shaikhang and Assan (2014: 436) have pointed out that the concept of classroom misconduct has been used interchangeably with other concepts such as misdemeanour, indiscipline,

and disruptive behaviour. Classroom misconduct, therefore, denotes any behaviour that prevents other learners from feeling safe, secure, and respected within a particular classroom environment (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 112). Marais and Meier (2010: 43) perceive classroom misconduct as simply all forms of disciplinary problems that affect the fundamental rights of the learners within a learning environment.

Many researchers have provided examples of learner behaviours that constitute misconduct in the classroom learning environment. These include disobedience, tardiness, noisiness, homework not done, as well as refusal to keep quiet when the teacher wants to talk (Rossouw, 2003: 423). Other misbehaviour includes wandering about, name calling, teasing, punching, humming, refusal to follow directions, aggressive and antisocial behaviour, theft, telling of lies, and juvenile delinquency as common classroom misbehaviour among learners (Marais & Meier, 2010: 44; Lekganyane, 2011: 17). The Department of Basic Education (2012: 35) in South Africa also provides a good insight into what constitutes misconduct in the classroom using levels 1 to 5 indicating less to serious misconduct. In the literature review chapter, each of these levels, as well as other examples from different sources, will be discussed.

1.2.1.1 Causes of misconduct among learners

Researchers have attributed misconduct among learners to many different causes. Some researchers (Mancini, 2017: 15-16; Gyan, Baah-Korang, McCarthy & McCarthy, 2015: 19) have associated misconduct with the socioeconomic conditions in which learners find themselves. These researchers have substantiated their views with the argument that primary schools located within communities of low socioeconomic status (problems at home and community) appear to experience more cases of learner misbehaviour. Other researchers have maintained that misconduct may be situated within the learners themselves or outside of the learners. These refer to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Lekganyane, 2011: 19-20). Misconduct among learners has also been perceived to be caused by environmental as well as biological factors (parental separation, child abuse, parental death, poverty, sickness, disability or impairment and genetic defects) factors (Gyan et al., 2015: 19-20). In addition, Molefe (2011: 21-23) has summarised the causes of disciplinary problems among learners as a combination of classroom, family, educator, and school related factors. In the literature review chapter, these factors will be discussed in detail.

1.2.2 Classroom Discipline

According to UNESCO (2015: 20-21), discipline refers to the practice of teaching a learner to obey a code of behaviour that will enable him or her to achieve acceptable behaviour patterns. Discipline within the classroom is important if teachers are to achieve the educational goals of teaching and learning (Sadruddin, 2012: 25). For Asare et al. (2015:1), discipline involves the readiness or ability to respect the rules and regulations governing a given society, such as in schools. In schools, discipline is generally regarded as a measure by means of which authority is maintained in order to control behaviour when learners reveal non-conformist or non-submissive behaviour (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011: 245). In the context of education, discipline is designed to maintain order that promotes learning objectives and a classroom atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning (Ndofirepi, Makaye & Ndofirepi, 2012: 84); therefore Nigrini (2016: 4) has conceptualised discipline as a certain pattern of behaviour that is expected from the learners.

School discipline has been conceptualised as the policies and code of conduct by the relevant governmental and school authorities (Panorama Primary School, 2018: Part 1; Mancini, 2017: 5; Gauteng Department of Education, 2011: 8-13; Government of South Africa, 2011). These policy documents variously describe the behaviour expected of learners as well as the roles that teachers must play to ensure that learners comply with those rules. The documents are also explicit about the various consequences of not adhering to set rules and regulations. With a view that discipline is a misused concept often associated with punishment, UNESCO (2015: 20) clearly addresses this misuse when it notes that discipline is a practice of teaching or training a learner to obey school rules. This explanation thus contradicts the often-misused discipline of corporal punishment, which entails a system whereby a supervising adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child for inappropriate behaviour or language (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011: 247).

Effective discipline is a prerequisite for conducting meaningful teaching and learning (Maphosa, 2011: 76). Researchers like Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 177); Ntshangase and Naidu (2013: 657); and Asare et al. (2015: 6) have shown that verbal discipline is the most preferred disciplinary strategy teachers use to handle misconduct in the classrooms. Yet, verbal discipline has received little or no attention from school

discipline researchers in South Africa, let alone understanding whether it is effective or ineffective in handling classroom misconduct. This study therefore focused on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in primary schools.

1.2.2.1 Importance of classroom discipline

The importance of discipline comes in the wake of the recognition that the incidence of classroom misconduct is on a steadily rising trajectory, and a cause for concern in most schools in South Africa and other countries (Nakpodia, 2010: 144; Lekganyane, 2011: 1; DBE, 2012: 35; Govender, 2014: 28; Asare et al., 2015: 2). Research indicates that many countries still face challenges on how to provide the right method of discipline that will create the necessary climate for effective teaching and learning in schools (Dhlamini, 2014: 841). In an effort to prevent and resolve learners' disciplinary problems and to ensure efficient functioning of schools, there has to be reasonable disciplinary policies and procedures in place (Nakpodia, 2010: 145; Asare et al., 2015: 10). Through this initial literature review, it would appear that optimal teaching and learning is possible only when teachers can achieve an orderly classroom environment that is devoid of all forms of disruptive learner behaviours (Serame et al., 2013: 1). A new research agenda is therefore created by the perceived understanding that teachers appear to believe that an orderly, non-disruptive classroom environment is achievable through verbal discipline (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013:177; Asare et al., 2015: 10; Okeke, 2018: 129). Hence, I was keen to study the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in primary schools.

1.2.2.2 The code of conduct, school policies and classroom rules

With the abolition of the use of corporal punishment in schools in South Africa, the South Africa Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 Section 8 (Government of South Africa, 2011) sets out the code of conduct that must be adopted for learners. A learner code of conduct is a strong disciplinary policy that controls learner behaviour in schools. A code of conduct must be aimed at establishing a disciplined school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. This policy framework will be fully taken up in the literature review chapter of this thesis. In the meantime, it is important to note that various subsections of the code of conduct form

the basis for the formulation of particular school policies and classroom rules for dealing with learner disciplinary problems. The learners' code of conduct is designed with the purpose of creating a safe and secure learning environment in which a learner is not denied the right to be treated fairly and responsibly, to demonstrate an acceptable level of respect, to be taught in a safe and disciplined learning atmosphere, and to be treated with dignity and respect (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 3).

School policies and classroom rules are meant to provide the basis upon which various schools can regulate learners' behaviour. According to Molefe (2011: 25), "rules are not merely intended to promote order…they are not supposed to prohibit misbehaviour but rather to provide for a prohibition of specific negative occurrences". In the literature review chapter, these codes, school policies and rules will be fully discussed. That said, it appears that it is on the basis of a particular school's policies and rules on learner conduct (Panorama Primary School, 2018: Part 1; Nigrini, 2016: 32; Gauteng Department of Education, 2011) that individual teachers attempt one or a combination of disciplining strategies in dealing with learner misconduct. Thus, understanding the effectiveness of verbal discipline as one of the disciplining strategies in dealing with classroom misconduct in FP classroom was the focus of this study.

1.2.3 Verbal Discipline

Verbal discipline involves using talk to direct a learner or learners to conform to an established classroom order. Verbal discipline is referred to by various names including verbal warnings (DoE, 2000: 25; DBE, 2012: 35; Ntuli & Machaisa, 2014: 1788); or verbal reprimands (Saunderson & Oswald, 2009: 158; Maphosa, 2011: 80; Ntshangase & Naidu, 2013: 657). Other studies refer to it as verbal appreciation (Sadruddin, 2012: 36; Asare et al., 2015: 10). There are various types of verbal discipline. For instance, Wang and Kenny (2014: 909) found that teachers use shouting, swearing, screaming, while Govender (2014: 35) found that yelling forms part of verbal discipline. All the above forms of verbal disciplining seem negative, although Santos et al. (2017: 4) has categorised verbal disciplining in terms of nonviolent, moderate and harsh verbal discipline; and each of these forms have a unique impact on the learner experiencing it. In the literature review section of this thesis, these forms as well as their impacts in dealing with classroom misconduct will be fully discussed. The focus, however, will be on the positive and effective use of verbal discipline.

1.2.3.1 Consequences of verbal discipline

Few studies have explored teachers' recourse to verbal disciplining in dealing with classroom misconduct. According to Govender (2014: 35) teachers often resort to verbal discipline in order to "get a message across". Nkosana, Rembe and Shumba (2014: 1581) reported that teachers use verbal warnings as an alternative to corporal punishment to correct learners for minor offences. Teachers' verbal discipline practices appear to be reported in studies with a broad concept of disciplinary strategies. Yet, no study appears to exist on how teachers use verbal discipline and what they achieve through it. However, what is known from various studies mentioned above is that verbal discipline is among the alternatives to corporal punishment that teachers prefer and depend on in handling classroom misconduct. Notwithstanding, various studies presented in this preliminary review suggest that verbal disciplining can have positive or negative implications on the behaviour of a learner. In discussing the consequences of the application of verbal discipline by teachers in dealing with classroom misconduct, I will attempt to highlight both the effective and ineffective aspects of verbal discipline.

1.2.3.2 Effectiveness of verbal discipline

The manner in which teachers use verbal discipline while in the classroom will have implications on how learners behave. Studies (Kelly & Pohl, 2018; Manzoor, Ahmed & Gill, 2015) have shown that teachers' praise talks with an offending learner can be more rewarding than yelling when dealing with classroom misconduct. Kelly and Pohl (2018: 24) have found praise to be more rewarding than punishment, which takes away teaching time. Again, Manzoor et al. (2015: 38) observed that using motivational expressions like 'well done', 'keep it up', 'excellent', 'you have done well', helped the teachers in their study to change the learners' behaviour towards learning. Learners appear to be encouraged to be well-behaved when teachers acknowledge their good conduct. Mumthas et al. (2014: 304) found warning, giving advice, and counselling to be yielding the desired outcomes from the misbehaving learners. A study by Ntuli (2012: 112) also found mentoring to be a very effective method of reducing learner misbehaviour at school. Mentoring in this context refers to the teacher-learner conversational relationship that is aimed at communicating the desired and expected behaviour to the learner. Moreover, a previous study by Saunderson and Oswald (2009: 158) indicated that teachers' conversations with individual learners often helped, to some extent, to compensate for their need for love and acceptance. It would

therefore appear that there are aspects of verbal disciplining as a strategy that work favourably in the handling of classroom misconduct. This will be discussed in greater detail in the literature review chapter.

1.2.3.3 Ineffectiveness of verbal discipline

Although no study has specifically singled out verbal discipline for empirical study in South Africa, a number of studies (Maphosa, 2011: 83; Ntshangase & Naidu, 2013: 657; Ntuli & Machaisa, 2014: 1788; Moyo et al., 2014: 11) have highlighted verbal discipline as one of the alternatives to corporal punishment. Within those studies, it has been reported that aspects of verbal disciplining such as yelling, screaming, and shouting can have negative consequences on the receiving learners. In India, Mumthas et al. (2014: 304-306) found that learners considered verbal reprimand and callous words in the name of verbal discipline as highly undesirable disciplinary practices by teachers because such practices caused them pain, shame, sadness, and hate for the teacher's subject. A study in Greece by Bekiari and Tsiana (2016: 162) observed a negative relationship between teachers' verbal aggressiveness and learners' task-orientation. This apparently explains why teachers' verbal aggressiveness was a major demotivating factor for the learners who took part in the study (Bekiari & Tsiana, 2016: 164).

Another study in Sudan (Elbla, 2012: 1661) noted that learners who experienced harsh verbal discipline from their teachers, presented issues with concentration during lessons, feelings of anger and isolation, and learners often disliked the subjects such teachers taught. In their study on disciplinary practices in schools and principles of alternatives to corporal punishment, Moyo et al. (2014: 11) indicated that teachers have also mistaken verbal warning with shouting (verbal abuse) and they noted that shouting can trigger anger and fear in learners. Therefore, Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 117) have claimed that one challenge that teachers face is the temptation to use abusive language at learners which, in most cases, worsens their behaviours instead of correcting or reducing them. Govender (2014: 69) reported that learners who experienced being yelled at presented feelings of humiliation and isolation, which affected their participation in class activities. In the absence of studies that specifically explore verbal disciplining in schools, this study becomes imperative to examine the

effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in primary schools.

1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This study was a continuation of my research interest on alternatives to corporal punishment with specific reference to verbal discipline. Primarily, I was concerned with establishing how teachers use verbal discipline and its effectiveness in handling classroom misconduct in FP classroom. The lack of classroom discipline has been a major problem the world over and this can have an enormous impact on teaching and learning. There have been various claims (Ngidi, 2007: 136; Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 177; Ntshangase & Naidu, 2013: 657; Asare et al., 2015: 6; Santos et al., 2017: 4; Okeke, 2020: 372) that verbal disciplining has become a commonly used disciplinary strategy by teachers within different educational contexts. Despite this claim, research on how teachers use verbal discipline as an effective alternative to corporal punishment seems limited.

Solving the problem of persistent classroom misconduct in schools is essential for teachers to achieve the set learning objectives. Since verbal discipline is one of the most common disciplining strategies used by teachers, I was motivated to engage in this study in order to establish: i) the meaning teachers make of verbal discipline; ii) how teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct; iii) what teachers say to learners as verbal discipline; iv) what verbal disciplining enables the teachers to achieve with regard to learner classroom misconduct; v) the strategies that will facilitate the use of verbal disciplinary strategy for more positive outcomes; and, vi) I was equally motivated to embark on this study in order to obtain empirical data that would facilitate the construction of guidelines that would influence policy on the use of verbal discipline in handling classroom misconduct.

Research addressing the above pertinent concerns is lacking, particularly in South Africa, therefore, the prospect of contributing to the knowledge on how teachers can best utilise verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct in the FP, provided the motivation for this study.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Given that limited research reports appear to exist at the moment on alternatives to corporal punishment in South Africa that have clearly captured verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct, this study is significant in many ways. I believe that empirical evidence emerging from this study will improve how teachers use verbal discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment. Serame et al. (2013: 2) have argued that in order for teachers to "establish and maintain a disciplined and purposeful environment for effective education and learning in schools, teachers need to apply effective disciplinary methods". However, only well-coordinated empirical research, such as this study, may lead experts in the field of school discipline to establish effective methods of administering humane disciplinary approaches. The study intended to obtain relevant empirical data to impact verbal discipline practices for an effective classroom environment.

Lekganyane (2011: 1) has noted that "learner misconduct in South African schools is a major concern". As a result, the findings of this study will be beneficial to classroom teachers, policy makers and other stakeholders with an interest in the practice of alternatives to corporal punishment. The study will disclose misconduct teachers encounter in the classroom, forms of verbal discipline they use to handle them, how they use it, and the effectiveness in dealing with such classroom misconduct.

In addition, findings from this study will inform the Department of Basic Education, in particular, of the state of alternatives to corporal punishment, with particular reference to verbal discipline. Such empirical information may form the basis for further research, policy formulation and guidelines on verbal disciplining in schools in South Africa. Finally, the entire school system will benefit from the findings of this study given that verbal discipline is the first disciplining measure teachers resort to when dealing with classroom misconduct. By conducting research on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in FP, the present study aimed to obtain empirical data that could aid policies and training of initial teachers, as well as inform the development of courses for further professional development of teachers in handling classroom misconduct. Thus, it is thought that initial teacher training and continuing teacher professional development in the area of classroom discipline would be enhanced by the nature of the empirical data and the narrative interpretation

emerging from the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in FP.

1.6 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite reported claims by various studies (Maphosa, 2011: 80; Ntshangase & Naidu, 2013: 657; Ntuli & Machaisa, 2014: 1788; Serame et al., 2013: 5; Moyo et al., 2014: 11; Okeke, 2018: 132) about verbal discipline or verbal warnings in South African schools, existing literature fails to provide a clear and complete understanding of the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct. There is no evidence in literature about the association between the use of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in controlling classroom misconduct. However, studies (Maphosa, 2011: 79; He, 2013: 36; Bilatyi, Rembe & Shumba, 2014: 1581) have shown that the use of verbal discipline is on the rise among teachers the world over, including those in South Africa. Notwithstanding, there seems to be a dearth of knowledge on how effective verbal discipline is in dealing with issues of classroom misconduct in the FP. This situation therefore necessitated that the study of the effectiveness of verbal discipline in handling classroom misconduct be carried out. A study of this kind would assist in establishing what teachers say to learners as verbal discipline and the effectiveness thereof in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. In the light of the study, there is a need to examine teachers' verbal discipline practices or strategies to develop guidelines for effective verbal discipline in schools.

1.6.1 Research questions

The main research question that guided the present study was: How effective is verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP?

To answer the main research question, the study addressed the following sub-research questions:

- How do teachers understand verbal discipline?
- How do teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct?
- What additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct?

- What policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools?

1.6.2 Purpose of the study

The present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP in order to develop a guide to enhance the effective use of verbal discipline in schools.

The specific aims were to:

- Explore how teachers understand verbal discipline.
- Understand how teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct.
- Establish additional strategies that can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct; and,
- Establish the policy guidelines that can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM (SI)

This study followed the theoretical perspective of Symbolic Interactionism (SI). What this theory entailed, its basic principles, its relevance to the study of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct are presented below.

1.7.1 Meaning of symbolic interactionism

This study adopted the symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective of Herbert George Blumer (Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical viewpoint that emphasises the importance of meanings that are embedded in the verbal but also non-verbal conversations between individuals within a social setting (Sipes, 2014: 29). According to Carter and Fuller (2016: 931), symbolic interactionism addresses the way society is created and maintained through face-to-face, repeated, and meaningful interactions among individuals. Symbolic interactionism simply means the process of interaction in the formation of meanings by participating individuals. Individuals attach meanings to words as they receive them and respond to words according to the

meanings, they themselves are able to draw from such words (Sipes, 2014: 32; Carter & Fuller, 2016: 932). This meaning-making process is important to the understanding of how teachers use verbal discipline, and how learners respond or react to it. It would seem that individual learners appear to respond to verbal discipline based on the interpretations they are able to make from such verbal discipline. This is because, as Sipes (2014: 30) has noted, “an individual’s perspective is derived from the meanings they create through interaction”. It is the individual perspective that will determine the nature of his or her response to the issue discussed.

1.7.2 Basic principles and assumptions of SI

The main objective of symbolic interactionism is the understanding of the meanings that individuals attach to their actions as well as to the language in use. Symbolic interactionism maintains that, for an action to proceed, there has to be the presence of actors, orientations, situations as well as both normative and evaluative standards (Sipes, 2014: 30-31; Alver & Caglar, 2015: 479-480). In every human action there is an actor who is considered a normal and functional human being. The individual is expected, as a free agent, to think and act in accordance with such thinking. Central to symbolic interactionist thought is the idea that individuals use language and significant symbols in their communication with others (Carter & Fuller, 2016: 932).

According to Alver and Caglar (2015: 479), symbolic interactionism rests its assumptions on three grounds: 1) Individuals attribute personal meanings to actions and subsequently act towards such actions in a social environment on the basis of the derived meanings. 2) Meaning develops from the way other people act towards the person in relation to the phenomena. Sipes (2014: 32) has noted that “meanings are created from every interaction and in turn people’s understandings of their interactions become their reality”. 3) Meaning is negotiated, maintained, and adopted in a process of interaction. It would thus seem that it is not enough for the teacher to presume that learners understand verbal disciplining intentions.

Furthermore, symbolic interactionism can be summarised through three premises: 1) Human beings act toward a phenomenon based on the meanings that the phenomenon has for them. (2) The meaning of the phenomenon is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others. (3) Meanings are handled

in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by a person in dealing with the phenomenon he or she encounters (Blumer, 1969). Blumer further claimed that social life requires an understanding of the processes, individuals use to interpret situations and experiences, and how they construct their actions among other individuals in society. For any particular action to be meaningful, the actors must be in tune with the intentions of each other. If the learner is in doubt about the intentions of the verbal disciplining in the classroom, the outcome may be negative instead of the intended positive results.

1.7.3 Relevance of SI to the present study

Fundamental to the present research is the fact that in every interaction with each other or between the teacher and the learner, everyone is engaged in a meaning-making process. Symbolic interactionism derives its strength from the power of interaction. Thus, the relevance of SI theory to the current study draws from what Stewart and O'Neill (1999: 77) referred to as SI's appreciative and designatory capacities. The appreciative capacity of symbolic interactionism enables the researcher to explore the research participants' personal viewpoints. On the other hand, Stewart, and O'Neill (1999) have argued that the designatory capacity of SI places great value on the interactional language of the participant in a social setting. Verbal discipline as a disciplining strategy entails vocal interactions between the teacher and the learner/s.

From the point of view of SI, only the meaning the learners attach to the teachers' verbal disciplining would determine their actions. If a particular learner perceives verbal discipline as helpful, he or she would respond accordingly. Conversely, if a particular learner perceives verbal discipline as hurtful or abusive, the meaning making process warrants that such a learner may want to respond in an inappropriate manner, which may resultantly worsen the case it intends to correct. Based on the above, the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism was deemed appropriate in studying the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study only focused on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. Only FP teachers participated in the study.

Geographically, this study was conducted in selected primary schools located within Motheo District in the Free State Province of South Africa.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Key concepts are defined for the purpose of clarity. The definition of key terms enables the researcher to clearly provide operational definition of terms. The following key terms are hereby defined:

1.9.1 Classroom discipline

According to Asare et al. (2015:1), classroom discipline involves the readiness or ability to respect the rules and regulations governing a given organisation such as the school. In schools, discipline is generally regarded as a measure by means of which order is maintained to control behaviour when learners reveal non-conformist behaviour (Venter & Van Niekerk, 2011: 245). This definition of classroom discipline is adequate for the context of this study.

1.9.2 Classroom misconduct

According to Sun (2015: 94) classroom misconduct refers to any “unruly behaviour, which upsets classroom order and hampers teaching and learning” so that it will be difficult for the objectives of teaching and learning to be achieved. Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 112) have noted that “any behaviour contrary to discipline which prevents both teachers and learners from feeling safe, secure, respected and learning effectively is contrary to the learning contract between the school and the learner”. These two explanations capture my clarification of classroom misconduct.

1.9.3 Verbal discipline

Verbal discipline or reprimands are verbal rebukes a teacher makes to learners for minor acts of misconduct (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 177). Verbal discipline or verbal warnings or reprimands are one of the examples of disciplinary actions for misconduct inside the classroom carried out by teachers (DoE, 2000: 25; DBE, 2012: 35). In a broad sense, verbal discipline is defined as all forms of verbal expressions that mainly serve corrective purposes, which the teacher employs when disciplining learners who have misbehaved. It can, however, be positively or negatively employed.

1.9.4 Foundation Phase

In the South African education system, the FP is the first stage of formal schooling after preschool or nursery. FP education level ranges from Grade R to 3 (DBE, 2011: 15). Learners in this phase of education fall within the age bracket of five to nine years (DBE, 2011: 5).

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section provides an explanation of the various methodological steps followed in order to achieve the objectives of this study. These methodological steps include the research paradigm, research approach, research design, data collection, data trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

1.10.1 Interpretive paradigm

According to Bakkabulindi (2015: 19), a paradigm simply means “a sort of camp, to which a researcher belongs in terms of assumptions, propositions, thinking and the approach to research”. In line with the objectives of this study, and the principles of symbolic interactionism, the interpretive paradigm was thought to be the most appropriate for the study. The interpretive paradigm provided the platform where the participants and their subjective meanings were seen as the primary source of data. Bakkabulindi (2015: 26) further noted that an interpretive research paradigm is ontologically subjective. The interpretive paradigm seeks an understanding of the empirical social worlds in which humans continuously interact. Researchers who operate from the interpretivist perspective seek to understand people through accessing the meanings that participants attach to social worlds (Tshabangu, 2015: 40). In other words, the researcher who follows the tenets of an interpretive paradigm engages in a deeper immersion of the self within the natural setting in which participants dwell.

1.10.2 Qualitative research approach

Given the choice of SI as the theoretical framework and the research paradigm, this study adopted the qualitative research approach. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 31), a qualitative research approach emphasises “the gathering of data on naturally occurring phenomena…in the form of words rather than numbers…the researcher must search and explore with a variety of methods until a

deep understanding is achieved". Creswell (2014: 17) has noted that in qualitative research, the researcher collects data in order to learn more about a particular phenomenon and, in this case, on verbal discipline and its effectiveness. The study of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct warranted that this research approach be followed. This ensured that I stayed true to the course of achieving a clear and deeper understanding of the dynamics of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in schools in South Africa. The research met the participants in their context to obtain first-hand information about verbal discipline in relation to teaching and learning. The approach further ensured that only the participants' own perspectives were considered in the final analysis of the obtained data.

1.10.3 Phenomenological research design

Given the qualitative research approach described above, the choice of the phenomenological research design became imperative. A phenomenological study examines social or lived experiences through the descriptions provided by the people involved (van Wyk & Taole, 2015: 175). This design provided me with the opportunity to obtain empirical information on how teachers use verbal discipline and what they achieve through it in the context of classroom misconduct. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 372), the purpose of a phenomenological study is to describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding a particular event in order to understand the participants' meanings ascribed to that event. Thus, by following this design, I was able to describe participating FP teachers' use of verbal discipline and equally described what they achieve by using this disciplining strategy.

Thus, I believed that the phenomenological design was appropriate for use in this research as it provided the framework to study and describe the lived experiences of primary school teachers. The design enabled me to understand and describe the teachers' struggles in adopting verbal discipline while dealing with learner misconduct. The goal of a phenomenological research design is to enable the researcher to "gain insight into (the teachers') experiences and come into greater contact with the world" (Leach, 2015: 36) in which the teachers live in real terms. The phenomenological research design was relevant in this study because I wanted to understand and describe the primary school teachers' verbal disciplining. Most importantly, Creswell (2007: 58-59) has noted that phenomenologists not only explore individuals' lived

experiences; they also “focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon”. By adopting the phenomenological research design in the present study, I was able to describe verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct from the participating teachers’ perspectives.

1.11 DATA COLLECTION

1.11.1 Research participants and site

The target participants for this study were FP teachers who teach in schools located in Motheo District in the Free State province. The rationale for the choice of the target population and site was based on the empirically proven evidence that classroom misconduct is on the increase in schools since the abolition of corporal punishment (Masitsa, 2008: 236; Serame et al., 2013: 5). I was also interested in establishing how teachers who taught before and after the ban on corporal punishment experience classroom misconduct, use verbal discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment. I also reside and work in the chosen site and therefore was familiar with primary schools in the area. Research by Masitsa (2008: 236) has indicated that “numerous primary and secondary schools are experiencing increasing incidents of ill-discipline”. Another study conducted by Serame et al. (2013: 5) has revealed that discipline is far from sound in secondary schools. Although classroom misconduct is a general problem in most South African primary and secondary schools, personal experience as a teacher has also shown that teachers have experienced high level of classroom misconduct since corporal punishment was abolished in schools.

1.11.2 Sampling and sample size

The purposive sampling technique was used to select both the schools and the teachers that took part in this study. Purposive sampling is a subjective sampling method in which a certain number of participants is selected for the study, simply based on the researcher’s own judgement (Lumadi, 2015: 230). This type of sampling is classified as non-probability sampling on the basis that not all components of the population will be represented in the emerging sample size (Lumadi, 2015: 235). The participating schools were selected from primary schools located in Bloemfontein under Motheo District in the Free State province. The participating teachers were a

combination of teachers teaching before and after the abolishment of corporal punishment. It was assumed that such teachers had experienced classroom misconduct and were in possession of valuable information that I required to achieve the objectives of this study.

Ten FP teachers teaching in grades 1 – 3 were selected from two primary schools for this study. Five teachers were selected from one urban and another five from one rural primary school. The rationale for selecting two primary schools was to provide an opportunity for rich and varied information to be obtained from the participants. By selecting two schools, I also wanted to ensure that the ten teachers were not selected from one school that shared the same socio-economic status. This facilitated data triangulation that would ensure the credibility of the emerging findings on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. It must be noted, as suggested by Bakkabulindi (2015: 27), that "interpretive researchers…usually deal with small samples that are often not representative of their parent populations, but which they study holistically, that is, from all angles, to bring out the many realities".

1.11.3 Data collection techniques

I personally collected data from the participants by means of interviews and school discipline policy-related documents. Interviews were scheduled to last between 30 and 60 minutes. Through semi-structured interviews with a simple interview guide carefully developed to achieve the objectives of the study, data were collected. By carefully developing an interview guide, I ensured that all participants received the same open-ended questions. All interviews were tape-recorded to ensure that nothing was missed or confused about each participant's responses during transcription for proper analysis. The participants were interviewed in their schools. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 346), qualitative researchers believe that behaviour is best understood in its natural setting as it occurs without external constraints or control. I negotiated with the schools' principals and the participating teachers to ensure that an appropriate venue within the schools' premises was made available for the purpose of the interviews. The choice of the interview space or venue was left with the participating teachers. I also collected the schools' discipline policy-related documents for review to

complement data from the interviews as more than one data source was needed for triangulation purposes in a study of this nature.

1.11.4 Research instruments

Following a phenomenological perspective, I used semi-structured interviews to obtain data from the participants. Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail (Gill, Steward, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008: 291). In a typical semi-structured interview, according to Edward and Holland (2013: 29), a list of questions or series of topics to be covered, is necessary. This is in the form of an interview guide with probes, but there has to be flexibility on how and when the questions are put forward and how the interviewees can respond. The major aim of a semi-structured interview is to obtain an informant's subjective response to a known situation from his or her lived world (Datko, 2015: 143). Adopting semi-structured interviews in this study allowed the participating teachers the freedom to express views on various issues covered during the interviews. I structured the interview guides/questions according to the specific objectives of the study. I also collected the Codes of Conduct for learners from the principals of selected schools and downloaded the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment for Schools from the internet for document review/analysis to have background information about school discipline policies in the schools and state to support or complement the interview data.

1.11.5 Data analysis and presentation

Qualitative data analysis is an inductive process (content analysis) of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 395). To achieve this, data obtained from the individual interviews were analysed following Creswell and Creswell's (2018: 193 – 195) five steps which involved organising and preparing the data for analysis, reading or looking at all the data, coding all the data, generating description and themes, and representing the description and themes. These five steps will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. Thus, by following the above steps, I hoped to produce the data for presenting and reporting the participants' experiences and views on the effectiveness of verbal disciplining in handling classroom misconduct in the FP in narrative format.

I also analysed the school discipline policy documents to establish the state of verbal discipline in schools to support the interviews. On completion, the findings will be disseminated to the participants, DoE and the public through conferences and article publications.

1.12 DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS

To ensure that the report emerging from this study is trustworthy, I paid due diligence to the following elements of qualitative data trustworthiness, namely, credibility in terms of the confidence of the study, which involved being in the research site for a reasonable length of time during the period. I conducted semi-structured interviews, engaged in member checking; peer debriefing; and researcher reflexivity (Anney, 2014: 276). Trustworthiness also requires the researcher to be mindful of the issue of data transferability, with the consciousness that qualitative research does not adhere to the issues of generalisation. Notwithstanding, I have endeavoured to present the study in an accurate manner that would enable "other researchers to interpret for similar settings" (Billups, 2014: 10). Dependability, which entails reliability (Gunawan, 2015: 4), allows me to subject the report resulting from this study to external assessment, scrutiny or an audit trial to achieve stability and consistency of the entire process leading to the final report with minimal replication. I also ensured confirmability, which entails the extent to which the results of a research can be corroborated by other subsequent researchers (Anney, 2014: 279). To achieve this, I have clearly demonstrated all processes of data collection and interpretation in the report so that readers and assessors of the final report are not left with any doubts. I made use of a reflexive journal, verbatim quotes from participants and an audit trial to ensure that the requirements for confirmability were met in this study.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In keeping with the relevant rules and regulations guiding research involving human beings, all appropriate bodies and procedures were consulted and observed. Thus, I applied and obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa. I also sought permission from the Free State Department of Education where the study was located. I then sought permission from the principals of the two participating schools

and participant teachers signed consent forms. Full disclosure of the research and risk associated with the study were clearly explained to the participants before the interviews. Once the above ethical process had been concluded, I informed the participants about their individual rights to participate or not to participate in the study. The participants were assured that their identities and responses would be protected, and that all the principles of anonymity and confidentiality would be adhered to. Dakwa (2015: 306) has advised researchers obtaining data through interviews to "use pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants", which I adhered to during data collection and analysis.

In gaining consent, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 363), "most researchers give participants assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and describe the intended use of the data". While anonymity entails that the identity and responses of the participants will not be disclosed to the public by any means, confidentiality is the assurance made to participants in a study that information shared will not be disclosed in a manner that will identify the source of such information. I also made every effort to assure the participants that no physical or psychological harm would be experienced. Given the objectives of the study, I did not envisage any such harm as the study focused only on verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP.

1.14 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

The thesis is presented in the following order:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter presented the background of the study; preliminary literature reviews on classroom misconduct; classroom discipline and verbal discipline; rationale for the study; significance of the study; statement of the problem covering the research questions and purpose of the study; the theoretical framework; delimitation of the study; clarification of key concepts, research methodology; organisation of the chapters and the summary.

Chapter Two: Literature review on classroom misconduct in the Foundation Phase

This chapter reviewed related literature on classroom misconduct in the FP covering the meaning of classroom misconduct; forms and causes of classroom misconduct; influence of classroom misconduct on teaching and learning; strategies to deal with classroom misconduct and summary of the chapter.

Chapter Three: Literature review on verbal discipline in the classroom context

The chapter captured the related literature review on the concept of classroom discipline; the language of classroom discipline; the importance of classroom discipline; the meaning of verbal discipline; types of verbal discipline; effectiveness and ineffectiveness of verbal discipline; implications for the present study and summary of the chapter.

Chapter Four: Research methodology

This chapter presented the research methodology that informed this study covering the research paradigm; research approach; research design; data collection involving the research participants and site, sampling and sample size, research instruments and procedures and data analysis; data trustworthiness; ethical considerations and summary of the chapter.

Chapter Five: Data analysis, interpretation, and discussion.

This chapter captured the research or fieldwork journey; data analysis and interpretation; findings and discussion and the summary of the chapter.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and recommendations

This chapter concluded the thesis by providing summaries of the key findings from the literature, interviews, and document analysis; guidelines for effective verbal discipline; recommendation for further studies; limitations of the study and conclusion of the study.

1.15 SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to present a road map that demonstrates the effectiveness verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. The chapter has presented a descriptive background setting in order to accentuate the current lack of

empirical knowledge besetting verbal discipline within the context of alternatives to corporal punishment in schools. To achieve this, I demarcated the chapter into sections to enable proper attention to be given to specific sections. It is hoped that the findings from this study will offer a guideline on the effective verbal discipline that will assist teachers to deal with classroom misconduct in the FP.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW ON CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT IN THE FOUNDATION PHASE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been acknowledged by scholars worldwide that classroom misconduct remains a major challenge for primary school teachers. Research in England by Haydn (2014: 31-64); in Greece by Zachos, Delaveridou and Gkontzou (2016: 8-19); and Guyana (Fraser, Edwards & Williams, 2018: 144-153), as well as in South Africa by Nunan and Ntombela (2018: 1-15) has highlighted the implications of learner misconduct for teaching and learning in schools. Specifically, in South Africa (SA), scholars (Marais & Meier, 2010: 41-57; De Witt & Lessing, 2013: 35-45; Roberts & Venkat, 2016: 377) has noted that teachers appear to be facing difficulties in dealing with learner classroom misconduct within the policy framework of alternatives to corporal punishment. In Chapter One I highlighted that primary school teachers constantly mention their reliance on verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct because of the ban on corporal punishment. Yet, there is a lack of knowledge on what teachers achieve when they use verbal discipline. In keeping with my topic, I focused my research on how the use of verbal discipline has enabled teachers to deal with classroom misconduct in the FP.

This chapter highlights the views of researchers on classroom misconduct. I will clarify the concepts of classroom misconduct, FP and explore the various forms of classroom misconduct. I will take contextual factors into consideration because I am of the view that learners' behaviour that constitutes misconduct within one classroom may differ from what constitutes misconduct in another classroom. By contextually exploring the different ways misconduct may be perceived, it may help to create a better understanding of how teachers could approach the issue of classroom misconduct in their own contexts. I will investigate possible causes of classroom misconduct and how learner misconduct impacts teaching and learning. Improving learner classroom conduct is very important in creating an enabling classroom environment for effective teaching and learning. Therefore, I will further explore some preventative strategies for classroom misconduct. Finally, given that the study has been conceptualised in terms

of the SI theory, I will summarise my discussions in this chapter by highlighting the implications of the SI theory for research into classroom misconduct.

2.2 THE MEANING OF CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT

Classroom misconduct is the foremost discussed challenge facing teachers in South African FP classrooms (Lekganyane, 2011: 10). This challenge is, however, a prominent research agenda among scholars worldwide (Lopes & Oliveira, 2017: 231-232; Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014: 254-256; Busienei, 2012: 155-157). Yet, understanding classroom misconduct as a social concept may not be as straight forward and as simplistic as it sounds. Establishing an acceptable definition of classroom misconduct can be very complex at times in a real classroom or even in whole school contexts. For instance, what may be defined as classroom misbehaviour by one teacher may be overlooked by another teacher, but also completely misinterpreted by a particular learner. A teacher, for example may see a particular conduct as appropriate and an expression of the self, whilst another teacher may see the same conduct as disruptive or an act of misconduct.

From the SI theoretical perspective, as indicated in Chapter One, research will be helpful in establishing how a learner whose behaviour is characterised as misconduct, views his or her personal classroom actions. This suggestion would seem plausible, because I have previously experienced a real-life encounter between a FP teacher and a parent over a particular child's 'unruly' classroom behaviour in a school. The said parent did not consider the child's behaviour as misconduct. Instead, she thought that *"children will continue to be children"*, despite the school rules. Therefore, understanding how the FP learner and his or her teacher perceive classroom conduct is very important. Firstly, this is germane in establishing an effective approach in dealing with what otherwise may constitute misconduct within classroom contexts. Secondly, a study of British teachers by Nash, Schlosser, and Scan (2016: 170) has suggested that a psychological perspective to understanding learner misconduct appears to offer a more plausible approach in dealing with learner misconduct. Nash et al. (2016: 170) have argued that teachers should understand learners' behaviour as the conveyance of meaning, rather than as disobedience requiring some disciplining.

In fact, teachers should understand learner behaviour as protective and defensive of themselves as learners.

Nevertheless, there appears to be consensus among scholars worldwide on what learner misconduct refers to. In McCaskey's (2015: 18) study of elementary school teachers in Georgia, United States, teachers defined misconduct as learners' behaviour that veers from the expected norms and negatively affect others. In Turkish literature, learner misconduct refers to any kind of behaviour that violates explicit or implicit norms and rules of the classroom, thereby interfering with the normal process of teaching and learning (Dalgic & Bayhan, 2014: 102). However, going forward, Sun and Shek (2012: 3), in a Hong Kong context, have advised teachers to rather be more conscious about what they may classify as classroom misconduct. The above consists of general statements, but although some problematic behaviour may be defined in general as misconduct, other so-called problematic behaviour may not constitute deviation from set rules within a specific context; for instance, the Hong Kong classrooms mentioned that children must be children. Perhaps that is why the DBE (2012: 15) in South Africa has noted that, because learners act in a purposeful manner, it becomes imperative to see the world of classroom misconduct through the eyes of the learners themselves. Whereas the present study focused on the viewpoints of FP teachers in establishing the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct, it would benefit emerging knowledge on alternatives to corporal punishment if future research could explore learners' views on what constitutes misconduct in the classroom. This is important because I am of the view that should a teacher lack the understanding of how learners perceive their actions within the classroom, the efficiency of his/her choice of disciplinary strategy could be problematic.

However, to minimise misconceptions over what constitutes classroom misconduct, a legislatively backed definition of the social ill in classrooms and schools becomes imperative. To this end, the SA Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, Chapter 2, Section 8(2) sets out a code of conduct which is "aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process" (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Classroom misconduct for the DBE (2012: 39) in SA therefore entails improper behaviour that does not comply with

the rules and what is considered acceptable behaviour within the classroom or school in general. So, given the above examples, there appears to be a common understanding that classroom misconduct means unacceptable behaviours by learners that hamper teaching and learning in the school. In the next section, I will explore literature across different contexts to find out how misconduct differs across different classroom contexts.

2.2.1 Foundation Phase

The concept and context of the FP are central to my study, and they deserve some explanation. Thus, I will highlight the peculiarity of the phase as well as the learner within this phase. In the South African education system, the FP education level ranges from Grades R to 3 (DBE, 2011: 15). Learners in this phase of education fall within the age bracket of five to nine years (DBE, 2011: 5). The FP is the first stage of formal schooling in SA and the primacy of this phase is that it is during this developmental period that the basis on which learners grow in formal schooling is established. It is therefore likely that what happens during the phase will have fundamental implications on the learners in the long run. During my fieldwork, I sampled teachers who teach in this phase. Marais and Meier (2010: 45) have argued that the uniqueness of the developmental stage of the FP learner requires proper understanding in order to learn why a learner behaves in a particular manner. In subsection 2.4.2, the peculiar nature of the learner within the FP is discussed.

Generally, as noted in Chapter One, the FP context draws attention to the environmental conditions that help researchers and teachers alike to understand how learners and teachers may be influenced by the sociocultural dynamics within their classroom setting. Such dynamics resonate through the teacher's beliefs, goal orientation, behaviour, classroom organisation and management (Turner & Meyer, 2000: 70). Knowledge of the classroom context therefore becomes imperative for an effective disciplining strategy. In SA, a study by Wilmot and Irwin (2015: 138) have shown that FP classrooms are characterised by diversity because schools are seen to differ in terms of culture, ethnic groups, quality, financial resources, and size. The Department of Education in SA (2008: 67) recognises the harsh reality that schools have a range of contexts in which they operate. Wilmot and Irwin (2015: 139) have

argued that FP classrooms are challenged by numerous contextual issues ranging from a poor culture of learning evident in high absenteeism as well as being late for class and socio-economic disadvantage. Given these realities, it is possible that the contextual factors may be implicating the manner learners behave in the classroom. Understanding these contexts becomes imperative as teachers attempt to develop alternative disciplining strategies.

2.3 FORMS OF CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT

Many forms of classroom misconduct have been reported in literature by various researchers (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013; Haydn, 2014; Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway, 2014; Karuri, 2015; Chikwature, Oyedele & Ganyani, 2016) from different research contexts worldwide. I have organised my discussions on the forms of classroom misconduct in line with the classifications by Sullivan et al. (2014: 50) namely, disengaged learner behaviours, low-level disruptive as well as aggressive and anti-social behaviours. I am of the view that these classifications are important for teachers in determining their disciplining approaches and responses to incidences of classroom misconduct (see Sun & Shek, 2012: 3).

2.3.1 Disengaged learner behaviours

According to Balwant (2018: 390-7), disengaged behaviours can refer to various aspects of learner conduct that promote a consistent lack of physical, cognitive and emotional connections within the classroom context. Such category of learners may desire to not participate in classroom activities or may decide to intentionally behave in an unacceptable manner. Learner disengagement from learning is a very serious issue caused by a number of reasons and can be associated with a number of negative outcomes for both the learner, his/her family and the society at large (Lloyd-Jones, Bowen, Holtom, Griffin & Sims, 2010: 8-10; Oreopoulos & Salvanes; 2011: 159-184; Vaughn, Salas-Wright & Maynard, 2014: 265-70). A study by Lloyd-Jones et al. (2010: 8) has suggested that learner disengagement from learning and school results from an outright breakdown of the relationship between the learner and the school. This breakdown could result in incessant truancy or other associated learner behaviours. The missed lessons and disinterest in class activities will result in the learner not performing in class or experiencing class work as hard. Vaughn et al. (2014) have argued that disengaged learners will finally drop out of school with little or no useful

skills to help them to a make a meaningful contribution to their community. This happens because of lack of competence that is achieved with disciplined persistence in classroom and school activities. Such learners will lack the positive attitude necessary to a make a meaningful contribution in their context.

A study by Hancock and Zubrick (2015: 5) have shown that disengaged learners are often at risk of a variety of social and academic consequences. Such learners are known to present with behaviours that are disruptive to their own as well as others' learning within the classroom. Examples of disengaged behaviours include being late for class, avoiding doing schoolwork and disengaging from classroom activities (Sullivan et al., 2014: 43). Sullivan et al.'s (2014: 43-56) study of South Australian teachers characterised disengaged learner behaviour as classroom misconduct. Their study used the adapted version of the Discipline in Schools Questionnaire (DiSQ) to learn the views of 1750 Year 12 teachers about learner behaviour. The researchers of the mentioned study found that those teachers who participated in the study made use of disciplinary strategies that may not have addressed the underlying causes of the learners' misconduct (Sullivan et al., 2014: 53). This revelation is important, as I argue that teachers appear to struggle to deal with classroom misconduct because of the implementation of ineffective strategies. It may suggest that such teachers lack knowledge of the underlying causes of the very misconduct they intend to discourage.

In South Africa, disengaged learner behaviours such as lateness/bunking classes, incomplete homework, and not responding to instructions have been categorised by the DBE (2012: 35) as a level one misconduct that teachers have to deal with on a daily basis. The study of FP teachers in the Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality in South Africa by Moyo et al. (2014: 5) reported that bunking classes is amongst the most common classroom misconduct that falls within the category of disengaged learner behaviour. Similarly, in the Ngaka Modiri Molema District in South Africa, teachers in Molefe's (2011: 91-92) study have revealed that learners not doing their schoolwork and absenteeism are among the most common misconduct they experience in their schools. Next, I will look at low-level disruptive behaviours.

2.3.2 Low-level disruptive behaviours

The term low-level behaviours entail behaviour that occurs within the classroom (Kreisberg, 2017), though not detrimental to the success of teaching and learning, yet such behaviour is not acceptable by any standard. Kreisberg (2017: 22) has referred to low-level disruptive behaviour as those disruptive acts that some learners exhibit in the classroom which are challenging for most teachers. Sullivan et al. (2014: 49) have identified forms of low-level disruptive behaviours as disrupting the flow of a lesson, talking out of turn, making distracting noises intentionally, interfering with property, moving around the room unnecessarily, using a mobile phone inappropriately, making impertinent remarks and ridiculing others in the classroom. These disruptive behaviours are also similar to the study by Chikwature et al. (2016: 38) which found that noisemaking, teasing of learners in the classroom and making remarks about learners were among the unproductive behaviours that FP teachers have to deal with daily in their classrooms. Similarly, Haydn (2014: 31-64) obtained a sample of teachers and learners across schools in England in order to establish the most common classroom misconduct that deterred learners from learning. The study revealed that learners fooling around in the classroom, throwing things at others, disrupting lessons and teasing other learners were some of the most common forms of learner misconduct in the classroom (Haydn, 2014: 42).

Kagoiya and Kagema (2018: 4) selected 91 teachers from 13 schools to study factors contributing to learner classroom indiscipline in schools in Nyeri Central sub-County, Kenya. The study identified the use of foul language, lying, noisemaking, destroying school property and being rude to teachers and other learners as aspects of classroom misbehaviour that are prevalent in schools in Kenya (Kagoiya & Kagema, 2018: 5-6). It is important to note that the study recommended that teachers require moral, spiritual, and social training to enable them to identify causes of classroom misconduct and to effectively deal with them (Kagoiya & Kagema, 2018: 7). Perhaps this was what Narvaez and Lapsley (2008: 156-172) meant when they argued for character education that aims to target the moral education of both the learners and the teachers in the classroom in order to create an enabling classroom environment in which learners are ready to learn, and teachers can perform their work with little or no stress. Again, it is worth noting that Sullivan et al.'s (2014) classification of low-level disruptive behaviours fall within what the DBE (2012: 35) in South Africa has identified as level

two misbehaviours including smoking, graffiti, dishonesty, abusive language, disrupting class work, and leaving school without permission. Similarly, an earlier study of 90 teachers in the FP by Marais and Meier (2010: 49) has revealed that class disruption and the use of bad language are common forms of misconduct in South African FP classrooms.

2.3.3 Aggressive and anti-social behaviours

Aggressive and anti-social behaviours are ways of acting or behaving that tend to lack empathy and consideration for others and their feelings. According to Obiunu (2014: 21), for behaviour to be categorised as aggressive and anti-social, such behaviour must be persistent to the point of either causing harm or discomfort to other persons or to their environment. Within the classroom context, aggressive and anti-social behaviours are very serious offences that teachers have to deal with. This behaviour manifests in various forms of misconduct such as spreading rumours, excluding peers, verbally abusing other learners and teachers, sexually harassing other learners, being physically aggressive towards other learners and teachers, and displaying erratic behaviours (Sullivan et al., 2014: 49). In South Africa, levels three to five misbehaviours in the guidelines for assessing and dealing with misconduct in school (DBE, 2012) fall within the aggressive and anti-social behaviour categorisation, for example:

> **Level 3:** Serious misbehaviour or violation of school codes
> **Examples of misbehaviour:** inflicting minor injury on others, being racist, sexist or discriminatory, vandalism, stealing or cheating, and possessing dangerous weapons.
>
> **Level 4:** Very serious misbehaviour or violation of school rules
> **Examples of misbehaviour:** threats using dangerous weapon/s, causing intentional limited injury to others, engaging in sexual activities, possessing, selling or using alcohol/drugs, and forging documents.
>
> **Level 5:** Criminal acts which violate school codes and breach the law
> **Examples of misbehaviour:** sexual harassment, abuse, rape or assault; robbery, stealing or burglary; and using a dangerous weapon and murder. (DBE, 2012: 35)

Various forms of classroom misconduct that fall within the aggressive and anti-social categorisation have been reported to be prevalent in South African FP classrooms. For instance, the study by Singh and Steyn (2013: 5) revealed that physical and verbal aggressions, as well as bullying, were the most common forms of aggression among

learners in the participating schools in KwaZulu-Natal. Similarly, Tugli (2015: 106) reported that learners who took part in their study confessed to carrying dangerous weapons like knives to school and were aware of the associated dangers. The study of FP teachers in Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality in South Africa indicated that vandalism, fighting, intimidation of teachers and drinking were amongst the most common classroom misconduct of aggressive and anti-social forms (Moyo et al., 2014: 8).

There are examples of studies conducted in other countries that can be classified as aggressive and anti-social behaviours. For instance, a descriptive survey study of 150 teachers sampled from 10 schools in the Harare Province in Zimbabwe by Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 112) reported that fighting, vandalism, bullying, taking drugs, sharing pornographic materials and improper sexual association were some of the common misconducts committed by learners. Similarly, in Kenya, learners' rebellion, fighting, stealing and bullying were the most pressing classroom misconducts facing schoolteachers (Karuri, 2015: 65), while in England, theft or stealing items were the most common form of learner misconduct in the classroom (Haydn, 2014: 42).

The discussions on the forms of classroom misconduct show that classroom misbehaviour does not differ much across contexts. But an important question to be asked now is why is it that some learners behave in ways characterised as misconduct? In other words, what do previous studies reveal as the causes of classroom misconduct? The next subsection will attempt to provide some explanations to this question.

2.4 CAUSES OF CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT

Schools worldwide experience classroom or learner misconduct, which are caused by numerous factors. I will endeavour to highlight some important factors, supported by various studies, responsible for classroom misconduct. Broadly, home-based factors, the individual learner, school-based factors, and community-based factors have been found to impact learner classroom misconduct (Marais & Meier, 2010: 45-47).

2.4.1 Home-based factors

By home-based factors, I refer to conditions that exist within the family which may impact the overall lived experiences of being a growing child (Marais & Meier, 2010: 47). These conditions may include one or a combination of the following: parent/child relationship and parenting style, parents' socioeconomic background, home environment of the child, lack of role model in the family, as well as family instability. I will briefly discuss each of these in order to establish how home-based factors impact classroom misconduct.

2.4.1.1 Parent-child relationship, parenting style and behaviour

I refer to the parent-child relationship as the nature and quality of the socialisation processes between parents and their children. I am of the view that a good parent-child relationship relates to the quality of attention, care, affection and interaction that exists between the parent and the child. Research has shown that the parent-child relationship exacts enormous influence on the behaviour of learners within the school context. Studies have noted that the parent-child relationship comprises different elements including parental attachment (Gray, 2011: 5-15), monitoring, communication (Rusby, Light, Crowley & Westling, 2018: 312), and involvement (Duan, Guan & Bu, 2018: 1-8). For instance, Totsika, Hastings, Vagenas and Emerson's (2014: 424) study in the United Kingdom on the effects of parenting practices on children's behaviour found that relationship quality emerged as the most important element of parenting in relation to children's behavioural problems. The study further noted that a parent-child relationship that was low in conflict was associated with less or no conduct problems, while those relationships that were very high in conflict encouraged more conduct problems for learners. In addition, a study by Greenberg, Seltzer, Baker, Smith, Warren, Brady and Hong (2012: 331-346) has drawn a link between a chaotic home environment and problematic behaviour in children. Greenberg et al. (2012: 8) identified both the positive (parental warmth and positive remarks), and the negative (criticism and over-involvement) dimensions of the family environment and concluded that a problematic home can negatively impact the behavioural development of the child.

Other studies have also linked learners' conduct with parenting style. Three basic styles of parenting, namely: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive have been

discussed by authors (Woolfolk, 2016: 108-9; Harrison, 2017: 378), who have argued that each of these parenting styles resonates through the behaviour of children. Authoritarian parents rely strictly on set rules as a way of controlling their children who must do what their parents say in order to avoid punishment. Within an authoritarian household, affection for children is not present even though parents may not be abusive. There is a total lack of warmth for children by authoritarian parents (Woolfolk, 2016: 109). On the other hand, within the authoritative parenting household, there are set limits to ways of behaving and strict enforcement of rules; however, parents are warm with their children and spend time with them listening to their concerns. Authoritative parents allow some level of democratic process where the views of children are taken into consideration in decision making. Authoritative parents put a demand on their children to behave maturely (Harrison, 2017: 378). With permissive parenting, children must be children. Permissive parents do not place much emphasis on rules and consequences (Woolfolk, 2016: 109; Harrison, 2017: 378). Children are permitted to behave as they please within the frame of permissive parenting so long as their actions do not interfere with what parents want from them. However, the danger with this approach is that children may not be aware of what not to interfere with. Woolfolk (2016: 109) identified a fourth parenting style referred to as rejecting/neglecting/uninvolved parents. This is an act of irresponsibility when a parent decides to reject or neglect his/her children. I do not think it is necessary to classify such an act of irresponsibility as a parenting style because, unlike the first three styles, it is possible that parents who decide to reject or neglect their child are acting consciously and willingly. More research may be necessary to deal with this aspect.

The effects of parenting style on the behaviour of learners have become a matter of concern among researchers. Sarwar (2016: 235-243) explored the effect of authoritarian, authoritative and permissive parenting models among selected Pakistani mothers. She found that an authoritarian parenting style actually poses negative impact upon the behaviour of their children (Sarwar, 2016: 238). This appears to mean that authoritarian parenting encourages unwanted behaviour in children. Thus, mothers in Sarwar's (2016: 240) study favoured authoritative and permissive parenting styles, because such approaches are more likely to define appropriate ways of behaving in the family and encourage the child to consider those rules as the guiding principles of good behaviour. In this way, the child will perceive rules as guides to good

conduct and may not feel prescriptively coerced or abused into behaving within the dictates of parents. Zachos et al.'s (2016: 12-14) study of primary school teachers in Thessaloniki District, Greece found that the child's home environment is a dominant factor in causing or preventing learner misconduct. A child who encounters abuse as a result of the parenting style at home may develop behaviour problems that may translate to misconduct when in the classroom. Overall, the argument pertains to the fact that learners who come from homes in which parental love and care are lacking and those who experience parental neglect in their homes tend to present difficult and challenging behaviours at school. Such learners are said to be a source of misconduct in the classroom (Marciniak, 2015: 57). Next, I will discuss parents' socioeconomic background as another home-based factor implicated as a cause of classroom misconduct.

2.4.1.2 Parents' socioeconomic background

Parents' socioeconomic background is an area of research that is emerging in South Africa as researchers try to obtain empirical information on the possible causes of poor behaviour among learners in schools. The socio-economic background of parents refers to the parent's individual or group demographic characteristics, social and economic position in relation to others within a given society. This is often measured in terms of parent's level of education, occupational status, income bracket, and social networks as well as general lifestyle (Juma, 2016: 8). A study by Li and Qiu (2018:15) has shown that parents of different socioeconomic status provide different behavioural support for their children's education due to constraints in their own ability and resources. Research has indicated a link between parents' socioeconomic background and learner classroom misconduct. For example, Nunan and Ntombela' s (2018: 6) research on causes of challenging behaviour among FP learners found that family socio-economic background was a major source of classroom misconduct. Similarly, Kubeka (2018: 100) found that divorce, separation, lack of attention from parents, a shortage of money, and parents' educational level were major factors that appeared to influence how learners behaved during lessons in the classrooms. A study by Hameed-ur-Rehman and Sadruddin (2012: 166) maintained that for moral development it is important to provide children with a healthy environment, because an unhealthy environment adversely affects development and behaviour.

2.4.1.3 Home environment of the child

Home environment refers to the totality of all the physical conditions as well as location of the home (as in urban, township or rural) and the human beings living within the environment (Odunga, 2015: 9). Home environment also refers to the social environment of the child. Bronfenbrenner (1994: 39) has offered a well-conceptualised understanding of the relationship between the environment and the child from the perspective of a developing child. Bronfenbrenner (1994: 39-42) argued that the developing child is not a passive individual within the environment; instead, he/she is actively involved in the processes within the environment that affect him/her or where he/she affects the environment. Therefore, home environment indicates the quality of the surroundings in which a person lives. Lyamba's (2013: 46) study on the causes of learners' classroom misconduct in Zambia found that a disorganised home environment and household chaos were major causes of misconduct among learners. Another study by Chikwature et al. (2016: 38) also indicated that lack of parental guidance was among the major causes of classroom misconduct among FP learners in the Mutare District of Zimbabwe. A similar study by Magwa and Ngara (2014: 84) concluded that permissive home environments, such as parents migrating to neighbouring countries or overseas, leaving their children under the guardianship of relatives or grandparents, or children taking care of themselves, contributed to learners' misconduct.

In South Africa, classroom misconduct in the FP continues to receive attention from researchers who have been making efforts to offer explanations as to what may be responsible for this social ill. For instance, Marais and Meier's (2010: 51) study of disruptive behaviour in the FP revealed that "misconduct can definitely be traced back to the quality of the home environment and lack of discipline at home being the main reasons for disrespect towards teachers". It is important to note that Marais and Meier's (2010) findings are similar to those of Lyamba (2013: 40), who revealed a link between home environment and learner misbehaviour. Given this scenario, teachers are, however, advised to be mindful to not think that all learner misconduct is home environment induced.

2.4.1.4 Lack of role model in the family

A role model is a person whose actions and ways of living are worthy of emulation by others, especially by children (Wiese & Freund, 2011: 218-219). When the term role model is invoked, it connotes an understanding that the person lives an exemplary life that is worthy of imitation. Role modelling is a very powerful behaviour development tool (Bradford, Hickson & Evaniew, 2014: 18) within the family. Bandura's (1977: 4-5) social learning theory emphasised the powerful influence of modelling and learning by direct observation when he suggested that most behaviours that individuals exhibit are learned either deliberately or unintentionally through the influence of examples from others in context. From the perspective of social learning within the family context, therefore, role modelling performs both conscious and unconscious socialisation whereby parents shape their children's ways of behaving. Social learning theory suggests that parents' behaviour tends to have a direct bearing on the way children behave. As a result, it is important for parents and other socialising agents (e.g. teachers) that bear influence on children and learners, to be mindful of what they do in the presence of children.

The influence of parents as role models has been a subject of attention from researchers. A study by Morgenroth, Ryan and Peters (2015: 1-19) has shown that parents can use role modelling as a motivational strategy in determining how they want their child to socialise as well as what they want their children to become. However, lack of a role model in the family can have a negative effect on the behaviour of children within the classroom context - such children may become involved in learner misconduct. Marais and Meier's (2010: 51) study of disruptive behaviour in the FP revealed for instance that "misconduct can definitely be traced back to the lack of role models in the family, lack of respect for parents, and lack of discipline at home…". Other studies on the negative effects of the lack of role models on the behaviour of the child include that of Freeks (2017: 105) who explored the challenge of father absence and fatherlessness in the South African context. The absence of father figures who should serve as models means that children are raised without the powerful influence from modelled positive behaviour from their fathers. This can result in poor conduct. Thus, when such children find themselves in the classroom as learners, misconduct for them becomes a norm. Linked to the lack of a role model is the issue of family instability, to which I now turn my attention.

2.4.1.5 Family instability

Family instability refers to the continual inconsistent changes that occur in a child's family structure (Fomby & Osborne, 2017: 1). Such inconsistent changes range from parental marital instability, parental separation, gender-based violence and parental loss of income (Fomby & Osborne, 2017: 1; Kubeka, 2018: 100); lack of leadership, guidance, control and poverty (Magwa & Ngara, 2014: 84). Parental marital instability connotes a breakdown of marital union either through separation, divorce or by abandonment. Research by Kubeka (2018: 100) found that family problems such as divorce and parental separation were also among the major factors that appeared to be influencing how learners behave in class, while Duke-Natrebo (2014: 4) concluded that learners can be influenced by this situation when they are witnesses to the situation.

The term gender-based violence is used to describe the nature of violence that occurs as a result of the normative role expectations that are linked to each gender. It also refers to the unequal power relationships that exist between the genders within the context of a specific society (South African Human Right Commission, 2018: 5). From the perspective of the social learning theory, Bandura (1977: 5) has suggested that children learn from what they observe within their immediate environment. Thus, children who are socialised to think that gender-based violence occurring in their family is normal and ideal, most times behave the same within the social setting as the classroom.

Poverty is also perceived as a major cause of misconduct in schools (Magwa & Ngara, 2014: 84). One immediate effect of parental income loss or poverty is the parents' inability to financially cater for their children's daily needs (Stevens & Schaller, 2011: 293-298) and when parents fail to meet these needs, according to Magwa and Ngara (2014: 84-85), such children/learners may engage in stealing and skipping classes to engage in informal jobs to meet their daily needs. Studies have traced the increasing incidences of classroom misconduct among learners to family instability. Jacobsz (2015: 34-36) found that family instability is a major cause of learner misconduct at schools in Botswana. Ugwuoke and Duruji (2015: 43) observed a significant relationship between inadequate parental supervision resulting from the incidence of broken homes and juvenile delinquency among school children. A study by Magwa

and Ngara (2014: 84) has maintained that disorganised families, where there is lack of leadership, guidance and control by parents leads to disruptive behaviour problems in the class.

Home-based factors can exert enormous influence on the learners' classroom conduct. It is therefore important to suggest that when seeking to manage classroom misconduct, teachers should endeavour to understand learners' home experiences. It may seem plausible in this case to suggest that the effectiveness of a disciplining strategy will partly depend on the teacher's background knowledge of who the learners are (Okeke, 2018: 1038) as well as what may be informing their behaviour.

2.4.2 The individual learner

In this section, I discuss factors that are inherent to the individual learner. This refers to factors that emanate from the individual learners that teachers must acknowledge and try to understand in order for them to be able to deal with misconduct that derives from such factors. Some of these individual-level factors that I have identified in literature (see Marais & Meier, 2010: 45-47) include: the developmental level of the FP learner, the learner's inexperience and ignorance, the learner's need for love and belonging and the learner's need for recognition or attention-seeking. Below, I present these factors in order to establish how they contribute to making some learners behave in a particular way when in the classroom.

2.4.2.1 The developmental level of the FP learner

Learners in FP education mainly fall within the age bracket of six to nine years, and research (Marais & Meier, 2010; Bruwer, 2014; Kingwill, 2016; Roberts & Venkat, 2016; Kriel & Livingston, 2019) has shown that disruptive behaviour occurs in most FP classrooms. It is therefore important to explain the dynamics of the developmental stage of the learner in the FP classroom to understand indiscipline. By so doing, FP teachers will be empowered to understand the characteristics of the FP learner and link it with unaccepted behaviour with a view to implementing more effective strategies. Kingwill (2016: 18) has argued that the FP learner behaves in a unique manner, and for teachers to understand this behavioural uniqueness, knowledge of the physical, cognitive, psychosocial and emotional development of the learner becomes imperative.

2.4.2.1.1 Physical development

According to psychologists Woolfolk (2016: 58-9) and Harrison (2017: 369-76), physical development represents an important aspect of child development, which encompasses both observable changes in the child's body as well as in his/her ability to control the muscles of the body. It is important to note that these changes do not occur for every child at the same rate. For instance, both Marais and Meier (2010: 45-46) and Kingwill (2016: 18-22) have noted that the most prominent physical development during this stage is the gross motor development - the use of large muscles, mainly of the legs and arms - as well as the fine motor development involving, for example, the precise use of muscles of the hands and fingers. This explanation is important bearing in mind the individual differences that may occur for different learners during this period (Kingwill, 2016: 19). Given the possibility of variations discussed above, it is possible that not all learners will simultaneously experience the age-appropriate development of the gross and the fine motor skills. Research has shown that children with deficits in fine and motor skills experience delays in many areas of development (Matheis & Estabillo, 2018: 476). Given this, a learner who is unable to perform a simple task in the same way as his/her peers in class as a result of deficits in fine and motor skills may become an object for insult by his/her peers, and this can be a source of misconduct by the affected learner. It is therefore necessary for teachers to have adequate knowledge of the physical development of the learners in their class because, by so doing, they will have a better understanding of the learners they are teaching.

2.4.2.1.2 Cognitive development

The theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget (1964: 176-186; 2005: 31-38) draws attention to the dynamic processes through which individuals grow and change from infancy to adulthood. These dynamic processes relate to all forms of human competences including memory, thinking and reasoning that enable effective problem solving, language abilities and the individuals' perceptive processes (see Harrison, 2017: 352-356; Munro, 2017: 292-295). The emphasis is to explain how these dynamic processes can help understand the child's cognitive development processes that impact the learner's cognition within the classroom context, which may explain the individual learner's behaviour. Piaget (1964: 176) used the concept of operation which refers to the "…core of knowledge or an interiorised action, which modifies the object

of knowledge" to explain his theory of cognitive development in the child. Piaget (1964: 177) identified four stages of his concept of operations, namely the sensorimotor (0-2 years), pre-operational (2-6 years), concrete operational (7-12 years), and formal operational (12 years to adulthood). From the standpoint of my research, the foundation phase learner falls within Piaget's concrete operational age. Piaget (1964: 177) referred to the third stage as concrete operational because the child operates mainly objects, and not verbally expressed hypotheses. Harrison (2017: 353) noted that learners during this stage are "able to conserve and reserve their thinking as well as classify objects in terms of their many characteristics…but only about concrete events". Now, the question is: What is the relevance of Piaget's concrete operational stage to the behaviour of the learner?

Within the classroom context, cognitive development theory centres around the belief that what goes on in the learner's mind directs his/her behaviour (Skosana, 2017: 204). It is important to note that Piaget's cognitive development theory implicitly emphasised the understanding of the learner's behaviour rather than providing guidance for the teacher (Woolfolk, 2016: 88). By devoting time to understand learners' motives for thinking and acting in a particular way, teachers will be better positioned to deal with learner actions that are contrary to the ground rules in the class. Since cognitive theory relates to how children think, Woolfolk (2016: 88) has suggested that the major task confronting the teacher in a disruptive class is how to determine if such learners lack the necessary thinking abilities to understand that their actions are disruptive or against the set ground rules? Again, it is important for the teacher to assess whether the contents of the ground rules or class code of conduct have been sufficiently explained to the learners and whether they are concrete in nature. Ojose (2008: 27) has noted that during the concrete operational stage, learners employ their senses in order to understand a particular object or task. But what if there are variations in the cognitive development of different learners as emphasised by Piaget (1964: 176-178), and noted by Shaffer and Kipp (2010: 202-203)? How would the teacher determine such sensory variations? Or better still, in the context of classroom misconduct, how would the teacher determine whether his/her learners have understood the set ground rules meant to guide their conduct in class? By implication, Piaget's theory of cognitive development emphasises the importance of listening and paying close attention to how children interact and carry out their own actions (Woolfolk, 2016: 88). This requires

teachers to be skilful but also patient in listening to any disruptive learner in their class. Hopefully, by listening to such learners, teachers will come to understand why they behave in the way they do.

2.4.2.1.3 Psychosocial development

Psychosocial development refers to the learner's individual development within the context of his/her sociocultural environment. According to Harrison (2017: 358), psychosocial development involves the individual's development of relationships, personality as well as a sense of gender. Erikson (1950: 222-247) identified eight stages of psychosocial development, namely, trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and ego integrity versus despair. It is important to note that each of these stages in the psychosocial developmental cycle of every individual learner represents either an emotional crisis or a turning point for such a learner. For example, if a particular stage is managed very well, the individual will emerge with a sense of adequacy; however, when the stage is poorly handled, the particular learner will emerge with a huge sense of inadequacy (Kingwill, 2016: 20). My focus, however, was on industry versus inferiority where FP learners belong. Industry versus inferiority is an important life-stage that occurs during the primary school years. Table 2.1 below presents Erikson's stages of psychosocial development and the accompanying developmental issues relevant to this study.

Table 2.1: Two of Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

Stages	Year	Development crisis	Successful dealing with crisis	Unsuccessful dealing with crisis
3	Preschool: Three to five years old	Initiative versus guilt: Preschool children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour as they develop self-concept.	If pre-schoolers succeed in controlling their reactions and behaviour, they feel capable and develop a sense of initiative.	If pre-schoolers fail in controlling their reactions and behaviour, they become irresponsible and anxious, and develop a sense of guilt.
4	**Primary school: Five to twelve years old**	**Industry versus inferiority: School-aged children must learn new skills in both the academic world and the**	**When children feel they have succeeded at learning these skills, they develop a sense of industry, making them feel**	**When children fail or feel they have failed in learning these skills, they feel inferior when compared to others.**

		social world. They compare themselves to others to measure their success or failure.	**competent and improving their self-esteem.**	

Source: Derived from Harrison (2017: 362-363)

The FP comprises Grades R to 3. The Education Laws Amendment Act (Republic of South Africa, 2002: 4), section 5, subsection 4(i & ii) stipulates that the admission age for a learner into a public school shall be 5 and 6 years for Grades R and 1 respectively by 30th June of the year of admission. From the above table, the fourth stage (5-12 years) of Erikson's (1950: 232-3) stages of psychosocial development is where the FP learners are located. So, the stage of industry versus inferiority happens between the age of 5 and 12 years. During this stage, Erikson has noted that learners develop the sense of industry as they become part of the productive situation. The eagerness to successfully complete a task soon takes over the impulses and aspirations of play while they begin to come to terms with the relationship between perseverance and the desire to get a task completed. The development crisis that occasions this stage is what Erikson (1950: 233) has referred to as industry versus inferiority, because learners are expected to learn new skills and measure success or failure by comparing themselves with others in the class. Erikson (1950: 233) noted that by comparing him/herself with each other, the child faces the danger or a crisis of inferiority; a feeling of inadequacy in his/her ability to compete with peers in the completion of a certain task. During the process of dealing with the crisis, children who succeed will develop a sense of industry and competency, while those who fail to deal with the crisis will develop a sense of inferiority (Harrison, 2017: 263).

Issawi and Dauphin (2017: 4) noted that the industry versus inferiority stage has consequential implications for children's behaviour. This stage basically consists of the acquisition of basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and opportunities for learning other skills such as habits, behaviour, and culture by observing and participating in activities (Jordaan & Rens, 2018: 51). If learners manage to acquire the basic skills and abilities, they will experience industry, and if they do not succeed, they experience inferiority. So, teachers should endeavour to guide the learners to achieve a healthy balance in order to reach ego strength of competency. Furthermore, studies

by McCreary (2014: 71) and Kingwill (2016: 23) have shown that learners who feel inferior as a result of their inability to grasp new skills and those who fail to get attention from their teachers will doubt their abilities, and may consequently develop conduct problems. Given the discussions here, teachers should be well-acquainted with the psychosocial development of the learner. In the next subsection, I will discuss the emotional development of the learner.

2.4.2.1.4 Emotional development

The emotional state of individual learners can have fundamental implications for their behaviour and actions. According to Morris (2017: 415), emotion refers to the feeling aspect of consciousness that is directed by three important elements. The first is the physical arousal, which is necessary in order to keep learners alert about their feelings or emotions. Secondly, there is an inner consciousness of feelings representing a heightened awareness of how one feels, which refers to self-consciousness (Cherry, 2019:1-3). Thirdly, both the physical arousal and self-consciousness will then direct the individual's behaviour, which reveals the feeling of the individual to the outside world. I am of the view that the understanding of what arouses and motivates learners to feel and act in a particular manner is very important if teachers want to be successful in dealing with the ill behaviour that may emanate from such an emotional display.

There are many things that can influence learners' outward display of emotional expressions, according to the Commonwealth of Australia (2012: 1). Firstly, individual beliefs about what are appropriate and inappropriate ways of expressing their feelings or emotional displays are basically learnt from both their parents and teachers. Secondly, there is also the influence emanating from how effectively learners' emotional needs are met by caregivers, parents and teachers. A third influence is learners' temperament, including their personal dispositions towards things, as well as towards people around them. Fourthly, learners' emotional expressions are equally influenced by what they observe or experience from significant people around their environments. Finally, learners' emotional expressions can be influenced by the extent to which their families and they themselves are able to recognise, control and communicate emotions under various kinds of stress, pressure and moods. Kingwill's (2016: 21) study has shown that learners in the foundation phase are able to interpret their teachers' facial emotional expressions. As a result, it becomes necessary for

teachers to be conscious of their emotional expressions, because some misbehaving learners may derive pleasure in seeing that they have negatively impacted the emotional state of their teacher. At the same time, it is important for teachers to understand how learners' emotional development may be impacting their behaviour, as the child's ability to control emotions requires adult support.

2.4.2.2 Learner inexperience and ignorance

Inexperience and ignorance are two concepts that featured equally in the study of Marais and Meier (2010: 45), indicating a situation where a child may unintentionally behave in an unacceptable manner, not because he/she wants to, but due to ignorance of classroom or school rules and regulations. Personal experience has shown that teachers sometimes have unrealistic expectations about the way a child should behave in the classroom. Perhaps, mainly due to lack of experience of the developmental level of the learner, discussed in the preceding sections, teachers may place certain behavioural expectations on learners that once such learners deviate from these expectations, they may be categorised as misbehaving. However, the philosopher John Dewey (Dewey, 1902) has broken down the dividing line between the learner and the teacher.

According to Dewey (1902: 1-4), there are two critical individuals in teaching and learning: the one he calls mature (the teacher) and the other he calls the immature (the learner). Dewey (1902: 1) has noted that the process of teaching and learning simply comprises the conscious interactions between the two. Education is thus a process of interaction between two individuals: the mature teacher and the immature learner. Dewey (1959: 2) further argued that the business of the educator - whether parent or teacher - is to see that ideas acquired by children serve as moving ideas or forces in the guidance of behaviour. I will then argue that within the context of appropriate classroom behaviour, the responsibility rests on the mature teacher to carefully guide the immature learner through the process that would enable him/her to learn what is considered appropriate behaviour for a conducive classroom climate. Marais and Meier (2010: 46) have suggested that the teacher's task in such circumstances is to teach learners that there is a set of behaviours and communication standards and speech patterns that will make them successful at school.

2.4.2.3 Learners' need for love and belonging

The concept of love and belonging refers to the act of receiving and giving love, affection, trust, and acceptance. It also relates to the benefit of affiliating oneself to a group, which may include family and school (Woolfolk, 2017: 475). The concept of love and belonging forms a part of Maslow's (1943: 370-396) hierarchy of needs within his broad theory of human motivation. According to Maslow (1943: 381), it would seem probable that once the individual's quest for physiological and safety needs have been met, then there will emerge the hunger for love, affection and belonging. Maslow emphasised that the individual will see reason to pursue this need with great intensity and noted that the failure by the individual to achieve this goal has been found to be a major source of maladjustment and even psychopathology or abnormal behaviour (Maslow, 1943: 381-382). Within the classroom conduct connotes how well a learner can regulate his/her interpersonal relationships and emotional reactions within the classroom environment (Busse & Yim, 2012: 1). The question now is: How can the teacher provide for the unmet needs for love and belonging of FP learners? The teacher, knowing that every child needs to be loved, accepted, respected and recognised in the classroom should see the child as a valued member of the classroom, whose contributions are recognised and appreciated in the class group.

2.4.2.4 Learners' need for recognition or attention-seeking behaviour

The term recognition or attention-seeking behaviour, according to Mellor (2005: 96), refers to various behaviours that learners persistently display over a long period of time by which they tend to draw the attention of others, including their teachers and fellow learners. By their very nature, attention-seeking behaviours are usually irritating to others and usually attract the attention of fellow learners and the teachers, which is very concerning for the teachers (Yuan & Che, 2012: 144). Attention-seeking behaviour can take various forms including swearing at others in class, making fun of other learners, non-compliant behaviour and talking out of turn (Peretti, Clark & Johnson, 1983: 185-9).

The desire to belong in a group and to be recognised as a person impacts learners' behaviour. For instance, both Chikwature et al. (2016: 35-45) and Marais and Meier (2010: 46) have suggested that the unmet need for recognition or attention-seeking behaviour, can lead some learners to misbehave in class. A recent study by Nunan

and Ntombela (2018: 5-6) found that attention-seeking behaviour and power struggles emerged as major causes of misconduct by learners. Also, the study by Yuan and Che (2012: 144) mentioned attention-seeking behaviour as a major cause of classroom misconduct among primary school learners and indicated that there are both positive and negative attention-seeking behaviours that learners bring to the class. Thus, it is the responsibility of the teacher to try to pick out what is positive about the learners' attention-seeking behaviour. Again, the teacher in this situation should be skilful and patient in order to understand the learner to help in dealing with misconduct.

2.4.3 School-based factors

Several school-based factors have been identified by scholars on classroom misconduct. Among them, Zachos et al. (2016: 13-14) in Greece found that teachers' psychological well-being and experience in handling learner misconduct, pedagogical training and experience, as well as learners' perception of school life can play a huge role in alleviating learner misconduct. These mentioned school-based factors will be discussed below in order to demonstrate their influence on learner classroom misconduct.

2.4.3.1 Teachers' psychological well-being and experience in handling learner misconduct

Teachers' psychological well-being refers to the combination of the physical, mental, emotional and social health, which determine the internal feelings of the teachers and their direct outward reactions to environmental situations (Gangadharan, 2017: 513). An important component of the teachers' well-being relates to the nature of their experiences of interpersonal relationships. Based on the above explanation, teachers who experience negative relationships with learners as a result of learner classroom misbehaviour are likely to struggle to control their emotions. Some teachers who lack the ability to manage their emotions when faced with difficult classroom situations or who lack adequate training and the necessary experience in dealing with learners with challenging behaviour will obviously struggle to deal with difficult classroom situations. That is why Zachos et al. (2016: 14) noted that the experience of the teacher is important in maintaining a classroom atmosphere conducive to effective teaching and learning. It is therefore necessary for teachers to engage in self-introspection in order

to not let any lack of experience or inability to control their emotions (Okeke, 2018: 1037) compound the classroom situations they are expected to manage.

2.4.3.2 Pedagogical training and experience

Pedagogy refers to the method and practice of teaching and learning (Department of Education, Australia, 2009: 42). Pedagogical training thus relates to training in the methods and practice of teaching that equips teachers with the necessary skills that enable them to successfully handle various aspects of the instructional processes (Teygong, Moses & Daniel, 2017: 565). Teachers' pedagogical training and experience can impact the manner in which learners behave in a classroom. A study by Bosah, Ejesi and Aleke (2016: 89) found that the use of poor teaching methods, lack of experience, boredom in the classroom and inappropriate use of punishment and reward are major causes of classroom misconduct. The Polish study by Marciniak (2015: 59) has highlighted the need for teachers to be mindful of their classroom practices as well as with the learning activities they present to learners if they want to maintain control of learning and class teaching. He further noted that when teachers present their lesson unprepared or give boring lessons in school, learners are not engaged with a relevant class task or topic, they are more likely to engage in disruptive behaviour (Marciniak, 2015: 59). Lyamba's (2013: 46) study found that poor classroom management skills were a major cause of misconduct among learners. Thus, when classroom misconduct by learners emanates from the teacher's pedagogical processes, questions will be raised about the teacher's training and experiences, including his/her level of preparedness in dealing with classroom misconduct.

2.4.3.3 Learners' perception of school life

Another school-based factor that can cause learner classroom misconduct relates to the learners' perceptions of school life. The concept of school life, according to Payne (2018: 7), refers to the totality of the nature of the school climate, which is defined by the extent to which learners perceive their relationship with the school community as safe, supportive, caring, respectful and trusting. Research by Chikwature et al. (2016: 39) has shown that learners who perceive the classroom and school environment as friendly are more likely to respond to the environment in the same manner. On the other hand, learners who perceive the school environment as abusive are more likely to respond in a negative manner to the structures of the school. Given this finding, I

argue that from a symbolic interactionism (SI) perspective, as indicated in section 1.7.3, the effectiveness of a strategy in handling classroom misconduct does not solely rest on the strength of the strategy itself; it also resides with the individual teacher's ability to understand how individual learners perceive their schooling.

Moreover, in South Africa, Nunan and Ntombela (2018: 8-9) outlined some negative school factors as perceived by learners, including the use of corporal punishment, teachers' use of abusive and offensive language, as well as the perceived lack of love from teachers as major causes of misconduct. The participants in the study of Nunan and Ntombela (2018: 9-11) suggested that despite the abolition of corporal punishment, teachers in the participating schools still resorted to outlawed methods of punishment. For these participants, the manner in which teachers treated them was perceived as unfair because such treatments affected them emotionally, thereby causing them to misbehave in the class or elsewhere within the school premises.

2.4.4 Community-based factors

Several community-based factors have been identified as contributing to learner conduct problems at school. These factors include moral degeneration of the surrounding communities, quality of housing and basic amenities, effect of gangsterism, the presence and use of drugs, and influence of violence within the community.

2.4.4.1 Moral degeneration of the surrounding communities

Moral degeneration implies the debasement of societal moral values that hold a people together and direct their everyday conduct (Bayaga & Jaysveree, 2011: 199-210). Research by Sari (2013: 154-9) has shown that the quality of the practice of moral values in a given society can have a lasting effect on the learners within such a community because learners often positively or negatively imitate what they see. A study conducted in South California in the United States of America by Borofsky, Kellerman, Baucom, Oliver and Magolin (2013: 381-395) found that when learners are exposed to community violence, they are likely to become vulnerable to a cascade of events, including decreased connectedness to class activities. De Wet (2003: 93) noted that moral degeneration of the learners' surrounding communities remains one of the community-based factors causing misconduct among learners as the school is

a small community within the larger community. Marais and Meier (2010: 48) argued that in order to productively manage learners' disruptive behaviours within the classroom, it is important for concerned teachers to endeavour to understand such misconduct within the context of the surrounding community in which learners live.

2.4.4.2 Housing quality and basic amenities

Housing quality and basic amenities that may influence the well-being of learners are house size, severe overcrowding, structurally deficient accommodation, lack of basic amenities like water and electricity, and housing located in rural areas or townships with lots of violence and crime (Zunguzane, Smallwood & Emuze, 2012: 20). A major impact on the conduct of learners is the quality of housing (Harker, 2006: 10) where learners live. Many houses, especially in the rural areas lack space for studying and electricity for proper lighting conducive to studying and doing homework. Yet, little has been researched on the direct relationship between housing quality, basic amenities and learners' misconduct. The earlier study by Marais and Meier (2010: 48) alluded to poor housing as a major cause of classroom misconduct among learners. Also, the study by Galvez and Luna (2014: 1) argued that learners from houses with a lack of basic amenities are usually susceptible to high absenteeism from class. Zunguzane et al. (2012: 20-1) have noted that parents of such learners are often in the habit of incessant complaints about service delivery, which may degenerate into picketing within the community. Such picketing sometimes turns violent as children who witness incidences of picketing by their parents and other members of the community think that demands can only be met through the act of protests.

Friedman's (2010: 5) study noted that there is a connection between a poor housing environment and juvenile delinquency among school learners. Given that learners need a conducive learning environment with basic facilities to study, which in many cases are not available or affordable by families, especially in the rural areas, teachers are likely to face huge challenges with misconduct in the classroom. Teachers, therefore, need to understand and accommodate learners from these disadvantaged communities, while encouraging them to work hard. This is why a study by Okeke (2018: 136) has recommended that teachers need to know their learners' background as most misconduct problems originate from the home.

2.4.4.3 Influence of gangsterism and violence

According to Reis (2007: 15), gangsterism refers to an anti-social way of life that resonates through absolute allegiance to the gang against loyalty to the institutions of civil society such as the school, the family, the church and the justice system. Gangs operate in most South African communities that are characterised by, for instance, domestic violence, violent crime, lack or poor service delivery, structural neglect, unemployment, substance abuse, illegal possession of firearms as well as contract killing (Law, 2017: 1). It has also been shown that children who experience gang activities yearn to become gang members themselves (Law, 2017: 2), and as learners at school, they like displaying gangsterism, because they want to strike fear in their peers and teachers. Research (Mncube & Steinmann, 2014: 209; de Wet (2016: 4-6) has shown that school-based gang violence is a direct consequence of gangsterism that is commonplace in South African schools. Violence begets violence, and as such it is possible that learners who are exposed to gang culture and community violence are more likely to think that violent behaviour is normal behaviour. As such, learners who come from communities that are ridden with gang activities are themselves susceptible to practising misconduct in class. While gangsterism has been identified as a source of classroom misconduct (de Wet, 2016; Law, 2017), the question remains how teachers can identify and handle such learners whose classroom conduct is gang related. Pertaining to a study by Mncube and Steinmann (2014: 210) recommended that schools that experience gang-related violence need an active safety and security committee that monitors violence.

2.4.4.4 The effect of drugs or substance abuse

Drug or substance abuse refers to the taking of any harmful drug or any other substance that can cause physical and/or mental harm to the individual (Keane, 2006: 8). A study by Njoki (2011: 52) found that violent behaviour, rampant indiscipline, and absenteeism were major acts of misconduct observed among learners who confessed to having used drugs or any other harmful substance. Walton, Avenant and van Schalkwyk (2016: 2) found that the behaviour issues that result from drug and substance use by learners include truancy, aggression and disrespectful conduct towards their teachers, as well as to the class rules. In addition, the study by Jacobsz (2015: 36) revealed a concern for the growing increase in the use of drugs among learners and the resultant effect of incessant truancy and behaviour problems among

them. Thus, there is a relationship between drugs or substance abuse and learner classroom misconduct. This situation requires the experience of skilful teachers to get knowledge about the learner and his/her context. Without this knowledge of the learner's context, teachers will struggle with the implementation of any form of behaviour-correcting strategy, no matter how effective the strategy looks. In learning about the learner, Walton et al. (2016: 6) have suggested that listening to the learner's narrative appears to be the best approach as most learners displaying challenging behaviour would prefer to be listened to.

In this section, I have contextualised some of the causes of classroom misconduct by reviewing studies conducted in countries like Greece, Zimbabwe, Poland, the East Coast of the United States of America, Nigeria, Botswana and South Africa. In all these cases, it is important to note that I did not observe any significant disparity in the nature of the causes of classroom misconduct by learners. In the next section, I will look at the influences of classroom misconduct on teaching and learning.

2.5 INFLUENCE OF CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

I have organised the discussions on the influence of classroom misconduct on teaching and learning along the following themes: loss of instructional time resulting from classroom misconduct, effect of classroom misconduct on learners' academic performance, and effect of classroom misconduct on teachers and teaching. Below, I explain the three themes.

2.5.1 Loss of instructional time resulting from classroom misconduct

According to the Ministry of Education of Canada (2017: 43), instructional time refers to the official minutes and hours of the school day that are scheduled for direct learner-teacher interactions, which usually take place in the classroom. Moriconi and Bélanger (2015: 7) have referred to instructional time as the proportion or percentage of the daily school time that teachers spend delivering their lessons to learners. Studies on learner classroom conduct (Ofsted, 2014: 1-26; Moriconi & Bélanger, 2015: 7-9) have suggested that negative learner misconduct results in the loss of instructional time. For instance, Moriconi and Bélanger (2015: 7) have noted that teachers experiencing disciplinary problems in their classroom view their lessons as less conducive for learning because they spend a lot of time dealing with disruptions instead of engaging

in the main objectives of teaching and learning. The amount of time spent by teachers while attempting to maintain a conducive learning classroom climate is important to researchers. For instance, in England a survey of teachers (n=1048) and learners aged 5 to 18, commissioned by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to determine the extent and consequences of classroom misconduct in schools, found a worrying degree of loss of class time or teaching by teachers as they struggled to maintain discipline (Ofsted, 2014: 1-26). Teachers who took part in the survey were asked to estimate the amount of time a teacher would presumably lose should s/he experience misconduct during lessons. The survey found that every school has a teacher who is struggling with enough time to maintain a conducive learning because of disruptions from learners (Ofsted, 2014: 11).

An earlier study of time loss by teachers (n=14 elementary, 12 middle and 22 high schools) in Florida, United States by Behar-Horenstein, Isaac, Seabert and Davis (2006: 86, 94) found 14.25% of allocated time lost to non-instructional matters in classrooms in the elementary schools. Interestingly, Behar-Horenstein et al. (2006: 86) noted in their study that of this percentage, learner-initiated loss of instructional time to non-instructional purposes accounted for 5.63% (talking, pinching, pushing or the likes during lessons), while teacher-initiated loss accounted for 8.62%. A common-sense explanation for the higher percentage of time loss to non-instructional purposes by teachers appears to be the time the teachers spent trying to correct misbehaving learners during the lesson.

In South Africa, Roberts and Venkat's (2016: 2) study on disruptive learner behaviour in a Foundation Phase mathematics class followed the reflective practice-based approach to highlight the dangers disruptive classrooms pose to instructional time. The researchers (Roberts & Venkat, 2016: 6) were particularly interested in understanding how 23 minutes was spent during the mathematics lesson in the face of intense disruptions among the learners in that classroom. The seriousness of the disruptions that occurred in that particular mathematics class was captured in the authors' statement, which noted a total of 31 classroom management episodes in the 23-minute lesson, with 66% spent by the teacher attending to classroom management disciplinary issues (Roberts & Venkat, 2016: 6). It is obvious from the statistics here that quite a lot of time is being spent by teachers, especially those in the foundation phase, attending

to learners' classroom interactions that are deemed disruptive. The next subsection looks at the effect of classroom misconduct on learners' academic performance.

2.5.2 Effect of classroom misconduct on learners' academic performance

There are possibly three broad aspects of learning that can be affected by learner classroom misconduct, namely, poor academic achievement for the misbehaving learners; lowered academic achievement for other learners; and decreased learner motivation to learn. For example, Knowlton's (2014: 9-12) study of two elementary schools, thirteen classes and one hundred and thirty-eight learners in South-western Ontario in the United States of America aimed to establish how misbehaviour affected learners' well-being in the classroom. Knowlton's (2014: 28) study showed that the majority (69%) of the learners who took part in the study felt annoyed when other learners misbehaved in class. Under such circumstances, the affected learners may feel demotivated to learn and this may affect the performance level of the affected learners. A Zimbabwean study by Chikwature et al. (2016: 37) explored the impact of deviance on the academic performance of learners. The authors noted that 100% of all 30 teachers revealed that deviant behaviour resulted in poor performance among learners, and this equally affected well-behaved learners negatively as teachers tended to pay more attention to the misbehaving learners at the expense of other learners (Chikwature et al., 2016: 39).

In Pakistan, Ahmed, Hussain, Ahmed, Ahmed and Tabassum (2012: 19) sampled both male head teachers (n=20) and female teachers (n=100) to explore the effects of learner classroom bullying during lessons. Ahmed et al. (2012: 20) found a relationship between learner classroom bullying and academic performance of the affected learners. Al-Raqqad, Al-Bourini, Al Talahin and Aranki (2017: 47) sampled 6th and 7th grade male and female teachers (n=220) to find out how these aspects of misconduct impacted the academic achievement of the affected learners in Amman West of Jordan. The results of their study showed that bully victims do not concentrate in the classroom and sometimes avoid being in the class altogether. The authors have also revealed that the academic achievement of bullies is equally affected because bullies tend to experience reduced motivation for learning because they lack concentration as they think of who next to bully, even during lessons (Al-Raqqad et al., 2017: 48).

Fraser et al. (2018: 144-153) sampled 33 6th grade learners to explore the effects of maladaptive behaviours on the academic performance of learners in schools in Guyana, South America. Fraser et al. (2018: 150) revealed that learners who were affected by misbehaviour felt sad, annoyed and frustrated by it and, by implication, such learners became demotivated to learn. Invariably, the academic performance of a demotivated learner would appear to be abysmal in both the short and long term. Again, in Pennsylvania in the United States of America, Smolleck and Duffy (2017: 3) adopted an observational case study of 18 children within an early childhood education setting to explore the role of negative behaviour on the academic performance of children. The study found that the learners' inability to independently perform a given task led to negative attention-seeking behaviour among some of the participant learners. This negatively affected their academic performance as well as the performance of other learners in the class.

2.5.3 Effect of classroom misconduct on teachers

In the United Kingdom, learner classroom misconduct was found to have a significant effect on teachers as well as on their ability to perform their professional responsibilities (Department for Education, 2012). I have noted in section 2.5.1 how unruly learner behaviour can lead to significant loss of instructional time. It is likely for teachers who spend greater percentages of their instructional time on classroom management of disciplinary problems in an effort to ensure a conducive atmosphere for learning, to not achieve the objectives of teaching. The British study (Department for Education, 2012: 52) on learner classroom misbehaviour found a relationship between poor learner behaviour in the classroom and teacher health, job satisfaction, recruitment, and retention. The sector analysis report also noted that poor learner behaviour ranks second among the 16 sources of dissatisfaction among teachers. An earlier survey of 1078 teachers by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) cited in the British Department for Education's (2012: 55) report found that 77% of the respondents thought that their job had become too difficult, resulting in stressful situations, absenteeism and constant visits to the doctors' clinics.

Similarly, in South Africa, learner classroom misconduct is known to exert discomforting influences on the working life of teachers. A study by De Witt and Lessing (2013: 1-9) explored whether learner misconduct has any negative influence on the

emotional and social lives of an undefined number of teachers spread across 350 primary and secondary schools affiliated with the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). One of the findings of De Witt and Lessing's (2013: 4) study indicated that 64.49% of teacher participants in the study reported that learner classroom misconduct caused them enormous irritability, which affected their temper. When teachers, who are supposed to be positively engaged with the learners in the classroom, found themselves provoked by one or two misbehaving learners, they struggled to perform their main task of teaching. When such a situation is not under control, this could have long-term effects not only on the learners' academic performance, but also on the learner-teacher relationship. That could be the reason why De Witt and Lessing (2013: 6) further noted that teacher depression as a result of learner misconduct should not be ignored, because this was reported by over one third of the teachers who took part in their study. De Witt and Lessing (2013: 6) also stated that over half of the teachers felt that misbehaving learners' attitudes negatively affected their health, because of job dissatisfaction. Given these findings, I argue that a teacher whose delivery of teaching is affected by learner misconduct is an unhappy individual and may be unable to perform his/her official classroom and other school duties. It becomes imperative for researchers to come up with functionally practical ways of dealing with classroom misconduct to enable teachers to create a conducive classroom climate for meaningful teaching and learning.

Notwithstanding the link between undisciplined learner behaviour and the incidences of stress in some teachers, Kingwill's (2016: 67-68) study of FP teachers cautioned readers on the nature of inferences and interpretations that may emanate from the link between undisciplined learner behaviour and educator stress. For example, two of the participants in the study noted that: "…If I'm stressed and I've got a lot to do, and I can't, then I find every little thing disruptive" [participant 5]. Another participant commented "…the more worked up I get, the more worked up they get, the more despondent they get" [participant 1] (Kingwill, 2016: 68). In the meantime, it is important to note that learner classroom misconduct can also create a degree of tension between school (teachers) and home (parents). Earlier in this chapter (section 2.2) I revealed an encounter between a schoolteacher and a parent over her child's conduct at school. From the standpoint of personal experience, teachers have over the years become more susceptible to blaming parents for most undisciplined behaviour. If the child fights

in the classroom or at school, it apparently is because she learnt it from home. The child that bullies fellow learners at school is bringing the habit from home where either the father or the mother is a bully. A child's unruly behaviour is thus linked to the home in one way or another. As a parent of children in the FP and attending parents' meetings from time to time, I realise it often happens that teachers blame parents for their child's unruly behaviour at school. It is equally important to note that some teachers who approach parents with this sort of thinking about learner classroom misconduct appear to experience strained relationships with such parents. Page (2016: 26) stated that the style of communication between teachers and parents can help the former in dealing with difficult situations presented by learners in the classroom. On the one hand, parents who feel welcome at the school and those who perceive their role as part of the solution will most likely engage positively with teachers in finding lasting solutions to the misbehaviour of their child. On the other hand, parents who perceive teachers' communication about the misconduct of their child as a one-sided blaming game will be less cooperative in finding solutions to challenging behaviour. In the next section, I will be discussing some of the strategies that teachers use in dealing with misconduct in the classroom.

2.6 STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH CLASSROOM MISCONDUCT

Preventing classroom misconduct by learners appears to be the core disciplinary responsibility of every class teacher. Eliminating misconduct in classrooms is important for the creation of an enabling classroom climate that supports learning. Various strategies for dealing with classroom misconduct have been reported in international literature (Department for Education, 2012; Dulay & Karadag, 2017) by researchers from different research contexts. Below, I present some of these strategies.

2.6.1 Creation of a positive school climate

The school climate covers an extremely diverse range of aspects of school life, from the objective size and physical condition of the school building to the subjective perceptions of interpersonal relations within the school (Chirkina & Khavenson, 2018: 135). In the context of the current study, school climate can be explained as the psychosocial impact of the organisational environment on the overall well-being of the learners but also on the teachers, parents and other stakeholders. It is based on quality of learners', teachers', parents' and other stakeholders' experiences of school life

(Payne, 2018: 7-8). A positive school climate resonates through the school's norms, expressed values and all expectations, which enable learners' and other stakeholders' feelings of social, emotional, and physical safety. Dulay and Karadag (2017: 200) studied schools in Turkey and demonstrated that the organisational environment of the school climate consists of the physical, social and emotional well-being. Below, I explain each of these components in order to demonstrate how they can facilitate the creation of a positive school climate necessary for a healthy classroom.

2.6.1.1 The physical learning environment

The physical environment of the classroom simply refers to the way a classroom's physical space is set up. Ahmad and Amirul (2017: 48) have referred to the physical learning environment as the space allocated to teaching and learning that ensures that learners experience a positive and intimate learning space while in class, but also during their stay in school as learners. Studies by Guardino and Fullerton (2010: 8-13), Cantero, Mira and López-Chao (2016: 249-253), Ali (2017: 63-64), Sharma (2017: 15156), as well as that of Ahmad and Amirul (2017: 48-50) have demonstrated a link between the quality of the learning environment and learners' behaviour. Also, learners who took part in Ahmad and Amirul's (2017: 52) study expressed their view that a conducive physical learning environment increased their motivation to learn while reducing their susceptibility to negative classroom behaviours. It is then obvious that the physical learning environment forms an integral part of the learners' classroom conduct. For instance, in the FP classroom, organised round furniture for group learning, colourful posters and pictures on the wall, play corner with various kind of toys and even a TV set in most schools keep learners busy. Teachers are therefore encouraged to ensure that the physical learning environment remains organised, playful, and colourful in order to encourage FP learners to continue to be focused and behave in an acceptable manner.

2.6.1.2 Social learning environment

The term social learning environment in the context of the current study connotes the quality of the interpersonal relationships among learners and between learners and their teachers within the classroom and school context, which creates the avenue for positive communication and interaction amongst them, as well as with the learners' parents (Dulay & Karadag, 2017: 200-201). A study by Allodi (2010: 90) demonstrated

that there are both short-term and long-term benefits resulting from the quality of the interactional relationships amongst the stakeholders within the social learning environment on learners' classroom conduct. A healthy social learning environment will lead to socially healthy learners, while the reverse will lead to the creation of socially unhealthy learners. This is because the quality of the social learning environment in the classroom appears to impact the nature of moral value formation of learners (Arifin, Wahab, Teh & Otman, 2018: 933). It is through such interactions that learners come to learn about each other, and about each other's likes and dislikes. By so doing, a positive social learning environment will facilitate learner identity formation that enables him/her to behave in a particular way. It is equally possible that learners whose behaviours are seen by their peers as repulsive may begin to take corrective measures in order to avoid being isolated from the rest of his/her classroom peers, thus influencing the emotional learning environment.

2.6.1.3 Ensuring a positive emotional learning environment

This is an emerging psychological phenomenon that collectively attempts to describe the emotional and shared relationships among significant persons within a social setting such as the classroom (Meirovich, 2012: 170). The quality of the emotional interactions amongst learners and between learners and teachers creates and supports the emotional classroom environment. Creating a positive emotional classroom climate or environment is a skill that every thoughtful teacher must possess. A positive emotional classroom climate appears to consist of a warm and friendly climate where teachers are perceived by learners as responsive and sensitive to their own emotions. The bio-ecological theory of child development by Bronfenbrenner (1977: 513–531) postulates that the quality of the relationship between the child and members of his/her microsystem is key to the emotional development of the child. The school/classroom falls within the microsystem and the ecological model suggests that the nature of learner/learner as well as learner/teacher interactions dictates the quality of the classroom emotional learning environment (see also Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White & Salovey, 2012: 700).

According to Aydogan (2012: 18), a positive emotional classroom environment refers to the way the teachers' and learners' interactional behaviours impact the overall classroom climate. In other words, the quality of emotional interactions amongst

learners and with their teachers influence the emotional tones such as care, warmth and respect, as well as anger, irritation and sarcasm. Studies show that a positive emotional learning environment can facilitate the development of a sense of belonging important for learners. Learners experiencing such a positive emotional environment, according to O'Conner, De Feyter, Carr, Luo and Romm (2017: 5), have shown to be socially competent with little or no behavioural problems. Also, Schonert-Reichl (2017: 139) argued that teachers who poorly manage their own emotional reactions to occurrences within the classroom, such as learner misconduct, end up with learners who display behaviour problems in reaction to the teachers' classroom emotional outburst. It is therefore necessary for teachers to receive adequate training in child psychology, especially on topics dealing with the emotional development of children during their initial or continuing professional development training to enable them to be able to deal with their own as well as the learners' emotional classroom incidences. This suggestion appears plausible given my earlier discussion in section 2.5.3 on the effect of classroom misconduct on teachers and teaching where teachers in De Witt and Lessing's (2013: 4) study revealed that learner misbehaviour caused them enormous irritability, which affected their temper. However, with adequate and relevant training, teachers can be well-equipped to effectively handle such inevitable situations.

Overall, a positive school climate appears to be an important factor in dealing with classroom misconduct, because when learners feel supported and perceive the school environment as friendly, they are less likely to engage in disruptive behaviours. In England, the Department for Education's survey (DFE, 2012: 57) found that school climate, which is defined as the shared values and beliefs that impact the everyday interactions within the school, correlates with positive learner behaviour. It further argues that a positive and friendly school climate creates positive learner behaviour. Perhaps, when combined with other learner-friendly approaches, a positive school climate may assist teachers in dealing with classroom misconduct.

2.6.2 Effective school leadership

Effective school leadership has been identified as one of the strategies to create a conducive school environment in which teaching, and learning can flourish with minimal distractions (Bush & Glover, 2003: 4; Day & Sammons, 2016: 11-18). Research (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016: 222; Miller, 2018: 2) has shown that effective

school leadership can have a tremendous impact on the overall climate of the school, including the behavioural conduct and the academic performance of the learners. According to Miller (2018: 2), school leadership is a constant encounter with difficulties that demand thinking and problem solving, responding, and adjusting to the situation at hand. A study by Okoroji, Anyanwu and Ukpere (2014: 190) found that effective school leadership positively impacted the overall school climate of the schools that participated in the study. As a result, learners' classroom conducts improved, and this translated to improved academic performance for the learners.

Similarly, Krasnoff (2015: 2) noted that in Washington, United States of America (USA), schools with effective principals had fewer cases of absenteeism among learners. Within the classroom context, the teachers must take up the role of effective leaders. They have to demonstrate the ability to see to it that every learner feels comfortable by treating every learner (and offender) fairly, as well as being consistent with the manner in which they handle issues relating to learner misconduct. Above all, it would be helpful if the teachers have good listening skills to both the learners and their parents as parents deserve to hear teachers narrate learners' conduct to make contributions on the way forward. The teachers must demonstrate effective leadership in this respect by ensuring that they remain skilful and patient listeners in managing such engagement with the parents. Another important strategy that is worth considering in dealing with classroom misconduct is school discipline policy and code of conduct.

2.6.3 School discipline policy and code of conduct

The school discipline policy is presumably meant to keep every learner's conduct within set rules in order to ensure that a healthy learning environment is always facilitated in the classroom. According to Bear (2010: 1), effective school discipline policy will seek to achieve two broad aims: to assist in creating a safe, orderly and peaceful learning environment, and to teach learners self-discipline throughout their stay in school. Research by Chiu and Chow (2016: 516) noted that effective school and classroom discipline policy helps learners to internalise self-discipline and facilitates teaching and learning. In the United Kingdom (UK), the importance of the overall approach to school discipline has been strongly emphasised by the Department for Education (2012: 58-65). The UK policy emphasises proactive measures of

consistent rules that define accepted behaviour for both learners and their teachers (Department for Education, 2012: 59). It is common knowledge that when misbehaving learners know that there are no consequences for their bad behaviours, they may be encouraged to persist with their ill-conduct. However, when learners are aware of the existence of a functional whole-school disciplining policy, this will help deter some of the learners from engaging in acts of misconduct. Well-written and effective school discipline policy is therefore very important in dealing with learner misconduct.

The South African Schools Act (hereafter referred to as SASA) No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 9) stipulates the procedures (in conjunction with applicable Provincial laws) for the establishment of the code of conduct guiding the behaviour of learners during the official school hours. Section 8(1) of SASA (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 9) is clear on who should be involved in policy regarding the code of conduct for schools. The Act states that the governing body of a public school shall, after due consultation with the learners, teachers, and parents, set out the code of conduct for learners. The Act further states that all learners must be obligated to abide by the code of conduct, while the interests of all parties in the school must be protected through the provisions clearly stated in the code of conduct. Following the enactment of SASA, various Provincial Governments in South Africa (for example, Province of the Western Cape, 1997: 28; Gauteng Department of Education, 2011: 4-33) to mention but a few, ratified the Act by adopting its stipulations for a code of conduct for learners in schools within their jurisdictions. In the Gauteng Department of Education (2011: 4), the code of conduct aims to set out the boundaries within which learners should conduct themselves in order to guarantee the safety, integrity and security of each other as well as that of other members of the school community. Section 12 of the Gauteng Department of Education (2011: 23), on the promotion of the code of conduct, sets out clearly how schools should convey the content of the code of conduct to learners to ensure that each registered learner at a school gets a copy of the code of conduct on the first day of school. In addition, ground rules guided by the terms of the code of conduct must be established and displayed on the walls of each classroom.

It is important to note that both FP learners and their parents are very important stakeholders in the setting of class rules. According to the Department of Education,

Canada (2010: 6), the establishment of clear ground rules and guidelines, which set out consequences in no uncertain terms and are shared by every learner, is the only hope for the improvement of learner classroom conduct. Following the establishment of both the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and various provincial education acts, various schools in the country have endeavoured to ensure that classrooms provide a code of conduct that may ensure improvement in learner classroom conduct.

From the reviewed literature (Mtunzini Primary School, 2011: 1-15; Northcliff Primary School, 2017: 1-34; St. Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, 2018: 1-23; Fairmont High School, 2019: 1-6), the procedure for setting class rules does not differ, given that schools are expected to follow the guidelines set out in SASA No. 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 9). At Mtunzini Primary School (2011: 5), once learners and their parents have been consulted, class rules are compiled by the class teacher and tabled to the principal and the school governing body for final approval. Thereafter, copies of the class rules are displayed on the walls of the class while learners and their parents are given copies. I am of the view that a cooperative and progressive approach to setting classroom rules or codes of conduct would entail the full involvement of all school stakeholders.

2.6.4 Positive behaviour support strategy

Positive behaviour support refers to an evidence-based approach with the goal of increasing a learner's quality of life in order to facilitate a decrease in the frequency and severity with which they exhibit challenging behaviours within the classroom context (Government of Western Australia, 2012: 1). Such a support strategy works to encourage the individual misbehaving learner to begin to appreciate him/herself as a valuable individual with roles to play in facilitating the classroom atmosphere necessary for learning. The National Association of School Psychologists (2018: 3) in Maryland, USA, has observed that the greater use of learner-friendly classroom-based positive behaviour support in elementary schools is positively associated with higher learner ratings of discipline, fairness and quality of learner-learner and learner-teacher relationships. Classroom-based support strategies include the use of rewards and positive reinforcement. The Government of Western Australia's (2012: 3) policy document further states that a positive support strategy may also involve ensuring that changes are made within the learners' environment in order to encourage learners to

continue to be well-behaved. The policy document also encourages the promotion of the habit of healthy communication in order to enhance positive relationships amongst learners and between learners and their teachers. The Government of Western Australia's (2012: 3) policy documents further argue that making positive changes to the learners' environment will enable teachers to solve situations that will make the learners concerned less susceptible to engaging in challenging behaviour.

A positive behaviour support strategy directs the attention of involved learners to otherwise preferred behaviour within the classroom setting. A positive behaviour support strategy targets specific negative behaviours as they are displayed by FP learners. Teachers who adopt this approach will have to create positive counter behaviours to respond to the displayed ill-behaviour. Such teachers will have to skilfully assist misbehaving learners to replace their ill-behaviour with the preferred positive behaviour. As noted above, to succeed in this task, teachers who are confronted by learners with challenging behaviour will have to endeavour to improve their communication style. Also, they will have to facilitate positive relationships between them and such learners. In addition, teachers who found themselves in this situation will need to skilfully create meaningful and interesting activities that will stimulate the attention and interest of the misbehaving learners in order to win them over. This view appears to have been highlighted in an earlier study by Allday (2011: 293) who argued that the "creation of classroom rules and expectations, as well as creating a positive learning environment is crucial to responsive classroom management". In addition, Smolleck and Duffy (2017: 6) maintained that because this approach relies on positive reinforcement, learners will be motivated to respond to good behaviour. This will help teachers to minimise or eliminate misconduct in the classroom, given that learners will begin to appreciate good behaviour.

2.6.5 Problem-solving conversation strategy

The problem-solving conversation (PSC) strategy was developed by Dwairy (2005: 144-150) and refers to a verbal strategy for dealing with a persistent behaviour problem involving one learner at a time (Crowe, 2009: 41). Usually, the PSC involves a structured interview between the misbehaving learner and his/her teacher (Dwairy, 2005: 144). In some cases, the PSC involves the teacher, the learner and the parent. Crowe (2009: 40) noted that the main purpose of the PSC is to establish a rapport-

guided problem-solving alliance with the FP individual learner. The parent/teacher/learner meeting highlighted by both the British Department for Education (2012: 68) and Bosah et al. (2016: 89) falls within this strategy. Both Dwairy (2005: 145) and Smolleck and Duffy (2017: 6) have highlighted four important phases in the PSC, including the following:

2.6.5.1 Listening to the learner

This is the first important step of the PSC process that allows the teacher and any other adults that may be invited to the PSC to get to know the child (Dwairy, 2005: 145; Smolleck & Duffy, 2017: 6). I have indicated that the PSC is a strategy for dealing with persistent misbehaviour involving a learner. Dwairy (2005: 145-146) has noted that the teacher who patiently listens to his/her learner will be in a better position to learn the learner's version of the reasons why the misbehaviour persists. By patiently listening to the learner on why s/he has acted in the way he/she did, the teacher will then deal with the situation through probing for re-evaluation of cases.

2.6.5.2 Probing for re-evaluation of cases

Dwairy (2005: 146/7) argued that it is very important for teachers to ensure that the first phase ended well, and that the learners are convinced that they have been given proper attention. Once teachers can assure themselves of having achieved the first phase, then they will be empowered to find out from the learners how they feel about what has happened, whether they are satisfied with what the teachers have done, and whether such learners are satisfied with the outcome of their actions. This may lead the learner beginning to explore some alternatives with the help of the teacher.

2.6.5.3 Exploring possible alternatives

This step entails setting up a new behaviour plan. Dwairy (2005: 147) has indicated that success in both phases one and two will empower the teacher to start engaging the learners with a new behaviour plan. However, the role of the teacher is not to establish a behaviour regime. Instead, the teacher will try to facilitate the behaviour change plan by requesting the learners to say what they want to do and how they intend to achieve the new behaviour. In fact, the teacher will endeavour to find out from the learners what their behaviour change plans may be. The teacher will then assist

the learners to refine the new behaviour plan in a way that it would successfully facilitate the desired behaviour change in them.

2.6.5.4 Doing a follow-up

Essentially, in order to establish how the particular learner is coping, it is imperative for the teacher to constantly do a follow-up. The purpose of the follow-ups is to help ensure that the learner does not backslide in his/her resolve for a positive change in behaviour. Dwairy (2005: 147) said that follow-ups allow the teacher to offer a helping hand to the learner who may be experiencing a positive change in behaviour, but also to ensure that together both teacher and learner can sustain the new change.

The PSC has been found to be an effective strategy in dealing with persistent misconduct among learners because the strategy clearly helps to identify which behaviours are acceptable in the classroom, which ones are not, and the potential alternative behaviours that can help facilitate acceptable behaviours in the misbehaving learners (Smolleck & Duffy, 2017: 6). Teachers are therefore encouraged to embrace the PSC strategy as a genuine alternative disciplining strategy for dealing with learner classroom misconduct.

2.6.6 Non-verbal cues

These are the gestures that teachers use to redirect the attention and behaviour of the misbehaving learners in the classroom. Non-verbal cues include a smile, eye contact, nodding of the head, expressive actions and clapping of the hands, among others (Oladipupo, 2014: 429). Research by Ali (2011: 1097) showed that non-verbal cues are a system of gestures that teachers adopt that allow them to perform classroom management efficiently. Kingwill (2016: 78) noted that these cues include changing the tone of their voice, using eye contact and keeping silent until the noise stops. For example, one of the teacher participants in Kingwill's (2016: 78) study noted how effective the cue of stopping to teach for a while and gazing at the noisy learners worked in completely restoring quietness to the FP classroom. Personally, I find this strategy to be very effective too. In the past, I have found that entering a noisy class and simply standing and gazing at the learners could do just a little magic in quieting the noise. The problem with gestures, however, is that sometimes a teacher may work on the assumption that his/her gestures are understood by a particular learner, when

such a learner makes no sense of the teacher's non-verbal cues (Nowicki Jr. & Duke, 1994: 31). I argue that the teacher's communication may be deemed effective when learners are able to make sense of such communication. However, Kingwill's (2016: 78-79) participants found this approach to managing disruptive behaviour to be effective.

2.6.7 Verbal prompts

In the context of classroom management and learner misconduct, a verbal prompt is any form of verbal assistance the teacher gives to the learner in order to facilitate a positive response to unacceptable behaviour (Kingwill, 2016: 79). The participants in Kingwill's (2016: 79-80) study noted that the most effective verbal prompt they used in managing their disruptive classroom was positive reinforcement in the form of praise. Kingwill (2016: 79) pointed that the educators in the study made use of positive verbal reinforcement in dealing with classroom misconduct and found it to be effective. Kingwill's (2016) verbal prompt is in line with verbal warning (DBE, 2012: 35; Moyo et al., 2014: 11) and verbal rebuke (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 177). In Chapter One, I highlighted that verbal discipline comes in positive and negative forms that may include teachers' sweet and friendly talks, yelling, scolding, name-calling, swearing and verbal appreciation. From the standpoint of the reinforcement theory, verbal praise could be a potentially effective strategy for teachers to deal with learner misconduct in the classroom. As suggested by Skinner (1969) cited in Titsworth (2000: 7), positive behaviour is reinforced in learners when they receive such positive reinforcement as praise for exhibiting acceptable classroom behaviour. It is therefore the responsibility of teachers of misbehaving learners to constantly seek out the positive behaviours in learners and to try to positively reinforce such behaviours. For instance, one of the participants in Kingwill's (2016: 80) study noted that "…children need to know that you are on their side". The problem with positive reinforcement, though, is that a learner may simply act out a desirable behaviour just for the perceived gains and not necessarily as evidence of a progressive positive change in behaviour. In Chapter Three, I will engage the issue of verbal discipline in more detail.

2.6.8 Temporary exclusion

The participants in Kingwill's (2016: 80) study have observed that a learner is temporarily removed from class when his/her disruptive behaviour becomes too

disruptive and unmanageable. However, I noted that the participants in Kingwill's (2016: 81) study were divided on this strategy. It is also important to note the disapproval among some participants of Kingwill's (2016) study on the application of temporary exclusion as a strategy for dealing with misbehaving learner/s, as FP learners in this case will end up playing around. Some of the participants felt that isolating a particular learner from the rest of the class may not prove effective in the long run. For example, one participant in the study has stated that he/she is not in favour of moving a misbehaving boy from one class to another because such a strategy does not guarantee any long-term success (Kingwill, 2016: 81). When parents have paid fees for their children to attend school and to be in the classroom to be taught by educators, it raises fundamental ethical questions if such learners are excluded from classrooms where they have been sent to learn. Appropriate skills are therefore required from the educators to substitute exclusionary measures with a more corrective behaviourist approach.

2.7 SUMMARY

Literature reviewed in this chapter has indicated that classroom misconduct is a major concern for teachers and other stakeholders within the school. The importance of a positive classroom climate for effective teaching and learning cannot be overemphasised. The reviewed literature has shown that effective learning can be in jeopardy in the absence of a supportive classroom climate, and it is imperative for teachers to ensure that such conditions always prevail in the classroom. What emerges clearly is the fact that the main aim of disciplining strategies is to ensure that learners comply with school and classroom rules. The excessive use of and compliance to rules and regulations may, however, result in the production of learners that are docile. However, if learners participate in the making of the ground rules guiding their classroom conduct, they will be more readily susceptible to observing and abiding by the ground rules. The following chapter will explain verbal discipline in more detail.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW ON VERBAL DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Verbal discipline practices appear to be reported in studies of disciplinary strategies; yet, no study appears to exist on how teachers use verbal discipline in their classrooms and the effectiveness thereof. In Chapter One, I highlighted that verbal discipline comes in positive and negative forms that may include teachers' praise, talks, yelling, scolding, reprimands, swearing, verbal appreciation and redirection (Govender, 2014; Mumthas et al., 2014; Wang & Kenny, 2014; Kelly & Pohl, 2018). But what is not clear in the mentioned studies is whether teachers succeed in using verbal discipline to create a classroom environment conducive for learning. As the use of verbal discipline as an alternative strategy for dealing with classroom misconduct continues to gain popularity among teachers, few studies have explored its effectiveness. It is imperative to empirically research this disciplinary strategy, as well as how teachers use it and what they achieve by so doing.

In the previous chapter, I clarified the concepts of classroom misconduct and explored the various forms and causes of classroom misconduct. I also indicated how learner misconduct impacts teaching and learning followed by some preventative strategies for classroom misconduct. In this chapter I will deal with verbal discipline in the classroom context. First, I will discuss the broad concept of discipline in the context of schooling. The importance of discipline for the maintenance of a classroom atmosphere conducive for effective teaching and learning will be highlighted before moving to the meaning of verbal discipline, types of verbal discipline, effectiveness and ineffectiveness of verbal discipline, the implications of the study and conclusion of the chapter. However, to restate my topic, this study focused on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom.

3.2 CONCEPT OF CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Discipline within the classroom context is widely regarded as an important requirement without which the objectives of effective teaching and learning will be hard to achieve

(LeeFon, Jacobs, Le Roux & De Wet, 2013: 4; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 1). Broadly, the concept of discipline derives from the Latin words *disciplina* (meaning instruction) and *discere* (meaning to learn) (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008: 107; Oosthuizen, 2010: 57). Discipline has been defined differently by various authors. According to de Witt (2021: 213), discipline is the set of rules and norms that define acceptable behaviour. Discipline is likened by Marciniak (2015: 53) to a form of behaviour that is consistent with the set rules and regulations governing learners' activities and/or conduct within the classroom or the school at large. Joubert and Prinsloo (2008: 107) also consider discipline as a collaborative process between the teacher and the learner, which is aimed at producing an acceptable behaviour pattern within the classroom. Collins Harper Dictionary Online (2010, no page) defines discipline as the practice of training an individual (in this case the learner) to learn to obey a set rules or standards of behaviour within the classroom. Dzivhani (2000: 6) defined discipline as a condition of order and obedience amongst learners in the classroom that makes it possible for teaching and learning to proceed with minimal or no disruptions from learners. According to Oosthuizen (2010: 57), discipline entails a continuous effort with a view to training, shaping, as well as facilitating the desired positive behaviour in learners. For Bear (2010: 1), discipline helps to create and maintain a safe, orderly, and positive learning environment, which often requires the use of discipline to correct misbehaviour and to teach self-discipline. Discipline helps the child develop self-discipline (the ability to control one's emotions and weaknesses), self-control and independent decision making (de Witt, 2021: 215). Venter and Niekerk (2011: 251) have concluded that the essence of good discipline in education is to create a learning atmosphere where teachers can teach, and learners can learn with respect.

School discipline in the post-corporal punishment era in SA centres on the above views which indicate that discipline involves teaching the learners the right behavioural patterns to follow for teachers to achieve conducive classrooms for teaching and learning. This discipline pattern can also be referred to as positive discipline which entails giving children clear guidelines for what behaviour is acceptable and then supporting them as they learn to abide by these guidelines (DBE, 2012: 5). The DBE (2012: 5-7) has further observed that positive discipline:

- Teaches children to understand and follow social rules in and outside the classroom without using physical or emotional violence

- Teaches children to do things right rather than punishing them for doing wrong
- Encourages self-discipline and mutual respect within a non-violent and caring environment
- Works with children and not against them
- Promotes child participation and problem solving
- Encourages adults to become positive role models for the learners in their care
- Builds a culture of human rights where everyone - learners and educators alike - are protected from harm and are treated with dignity and respect.

Positive discipline, according to Maphosa (2011:78), entails the use of non-punitive methods while teaching of valuable social and life skills in a manner that is respectful and encouraging for both children and adults. It is important to point out here that the major aim of alternatives to corporal punishment policy is to achieve positive discipline in schools - a classroom climate based on mutual respect within which learners feel safe and affirmed to practice self-discipline (DoE, 2000: 12).

3.3 THE LANGUAGE OF CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

The techniques of language and communication that form discipline in the classroom, according to de Witt (2021: 219), are both verbal and non-verbal. The author has further indicated the effectiveness of tone of voice, choice of words, body language and attitude towards creating an effective discipline climate in the classroom. The following verbal and non-verbal discipline approaches are recommended to teachers for creating effective discipline in the classroom (De Witt, 2021: 219-223):

- **Tone of Voice:** Use a firm but calm voice (never shout) and controlled speech (specific instruction) when disciplining young children to convey the message and authority in the classroom.
- **Choice of words**: Use clear and simple statements (short sentences) to direct the child what to do (positive instruction) rather than using too many words in an attempt to relieve frustration and anger. The language to use must fit the child's comprehension level for clear understanding.
- **Body language**: Get close enough for the child to hear your soft but yet firm voice clearly; speak to the child face to face and at eye level, keep your facial expression friendly and relaxed, look at the child directly in the eye and ask the

child to look at you (eye contact) to send a particular message. Also give a child who tries to hit another a gentle tap on the shoulder to let the child know that an adult is in the classroom to protect and discipline.

- **Attitude**: Relate well with your learners and have consistent behaviour in the administration of discipline in the classroom to avoiding getting the child confused.

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

The importance of discipline for the maintenance of a classroom atmosphere conducive for effective teaching and learning cannot be overemphasised. Research by Rahimi and Karkami (2015: 58) has shown that an adequate degree of discipline is essential in the classroom in order to create a climate conducive for teaching and learning, because learners' misconduct can frustrate even the most carefully planned lesson. Thus, classroom discipline plays an important role in providing a classroom atmosphere that ensures effective teaching and learning. Oosthuizen, Smit and Roos (2009: 155-6) have stated that teachers use discipline to maintain order in the classroom, to guarantee equal treatment among learners, to protect learners and as a corrective measure for misbehaving learners.

3.4.1 Maintain order in the classroom

An orderly classroom is one where learners and teachers abide by specific rules for a specific classroom context and behave accordingly to ensure good conduct towards others. According to Oosthuizen et al. (2009: 155), one major role of classroom discipline is to maintain order so that teachers can perform classroom duties with minimal disruptions. Learners can learn in a classroom climate where they exercise restraint against misconduct and respect each other. Achiron (2013, no page) argued that an orderly classroom is not an end, rather, it is a means to an end; it is a precondition for effective teaching and learning within the classroom. Lopes and Oliveira (2017: 234) have argued that the goal of classroom discipline is for the maintenance of order to enable effective teaching and learning. A classroom without order will be a negative experience for both learners and teachers. Therefore, every teacher must strive to maintain order in the classroom to prevent the future occurrence of behavioural problems (Bear, 2010: 1).

3.4.2 Fairness for all learners

Fairness or equal treatment in the context of class discipline is paramount for teachers to be rational and just in discipling learners in their classrooms. Oosthuizen et al. (2009: 155) have maintained that every learner has the right to learn in a classroom devoid of all forms of infringements. Teachers have the responsibility to ensure that no learner experiences unfair treatment from fellow learners or from teachers. Misconduct in the classroom, however, causes unfairness or injustice, especially where some learners bully others without consequences, in the face of alternatives to corporal punishment. Effective discipline, therefore, ensures that learners do not suffer unfairly at the hands of fellow learners. In addition, an effective disciplinary strategy will also ensure that offending learners are disciplined fairly and in accordance with the nature of their undesirable behaviour. According to Valente, Monteiro and Lourenço (2018: 742), fairness in disciplining misbehaving learners will enable positive teacher/learner relationships where learners will see discipline as guidance towards self-discipline.

3.4.3 Protect learners

Every learner deserves to be protected from the ills of misconduct from misbehaving learners. Oosthuizen et al. (2009: 155) argued that classroom discipline functions to protect learners from the menace of other unruly learners. From a social standpoint, research by Rahimi and Karkami (2015: 58) have shown that effective teacher classroom discipline can serve as a protective strategy for all learners within the classroom. It has the potential to create a sense of responsibility among learners because they will understand the importance of discipline and self-discipline for teaching and learning. According to de Witt (2021: 211), effective discipline helps the child learn how to cooperate with others and how to control his own behaviour in the classroom.

3.4.4 Correct misbehaving learners

Teachers' class discipline constitutes various forms of corrective measures against offending learners. From the perspective of Oosthuizen et al. (2009: 155), corrective measures for misconduct are intended to positively impact the overall development of the offending learner, thus enabling the learner to embrace a positive classroom demeanour. Hence, effective teacher discipline aims to correct the undesirable behaviour in the learner. Overall, discipline is an important ingredient for effective

teaching and learning. Effective classroom discipline has a positive influence on both the learner and learning and the teacher and teaching. Serame (2011: 19) noted that good class discipline is learner-centred because it emphasises learner self-control/self-discipline and enhances critical thinking skills in learners where fairness directs the process of disciplining. Nevertheless, the application of discipline gives the child a sense of security because the child knows what is permitted and what is not (de Witt, 2021: 215). Discipline in the classroom generally helps to mould positive behaviour in the learners. Having explained the meaning, language, and importance of classroom discipline in line with alternatives to corporal punishment, I want to focus now on key topics relating to my title: The effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom.

3.5 THE MEANING OF VERBAL DISCIPLINE

Within the classroom context, verbal discipline entails the teacher's spoken words (Lahr, 2014: 2; Soto, 2014: 11) that are directed at a learner to signify approval or disapproval of his/her classroom conduct. It is important to note that teachers can use verbal discipline to show their approval or disapproval of learner classroom behaviour, which I will explain in detail when dealing with the types of verbal discipline, below. Firdaus (2015: 30) perceived verbal discipline as a strategy whereby the teacher uses consciously chosen spoken words in trying to redirect and manage learners' misconduct or reinforce good behaviour. In addition, Levy (2014: 11) has suggested that verbal discipline entails the teacher's spoken responses to learners' behaviour in the classroom generally. Govender (2014: 35) has noted that teachers often resort to verbal discipline to "get a message across". Nkosana et al. (2014: 1581) reported that teachers use verbal warnings as an alternative to corporal punishment to correct learners for minor offences. What is common about the definitions of verbal discipline above is the fact that teachers use some form of spoken words to control learners' behaviour in the classroom. Having said that, different types of verbal disciplinary measures have been identified in literature. In the following section, I will itemise and discuss the different types.

3.6 TYPES OF VERBAL DISCIPLINE

Various types of verbal discipline have been identified in literature across the globe. One prominent type of verbal discipline found in literature is verbal praise (Soto, 2014:

9-13; Firdaus, 2015: 28-40; Split, Leflot, Onghena & Colpin, 2016: 1-22; Campbell, 2017: 9-22; de Witt, 2021: 221). Verbal redirection has also been discussed by researchers (Bavolek, 2009: 1; Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 65; Lentfer & Franks, 2015: 80-85; Rock, 2019: 1) as another form of verbal discipline that teachers use when dealing with classroom misconduct. Another form of verbal discipline is verbal reprimand, which has been found to be both an effective and ineffective form of verbal discipline (Gable, Hester, Rock & Hughes, 2009: 201; Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 64-66; Chikwature et al., 2016: 41; Ofoha, 2017: 219-222; Riedesel, 2019: 31-32; de Witt, 2021: 221). In the next subsections, I will explain each of these types of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct.

3.6.1 Verbal praise

Praise as a broad concept derives from the Latin expression *pretiare* which means to be highly valued (Firdaus, 2015: 30). Drawing from this idea of 'highly valued', I believe that the effectiveness of praise as a tool to reinforce desired behaviour in a learner resides in the quality of such praise. Praise simply means a strategy teachers apply to maintain a good rapport with their students (Mardiah, 2020: 44). Within the classroom context, this refers to teachers' verbal praise. Teachers' verbal praise has been defined differently by various researchers - it is a form of verbal reward (Firdaus, 2015: 29); an expression of admiration or approval (Brophy, 1981: 5); and it denotes a favourable interpersonal comment from the teacher to the learner for displaying good behaviour (Al-Ghamdi, 2017: 40). According to Campbell (2017: 19), praise symbolises a type of positive verbal feedback mainly because it offers the learner an opportunity to understand what desirable classroom conduct entails given the quality of positive feedback, he/she receives from the teacher. From the foregoing discussions on verbal praise, what clearly emerges is the fact that teachers use praise as a form of acknowledgement for appropriate behaviour in learners. When verbal praise is consciously and skilfully planned as a learner behaviour management strategy, empirical evidence (Campbell, 2017) suggests that it can produce useful outcomes not only for teaching and learning, but also for learner behaviour. Below are some positive effects of verbal praise:

i. Reinforcer of appropriate behaviour

There is a consensus amongst scholars (Brophy, 1981; Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder, Al-Hendawi & Vo, 2009; Split et al., 2016; Poirot, 2018; Weinstein, 2019) that verbal

praise can serve as a positive reinforcer of appropriate behaviour in learners. For example, the study by Split et al. (2016: 3) of teacher use of praise as an intervention strategy for behaviour management found that the use of contingent praise leads to a significant reduction in oppositional behaviour in learners. The study found that learners who received praise from teachers for appropriate behaviour gradually began to develop and exhibit compliant behaviours. This is a view supported by Poirot (2018: 10) whose study on the effects of non-contingent praise found that the skilful application of verbal praise can lead to an increase in on-task compliant behaviour in learners.

ii. Shaping the social and emotional effectiveness of learners

A study by Markelz and Taylor (2016: 2-3) found that teacher praise can shape the social and emotional worth of badly behaved learners. Markelz and Taylor (2016) highlighted the positive feelings of praise as joy, pride and pleasure, and argued that these feelings produce a positive effect, thereby encouraging learners to strive for better behaviour. The authors further noted that teacher praise tends to convey a specific message to learners that by receiving such accolades they have exceeded some remarkable behaviour. Such understanding appears to be what encourages learners to strive to behave even better. That is why Nauert (2020: 2) noted that teachers' praise, when delivered appropriately, can enhance the feeling of nurturing of learners' self-esteem and confidence, leading such learners to develop appropriate classroom behaviour.

iii. Positive feedback for learners' good behaviour

Verbal praise in the form of positive feedback to learners' display of appropriate behaviour has been found to improve the teacher-learner relationship. According to de Witt (2021: 224), positive feedback is very important as it tells the child that the demonstrated behaviour and actions were correct. For instance, research by Campbell (2017: 12) found that increased teacher verbal praise enabled the learners who took part in the study to develop trust in their teacher and that made them readily susceptible to listening and abiding by the classroom rules. Campbell (2017: 15) has also noted that when teacher praise induces interactions with learners, it encourages stronger learner engagement in appropriate behaviour, resulting in a lower likelihood that such learners would engage in misbehaviour. Poirot's (2018) study also alluded to the effect

teachers' verbal praise can have on their rapport with learners. Learners will more likely appreciate praise from their teachers if they perceive it as genuine and sincere. Burnett and Mandel (2010: 148) have indicated that students feel good, proud, and motivated when they are praised for good behaviour. This, of course, will increase the trust they may have in their teacher, thereby strengthening the relationship between them and their teachers. Consequently, learners' behaviour will be positively influenced.

iv. Managing learners with emotional and behavioural disorder

Verbal praise has been proven to be useful in managing learners with emotional and behavioural disorders (Kennedy, 2010; Levy, 2014). These learners present one or more of the following symptoms: difficulty in interpersonal relationships; limited cooperative skills; less frequent interaction with peers; use of coercive tactics to manipulate and control peers; being confrontational; and exhibiting emotional outbursts or anger tantrums (Markelz & Taylor, 2016: 1). Teachers who are in classrooms with such learners require skills in the use of verbal praise because empirical evidence has proven that this works. For example, a study by Kennedy (2010: 15) of elementary (Foundation Phase) teachers who relied on verbal praise in managing their learners with emotional and behavioural disorder, found that the skilful application of praise had a positive influence on the classroom conduct of such learners. The learners were observed to be well-behaved and less disruptive. Emotional and behavioural disorder learners are sensitive to negative comments from teachers (Campbell, 2017: 12), but Levy (2014: 11) found that teachers who often praise learners create a more enabling classroom environment. Despite the known benefits of verbal praise as a component of verbal discipline, in my review of the literature, no study was found on teachers' use of this approach. However, knowledge about verbal praise and its effectiveness can assist teachers in understanding how this strategy could function effectively.

Three categories of praise have been identified in literature (Poirot, 2018; Burnett & Mandel, 2010; Campbell, 2017). These are behaviour-specific praise (Poirot, 2018: 9), general praise (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 147; Lahr, 2014: 3), and backdoor or delayed praise (Campbell, 2017: 9-12).

3.6.1.1 Behaviour-specific praise

Behaviour-specific praise is the type of verbal praise in which the teacher specifies the behaviour that has received the praise (Poirot, 2018: 9). Researchers (Kennedy, 2010: 30; Partin, Robertson, Maggin, Oliver & Wehby, 2010: 174; Weinstein, 2019: 16) have suggested that the advantage of behaviour-specific praise relates to the fact that the teacher uses it to target specific learner behaviour. Moreover, Conroy et al. (2009: 18-26) have argued that this praise type is preferred because learners who receive such praise are directly aware of the reason for the praise. De Witt (2021:221) has advised teachers to stop making vague statements but instead praise the child's specific behaviour they want to control. The mentioned researchers argued that learners often feel embarrassed when they are unsure why they are being praised. From this perspective of specificity, a teacher using behaviour-specific praise to correct the behaviour of disruptive learners in the classroom would most likely make verbal praises such as:

i) *"Fikile, I really must tell you that I appreciate the manner you behaved today in class during lesson, please keep it up."*

ii) *"Somekele, you have done great today during the Life Skills lesson - you waited for your turn to be asked to speak."*

iii) *"Bongiwe, thank you so much; I really like how you sat quietly in class today. That was so good of you and I really would appreciate it if you can keep it up."* [my examples]

iv) *"You were so good to keep nice and quiet while I was talking on phone. I could hear everything Granny wanted to tell me." (De Witt, 2021: 221)*

As researchers support the use of this praise type as an effective tool in dealing with learners' behaviour, it would be interesting to find out if teachers are familiar with this kind of verbal praise. More so, it would be interesting to establish if they use it, and if they do, to understand what they achieve through it.

3.6.1.2 General praise

General or non-targeted praise is the most popular verbal praise among teachers (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 151). General praise, according to Jenkins and Floress (2015: 465), is defined as verbal statements or comments made by the teacher in reference to an occurrence of behaviour in which he/she does not mention the specific

behaviour or even mention the name of any particular learner. Al-Ghamdi (2017: 40) has argued that one of the qualities of a good praise statement is that it must satisfy learners' eagerness to know the reason for being praised as well as the behaviour that deserved the praise. Weinstein (2019: 26) gives examples of general praise in the classroom:

i) *Hey, good job today and no distractions.*
ii) *I value how well you are working with your group.*
iii) *Today everyone did a fantastic job during the group assignment and no messing around.*
iv) *I love your level of concentration today as everyone was so engaged in the discussion.*
v) *Good thinking today without disturbance.* [own examples]

In all the above examples, it is obvious that learners within the context of such praise would be left unsure to whom the praise may be addressed and the reason for the general praise. Pagilagan and Casupang (2014: 9) have classified praise which emanates from the general instead of being behaviour specific as global praise, denoting praise in which every learner is being praised at the same time. Arguing against teachers' use of general praise, Nauert (2020: 2) argued that praise is a form of teacher feedback to learners who want to understand the behaviour for which they are receiving praise. Supporting the above, Burnett and Mandel (2010: 15) noted that general praise is effective if it is contingent on a behaviour or targeted on a task. Although students want to be praised equally for good behaviour, most students prefer to be praised individually and privately (Burnett, 2001: 22; Mardiah, 2020: 45). It would be interesting to understand teachers' understanding and use of general praise in dealing with classroom misconduct.

3.6.1.3 Backdoor or delayed praise

The term backdoor or delayed praise refers to the type of praise that is indirect and often embedded in the teacher's comment during teaching and learning, which usually forms part of the corrective teaching that points directly to the behaviour the teacher wants to change in the learners (Reitz, 1979: 237-243; Trolinder, Choi & Proctor, 2004: 61-83; Campbell, 2017: 9; Campbell, 2019). The teacher using backdoor or delayed praise as a disciplinary strategy usually operates within intervals of between five to ten

minutes (Campbell, 2017: 63). It is important to mention that this type of teacher praise has not been studied by many researchers. However, studies by Trolinder et al. (2004: 72-7) and Campbell (2019: 74) have strongly defended the usefulness of this praise type as a good strategy for teachers to add to their classroom management toolbox. Campbell (2019: 74), who actually coined the concept 'backdoor' praise, noted further that pre-service teacher who took part in her study reported that the strategy supported positive behavioural changes in their learners and that they intended to continue using it as professional teachers. Campbell (2017: 9-10) has also suggested that since backdoor praise forms part of teachers' larger classroom interactions, learners who do not like public praise are less likely to be troubled by teachers' backdoor or delayed praise. Moreover, being a delayed form of praise, teachers who use it usually claim that it allows them ample time to think about the effect on learners' self-esteem. Given the lack of studies on this strategy, it is possible that teachers are currently using it either knowingly or unknowingly; yet little or nothing is known about what such teachers achieve by so doing.

3.6.2 Verbal redirection

Verbal redirection entails an interactional means by which the teacher tells the misbehaving learner what not to do, suggesting instead to him/her what good behaviour is (Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 65). It is a strategy that relies basically on behaviour redirection through which the teacher endeavours to explain the need for such redirection to the learner (Lentfer & Franks, 2015: 80). It is a gradual process that enables the teacher to engage with the misbehaving learner in a friendly verbal interaction in an attempt to redirect the learner's propensity for misbehaviour towards more appropriate behaviour (Queensland Health, Australia, 2017: 2). Verbal redirection has not been a popular disciplining strategy in schools. As a result, not much is known about what teachers achieve through this strategy. However, a few studies (Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 63-72; Lentfer & Franks, 2015: 79-87; Queensland Health, Australia, 2017: 1-3; Rock, 2019: 1-2) have found it effective in dealing with classroom misconduct in lower grades in primary schools. According to Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 66), verbal redirection provides learners with guidance on appropriate behaviour and allows them to demonstrate the replacement behaviour. For example, a learner may be in the habit of running around in the classroom, hitting other learners while lessons are going on. The teacher using this strategy will invite the learner to

explain why such behaviour may be inappropriate before explaining to the learner the appropriate and expected ways to behave in the classroom. The learner will then be given adequate time to correct his/her behaviour.

Seeing that this strategy promises to have the potential to effectively modify learner behaviour, verbal redirection has been relaunched through the redirect behaviour model. This model is a positive communication tool that provides the guidelines for teachers to enable them to redirect learners towards appropriate behaviour (Lentfer & Franks, 2015: 80-83). The aim of the model is to equip teachers confronted with difficult classroom behaviours with the appropriate communication skills to enable them to develop positive classroom habits. Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81) have identified three phases of the redirect behaviour model, namely: the initial training or teacher-centred phase; the questioning or learner-ownership phase; and the firm phase. I will start by explaining what each of the three phases of the model entails, according to Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81).

3.6.2.1 Initial training or teacher-centred phase

Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81) referred to this first phase as teacher centred because it is during this phase that the teacher tries to communicate the classroom rules for appropriate behaviour to learners. This usually takes place during the first to fourth week of the new term. It is referred to as initial training because the teacher uses this period to demonstrate and teach young learners the appropriate and desired behaviour expected of them in the classroom. According to Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81), the teacher should take every moment of her/his time in the classroom as an appropriate behaviour training moment. The objective of this phase is to demonstrate appropriate behaviour expected from all learners during the school year. One thing about this phase is that teachers must skilfully manage this phase so that they do not bore the learners with prolonged and unnecessary talks. Secondly, teachers must be mindful to not make every little display of misconduct a redirection of behaviour moment, thereby spending the greater part of the teaching time on behaviour redirection. So, this phase is all about what the teachers do to redirect their learners towards the desired behaviour.

3.6.2.2 The questioning or learner-ownership phase

According to Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81), this phase, which implies the questioning or learner ownership phase, offers the opportunity for intense interaction with the learner. The authors refer to this phase as learner centred because the role of teachers is that of facilitators. The learner is asked some probing questions about his/her behaviour and then the learner can engage in interaction with the teacher. It also refers to learner ownership because in this phase learners must take the responsibility to identify the inappropriate behaviour they engage in and explain why they think of such behaviour as inappropriate. The learners will also take the responsibility to identify what is appropriate behaviour and why they think this. The final phase is referred to as the firm phase.

3.6.2.3 The firm phase

Despite the teachers' efforts at redirecting the misbehaving learners, Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81) have suggested that there is the possibility that some learners will stubbornly decide to be non-compliant. The non-compliant behaviour will then force teachers to present such learners with the 'easy way and hard way' options from which such learners must make a choice. The easy way option signals a situation in which the learners decide to comply with the teachers' orders on the appropriate classroom behaviours. On the other hand, the hard way option is the result of the escalation of the learners' inappropriate behaviour, leading to the possibility of meetings between the parents, the teacher, and the principal. It must be mentioned that what seems to make this phase an effective way to deal with misbehaving learners is that teachers engage with such learners and patiently explain the implications of both options to the learners until the teachers are convinced that the learners understand the options to enable them to make informed decisions (Lentfer & Franks, 2015: 81).

Research by Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 65) and Rock (2019: 1) has found verbal redirection to be an effective disciplining strategy in use by teachers, especially in the lower grades in primary schools. The authors have suggested that the strength of the strategy lies in the fact that the teacher who chooses to adopt verbal redirection is able to refocus the learners from negative to positive classroom behaviour through the nature of the interaction between them. Verbal redirection is also recommended for

use when the teacher is challenged by a learner who is in the habit of repeating undesirable behaviour (Queensland Health, Australia, 2017: 2). Notwithstanding the fact that this strategy has been declared effective in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP, it is doubtful how the strategy has influenced teachers' handling of classroom misconduct and whether the strategy is even known to teachers. Given this, it would be interesting to establish whether teachers are aware of this strategy and, if they are, whether they use it and what they achieve by doing so. I will now turn my attention to yet another form of verbal discipline, here referred to as verbal reprimand.

3.6.3 Verbal reprimand

According to Jambor (2001: 222), verbal reprimand represents any form of the teachers' statements that tends to scold the misbehaving learner privately after the class or in the presence of his/her classmates in the classroom. Verbal reprimand also refers to remarks that may involve the use of unfriendly and insulting words that tend to indicate teachers' disapproval for learner misbehaviour (Ofoha, 2017: 222). Verbal reprimand is one disciplining strategy that has gained prominence among schoolteachers (Kennedy, 2010: 8; Chikwature et al., 2016: 41). Studies (Gable et al., 2009: 201-205; Split et al., 2016: 3-10; Campbell, 2017: 12) have shown that despite the value of using verbal praise, teachers are more susceptible to the use of verbal reprimand than the use of verbal praise. Verbal reprimand has been perceived by the above researchers as an aggressive and negative disciplining strategy. For instance, Chikwature et al. (2016: 35-41) have argued that verbal reprimand can be an extremely dangerous approach to deal with classroom misconduct because of its tendency to demean the learners' self-esteem and self-concept. A study by Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 117) also claimed that teachers face the challenge or temptation to use abusive language, which in most cases worsens learners' behaviours instead of correcting or reducing them. While verbal praise and redirection are considered as positive behavioural strategies, verbal reprimand is classified as a negative behavioural strategy (Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 65; Split et al., 2016: 10). As I will discuss later in this section, verbal reprimand can be categorised into an effective and ineffective strategy for dealing with classroom misconduct. More so, its effectiveness or ineffectiveness depends on the skills and experience of teachers adopting this strategy. Discussion on verbal reprimand is imperative because research (Kennedy, 2010: 7-8) has shown that teachers are more susceptible to using verbal reprimand

than using any other disciplining strategy. The study by Riedesel (2019: 31-32) identified four types of verbal reprimand namely, mild, medium, harsh and gesture verbal reprimand. Below, I explain the four types of verbal reprimand.

3.6.3.1 Mild reprimand

Mild reprimand refers to the teacher's soft-spoken minor comments made with the intention of showing disapproval for learner misconduct in the classroom (Riedesel, 2019: 31). The distinguishing element of mild verbal reprimand is that it is devoid of all forms of verbal sarcasm. Gable et al. (2009: 201) suggested that mild verbal reprimand in the form of a quiet or private talk can sometimes be more effective than verbal praise, but also suggest that teachers who rely on this type of reprimand have a more positive impact on learners' behaviour than those who shout or yell at misbehaving learners. An example of a mild verbal reprimand by the teacher to a learner who chose to be naughty, hitting or pinching other learners during lessons could be, "Hey Peter, do not do that again. This is not the way you treat your friends." The teachers who choose to use mild verbal reprimand will have to work out what kind of mild soothing words will encourage the learners to respond positively to their verbal command. Kennedy (2010: 8) has suggested that by designing the kind of lessons that will support the use of mild talk, skilful teachers can help the misbehaving learner to strengthen his/her self-efficacy. This implies carefully and consciously planned training in the use of the specific type of disciplining strategy.

3.6.3.2 Medium reprimand

A medium reprimand entails the teachers' use of critical or sarcastic words to demonstrate strong disapproval of the learners' specific classroom behaviour at a given time. Riedesel (2019: 31) has noted that teachers' use of medium reprimand resonates through their use of a critical tone of voice in dealing with the learners' classroom misbehaviour. When teachers employ medium verbal reprimand to correct bad classroom behaviour, they could make comments which may be perceived by the learners as being rude and disrespectful. Examples of such comments towards the misbehaving learner may include, *"Hey Kagiso, is this the best behaviour you can show us in this class?" "Jane, you are frustrating the class by what you are doing, when are you going to demonstrate good manners?" "I do not remember telling you to talk to*

your friends in that rude voice of yours, Nkosi!" In each of these examples, the teachers using medium verbal reprimand employ the use of sarcasm.

3.6.3.3 Harsh reprimand

The distinguishing aspect of harsh reprimand is the dramatic change in the teachers' tone of voice. The teachers' tone of voice will become louder coupled with clear observable change in facial expression (Riedesel, 2019: 32). In most cases, the scenario necessitating teachers to use harsh verbal reprimand signifies the height of frustration for the unskilled teachers. The tone of voice becomes very sharp with lengthy comments from the teachers (Riedesel, 2019: 32). At the height of this frustration, the teachers' voice becomes very stern, resulting in rebuke or scolding. For example, *"If I observe one more disruptive behaviour from you, Nkosinathi, your parents will be here first thing tomorrow morning." "By the way, how many times do I have to say this to you, before you learn to behave like your peers, Jessica?"* Omasu, Ueno, Sakazaki and Nishimura (2016: 85) noted that this tone of voice could be inimical to the teachers' successful handling of classroom misconduct due to its negative impact on the learners' self-esteem and its resultant effect on how such learners want to relate with their teachers. Thus, it is important for teachers to fully understand the disciplining strategy they have decided to follow to deal with classroom misconduct, being fully aware that there could be either positive or negative consequences for the learners. I argue that, given this scenario, it is imperative that teachers are equipped by means of either carefully planned pre-service or in-service training programmes in implementing verbal disciplining and/or other alternative strategies for dealing with classroom misconduct.

Although research has consistently shown increases in the use of verbal reprimand among teachers in schools (Lukowiak & Bridge, 2010: 64-65; Chikwature et al., 2016: 41; Ofoha, 2017: 219-222; Weinstein, 2019: 16), empirical evidence on what teachers achieve by so doing is lacking. More so, apart from the study by Riedesel (2019: 31-32) where the different types of verbal reprimand were highlighted, very few studies were found exploring verbal reprimand in dealing with classroom misconduct. Research that is specifically designed to explore teachers' use of verbal reprimand is essential to establish the workability of this strategy in dealing with classroom misconduct.

3.6.3.4 Gestural reprimand

Gestural reprimand entails the use of sign or non-verbal or body language to caution misbehaving learner/s. Gestural reprimand is when the teacher uses non-verbal actions to indicate disapproval of a student's behaviour (Riedesel, 2019). An example of a gestural reprimand, according to Riedesel (2019: 32), includes physically guiding the child' s body to a preferred area or activity such as "shaking head to communicate no or stop doing that, or putting hands on hips and making a disapproving look toward the child". De Witt (2021: 220) listed facial expression (sending disapproval message to a child facially), eye contact (using eyes to send message) and touch (tapping a child to show disproval of action). This implies carefully and consciously planned training in the use of body language as a disciplining strategy. Having explored types of verbal discipline, I now turn to the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of verbal discipline.

3.7 EFFECTIVENESS AND INEFFECTIVENESS OF VERBAL DISCIPLINE

The effectiveness and ineffectiveness of various types of verbal discipline have been identified in literature across the globe. In this section, I will highlight the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of verbal praise and verbal reprimand in dealing with classroom misconduct as verbal redirection has not been a popular disciplining strategy in schools although included and discussed extensively under types of verbal discipline.

3.7.1 Effectiveness and ineffectiveness of verbal praise

Numerous studies (see Brophy, 1981: 12-18; Soto, 2014: 12; Markelz & Taylor, 2016: 2-3) have shown that there is both effective and ineffective classroom verbal praise, notwithstanding the type of praise used.

3.7.1.1 Effectiveness of verbal praise

Studies (Kelly & Pohl, 2018: 24; Manzoor et al., 2015: 38) have shown that teachers' praise talks with an offending learner can be more rewarding in dealing with classroom misconduct. Firdaus (2015: 30) has argued that verbal praise will be an effective tool for dealing with classroom misconduct if teachers know and understand the qualities necessary to make verbal praise effective. A great deal of empirical evidence (Brophy, 1981: 12-18; Partin et al., 2010: 173; Lahr, 2014: 2; Levy, 2014: 11; Al-Ghamdi, 2017:

40) suggests that effective verbal praise should demonstrate some or all of the following qualities, namely, contingency, specificity and credibility.

i. Contingency of praise

One important quality of effective verbal praise is its contingency element. This entails that praise should only be given for learners' performance of appropriate or desired behaviour (Brophy, 1981: 12). This means that praise must be earned by a learner. It is not a gift. Rather, it is contingent in the sense that the teacher delivers praise in a suitable and timely way because a learner has displayed appropriate behaviour for the benefit of both the teacher and fellow learners. Al-Ghamdi (2017: 40) argued that learners are motivated to continue to display desired behaviour when praise is delivered contingently, because such closeness enables learners to appreciate the act of appropriate classroom behaviour.

ii. Specificity of praise

Another important element of the effectiveness of praise is its specificity. One quality of specificity of praise is that it provides feedback to learners on the specific behaviour receiving praise. Research by Campbell (2017: 10) suggested that learners are most likely to appreciate teacher praise when they are sure which aspect of their behaviour is receiving praise and why. Again, new research by Nauert (2020: 2) supports the quality of specificity of praise with regard to feedback, arguing that learners appreciate such feedback as it enables them to really understand, not just when they have displayed appropriate behaviour, but also to learn the type of behaviour expected of them by their teachers. De Witt (2021: 221) recommended praising the child's behaviour in specific terms as part of effective discipline. Praise as a form of positive feedback therefore becomes informative and interactive, enabling learners to become more appreciative of the value of appropriate classroom behaviour. Campbell (2017: 15) has noted that the effect of this scenario is that learners will become less likely to engage in undesirable classroom behaviours.

iii. Credibility of praise

Finally, for teacher praise to be effective, learners must perceive such praise as credible. The credibility of praise talks to the elements of sincerity and authenticity (Brophy, 1981: 12; Conroy et al., 2009: 19). Learners receiving praise will not

appreciate praise if they perceive insincerity and deceit from the teacher's tone of voice. Research by Burnett and Mandel (2010: 147) found that the behaviours of primary school learners improved because the learners perceived their teachers' praise as genuine. The learners then learnt to trust their teachers, resulting in better relationships with their teachers.

Having explained the various elements of effective praise, it appears that teachers resorting to praise as a strategy to deal with classroom misconduct will require specific training to effectively deliver quality and effective praise to deserving learners. While the qualities of contingency, specificity and credibility support the effectiveness of teacher praise as a corrective strategy for learner unacceptable behaviours, the question arises whether conditions could exist that render praise ineffective.

3.7.1.2 Ineffectiveness of verbal praise

Studies (Brophy, 1981: 8; Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Meyers & Sugai, 2008: 353-64; Soto, 2014: 12-13) identified a number of conditions that can render teacher praise an ineffective strategy in dealing with classroom misconduct. A discussion of reasons for ineffective verbal praise follows below.

i. Lack of training and experience in the use of praise

Lack of training and experience in the use of praise has been identified as a major reason why teachers fail to achieve the desired behaviour from misbehaving learners. Simonsen et al. (2008: 360-66) found that most teachers struggle to make use of praise because of lack of specific skills and/or the willingness to make themselves available for training. In this regard, Partin et al. (2010: 173) emphasised the importance of teacher skills in the use of praise as an effective strategy for managing classroom behaviour. This view is also supported by Firdaus (2015: 30) who argued that teachers' praise will be ineffective if they lack the basic information and skills on how to use it. Teacher training should, thus, include ways to use strategies such as praise. Simonsen et al. (2008: 228-9) noted that such training may either be indirect, whereby pre-service teachers could be provided with the type of content knowledge on how to use teacher praise, or direct training through continuing professional development.

ii. When learners perceive praise as a mechanism of control

A study by Soto (2014: 12) showed that teacher praise can be an ineffective strategy for correcting learner misconduct when praise sounds to learners as a mechanism for control. Learners, in general, dislike rigid control of their freedom. Foucault (1977: 152) also noted that disciplinary control does not simply consist of teaching learners the ideal ways of doing; it appears to subtly impose a form of regimental use of the body and classroom space. In Foucault's (1977: 152) account of well-disciplined learners, attention is drawn to the learners' accurate use of time where "nothing must remain idle or useless, everything must be called upon to form the support" of the form of behaviour that is required of every well-disciplined learner. This disciplinary approach appears to indicate an unequal power relation that places learners at a disadvantage if teachers abuse their power. If learners perceive teacher praise as a control mechanism, Split et al. (2016: 10) have argued that it may cause a negative sense of self-worth, engendering externalising inappropriate behaviours. Teacher praise then becomes an ineffective strategy for dealing with learner classroom misconduct.

Teachers, therefore, have a responsibility not to demean learners through wrongful praise, but instead to ensure that their learners continue to perceive teachers' praise as an enabler for self-regulation. Venter and van Niekerk (2011: 250) summarised Foucault's agency of self-regulation, describing the self as an individual who is frequently in the process of establishing him- or herself as a moral subject through both technologies of the self and that of ethical self-constitution, where the notion of power is not simply perceived as a form suppression, force and/or authority. Teacher praise will be ineffective if learners do not see value in it. Thus, the agency of the teacher's skilful guidance is paramount in leading the badly behaved learner to have the pleasure of seeking alternative positive ways of behaving by him- or herself. One of the findings of Firdaus' (2015: 30) study suggested that the wrongful application of teacher praise can hurt learners' self-esteem, thereby destroying the relationship between teachers and learners.

iii. The timing and place the teacher uses a praise statement

The timing and place teachers choose to use praise as a corrective strategy for ill-discipline may be ineffective if not done wisely. For instance, Campbell (2017: 22) found that teacher praise may be viewed as embarrassing and insulting by learners who deplore being praised in front of other learners. In fact, an earlier study by Burnett

and Mandel (2010: 146) had alluded to the fact that teachers should not assume that every learner wants to be praised publicly. Although learners in Burnett and Mandel's (2010: 147) study expected praise from their teachers when they behaved appropriately, some of them, however, preferred their teacher to call them aside for such praise. The teacher adopting praise as a strategy to deal with classroom misconduct needs to not only understand the appropriate time for using praise but is also required to understand the learners' space preference where they would expect the praise. This means that the teacher must know his/her learners very well.

iv. The infrequency of praise

Finally, teacher praise can be an ineffective strategy if it is infrequent or sporadic, and non-contingent (Brophy, 1981: 8). Although learners want to be praised regularly, they also want to know why they are being praised and for which specific behaviour. Teacher praise can be ineffective if learners simply rely on such praise to be well-behaved (Soto, 2014: 12). This suggests that the use of praise by an unskilful teacher can hamper instead of encouraging self-discipline in learners for appropriate classroom behaviour. Thus, learners may resort to behaving appropriately only to satisfy their teachers' expectations for good conduct to attract or receive teachers' praise. The final section of my discussion on the concept of praise now considers the effects of verbal praise.

3.7.2 Effectiveness and ineffectiveness of verbal reprimand

Studies carried out in the United States (Gable et al., 2009; Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010; Riedesel, 2019), in Belgium (Split et al., 2016), and in Nigeria (Ofoha, 2017) have highlighted some of the qualities of effective and ineffective teacher verbal reprimand to which I now turn my attention.

3.7.2.1 Effectiveness of verbal reprimand

Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 65-6) highlight conditions under which the teachers can effectively adopt verbal reprimand in their classroom to handle misconduct as follows:

i. Verbal reprimand must be instantaneous to be effective

Verbal reprimand will be effective in dealing with learner classroom misconduct if the learners are informed immediately what is inappropriate about their behaviour, and the

teachers' use of mild/soft verbal reprimand. This implies that the teachers who choose to adopt verbal reprimand have the responsibility to skilfully inform the misbehaving learners why they are being reprimanded. Brophy (1981: 13) referred to the importance of specificity of teacher disciplining actions, in other words, the teachers' ability to explicitly explain to learners the reasons why their behaviour was deemed inappropriate. Using this approach, Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 65) suggested that by not humiliating the learner, the teachers' verbal reprimand may be more likely to effect change in the learner.

ii. *Teachers' tone must be devoid of anger and chastisement*

Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 65) have advised teachers who adopt verbal reprimand in disciplining misbehaving learners to ensure that they avoid using a tone of voice that will portray anger. Instead, calmness and a firm tone of voice is key in sending a clear message to the misbehaving learners about the seriousness of their actions, while directing the learners to what is appropriate classroom behaviour.

iii. When combined with another disciplining strategy

Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 66) suggested that verbal reprimand will be effective if combined with other verbal disciplining strategies such as redirection and eye contact. Soto (2014: 12) has indicated that a combination of verbal disciplining strategies may be more beneficial in correcting learner misconduct. For example, teachers may use verbal reprimand to correct learners' inappropriate behaviour, use verbal redirection to direct learners to appropriate behaviour and then use verbal praise to try to encourage them to continue repeating the appropriate behaviour.

iv. When verbal reprimand is harmless

Finally, effective verbal reprimand should not cause any form of harm or embarrassment to the learners (Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 66). For instance, if teachers intend to correct misbehaviour in learners, verbal reprimand should not take place in front of other learners or the learners being reprimanded will become unnecessarily embarrassed. Studies (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 146; Campbell, 2017: 22) showed that not all misbehaving learners want to be corrected publicly in the classroom in the presence of other learners. In addition, Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 67) have further noted that effective teacher verbal reprimand should not involve

continuous threatening and chastising of the misbehaving learners, otherwise verbal reprimand will become ineffective. In the next section, I present the reasons why verbal reprimand is considered an ineffective strategy in dealing with learner classroom misbehaviour.

3.7.2.2 Ineffectiveness of verbal reprimand

Despite the above reasons supporting the effectiveness of verbal reprimand as a strategy for dealing with classroom misconduct, studies (Gable et al., 2009: 201; Chikwature et al., 2016: 41; Split et al., 2016: 9-10; Riedesel, 2019: 31-2) have found the strategy to be an ineffective disciplining approach for use by teachers for the following reasons:

i. *No evidence of incremental improvement in learner behaviour*

Verbal reprimand is perceived as ineffective because it does not lead to any significant improvement in misbehaving learners' classroom behaviour. For instance, the study by Split et al. (2016: 6-9) involving 30 teachers and 570 learners sampled from 15 elementary schools in the rural Dutch-speaking region of Belgium, found that teachers who resorted to the use of verbal reprimand in disciplining misbehaving learners reported cases of higher levels of oppositional and hyperactive behaviour. Split et al. (2016: 10) also noted that the relationship between those teacher participants who confessed to frequent use of verbal reprimand and their learners were poor because of the constant use of negative comments by their teachers. It undermined the learners' trust in their teachers' care and love, and these feelings impacted negatively on relationships with their teachers.

ii. *Evidence that it reinforces negative behaviour in learners*

In Central Illinois, USA, Riedesel (2019: 29) studied the use of verbal reprimand by 66 teachers to establish its effectiveness in controlling the behaviour of learners. Riedesel (2019: 48) found that neither mild, medium nor harsh verbal reprimand led to any observable positive improvement in the behaviour of learners with misbehaviour. Instead, Riedesel (2019) found that verbal reprimand resulted in reinforcement of negative behaviour among learners.

iii. *Negative impact on learners' relationship with teachers*

In Lagos Nigeria, Ofoha (2017: 219) studied teachers' use of verbal reprimand and its effect in dealing with misconduct in primary schools. The study found that teachers used verbal reprimand 86.4% of the time and only 13.6% of the time positive reinforcement when correcting their learners' inappropriate classroom behaviour. Ofoha (2017: 228) further reported that the frequency of using verbal reprimand in the classroom meant that learners perceived the classroom interactions with their teachers to be unfriendly and unsupportive. This appears to be the reason why Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 65) advise teachers to avoid the use of verbal reprimand, citing the fact that it does not provide the misbehaving learners with the opportunity to learn appropriate behaviour and to practice it going forward. Finally, I want to draw my discussions in this chapter to a close by looking at the implications of the discussions for my study in the next section.

3.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

To reiterate, the broad aim of the present study was to increase understanding of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. What was strikingly important for my study about the discussions in the various sections of this chapter as well as in Chapter Two, was the obvious lack of data about what teachers achieve by the adoption of verbal discipline when dealing with classroom misconduct. For example, none of the studies conducted in South Africa mentioned teachers' use of the various types of verbal discipline as alternative discipline approaches that I had cited in Chapters One and Three, informed readers on how teachers use verbal discipline, the skills and knowledge they possess for its use, or what they achieve by so doing. It would seem plausible to argue that teachers' skills and experience, as well as training in the application of one and/or a combination of verbal praise, verbal redirection, and verbal reprimand are key ingredients for the effective use of such strategies.

Research by Korb, Selzing-Musa and Skinner-Bonat (2016: 79-87) revealed that a well-structured in-service training in classroom management assisted primary school teachers in Jos Metropolis of Nigeria to gain the relevant skills in dealing with classroom misconduct. In addition, Floress, Beschta, Meyers and Reinke (2017: 227) have noted that training in teachers' classroom management skills can assist them in

applying appropriate discipline strategies in dealing with classroom misconduct. An earlier study by Simonson et al. (2008: 228) also highlighted the importance of training of teachers to effectively implement disciplining strategies in the classroom. However, in the absence of empirical studies on the effectiveness and/or ineffectiveness of verbal disciplining strategies in South African literature, teachers may continue to speculate about its effectiveness or its impact in dealing with classroom misconduct. It is therefore necessary to obtain empirical evidence that would facilitate our understanding of verbal disciplining and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom.

3.9 SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted the importance of verbal discipline as a viable disciplining strategy to deal with classroom misconduct. The strategy is also increasingly gaining prominence among teachers within the FP classrooms in South Africa. However, despite its potency in dealing with learner behaviours, it emerges from literature that not much is known of how teachers use this strategy and what they achieve by using it. Thus, it is rather common sense to argue that, with the paucity of empirical data on what teachers achieve or do not achieve by using verbal disciplining strategy, it is hard for teachers to determine what effects verbal disciplining may have on the behaviour of their learners. Empirical evidence from my research will help bridge this perceived gap in knowledge about teachers' use of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in handling classroom misconduct. Such empirical knowledge will involve both policy and practice in the implementation of verbal discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment. In the next chapter, I will discuss the research methodology that guided this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research methods that I used to carry out this study. The main aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP in order to develop a guide to enhance the effective use of verbal discipline. Although verbal discipline forms an integral part of teachers' daily disciplining strategies, limited studies in the area mean that teachers experience of its use and its effectiveness remain relatively unknown. It is important to note that I conceptualised this study from the theoretical perspective of Symbolic Interactions (SI), discussed in Chapter One, to facilitate the discovery of the processes through which verbal discipline may be effective in dealing with classroom misconduct to give guidance to teachers in practice. Hence, an interpretive paradigm, a qualitative research approach, a phenomenological research design and related data collection methods, as well as measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations discussed below will help to increase the understanding of teachers' use of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP with the goal of developing a guide to enhance the effective use of verbal discipline.

As mentioned in Chapter One, the main research question that guided this study was: How effective is verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP? The study was also designed to address the following sub-research questions:

- How do teachers understand verbal discipline?
- How do teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct?
- What additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct?
- What policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools?

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

A research paradigm is the philosophical position taken by an individual researcher, which provides him/her with the belief systems (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 325) that direct

the research. According to Quinn (2019: 30), a paradigm provides the lens with which researchers view and conduct their research. Nieuwenhuis (2020b: 58) noted that a paradigm implies an organising principle by which reality is understood. The value of a research paradigm relates to its function that dictates what is to be studied, how the researcher goes about studying it and how the empirical evidence from such research should be interpreted (Holt, 2019: 52). According to Bakkabulindi (2015: 19), a paradigm simply means "a sort of camp, to which a researcher belongs in terms of assumptions, propositions, thinking and the approach to research". The understanding of the social realities that resonate through the teachers' use of verbal discipline and the subsequent interpretations that I make thereof was guided by the epistemological assumptions I made in this regard. Woolridge (2017: 15) argued that it is imperative that the researcher's worldview be studied so that the fundamental notions made about the phenomenon and the interpretations thereof can be recognised and understood. The main research and sub-research questions, and the methodology I used are thus a reflection of my set of beliefs that provide significant information about the focus of this study. In line with the objectives of this study, and the principles of SI, the interpretive research paradigm was thought to be the most appropriate for the study.

4.2.1 Interpretive research paradigm

The interpretive research paradigm provides the platform where the participants and their subjective meanings are the primary source of data. According to Siddiqui (2019: 258), the interpretive framework refers to the approach that concerns itself with the understanding of the subjective social world of human lived experiences. Bakkabulindi (2015: 26-7) and Tshabangu (2015: 40) noted that an interpretive research paradigm seeks an understanding of the social world through accessing the meanings that participants attach to their actions and experiences. Interpretivists seek to understand and reveal what is going on within the natural setting under study (Siddiqui, 2019: 259). As a result, interpretive researchers implement the kind of methodology that allows them to conduct their research within a given natural setting. Such researchers use the approaches that will allow them to achieve direct and personal contacts with the participants that are being studied, to get the insiders' views of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 22-3). In other words, the researcher who follows the tenets of an interpretive paradigm engages in a deeper immersion of the self within the natural setting in which participants dwell.

By adopting the interpretive paradigm in this study, I was able to engage in prolonged interviews with the participating teachers to understand the philosophical underpinnings of the social, cultural and historical context within which they construct verbal discipline as a strategy for dealing with classroom misconduct. I actively positioned myself within the natural, shared location, beliefs, and contexts in which FP teachers adopt the strategy of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct. By using this approach, I intended to achieve a clear understanding of the wider sociocultural and historical contexts within which the participating teachers perceive the implementation of verbal discipline for misconduct amongst learners. I decided to adopt the qualitative research approach in this study to align with the interpretive paradigm.

4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

The choice of SI and the interpretive research paradigm warranted that I adopt a qualitative research approach in my study. For McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 31), a qualitative research approach emphasises the collecting of data through fieldwork using the actual words of the participants on a naturally occurring phenomenon, and not through quantification of responses as is the case with the use of, for instance, questionnaires in quantitative research. The qualitative approach thus requires researchers to search and explore the phenomenon under study with a variety of methods until they achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon. Okeke (2015: 207) defines qualitative research as the data collection process involving the direct collection of data through fieldwork representing the actual words of those who took part in the study. Creswell (2014: 17) noted that in qualitative research, the researcher collects rich data to get in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon. The phenomenon that I wanted to learn more about by using this approach was teachers' use of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom. As noted in Chapter One, this research approach ensured that I stayed focused on achieving a clear and deep understanding of the dynamics of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in order to develop a guide to enhance the effective use verbal discipline. It is also important to note that the epistemological link between the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative research approach and the phenomenological research design provided me with a

framework to understand the participants' individual lived and collective experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018: 75; Izzo, 2019: 42).

4.4 PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

The concept of phenomenology developed from the works of Edmund Husserl, emphasized the meaning a phenomenon has for a group of people or an individual (Nieuwenhuis, 2020c: 85). Over the years, several interpretations of phenomenology developed from Husserl's view. The interpretation that fitted the objectives of my study was descriptive phenomenology (Meyers, 2019: 32). I see a phenomenological research design therefore as referring to the kind of study that focuses on describing the meanings and essence of lived experiences of specific people (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 5) through the descriptions that are provided by them (van Wyk & Taole, 2015: 175).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018: 13), the phenomenological research design is the kind of research design in which the researcher endeavours to describe the lived experiences of specific people regarding the phenomenon under study as they themselves have narrated it – in this case the description of the participating teachers of their experiences of verbal discipline in the FP class. Creswell and Poth (2018: 79) have argued that a phenomenological design is appropriate if the aim of the study is to understand the collectively shared experiences of a phenomenon to articulate a deeper understanding concerning the features of such a phenomenon. Ataro (2020: 20) has suggested that the descriptive phenomenological research design is appropriate for researching phenomena of which little or no previous research evidence exists. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 372), the purpose of a phenomenological study is to describe and interpret the experiences of participants regarding an event to understand the meanings participants ascribe to such an event. I adopted the phenomenological design because I sought a deeper understanding of teachers' use of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct. This design provided me with the opportunity to obtain empirical information on how teachers use verbal discipline and what they achieve through it in the context of classroom misconduct.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Under this section, the participants and site, sample and sample size, data collection techniques and procedure, as well as data analysis and presentation for the study will be discussed.

4.5.1 Research participants and site

The target participants for this study were FP teachers who teach in primary schools located in Bloemfontein in the Free State province of South Africa. The rationale for the choice of the target participants was based on the empirically proven evidence that classroom misconduct, even in the FP, is on the increase in schools after the abolition of corporal punishment (Masitsa, 2008: 236; Nigrini, 2016: 55-77; Segalo & Rambuda, 2018: 3). Concerns continue to be on the rise about the state of learner discipline in the FP classroom and therefore I decided to study the perceptions of the teachers within this phase of schooling about the phenomenon. I was also interested in establishing how teachers experience misconduct in relation to the use of verbal discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment. A study by Nigrini (2016: 54-68) suggested that FP teachers spend a huge amount of time in their efforts to manage learner discipline in their classrooms. Stadler's (2017: 53-9) study revealed the serious nature of disruptive behaviour that FP teachers face in their classrooms. A study by Dwarika (2019: 8-12) has shown that FP teachers are seemingly overwhelmed by learners' difficult classroom behaviour. An earlier study by Singh (2014: 74-83) also indicated that FP teachers are hugely impacted by the level of learner disruptive behaviours in their classes. Dwarika (2019: 11) suggested that part of the classroom challenges is the teachers' mishandling of learners' disruptive behaviours, which seems to aggravate the situation.

The research site (selected primary schools in Bloemfontein) was considered suitable because of its proximity and accessibility as I reside and work in Bloemfontein and therefore familiar with the selected primary schools' locations. Bloemfontein is the capital of Free State Province of South Africa. Bloemfontein is a city in the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality under Motheo District. Both the urban and the rural schools were selected from Bloemfontein town. A study by Segalo and Rambuda (2018: 3) revealed that cases of disruptive behaviour are rampant in the FP classroom in the Free State province and that teachers are seemingly unable to encourage the

necessary behavioural standards that will enhance good self-discipline amongst learners. Also, an earlier study by Masitsa (2011: 170-1) discovered that FP teachers in the Free State continue to paint scenarios in which both the teachers and learners feel very unsafe due to incidences of serious misconduct among learners. Given these revelations, I considered both my choice of participants and the site relevant for the objectives of the study.

4.5.2 Sampling and sample size

This study adopted purposive sampling method to select both the research sites and the participants that took part in this study. Creswell and Poth (2018: 148) defined purposive sampling as a sampling technique that allows the researcher to deliberately select a group of people that can best provide relevant responses to the phenomenon under study. Purposive sampling according to Maree and Pietersen (2020: 220) is a method of sampling that is used in special situations where the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind. Nwaigwe (2022:121) indicated that purposive sampling technique is subjective given its dependence on the criteria for selection as defined by the researcher. The participating schools were selected from primary schools located in Bloemfontein. The selected teachers comprised a combination of teachers teaching before and after the abolishment of corporal punishment. They were selected based on their experience in using verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct and voluntary willingness to participate.

Ten teachers teaching grades 1 - 3 were selected from two primary schools for this study - five teachers from one urban and another five from one rural primary school. The rationale for selecting two primary schools was to provide an opportunity for rich and varied information from the participants. By selecting two schools, I also wanted to ensure that the ten teachers were not selected from one school that shared the same socio-economic status. This would facilitate data triangulation that would ensure the credibility of the emerging discourse on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. Although there is no standardised approach to measure the adequacy of a sample size, experts in qualitative research (Hall, Chai & Albrecht, 2016: 137-8) have noted that a sample size of ten would be adequate because there is no inferential emphasis from sample to population. Apart from the small number that characterizes qualitative research, Creswell and Creswell

(2018: 186) indicate a sample size of 3 - 10 participants for Phenomenology study. Study by Karr (2017: 71) argued that in a phenomenological research design, emphasis is not on the number of participants but on the experiential richness of the detailed accounts each participant is willing to give regarding the phenomenon under study. Karr (2017: 71) further pointed out that what is important is the fact that the researcher has to be knowledgeable enough to understand the need for him/her to continue to collect vital information on the phenomenon in focus until information saturation is reached, that is, until no new information is forthcoming from the participants.

4.5.3 Research instruments and procedures

I made use of two data collection instruments, namely, interviews and document analysis to collect data for this study. I used data from the document analysis to supplement data that emerged from the interviews. This was important in order to ensure triangulation of data sources, which would improve the trustworthiness of the emerging research findings (McMillian & Schumacher, 2014: 355; Creswell & Poth, 2018: 256). My reason for choosing only document analysis and interviews was to get in-depth knowledge of school discipline policies and the teachers' general views on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom.

4.5.3.1 Interviews

Following a phenomenological perspective, I made use of interviews as the main tool to collect data from the participants. Interviews involve the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals in the form of unstructured, semi-structured or structured interviews (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018: 508; Nieuwenhuis, 2020c:108). In this study, semi-structured interviews were employed to get detailed responses from the participants through open-ended questions and probes. According to Gill et al. (2008: 291) semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to deviate in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. In a typical semi-structured interview, according to Edward and Holland (2013: 29), a list of questions or series of topics are to be covered. An interview guide directs

the questions to be asked and responded to with probes for detailed information to answer the research questions. The major aim of semi-structured interviews is to obtain the subjective responses of the participants to a known situation from their own lived experiences (Datko, 2015: 143). Using semi-structured interviews in this study allowed the participating teachers the freedom to express views on the phenomenon of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP.

I personally collected data from the participants by means of face-to-face and telephonic interviews with Covid-19 pandemic protocols in place. Before the interviews, I held a preliminary meeting with the participants to explain the purpose of the study and the interview guide to assist them to provide me with relevant information to achieve the aims of this study. I negotiated with the schools' principals and the participating teachers to ensure that an appropriate venue within the schools' premises was made available for the purpose of the interviews. The interviews were conducted after school hours on a date and time approved by the participants to respect their official hours. The interviews, with the consent of the participants, were scheduled to last between 30 and 60 minutes. By carefully developing an interview guide (Appendix F), I ensured that all participants received the same open-ended questions. The participants signed the consent forms (Appendix E), thus granting their consent to be interviewed. I also sought permission from the participants for all interviews to be audio-recorded to ensure that nothing was missed or confused about each participant's responses during transcription for proper analysis.

4.5.3.2 Document review/analysis

Document review or analysis is an efficient means to engage organisational electronic and/or printed material in a critical and evaluative manner in order to make sense of its content (Penley, 2018: 59). The researcher doing document analysis examines a particular document in order to gain an adequate understanding of the specific issues being reviewed with the aim of generating particular empirical knowledge, which the researcher uses to interpret the phenomenon under study. I used document analysis as a supplementary data source and as a means to achieve the triangulation, which entails the use of multiple methods in the study of the same phenomenon. By collecting and reviewing the policy document (Alternatives to corporal punishment) on school

discipline and the selected schools' codes of conduct in combination with the semi-structured interview, I was able to corroborate findings across the two data sources. Using this approach, I was able to moderate the impact of potential biases that may occur when data is obtained from a single data collection tool (Bowen, 2009: 28). Bowen (2009: 31) also noted that document analysis is a highly advantageous means to obtain data if the researcher intends to gain background context to a specific phenomenon. Bowen (2009: 31) further maintained that document analysis can be an efficient means of data collection because it is less time consuming. Given that school discipline in SA is guided by the policy documents mentioned above, during fieldwork, I obtained the policy document from the internet and collected the codes of conduct from the school principals for review and analysis.

4.5.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis, according to Nieuwenhuis (2020a: 123), establishes how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings, and experiences to understand their interpretation of the phenomenon. Qualitative data analysis is an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying relationships among the categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014: 395). Creswell and Creswell (2018:190) simply view qualitative data analysis as segmenting (dividing into separate parts or sections) and taking apart the data to make sense out of the text and the image data. Based on the above definitions, data obtained from the interviews was analysed following Creswell and Creswell's (2018: 193 –195) five steps (organise and prepare the data, read all the data, code all the data, generate description and themes, and represent the description and themes) in analysing qualitative data. Following the five steps, I:

i) Organised and prepared the data for analysis - This involved transcribing the interviews, sorting, and arranging the data. I transcribed the interview recordings and arranged and organised the interview transcripts per sub-research question for review.

ii) Read or looked at all the data – This involved reading and reviewing the interview transcripts to make sense of the participants' general ideas. I read and

reviewed all the interview transcripts to understand the participants' general views on the sub-research questions for coding.

iii) Started coding all of the data – Coding is the process of organising the data into chunks or segments of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment to develop a general sense of it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 247). I manually coded or highlighted related data or text in the interview transcripts with common phrases as the participants' descriptions or response to the sub-research questions.

iv) Generated a description and themes – This involved generating descriptions of the categories or themes for analysis. Description here means a detailed rendering of information about people or events in a setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 194). I identified and grouped the participants' long or short descriptions of the phenomenon that were related to the particular sub-research question under a theme for analysis and presentation.

v) Represented the description and themes – This involved using the narrative passage or description to convey the findings of the analysis. I used the participants' narratives or descriptions of the phenomenon to present and interpret the findings following the themes under each sub-requestion.

Thus, by following the above steps, I produced the data for presenting and reporting the participants' experiences on the effectiveness of verbal disciplining in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP in narrative format.

Finally, the policy documents mentioned in sub-section 4.5.3.2 were analysed using document analysis to supplement or support the interview data. Given that school discipline in SA is guided by policy documents, I analysed these documents to get first-hand information on verbal discipline. On completion, the recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored safely for five years to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. After five years, the information will be deleted from the memory card permanently. Both hard and soft copies of the transcripts used for coding will also be deleted and destroyed. However, the findings from the study will be disseminated to the participants, DoE and the public through conferences and article publications.

4.6 DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS

In dealing with the issue of data trustworthiness in this study, I followed Guba's (1981: 76-91) seminal discussions on how the questions of trustworthiness in all naturalistic research should be addressed. Guba (1981: 79-80) highlighted four major aspects of concern for data trustworthiness that must be addressed. The first aspect relates to the issue of truth value, which addresses the question of how confidence can be achieved in the findings of a particular research study. The second aspect relates to the concern of the degree of applicability of the findings of a particular study to a different context using participants of similar characteristics. Thirdly, there is a need for consistency, which addresses the issue of the replicability of research findings from one context to another context. Guba (1981: 80) argued that broadly the concepts of truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality are the rationalistic/scientific mode of inquiry, and do not necessarily belong to the kinds of research endeavours that are labelled naturalistic. Instead, naturalistic researchers tend to achieve data trustworthiness through the alternative measures of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Guba, 1981: 84-88). Table 4.1 below summarises the naturalistic modes of demonstrating data trustworthiness.

Table 4.1: Scientific and naturalistic appropriate terms for data trustworthiness

Aspect	**Scientific term**	**Naturalistic term**
Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility
Applicability	External validity: Generalisability	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

Source: (Guba, 1981: 80)

Guba's (1981) terminologies to describe qualitative data trustworthiness have been influencing how qualitative researchers demonstrate the trustworthiness of their data. Researchers such as Karr (2017: 85-87), Penley (2018: 62-66), Cross (2019: 93-95), and Meyers (2019: 49-54), among others, have successfully adopted Guba's (1981) measures in their various phenomenological studies. Similarly, I addressed Guba's (1981: 83) questions of truth value or credibility, applicability or transferability, consistency or dependability, and neutrality or confirmability in the following ways.

4.6.1 Credibility

The concept of credibility in qualitative research relates to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the findings of the study are believable (Penley, 2018: 64). According to Nieuwenhuis (2020a: 144), data credibility addresses the question of how I can convince my assessors and readers to believe the findings of my study. Cross (2019: 94) viewed credibility as the achieved confidence in the truth of the findings of the study. To achieve credibility of the research findings, Guba (1981: 84) and Anney (2014: 276) have suggested that researchers should ensure extended engagement at the site, peer debriefing, data triangulation, and member-checking. Guba (1981: 84) also suggested that on completion of the analysis and interpretation, the researcher can enhance credibility by establishing referential corroboration of findings with existing literature.

To achieve extended engagement at the site, I embarked on two months' fieldwork which allowed me enough time to conduct extensive interviews with the participants. It was particularly important for me to allow sufficient time during the fieldwork to avoid rushing the processes of the interviews. The period also allowed me time to establish a listening and reviewing interval of between one or two days from the end of one interview and the beginning of another interview. This approach helped me to understand the data obtained from one interview and allow such knowledge to impact the subsequent interviews.

Secondly, to further guarantee the credibility of my findings, I subjected the findings of the interviews to peer debriefing or review. According to Creswell and Miller (2000: 129), the process of peer debriefing entails the review of the data and the research processes by an experienced person who is indeed familiar with the phenomenon being researched. To achieve this, my supervisor and the external assessors in my research area reviewed the data and findings of the study.

I further improved credibility of the findings using multiple data sources, namely, semi-structured interviews, literature review and document analysis. This refers to data triangulation, a procedure by which researchers check for validity of participants' voices by looking for convergence of various sources of information to find meaning and common themes (Meyers, 2019: 52). By triangulating multiple data sources, I accounted for any weakness that may have resulted from one or the other data

sources. Finally, I informed the participants in my study during the fieldwork that they would be given the opportunity to member-check specifically the final interview transcript, if they so desired. The purpose of the member checking is to provide the participants an opportunity to verify that the content of the transcripts is a true reflection of their own views. This process would help to improve the credibility of the findings. Next, I turn to transferability.

4.6.2 Transferability

Trustworthiness also requires the researcher to be mindful of the issue of data transferability, with being mindful that qualitative research does not adhere to the issues of generalisation. Notwithstanding I have endeavoured to present the study in an accurate manner that would enable "other researchers to interpret for similar settings" (Billups, 2014: 10). Nieuwenhuis (2020a: 144) has noted that the researcher can further enhance data transferability of the research findings using the actual words of the participants by adding rich and thick descriptions. Penley (2018: 65) explained the idea of thick descriptions involve the researcher's efforts at sufficiently detailing an account of the research processes, specifically the evidential experiences of the researcher through the research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation and discussion of the findings. As transferability is the sole responsibility of the researcher, I have tried to ensure (as I have already started doing through the various sections of this chapter) that I leave behind an account of the research processes (audit trail) so that another researcher interested in replicating the study in another context will not be in doubt of how to proceed. This, to me, is what transferability entails. As a researcher therefore, I have ensured the transferability of the findings of my study by thoroughly describing the research context and the underpinning assumptions which were central to my research.

4.6.3 Dependability

According to Penley (2018: 65), the concept of dependability talks to whether a study could generate similar findings if the same or similar research is conducted twice. Dependability, which entails reliability in a quantitative study (Gunawan, 2015: 4), ensures that the research findings are consistent and possible to be repeated. To achieve dependability, I have subjected the report resulting from this study to external

assessment, scrutiny, and an audit trail to achieve stability and consistency of the entire process leading to the final report.

4.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability entails the extent to which the results of a study can be corroborated by other subsequent researchers (Anney, 2014: 279). To achieve this, I ensured a clear demonstration of all processes of data collection and interpretation in the report so that readers and assessors of this final report are not left with any doubts. I made use of the literature review section and the policy documents to confirm the data. I have also used the verbatim quotes of the participants from the interviews and an audit trail to ensure that the requirements for confirmability are met in this study. Next, I will discuss the ethical issues in this research.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In keeping with the relevant rules and regulations guiding research involving human beings, all appropriate bodies and procedures were duly consulted and observed. Thus, I applied and obtained ethical clearance (Appendix A) from the University of South Africa. I also sought permission from the Free State Department of Education (Appendix B) where the study was located. I then sought permission from the principals of the two participating schools (Appendices C & D) and the participants signed consent forms (Appendix E). Before the interviews, full disclosure of the research and risk associated with the study, if any, was clearly explained to the participants. Once that process had been cleared, I informed the participants about their individual rights to participate or withdraw from the study. The participants were assured that their identities and responses would be protected by using alphabetical and numerical codes, and that all the principles of anonymity and confidentiality would be adhered to.

While anonymity entails that the identity and responses of the participants will not be disclosed to the public by any means, confidentiality is the assurance made to participants in a study that information shared will not be disclosed in a manner that will identify the source of such information. In gaining consent, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2014: 363), “most researchers give participants assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and describe the intended use of the data”. The participants were told the purpose of the study - which was for research purposes -

before data collection. Dakwa (2015: 306) has advised researchers obtaining data through interviews to “use pseudonyms to protect the identity of participants”. I assigned a code (for instance to each teacher to represent and protect his/her name). I also made every effort to assure the participants that no physical or psychological harm would be experienced as the purpose of the study was to improve classroom discipline. Given the objectives of the study, I did not envisage any harm as the study focused on verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom to improve discipline, which is a major challenge in our schools today. On completion, as mentioned above, the recorded interviews and transcripts will be stored safely for five years to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. After five years, the information will be deleted from the memory card permanently. Both hard and soft copies of the transcripts used for coding will also be deleted and destroyed. However, the findings from the study will be disseminated to the participants, DoE and the public through conferences and article publications.

4.7.1 COVID-19 pandemic measures during data collection

The nature of the data collection tools required that this research be conducted at various schools’ sites. Thus, first I visited the schools that would be participating in the study. These schools were implementing the National Guidelines on the adjusted level 3 (Department of Co-operative Governance, 2020: 4-5) requiring the wearing of a face mask, washing of hands and using hand sanitiser, as well as maintaining social distancing (of one and half metres between persons). Thus, on arrival at the various participating schools, I identified and adhered to their guidelines on all applicable health and safety protocols relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. I ensured that both the participants and I always observed these guidelines at each participating school which include wearing masks, sanitising hands, and social distancing throughout the duration of the fieldwork. On a personal note, I took a COVID-19 screening test three days before the commencement of the fieldwork and was willing to submit a copy of the test if required by the authorities in the participating schools.

4.8 SUMMARY

The phenomenological research design was a way to describe and interpret the lived experiences of participants in a manner that captured what they do, how they know, think, and feel about a phenomenon. Phenomenological research is intended to reveal

people's diversity of behaviour and the experiences that drive this behaviour with reference to teachers' use of verbal discipline and its effectiveness in dealing with classroom misconduct in context. In this study, I selected the phenomenological research design because it allowed me to gain a deeper insight into how FP teachers use verbal discipline in their attempts to create a conducive classroom environment for effective teaching and learning. I believed that a phenomenological research design would provide me with the opportunity to obtain the most relevant, detailed as well as rich data necessary to understand the phenomenon under study. The connectedness of all components (interpretive paradigm, qualitative research approach, phenomenological research design and data collection methods) of this chapter have been thoroughly explained. Based on the above, I believe that the objectives and the research questions of the study will be presented and interpreted in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to analyse, interpret, and discuss the findings of how effective verbal discipline is in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. Qualitative data analysis, according to Nieuwenhuis (2020a: 123), establishes participants' understanding and meaning making of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings, and experiences. In this study, both qualitative data analysis steps (content analysis) by Creswell and Creswell (2018: 193 - 195) and document analysis were employed, as discussed in Chapter Four (sub-section 4.5.4) to analyse the interview transcripts and the school discipline policy documents obtained during data collection. The analyses were guided by the following sub-research questions:

- How do teachers understand verbal discipline?
- How do teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct?
- What additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct?
- What policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools?

Before presenting, interpreting, and discussing the findings of this study, I want to report on my research journey (what I did before and after fieldwork) that led to the findings.

5.2 RESEARCH JOURNEY

My empirical research journey began with obtaining ethical approval and permission from all official bodies to conduct the research, meeting the participants to discuss consent forms and data collection, transcribing the interviews, and analysing the participants' background information. Below was my detailed research journey that led to the findings of this study:

5.2.1 Ethical approval

After completing the methodology chapter (Chapter Four), I applied for ethical clearance from the College of Education of the University of South Africa. On receiving the approval letter with reference no: **2020/11/11/50335731/34/AM**, from the Chairperson, UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee, I approached the Free State Department of Education (FSDE) for permission to conduct research in the Motheo Education District in Bloemfontein. On receiving both departmental and district permission letters in one package, I approached six schools' principals (three urban and three rural schools) for gatekeepers' access and permission, keeping the Covid-19 pandemic in mind. Three of the six schools (one urban and two rural) responded positively, and I then selected the two (one urban and one rural) that I needed for my study. (See subsection 4.5.2 for the rationale for selecting two schools.) On receiving permission letters from the schools to contact the FP head teacher, I approached the head teacher who organised the FP teachers in a scheduled meeting with me.

5.2.2 Meeting the participants for consent and data collection

On the separate scheduled dates to meet the teachers/participants in the two schools, I arrived at the schools with copies of the participant information sheet and the main research questions. The meetings (getting to know your proposed participants) took place in both schools' staff rooms after school hours. I welcomed and thanked the teachers for showing interest in my study and distributed copies of the said documents to them, allowing them 15 minutes to go through the documents. After that, I discussed the purpose of the study and sought their consent to participate. Some of them promised to participate while some declined with understandable reasons such as not having enough experience, having not witnessed corporal punishment as teachers and other personal reasons. But in the end, five teachers from each school indicated interest to participate and we agreed on convenient dates and times (after school hours) for the interviews. We also exchanged contact numbers for rescheduling purposes and agreed to complete and sign the consent forms on the day of the interviews.

On the days of the face-to-face interviews, participants completed and signed the consent forms, Covid-19 protocols mentioned in Chapter Four (sub-section 4.7.1) were observed and the interviews commenced. The interviews were recorded separately

using a cell phone with audio recorder as back up for a minimum of 30 minutes and maximum of 60 minutes. Six face-to-face and four telephonic interviews were conducted and recorded. The telephonic interviews were the choice of the participants as I offered them both face-to-face and telephonic options during meetings with the participants to accommodate Covid-19 protocols of social distancing. Before the telephonic interviews, I emailed the participants the information sheets and the consent forms. They completed, signed, and returned the consent forms via email before the interviews, although I reconfirmed their consent verbally via phone on the day of the interviews. The interviews with the ten participants took place over a period of more or less a month (25th March to 29th April 2021). Before leaving the research sites, I collected the two schools' Code of Conduct for learners from the principals and downloaded the 'Alternatives to Corporal Punishment in the Classroom' policy document from the internet for document analysis.

5.2.3 Transcribing the interviews

After data collection, the ten separate interview recordings were transcribed by a professional transcriber (*Top Transcriptions, Johannesburg*). During the transcriptions, the researcher was represented as the interviewer while the ten teachers were renamed participants with alphabetical and numerical codes as such: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, to P10 (for sample, P1 here means Participant 1). These codes were assigned to protect the teachers' identities and responses as discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.7). A study by Okeke, Omodan and Dube (2022:174) has recommended adopting alphabetical or numerical codes rather than pseudonyms (false names) to avoid coincidence as often pseudonyms coincidentally match the participants' names.

5.2.4 Participants background information

This study took place in two primary schools in the Motheo Education District, Bloemfontein in the Free State province of South Africa. Ten FP teachers (Grades 1–3) comprising five from an urban and five from a rural school participated in the study. The participants comprised eight female and two male teachers. The age bracket of the teachers ranged from 29 to 53 years old. Their qualifications ranged from BEd to BEd (Hons) with between 5- and 17-years' teaching experience. Below is a summary of the participants' background information:

Table 5.1: Participants' details

Participants' Codes	Age	Gender	Qualification	Teaching Grade	Years of Teaching Experience	School
P1	32	F	B.Ed.	Gr. 2	7	Rural
P2	53	F	PGCE	Gr. 1	11	Rural
P3	42	M	B.Ed.	Gr. 3	10	Rural
P4	48	F	B.Ed.	Gr. 1	17	Rural
P5	43	F	B.Ed. (Hons)	Gr. 2	10	Rural
P6	41	F	B.Ed.	Gr. 2	6	Urban
P7	38	F	B.Ed.	Gr. 3	8	Urban
P8	30	M	B.Ed.	Gr. 3	6	Urban
P9	31	F	B.Ed.	Gr. 3	9	Urban
P10	29	F	B.Ed. (Hons)	Gr. 1	5	Urban

5.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section focuses on the data analyses, interpretation, and discussion of the findings from both the content and document analyses of the interview transcripts and the school disciplinary policy documents reviewed. As stated in Chapter One, the main aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP to develop a guide to enhance the effective use of verbal discipline in schools. Below, the findings from the interviews are presented first, followed by findings from the document analysis. As discussed in Chapter One, the data interpretation was guided by the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism by Blumer (1969) to establish how teachers formulate meanings on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP classroom.

5.3.1 Findings from the interviews

This section presents, interprets, and discusses the findings from the interviews with the ten teachers in both urban and the rural schools on the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. As discussed in Chapter Four (sub-section 4.5.4), Creswell and Creswell's (2018: 193-195) five steps in analysing qualitative data (content analysis) were followed when analysing the interview transcripts. The analysis was guided by the sub-research questions mentioned above. The below categories and themes emerged from the manual coding of the interview transcripts:

Table 5.2: Categories and themes

Categories	Themes
1. Teachers' understanding of verbal discipline	1. Verbal discipline reminds learners of the consequences of misconduct. 2. Learners disobey reprimands and repeat misconduct. 3. Teachers reprimand learners repeatedly 4. Learners understand in the long run 5. Verbal discipline is stressful to master
2. How teachers use verbal discipline	1. Soft to serious tone of voice 2. Verbal reprimands and warnings 3. Involving school stakeholders 4. Body language and non-verbal actions 5. Private talk with learners 6. Verbal advice and motivation 7. Verbal promise 8. Verbal praise
3. Additional strategies for effective use of verbal discipline	1. Body language 2. Involve school stakeholders to talk to learners. 3. Talk to learners in a calm and polite manner 4. Verbal promise and reward

	5. Raise voice to show seriousness and disapproval 6. Private talk 7. Professionalism and consistency
4. Policy guidelines for effective use of verbal discipline	1. Know your learners and the reason for misconduct 2. Be professional and a role model 3. Polite and private talk 4. Discipline with patience 5. Involve school stakeholders 6. Involve school community and public figures 7. Additional guidelines

5.3.1.1 Category 1: Teachers' understanding of verbal discipline

In responding to the research question of how teachers understand verbal discipline, the following five themes emerged from the interview transcripts: verbal discipline reminds learners of the consequences of misconduct; learners disobey reprimands and repeat misconduct; teachers reprimand learners repeatedly; learners understand in the long run and verbal discipline is stressful to master. Below, I presented, interpreted, and discussed the themes and findings under Category 1.

Theme 1: Verbal discipline reminds learners of the consequences of misconduct

Responding to how teachers understand verbal discipline, P1 viewed verbal discipline as the starting point for reminding learners of the consequences of misconduct for them to reconsider their behaviour before teachers employed other measures such as detention:

> *P1: I always tell them the consequences before applying them. So, they know if I talk Ma'am will send me to detention, Ma'am will do this. So, I always say, "I will send you to detention." So, it's the starting point of giving a learner a chance to rectify the mistake.*

P8 believed that verbal discipline reminded learners of the appropriate behaviour to uphold and the inappropriate behaviour to avoid in the classroom because of clear consequences:

> *P8: Verbal discipline tells learners not to do a certain type of behaviour, when I'm telling them not to do that certain type of behaviour, they deserve that repercussion, or these types of privileges taken away from them.*

The above narratives agree with the notion of Downs, Caldarella, Larsen, Charlton, Wills, Kamps, & Wehby (2019: 139) that teacher reprimands are statements to individuals or groups of learners indicating disapproval of inappropriate behaviour or a desire to stop specific behaviour. P10 indicated that one good side of verbal discipline was the teacher's ability to caution and remind learners of the consequences of their actions:

> *P10: The nicest part about the verbal warning is that I can speak to you and say, "Hey Peter, I said you need to listen. So, if you do not listen then this and this is going to happen."*

The participant response above confirms Govender's (2014: 35) earlier finding that teachers use verbal discipline to get a message across to learners. In the narrative, P10 cautioned and reminded Peter, who was not paying attention, to listen by saying "*Hey Peter, I said you need to listen".*

The participants generally believed that verbal discipline was a strategy that reminded learners of the consequences of misconduct before other disciplinary measures were used. They further indicated that they used verbal discipline to caution and remind learners of the consequences of misconduct before incorporating other alternatives to corporal punishment in the classroom.

Verbal discipline is one of the disciplinary actions for misconduct inside the classroom such as failing to be in class on time, bunking classes, failing to finish homework, failing to respond to reasonable instructions and being dishonest with minor consequences carried out by an educator (DoE, 2000: 25). Firdaus (2015: 30) has also defined verbal discipline as a strategy whereby the teacher uses consciously chosen spoken words in trying to redirect and manage learners' misconduct or reinforce good behaviour.

Theme 2: Learners disobey reprimands and repeat misconduct

There was a general belief from the participants that verbal discipline was challenging as learners disobeyed reprimands and repeated misconduct constantly despite persistent reprimands to stop. This finding is consistent with the research of Split et. al. (2016: 6-9) that teachers who resort to the use of verbal reprimand in disciplining misbehaving learners reported cases of higher levels of oppositional and hyperactive behaviour. The narratives of the participants below confirmed the finding. P1 lamented reprimanding learners repeatedly while the learners kept violating and repeating the said misconduct which made her lose her temper:

> *P1: Oh, you'll be talking to one learner more than 10 times, but still be doing the same thing. That's where I end up losing my temper.*

P2 agreed with P1, indicating that verbal disciplining meant repeating and reprimanding learners daily without compliance from their side:

> *P2: One thing every day. Seeing that some of the leaners are not at all listening, they are still repeating that thing that is challenging.*

P4 attributed the non-compliance to the learners' developmental stage by saying:

> *P4: The same mistake that you have reprimanded, they will repeat that mistake again. I think it is because, maybe they are young, they are too small, or maybe…*

The participants' narratives above contradict Asare et al.'s (2015: 1) view of discipline as an expectation for learners to always respect teachers and obey classroom rules. A study by Kingwill (2016: 18) argued that FP learners behave in a unique manner, and there is a need for teachers to understand their behavioural uniqueness because of their developmental phase.

P6 and P7 claimed that verbal discipline was challenging as learners refused to carry out instructions and reverted to misconduct immediately after receiving reprimands. One can see the participants' reservations about verbal discipline in the following narratives:

> *P6: Okay, I said the challenges is that some learners, they know that you are just threatening them, so they don't really care and then some will listen to you, maybe for 5 minutes or so and then they go back to misbehaving.*

P7: They don't listen, or they don't take it seriously, they still think that you are joking, or you are not serious.

The responses of the participants showed that learners in the FP classroom disobey rules repeatedly and commit reprimanded misconduct incessantly. One of the participants attributed this behaviour to their age, which could be true as these learners fall within the age bracket of six to nine years (Grades 1 – 3), the first formal schooling phase (DoBE, 2011: 5). It could also be seen that FP learners are too young and busy adjusting to their new school environment, therefore fail to understand the meaning of obeying rules yet. Riedesel (2019: 48) discovered that neither mild, medium nor harsh verbal reprimands led to any observable positive improvement in the behaviour of learners, instead it resulted in reinforcement of negative behaviour among learners. Sun (2015: 94) agreed that classroom misconduct includes unruly behaviour with the intention to upset classroom order and hamper teaching and learning which could be seen in the participants' utterances about cautioning learners repeatedly, which could be interrupting teaching and learning.

Theme 3: Teachers reprimand learners repeatedly

The participants indicated reprimanding learners repeatedly daily. They reported that they felt as if they were talking too much, getting tired and frustrated by the repetition of the same misconduct daily. They all acknowledged the challenges of too much talk without compliance or improvement, as seen in the narratives below:

P1: Every day to the same learner. "Why are you not wearing your mask?" "Why are you not doing this?" "Why didn't you comb your hair?" "Where is your homework?" Every day timeously.

P2: Hey sometimes, you get tired of... talking one thing… Every day. Repeating every, every…one thing every day.

P4: Yes, I keep on talking. That is a challenge that I have, because I keep on talking.

P6: Hey, to me, because I mean you keep on talking, talking, talking and what does it do to you? Because you are also a human being, you also have feelings? And then you are now frustrated, you are angry.

P9: Okay, yeah you are reprimanding them all the time the same stuff and then your class is being disturbed because you still have to speak to this child, and you disturb your whole class.

This finding agrees with Lentfer and Franks (2015: 81) who stated that despite the teachers' efforts to redirect the misbehaving learners, there is the possibility that some learners will stubbornly decide to be non-compliant. Davin (2020: 364) has agreed that young learners need constant repetitions before they can truly understand and learn new facts. Although Firdaus (2015: 30) perceived verbal discipline as a strategy whereby teachers use consciously chosen spoken words in trying to redirect and manage learners, Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 67) have maintained that effective verbal reprimand should not involve continuous reprimanding of the misbehaving learners, otherwise verbal warnings will become ineffective.

Theme 4: Learners understand in the long run

Despite the feeling that many participants do not find verbal discipline very helpful, as stated in Theme 3, four participants gave positive feedback on the effectiveness of verbal disciplining. P1, for instance, indicated that a positive effect of verbal warning is that:

> *P1: One positive thing about verbal warning is that at the end of the day, your word as a teacher is heard, the aim is achieved of warning the learner verbally. It's achieved.*

P5 agreed by comparing verbal discipline with corporal punishment:

> *P5: I think it is a good discipline method. I think it is good because they know they are people; they are not animals. So, when we use the corporal punishment, they sometimes misbehave more, but when you talk to them, you make jokes with them, they understand.*

P8 maintained that verbal discipline was effective when learners understood the reprimands and consequences:

> *P8: No, verbal warning is very effective because they understand if I say to them, "Guys, you are making a noise; keep quiet." Therefore, they will understand.*

P6 stated some reasons why verbal discipline works better than harsher disciplining methods:

> *P6: Learners are now free, they are no longer afraid, so they can learn on free and safe environment.*

The above findings agree with the importance of effective verbal discipline within the classroom for effective teaching and learning (LeeFon et al, 2013: 4). Obadire and

Sinthumule (2021: 1) have claimed that if learners are not well disciplined, schools will not provide the best possible education. Segalo and Rambuda (2018: 1) have noted that dealing with classroom misconduct by establishing effective disciplining measures is considered a norm in ensuring the functionality of education in schools. Rahimi and Karkami (2015: 58) have agreed that a sufficient degree of classroom discipline is required to create an appropriate learning atmosphere. It is obvious from the participants that verbal discipline is effective in dealing with classroom misconduct, but it takes time and energy from the teacher.

Theme 5: Verbal discipline is stressful to master

The participants viewed verbal discipline as a stressful strategy as they reprimanded and redirected learners daily. P1 and P3 agreed that verbal discipline was successful but also stressful as one kept shouting and talking all the time which affected their well-being:

> *P1: But at the end the aim is achieved but the negative part of it is strenuous. You cannot be shouting from morning up until two o'clock.*
>
> *P3: Verbal discipline is successful but, you have to be strong for it, and you have to... You have to have that energy to talk.*

The above narratives confirm an earlier study by Robarts (2014: 59) that teachers reportedly felt that dealing with disruptive behaviour was taking too much of their teaching time and energy. Belle (2016: 256) has also agreed with the finding, stating that learners often misbehave so frequently that teachers feel stressed and disempowered. Segalo and Rambund's (2018: 4) recent study has confirmed that teachers feel disempowered because alternative discipline strategies often seem to be ineffective. The majority of the participants (P4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) additionally complained about getting drained, tired, exhausted, having headaches, losing energy, feeling depressed - emotionally and mentally - after talking, repeating, and shouting in class every day:

> *P4: Yes, when I was still like shouting at the kids it was completely draining because by the end of the school day I would come back and the first thing that I want to do is to sleep because it literally feels like any little bit of energy that you had left to carry you out for the whole day, you have spent it shouting.*
>
> *P5: Because I repeat, the repetition makes me very tired. Like I said, I*

am very tired because you will repeat, you will repeat, you will repeat yourself.

P7: Like if you shout a lot, then you get a headache sometimes. And a stressful day as well.

P8: You repeat yourself to a point that you find that when you arrive at home it has drained you and you find yourself you have a headache, and you are drained you are so tired.

P9: No, I get, I get tired, like tired like any teacher tired, exhausted but then the next day it is new, I try the best.

P10: It also put me in a very depressive mood because it felt like that is the only thing my children know me for is that I shout and so it plays a lot… for me personally it is more as it takes an emotional and mental toll on me when I shout at the kids all the time.

Verbal discipline seems to be ineffective here as teachers spent most of their teaching time reprimanding and redirecting the learners which had a negative bearing on their well-being. These findings are in accordance with De Witt and Lessing's (2013: 6) study that reported irritation, temper, feelings of depression, impatience, and aggression as part of the emotional life of teachers, resulting from learners' undisciplined behaviour. Moyo et al. (2014: 11) were in agreement with the above statement, indicating that teachers have mistaken verbal warnings for shouting which can trigger anger and fear in learners, thereby resulting in poor relationships in the classroom (Bekiari & Tsiana, 2016: 162). Additionally, Mugabe and Maphosa (2013: 117) have noted that one challenge that teachers face when they are stressed, is the temptation to use abusive language at learners which, in most cases, worsens the behaviours they intend to correct.

5.3.1.2 Category 2: Teachers' use of verbal discipline

In responding to the research question of how teachers use verbal discipline, the following eight themes emerged from the interview analysis: soft to serious tone of voice; verbal reprimands and warnings; involving school stakeholders; body language and non-verbal actions; private talk with learners; verbal advice and motivation; verbal promise and verbal praise.

Theme 1: Soft to serious tone of voice

The participants indicated that talking to the learners softly at the beginning, becoming firmer and more serious to show displeasure, often worked if learners refused to listen. The participants' responses, as indicated in the below narratives, showed that they used soft and calm tones to reprimand and redirect misbehaving learners. They started with soft tones and moved to serious or firm tones when learners kept repeating offences or deviated from taking instructions:

> *P1: The first attempt will be very soft. Don't do that, you are making noise. Why are you going out without permission? Don't do that. But doing it repeatedly I start shifting from being soft to being serious.*
>
> *P2: When I talk to them, I am not shouting at them because some of the learners when you are shouting at them, they cry. Some of them if you talk to them nicely, they can listen.*
>
> *P4: The tone that I am using is going to be low, neh? If that learner maybe doesn't do what I ask her to do, then I will raise up my voice.*
>
> *P5: I talk to them nicely and kindly but when they repeat and repeat and repeat misconduct, that is when I go and shout.*
>
> *P7: I speak to them calmly, like telling them, "Don't do that" in a calmly way. You first talk softly and then if they still don't listen, then you raise your voice hard so that they can listen.*
>
> *P10: So, I always start off calmly, but if I say, open to page 2 and everybody else is opening to page 2 and you are still not opening your book then I move to a more stern tone, but it is still not harsh. So, a calm and a reassuring tone is the one that you need whenever you do verbal discipline with foundation phase.*

The above narratives show two of the four types of verbal reprimand namely, mild and medium (Riedesel 2019: 31-32). According to Riedesel (2019: 31) mild reprimand entails soft-spoken minor comments made by the teacher with the intention of showing disapproval. Medium reprimand resonates from using critical tone of voice in dealing with the learners' misconduct. The empirical findings and literature review are in agreement here. De Witt's (2021: 219) study, which advised teachers to use a firm but calm voice and controlled speech (specific instruction) when disciplining young children to convey a message to the learners in the classroom, agreed with the participants' viewpoints. Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 65) have also advised teachers who adopt verbal reprimand in disciplining misbehaving learners to ensure that they

avoid using a tone of voice that will portray anger, but instead use a calm and a firm tone of voice to show learners the seriousness of their actions while directing the learners to what appropriate classroom behaviour should entail.

Theme 2: Verbal reprimands or warnings

The participants disclosed using verbal reprimands or warnings to deal with classroom misconduct. P2 reminded learners of what was right and wrong, because they were still young enough to make such suggestions their own:

> *P2: I really, don't scream…Yeah, I try to tell them the right and the wrong because I believe they can hear what they did wrong. You can't leave them they can't do everything by themselves.*

P5 cautioned learners to behave well, because there could be consequences that they would not like:

> *P5: And then I normally caution that I will take them to next door because they don't want to go for Grade R. So, they then calm down, because they don't want to share the class with those small kids.*

The narratives above indicated that teachers used verbal discipline to show disapproval of learner misconduct in class as shown by various studies (Kennedy, 2010: 8; Chikwature et al., 2016: 41), indicating that reprimand has gained prominence as a disciplinary strategy among teachers. Nkosana et al. (2014: 1581) have also agreed that teachers use verbal warnings as an alternative to corporal punishment to correct learners for minor offences. Participants 7 and 9 emphasised consequences of misconduct which seemed to work well with younger learners:

> *P7: You just tell them to stop what they are doing, because if they don't, they will suffer the consequences. Telling them that if they do that what will happen, like things like that.*

> *P9: I usually warn them, if they do something wrong that is disturbing somebody or in a way show disrespect to another learner, then I caution them and then they know my rules then they know okay if teacher's going to speak to me again then I'm going to get one little thing to do or something.*

The above finding falls under 'mild reprimand' which means the teachers' use of minor soft-spoken comments with the intention to show disapproval for learner misconduct in the classroom (Riedesel (2019: 31). Firdaus (2015: 30) has perceived verbal discipline as a strategy whereby teachers use consciously chosen spoken words in

trying to redirect and manage learners' misconduct or reinforce good behaviour. Kennedy (2010: 7-8) has agreed that teachers are more susceptible to using verbal reprimands or warnings than using any other disciplining strategy in the classroom.

Theme 3: Involving school stakeholders

The participants mentioned involving school stakeholders such as fellow teachers, the Head of Department (HOD), parents and the principal to talk to the misbehaving learners. They brought in these stakeholders after failing to get the misbehaving learners' compliance. They also indicated bringing these stakeholders in because learners were often afraid of facing them. Participants 1 and 3 indicated involving fellow teachers with the belief that they could assist:

> *P1: Sometimes, I use fellow teachers to talk to them, yes.*
>
> *P3: Or I can even... I can even take that learner to the other teachers to help me with the disciplinary measures.*

This finding is in line with DoE's (2000: 25 – 26) views of teachers' responsibility for talking to learners who commit level 2 and 3 misconduct (breaking school rules or codes). Participants 2 and 7 mentioned involving the HOD and principal in disciplining learners verbally:

> *P2: So, those who don't listen I take them to the HOD. The HOD will assist me with verbal discipline of the learners.*
>
> *P7: I say to them, "You know how principal is going to hear it when I say to him that you are not listening, he's going to do…" yes. Scare them eh, yes.*

This finding agrees with the DoE's (2012: 9-10) whole-school approach of involving the school community (principals and other school authorities) to achieve discipline in schools. Belle (2018a: 17) has noted that not having the collaboration of all school stakeholders hampers the effective implementation of daily disciplinary measures and suggests that every school stakeholder must take responsibility to contribute towards a sound and safe school environment for teaching and learning to take place in the most favourable school conditions. Participants 5 and 9 mentioned inviting and communicating with parents to assist in talking to their children:

> *P5: I also invite parents to talk to them. "Help me talk to your child because after I reprimanded your child, your child is still repeating the same thing."*

> *P9: Okay, so I said I communicate with the parent, then I ask the parent to, "Please sit down and talk to your child, because they are doing 1,2,3 in class. And I've already done 1,2,3, to try and get them back into track, but it's not helping."*

The above finding agrees with Segalo and Rambund's (2018: 4) study that parents should play a central role in the development of their children's character and their overall well-being. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 5), in support, have concluded that effective discipline can hardly be achieved in schools without the involvement and support of parents and guardians.

Theme 4: Body language and non-verbal actions

The participants admitted using body language and non-verbal actions such as facial expressions, sitting or standing up, hitting the table or board and clapping hands to send disapproval messages to misbehaving learners. P2 indicated using facial expression (angry face) to caution learners:

> *P2: I have to change my face, facial expression. Now they have to see that I, now I am angry.*

P5 mentioned changing positions or motions such as sitting or standing to show dissatisfaction with the learners' misconduct in the classroom:

> *P5: When I'm serious… when I was sitting down, when I am serious, I stand up and they have to sit down so that I can talk to them.*

These findings agree with De Witt's (2021: 220) findings of using body language such as facial expression and body position to discipline young children. The finding also confirms the symbolic interactionist thought or idea of combining language and significant symbols (gestures) in communication (Carter & Fuller, 2016: 932). P6 noted combining verbal discipline with non-verbal actions such as hitting the table or board and clapping to caution learners:

> *P6: I hit the table sometimes, like when I'm talking then I'll hit, or I'll do it so that whatever that I am saying it goes with my hand as I'm clapping them like that. Or the table, or the board. Then they know that right now she is very angry.*

The participant's narrative above is in accordance with gestural reprimands of Riedesel (2019: 32) which entail the use of non-verbal actions to caution misbehaving learners. Research by Ali (2011: 1097) has shown that non-verbal cues are a system of gestures

that teachers adopt that allow them to perform classroom management efficiently. Non-verbal cues include a smile, eye contact, nodding of the head, expressive actions and clapping of the hands, among others (Oladipupo, 2014: 429). On the contrary, the problem with gestures, however, is that sometimes teachers may work on the assumption that his/her gestures are understood by a particular learner, when such a learner does not understand the teacher's non-verbal cues (Nowicki Jr. & Duke, 1994: 31).

Theme 5: Private talk with learners

The participants mentioned talking to misbehaving learners privately to understand reasons for their misconduct. P2 mentioned calling disruptive learners after other learners had left the class to talk to them nicely and they could listen:

> *P2: You know what? Sometimes I call them, those who don't listen when I am talking. I call them after those learners left, I call them nicely and talk to them nicely and they will listen.*

This finding confirms studies (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 146; Campbell, 2017: 22) which have shown that not all misbehaving learners want to be corrected publicly in the classroom in the presence of other learners. P3 indicated not disciplining misbehaved learners before others but taking them to his office for a private talk:

> *P3: Okay, sometimes I don't discipline the learners amongst others. I just take him out to my office and talk to him. Just discuss the matter, to show him that this thing is not right.*

This response is in agreement with a study by Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 66) that effective verbal reprimand should not cause any form of harm or embarrassment to the learners, arguing further that verbal reprimand should not take place in front of other learners otherwise the learners being reprimanded will become unnecessarily embarrassed.

P6 disclosed sitting privately with a learner to understand what the problem was as sometimes learners proved stubborn in class because they needed attention or wanted to share feelings with a teacher.

> *P6: Sometimes I call the learner and then I sit down with the learner, and we talk like just to try and find out what is the problem because what I've noticed,*

sometimes you think that somebody is like, is disrespectful, only to find that they are just crying for attention.

A study by Chikwature et al. (2016: 35-45) have agreed with the participant narrative above, citing that the unmet need for recognition or attention-seeking can lead some learners to misbehave in class. A recent study by Nunan and Ntombela (2018: 5-6) also found that attention-seeking and power struggles emerged as major causes of misconduct by learners. Finally, I believe that effective discipline measures may become ineffective if teachers are not adequately informed about the reasons why learners behave as they do through engaging them privately.

Theme 6: Verbal advice

The participants confirmed using verbal advice to instil discipline in learners who distracted other learners in class, failed to do their homework, did not want to read or pay attention to lessons. They agreed that they used advice to get learners to behave in class. P2 advised the learners to stop interrupting teaching and learning and concentrate, mentioning the consequences of disruption during classes:

P2: I advise them, yes. Sometimes I told them, "If you are not listening, you are not disciplined in class. So, number one, you disturb other learners, you're going to fail, because when I'm in front of you, sometimes I do the thing toward the learning and you are busy talking, you are going to be lost from the work which we are doing in the classroom. Again, when I'm going to ask you the question, you will not know the answers, so don't disturb other learners, because if you disturb other learners, you are going to fail. So, don't disturb those who want to learn."

P4 agreed with P2, and added that they would fail and repeat class if they refused to change:

P4: I normally say to them, "Okay, if you don't behave well today, remember you are in grade one, and you are playing, you are not listening to me – you are going to fail. And the ones who behave, are you aware that next year they are going to grade two? So, you are going to remain in this class if you are not listening to me."

The above narratives are in accordance with the study of Mumthas et al. (2014: 304) that found that warning, giving advice, and counselling yielded the desired outcomes from misbehaving learners. P9 advised learners to always have the habit of completing homework and studying at home:

> *P9: Okay. I normally advise them. "Every time when you have been giving work, just do it. And even when you are at home, make sure that you do your homework – you study every day."*

The advice above confirms Obadire and Sinthumule's (2021: 2) belief that advice and motivation contribute to learners' improved behaviour and academic achievement. Finally, the participants' responses above simply reminded disobedient learners of the purpose of schooling and reasons for change to achieve the aims and objectives of teaching and learning.

Theme 7: Verbal promise

The participants disclosed promising learners' incentives like sweets or chocolate, small presents, stars, or stickers, to get them to behave and focus in the classroom. This agrees with Skinner's operant conditioning/reinforcement to maintain or encourage desirable behaviour in learners (Skinner, 1965: 430; Skosana, 2017: 218). P2 promised to give them sweets or chocolates if they stopped making a noise in class, which was effective for her:

> *P2: I promise them, "If you are not talking, I'm going to give you sweets or chocolate." That is the one which is more effective.*

P3 promised them small presents and fulfilled the promise to acknowledge and appreciate observable change:

> *P3: Then I promise them, and I deliver the promise, I fulfil it. I just buy them a small present, to say from changing that behaviour to this level, I appreciate you for changing.*

P5 promised them things like oranges or sweets or anything they wanted if they behaved well the whole week:

> *P5: I will tell them, "If you… for the whole week you do not do this and this and this and this, that falls under those rules we have done. On Friday maybe, I will come with oranges. Maybe on Friday we come with sweets, maybe on Friday we come with anything you can come up with."*

The narratives above are in line with Mtsweni's (2008: 113) claim that the availability of rewards and praise motivates learners to consistently obey the school rules. P4 promised and fulfilled his promise by sticking stars on the foreheads of the well-behaved learners*:*

> *P4: I normally come with the stars – the stickers. Yes. I promise them, "If today you behave well, I am going to put a sticker on your forehead."*

P6, in agreement with P4, encouraged them to read in the class to get sweets:

> *P6: I do promise them, that if you do 1,2,3,4, then I'm going to do 1,2,3,4 for you. When I said to them if they can come and read their blog book, which is theirs, it's like a textbook, the reading book, if they can come and read the sentences then I will give them all the stock, sweets, the lollipops.*

P10 also promised them chocolates or stickers to encourage them to write class activities and perform well:

> *P10: What I normally do, I will talk with them – telling them that, "Today we are going to write this class activity and then, if you perform well, or if you get ten out of ten in your total, I am going to give you something. Yes. Like a chocolate, or a sticker."*

Walters and Frei (2007:6) have confirmed the participants' responses by adding that acknowledging well-behaved learners is also a way of encouraging good behaviour and motivating other learners to behave differently. In agreement, Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014: 295) have suggested that learners who have made a great effort to avoid ill-discipline must be recognised, praised, and rewarded. Verbal promise and reward can keep the classroom discipline, teaching, and learning stable with minimal distractions, as most learners want to be rewarded and recognised in the class, thereby abiding by rules and regulations. Although this strategy can be effective once there is a reward, the downside is that teachers would struggle to achieve discipline once the reinforcement (sweets or chocolate, small present, stars, stickers) is withdrawn for whatever reasons.

Theme 8: Verbal praise

In responding to how teachers use verbal discipline, P3 indicated praising the learners when they changed and started behaving well:

> *P3: I praise them for changing from point A to B, and then just try to give them some praise.*

P5 agreed that praising learners for any little change to encourage them to behave better worked well:

> *P5: When they behave well. Even the one who know he is not disciplined at all, but when sometimes he has done a little thing that is good, I will try*

to praise him and show him that you can do it. You can be better; you can be and then he will become better as the time goes.

P6 also praised and rewarded good behaviour with sweets, stars, and stickers:

P6: And then one boy, I am also trying to help after school, so when he does good, I praise him. And then you see? I got sweets and stuff. I've got stars, I've got the stickers that says well done you are cute.

The participants' narratives above indicated that they used verbal praise to encourage learners to behave better in the classroom. Verbal praise, according to the participants, reinforced good behaviour and encouraged them to keep the good behaviour up with words like "*You can be better, you can"* and stars and stickers that said "*Well done, you are cute*". This agrees with Manzoor et al.'s (2015: 38) study that using motivational expressions like '*well done', 'keep it up' 'excellent' 'you have done well'*, helped the teachers to change learners' behaviour towards learning. Rafi Ansar and Sami (2020: 177) believed that teachers can use praise to manipulate the learning environment to increase or decrease certain behaviours in the classroom. It could be established from the participants' responses that teachers used praise to acknowledge and reinforce appropriate and expected behaviour from learners. The finding further agrees with Campbell's (2017: 19) definition of praise as positive verbal feedback that offers learners the opportunity to understand what desirable classroom conduct entails, given the quality of positive feedback received from the teacher. According to de Witt (2021: 224), positive feedback is very important as it tells the child that the demonstrated behaviour and actions were correct. The finding also confirms the behaviour-specific praise of Poirot (2018: 9) in which the teacher specifies the behaviour that has received the praise. Nauert (2020: 2) supported the idea of specifying praise, arguing that learners appreciate such feedback as it enables them to really understand not just when they have displayed appropriate behaviour, but also to learn the type of behaviour expected of them by their teachers.

5.3.1.3 Category 3: Additional strategies for effective use of verbal discipline

Responding to the question of what additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct, the following seven themes emerged from the interview analysis: body language, involve school stakeholders to talk to learners, talk to learners in a calm and polite manner, verbal promise and reward, raise

voice to show seriousness and disapproval, private talk, and professionalism and consistency.

Theme 1: Body language

The participants suggested using body language such as facial expressions (seriousness on the face), acting with hands, pointing, walking away from the class in pretence and coming back standing staring or gazing at learners (eye contact) to create consciousness to show displeasure with the learners' misconduct. They indicated that body language must show the seriousness of the misconduct to send the intended message to learners. They termed body language effective in connection with verbal discipline to discipline learners. The narratives of the participants, below, confirm the above finding.

P1 acknowledged that facial expression always helped in disciplining learners as one needed to show seriousness through body language:

> *P1: Facial…facial expression always helps. I cannot be verbally warning you and smiling at the same time. The seriousness in the face. Yes, because the more you smile, the more they take advantage of you. "Ah Ma'am is just joking," you see, but your facial expression also speaks a lot to them.*

P4, in agreement, indicated using facial expression as additional strategy:

> *P4: Using my body language? Facial expressions? Yes.*

The narratives above concur with De Witt's (2021: 220) position of using body language such as facial expression, body position, distance, and eye contact to discipline young children. Similarly, the narratives confirm gestural reprimand by Riedesel (2019: 32) which entailed the use of non-verbal or body language to caution misbehaving learners. P3 mentioned demonstrating with hands to show disapproval:

> *P3: Acting with my hands to show, now... Pointing, and doing whatever. Body language.*

P8 termed body language successful and effective, adding that sometimes he walked away from the class in pretence and came back standing staring at learners to create awareness that the class was noisy:

> *P8: They are very successful because sometimes even body language for me is also another effective way of interacting with learners. So sometimes you find*

like I had lashed out on them to say that "Okay, you are making a noise." Then I'd leave the classroom even though I'm not going far, but I come and stand there just standing gazing there would create a consciousness to them.

These narratives confirm Lukowiak and Bridges' (2010: 66) suggestion that verbal reprimand will be effective if combined with other verbal disciplining strategies such as redirection and eye contact. In agreement, Kingwill's (2016: 78) study established how effective the cue of stopping to teach for a while, and gazing at the noisy learners, worked in restoring quietness in the classroom.

Theme 2: Involve school stakeholders to talk to learners

The participants suggested involving school stakeholders such as fellow teachers, Department of Basic Education officials, school principal, and parents to talk to the learners to facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct. They found this strategy effective as some learners quickly adjusted to rules because they did not want to be confronted by school stakeholders. P1 indicated that once he mentioned inviting the principal or fellow teacher, the learners started showing remorse:

P1: So, if I say I'm going to call the principal, then they start to say they are sorry and stuff, so that also helps. I also bring the other teacher to class to talk to them.

P2 mentioned involving the department, principal, and other teachers:

P2: Yes, and the other thing is that even the Department can address the learners on how they should behave within schools. From there, I can invite someone – like the principal. I will involve other teachers.

P3 indicated inviting other teachers to talk to learners as a team:

P3: Team spirit, whereby we support each other. I mean teachers. Whenever you have a problem in a certain classroom with a particular learner, they help you to discipline that learner. Maybe we attend that classroom – maybe five of us, we attend that classroom to talk to the entire learners.

The above narratives agree with the DoE's (2012: 9-10) guidelines on the whole-school approach of involving the school community (teachers, principals, parents, and other school authorities like the Department) to achieve positive discipline in schools. P5 suggested inviting parents to talk to their children:

> *P5: Okay, I think if I work with the parents, ne, I communicate and then I let the parents come in talking to them.*

In agreement, P9 mentioned involving parents to assist at home:

> *P9: I let the parents come in as well to join me with the situation yeah to assist me at home and so that we can work together as a team for the benefit for the child.*

The above participants' responses confirm the DoE's (2000: 25-26) recommendation of involving teachers, parents, and principals to talk to the learners that commit level 2 and 3 misconduct (breaking school rules or codes). Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 2) also postulated that achieving learner discipline in schools calls for strong partnership with all school stakeholders involving parents, principals, educators, and other community members. Belle (2018a: 17) has claimed that not having the collaboration of the educators, Department of Education and the parents hampers the effective implementation of disciplinary measures daily and suggests that every school stakeholder must be involved in discipline matters.

Theme 3: Talk to learners in a calm and polite manner

The participants suggested that talking to the learners in a calm and polite manner helped as an additional strategy to facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline. They advised teachers to approach misconduct calmly and politely while reasoning with the learners to understand what informed their misconduct. They also indicated that learners found this approach friendly and comfortable. P1 suggested speaking to learners calmly to avoid scaring them:

> *P1: We must speak to them calmly because some of them they get scared, too scared to even answer you when you shout.*

P7 agreed that they would listen if approached calmly without shouting at them by saying:

> *P7: More in a calmly manner, I think they listen more when you are calm, you try to reason with them, without shouting.*

P2 believed that shouting would not help and suggested talking to them nicely:

> *P2: I don't think if you keep on shouting it helps, maybe it helps and then if you calm down also and try and talk to them the nice way, then they become right.*

P6 advised teachers to be polite and calm in talking to learners:

P6: You try to be polite, like I said, you try to be polite and calm down, then they are fine, they are happy, but at some point they feel, okay we can do whatever they want, then they go up, they want to come and climb.

P10 suggested approaching learners softly, politely, seriously or in a friendly manner, based on the misconduct:

P10: Sometimes you need to approach situation softly and politely, sometimes you need to shout at the situation that is happening, sometimes you need to be a friendly person, a friend to the learner in order for them to understand you in what they are doing and stop that particular behaviour.

The participants' narratives above are consistent with the study that advised teachers to avoid using an angry tone but rather to use calm and firm voices in reprimanding misbehaving learners about the seriousness of their actions while redirecting them to what is appropriate classroom behaviour (Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 65). De Witt (2021: 219), in agreement, has suggested that teachers should use firm, calm and controlled speech (specific instruction) when disciplining young children to convey messages and authority in the classroom.

Theme 4: Verbal promise and reward

The participants suggested that verbal promise and rewarding good behaviour were effective in dealing with classroom misconduct. They acknowledged that learners looked forward to being rewarded for good behaviour and therefore tried to comply with rules and to behave well for the recognition and award. P2 indicated that promising learners' sweets or chocolates to keep quiet was more effective:

P2: The one I find more effective is the one I promise them, "If you are not talking, I'm going to give you sweets or chocolate." That is the one which is more effective.

P3 suggested giving them stars when they behaved well:

P3: I think the one I said give them the stars when they are behaving in classroom, it's one of my strategies.

P8 suggested that promises and rewarding good behaviour worked:

P8: Yes, as I said, the reward system, we call it the reward system. The learners know for good behaviour you'll get a star, for good behaviour you'll get sometimes a chocolate if you are exceptional, do you understand what I mean?

Therefore, promises are very important when it comes to classroom because you can never lie to a learner.

P10 agreed that the classroom was friendly and fun when using promise and reward as learners were looking forward to being rewarded for adhering to rules by saying:

> *P10: I think promising them a good reward and actually fulfilling the promise it makes them much more at ease and it makes the classroom environment much more fun to be in because they not only trust that you will do what you say but they also trust that you are going to give them more than what they could have imagined in grade 1.*

The participants' narratives above confirm literature findings that stated that there should be a reward for good conduct and reprimand for bad conduct at home, school, and the society at large by parents, teachers, and government (Idu & Ojedapo, 2011: 87). Behaviourists, such as Skinner (1976: 90-115), has argued that human behaviour can be controlled by positive reinforcement, as well as negative reinforcement. In this case, teachers can control misbehaving learners by rewarding them to reinforce consistent and appropriate behaviour. As mentioned in category 2, the danger with this type of approach to discipline within the classroom context, according to Sibanda and Mpofu (2017:121), is that positive reinforcement collapses once rewards are withdrawn. In other words, if the teachers fail to continue with sweets, chocolates or stars, learners stop conforming to the rules, which may result in negative reinforcement - strengthening of the behaviour that followed removal of the stimulus or reward in this instance (Skosana, 2017: 221).

Theme 5: Raise voice to show seriousness and disapproval

Responding to what additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct, P1 indicated raising one's voice to show disapproval of misbehaviour:

> *P1: Yes, raising my voice. Then showing in classroom that this thing is not good... I would just like to show the classroom that you are not happy with whatever, for that particular reason.*

P5 mentioned talking to the learners seriously with a firm tone:

> *P5: As a teacher, I think I can talk to them very seriously and very firm so that they understand the… what they did is very wrong. You become very serious and you come very fair and firm at the same time.*

P7, in agreement, suggested raising one's voice to show the seriousness of the misconduct:

> *P7: Like when you speak to them, like and they don't listen, then you raise your voice so that they can be able to see that now you, you're serious.*

The participants' narratives suggested talking to learners in a serious and firm tone to indicate that a particular behaviour was not acceptable in the classroom. This strategy falls under medium reprimand (Riedesel 2019: 31-32) which entails the use of a critical tone of voice in dealing with the learners' misconduct, which is consistent with the participants' narratives above. Davin (2020: 364) has asserted that the teachers' use of language sets the tone of the classroom and has further advised teachers not to use harsh or demeaning words or shout at learners in the name of verbal discipline.

Theme 6: Private talk

P3 suggested holding private meetings with the misbehaving learners outside the classroom:

> *P3: Yes. So, you will have to... You will have to have one-on-one sessions. Like I said, I can take him out of the class.*

P6, in agreement, suggested a private talk with the learners:

> *P6: That's why I said, you can have the private talk.*

So, the participants suggested holding private talks as an additional strategy to deal with classroom misconduct. There was no need for probing here as the participants indicated in theme 5 in sub-section 5.3.1.3 (category 2: Teachers' use of verbal discipline) that teachers chose private talk to understand why some learners behaved the way they did or to respect learners as some learners felt humiliated or embarrassed when cautioned in public in the classroom with other learners. Walters and Frei (2007: 26) have suggested that when it comes to correction, it is generally more powerful and appropriate to correct students individually and privately. In agreement, other studies (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 146; Campbell, 2017: 22) have concluded that not all misbehaving learners want to be corrected publicly in the classroom under the watch of other learners.

Theme 7: Professionalism and consistency

P4 suggested that teachers should be organised, specific, strategic, and professional in dealing with learners' misconduct instead of shouting every day in the classroom:

> *P4: You can't keep on shouting every day when you come to class, or to school. So, you must come up with strategies, or maybe; today, I have to be organised. I have to be specific, strategic, be professional.*

In agreement, P5 and P8 suggested that teachers should maintain consistency with their disciplinary practices to prevent getting learners confused on the reasons for receiving a particular discipline:

> *P5: So, when I give a clear warning to the child you can see that they understand so that is for me the success in it. That understanding and communication that happens, because sometimes I do get children who ask, "But ma'am, why are you punishing me?" I would have to re-explain it. And then they would also come up with their understanding of it and then now we have an open communication, and it also builds a trust relationship between me and the child.*

> *P8: Consistence, if you warn the learners about something, about a certain behaviour and you say that this is what their punishment should be, then they will understand that every time we do this, these are the consequence. Consistency, that's all I can say, as a teacher you need to be consistent. In everything that you are doing, you must be consistent.*

The participants' narratives above demand that teachers should be professional and consistent with their discipline practice in the classroom. The DoE (2000: 13) has recommended that teachers should be serious and consistent about the implementation of discipline in the classroom. Mtsweni (2008: 100), in this regard, has advised teachers to act ethically at school to prevent misconduct amongst learners. P10 further suggested that teachers should examine their classroom conduct and activities daily to make sure that they were not the problem or initiators of classroom misconduct:

> *P10: And another strategy is that we as teachers we need to remember that we always have to do introspection before we even start our day. So, we need to know where we are mentally and emotionally and how are we going to make sure that it does not interfere because when those things now begin to interfere, then we are most definitely going… It is going to get to a point where you want to take the child and throw them out of the class, which has happened to me a few times because I did not address the situation before I taught.*

This finding appears to agree with Belle's (2018b: 43) study that educators' irresponsible attitudes and behaviour are likely to encourage learners to challenge their authority, disobey orders and bunk classes in an attempt to disturb classroom atmosphere. Okeke's (2018: 1037) study considered it necessary for teachers to engage in introspection to not let the lack of experience or inability to control their emotions compound the classroom situations they are expected to manage. Marciniak (2015: 59) has highlighted the need for teachers to be mindful of their classroom practices as well as with the learning activities they present to learners if they want to maintain control of learning and class teaching. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 6) have concluded that teachers' professional and classroom management skills will help them to prepare well and apply the correct strategy to deal with learners' behaviour.

5.3.1.4 Category 4: Policy guidelines for effective use of verbal discipline

Responding to the question of what policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools, the following seven themes emerged from the interview analysis: know your learners and the reason for misconduct, be professional and a role model, polite and private talk, discipline with patience, involve school stakeholders, involve school community and public figures, and other additional guidelines.

Theme 1: Know your learners and the reason for misconduct

Responding to what policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools, P1 suggested understanding your learners and their individual difference for proper verbal discipline:

> *P1: But the guidelines should be knowing your learners. Know their personalities. In that way, then, you can be able to discipline them verbally in the right way and in a way that will accommodate each one of them.*

P3 advocated knowing the background of the learners and their problems to be able to approach their misconduct without making situations worse:

> *P3: I have to make research about them – about the background. Yes. So that I can know how to talk to them. How... Maybe there is a serious problem about them – mentally or so. Maybe there is a treatment that he is undergoing, and... Yes. I have to first know the background.*

P10 suggested understanding reasons for misconduct before using verbal discipline as sometimes there might be a danger triggering misconduct in the classroom:

> *P10: I think a policy guideline would be that a teacher should use verbal warning, but the teacher needs to assess the situation before a warning is given. So, I cannot just walk into the classroom and my children are screaming. Obviously, they are screaming for a reason. So, I would have to calm them down first like, "Okay, what is going on?" And then now they will tell me, "No, a bee flew into the class." So that is basically assessing the situation rather than coming into the classroom already hot on my heels and shouting at them, "Why are you making a noise in the classroom?" What if they were in danger? Maybe a snake came into the classroom and they were screaming? So, I need to assess the situation before a verbal warning is given.*

The participants' narratives above suggested that understanding the learners and their background was important as some behavioural issues emanated from the learners themselves, possible danger in the classroom, and home culture. They also mentioned finding out reasons or causes of misconduct in the classroom before giving warnings as sometimes, possible danger could prompt misconduct. I believe that teachers devoting time to understanding their learners and the reasons behind their behaviour will better position them to deal with classroom misconduct. DoE (2000: 13) has mentioned knowing your learners through relationship building as a guideline to solving discipline problems in the classroom. Idu and Ojedapo (2011:86) have highlighted that teachers' attitude toward learners' behaviour is a contributing factor to indiscipline among learners and therefore teachers should devote time to understanding reasons for misconduct before disciplining learners. Woolfolk (2016: 88) has argued that the major task confronting the teacher in a disruptive class is how to determine if learners lack the necessary thinking abilities to understand that their actions are disruptive or against the set ground rules which is common in the FP, given their developmental stage. This agrees with the participants' suggestion of knowing the learners and their background.

Theme 2: Be professional and a role model

P1 advised teachers to be careful with their wording while disciplining verbally:

> *P1: On whatever you are saying and doing. Every action in the school yard, or around the environment. Yes, you must be careful.*

Similarly, P3 advised teachers to be careful and serve as role models to the learners who emulate their actions:

> *P3: Yes, the thing is now, when talking to learners, you must be careful, because they. Somehow you are a role model, and they capture everything that you say. So, you must be careful when talking to them. You must be careful of the ways, or how you do or say it to them. Because on everything that you do, they think that everything that you do is right, because you are a role model.*

In agreement, P10 advised teachers to always model good behaviour before learners:

> *P10: So, if… so we always need to role model good behaviour and how you speak to people. So those are some of the guidelines.*

The participants' narratives above advised teachers to be careful with their classroom practices and model good behaviour as learners watch them, which agree with the DoE's (2000: 18) views that teachers should model good behaviour before learners. Similarly, Walters and Frei (2007: 21) have indicated that teachers must establish themselves as appropriate authority figures and role models to achieve discipline. Other participants advised teachers to be consistent, act responsibly and professionally in handling classroom matters as learners emulated them. P4 advised teachers to be consistent and professional in dealing with learners:

> *P4: Yes, let us try to be consistent... You see? Let us be professional to these learners. When you speak with a learner you must be professional, don't have the; hey, I am not your mum, blah, blah. You must try to do what, how can I put it, you don't have to shout at the learners.*

P7 advised teachers to be disciplined and careful to be able to discipline learners successfully:

> *P7: Because we are talking about discipline. You must also look disciplined in front of them. That is why you must be careful around the learners. Because now, if I am not disciplined, I cannot discipline somebody. The discipline should start with me. Yes. The appearance, and how I talk with the other teachers, how I talk with other learners, that also counts.*

P9 agreed that learners needed professional teachers to direct them:

> *P9: And children need someone professional, they can't have somebody who's going to cry in front of the class. Kids don't listen to them or you can't have*

telling them about your problems because they don't care about your problems.

The above narratives confirm Van Breda's (2014: 1067) argument that when teachers disregard the fact that their conduct and attitudes in the classroom may influence the learners' sense of belonging and conduct, it may affect classroom misconduct. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 6) ascertained that young people emulate their role models when they grow up, therefore teachers should be mindful of their professional conduct at school.

Theme 3: Polite and private talk

The participants suggested talking to the learners calmly, politely, and privately. P2 suggested talking to the learners nicely, not shouting:

> *P2: Like I said, shouting at them, sometimes they cry. They cry…. Shouting is not good for me. Talking to them nicely helps.*

P3, in agreement with P2, also advised talking to them politely and privately, without shouting:

> *P3: Stop shouting. Shouting is not the proper way, because now even when you are shouting, you cause a dialogue, because if you are shouting, then they will answer you back. But then if you are talking to them politely, I think they will somehow understand you. They will change if we talk to them politely or work on a one-on-one session.*

P6 mentioned calm and private talk with the learners:

> *P6: Yes, being calm, you don't do that like with the whole class. That's when you are going to do that when you are having those private talks with the learners because remember I said sometimes you come and you try and be polite then they take advantage of that, they think oh now that can do whatever they want. But if you call and you have that private talk, even that learner can see that no, actually this is not an animal, she is a person, she's got feelings.*

P7 suggested calm talk to avoid scaring the learners:

> *P7: We must speak to them calmly because some of them they get scared, too scared to even answer you when you shout. So, you just speak to them calmly, calmly, then it will make them relax as well. Not to be scared of you.*

The above narratives suggested approaching learners with a calm and polite tone to achieve discipline in the classroom. Secondly, the participants agreed that verbal reprimand should not take place in front of other learners in order to avoid unnecessary

embarrassment. The DoE (2000:17) has recommended that teachers should use positive responses to encourage recurrence of good behaviour. Moyo et al. (2014: 11) have posited that teachers have mistaken verbal warning with shouting, which can trigger anger and fear in learners. Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 117) have argued that shouting, in most cases, worsens the behaviour teachers intend to correct. P9 further suggested speaking to the learners seriously and calmly:

> *P9: But this verbal discipline yeah, I think you're going to have to speak like seriously with the kids about, "We don't do this, this is wrong and stuff." In a way, speak to them also calm and soft and like they are talking to any person. Nobody speaks like that outside to the world, like when they scream on children or calling them names and nobody talk like that, so why are they doing it in the class?*

P10 advised that verbal discipline should not lead to shouting and reminded teachers to be conscious of the tone:

> *P10: And verbal warning should never escalate to the point whereby you are now screaming at the child. So, we need to watch the tone of our voices.*

The participants in the above narratives rejected shouting at learners as that could damage the learners' self-image and result in poor relationships and discipline in the classroom. Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 66) have noted that effective verbal reprimand should not cause any form of harm or embarrassment to the learners, while Okeke (2020: 374) described effective verbal discipline as applied with love, respect and reasoning rather than shouting at learners out of frustration.

Theme 4: Discipline with patience

P3 advised teachers to avoid losing their temper and to talk patiently to learners:

> *P3: You don't have to be short tempered; you don't have to be short tempered; you have to be patient to talk to them.*

P8 recommended that teachers be open and relate patiently with learners:

> *P8: No, all I can say is that a teacher must always be patient and a teacher must always be open with the learners. You must be able to make sure, they must not see you as a superior being that is there, they must always be able to be relative and relate to you as a person.*

P9 advised teachers to be patient and understand that they were dealing with little

children:

> *P9: So you must handle the thing in your way that you can do the best by not showing emotions too much, feelings, psychology and stuff like that because in a way you must understand you are working with children (to be patient – that's the meaning for me).*

In the above narratives, the participants encouraged teachers to be patient, while disciplining FP learners verbally. They further advised teachers to avoid anger when dealing with children. As indicated earlier in category 1, theme 5, that verbal discipline was stressful to master, this theme advised them to patiently deal with learners. It is noted that grades 1–3 learners fall within the age bracket of six to nine years and simply need caring, accommodation and understanding from their teachers. Although De Witt and Lessing (2013: 8) have noted instances of increased irritability and bad temper amongst teachers in dealing with classroom misconduct, empirical findings suggest that there is need for teachers to understand the developmental stages of FP learners in order to deal with their misconduct (Kingwill, 2016: 18). Another study has advised teachers never to lose patience with young learners (Davin, 2020: 364).

Theme 5: Involve school stakeholders

The finding here suggested working together with the teachers, parents, learners, principal, HOD and School Governing Body (SGB) in formulating and administering discipline. This confirms the participants' claim in category 2, theme 3 of inviting school stakeholders to assist in talking to learners. P1 believed that school stakeholders working together - especially parents' involvement in talking to learners - would assist:

> *P1: Yes, I think as teachers, parents, and learners we should work together. If the parents do not help the teacher, then the verbal discipline is failing.*

P2 agreed that involving parents worked:

> *P2: You know what, you can use their parents as a guideline so that they can help you. To the parents, then the parents will talk to the learners that, "When you are at school, you have to behave. If a ma'am is standing in front of you, you have to take her as your mother."*

Idu and Ojedapo (2011: 87) have recommended cordial relationships between parents and school authorities through active membership of the Parents-Teachers

Association (PTA). Moyo et. al. (2014:13) have suggested capacity building of all critical role players (parents, teachers, and learners) to ensure an understanding and implementation of standard disciplinary measures. Similarly, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021:6) recommended involving and encouraging parents to discipline their children with love, and act as role models at home to assist teachers in the classroom. P5 noted that involving the principal, teachers, and other school authorities such as the HOD and SGB in talking to learners helped:

> *P5: I think the calling of the principal also helps and the calling of the other teacher they do not know. So, I think the protocol, the HOD must come in and help and the principal must come in and help and the chairperson of the SGB. Sometimes we invite him to come and help us with the verbal discipline of the child.*

P6 indicated involving a respectful figure or the principal to talk to the learners:

> *P6: Yes…somebody who is a respectful figure that they know to come and talk to them, even to have the principal.*

P8 believed that involving all school stakeholders in formulating discipline policy from day one worked:

> *P8: Whenever you're formulating a policy I always say that involvement of all parties that will be affected by the policy is very key, because if you don't involve the learners who are directly affected by the policy then they will react towards the policy. If you don't involve the parent who their learners are affected by the policy, then they will overreact to the policy.*

The participants' narratives suggested involving the principal and other school stakeholders in formulating and administering discipline in schools. The DoE (2000: 25-26) recommended inviting teachers, parents, and principals to talk to misbehaved learners under level 2 and 3 misconduct (breaking school rules or codes). Similarly, the DBE (2012: 9-10) emphasized the importance of a whole-school approach in involving the school community (learners, teachers, principals, parents or caregivers and other school authorities) to achieve discipline in schools. A study by Belle (2018a: 17) revealed that not having the collaboration of all school stakeholders hampers the successful implementation of discipline measures and suggests their involvement to achieve a sound and safe school environment for teaching and learning to take place in the most favourable schooling conditions.

Theme 6: Involve school community and public figures

Involving respected community members or public figures to speak and motivate learners on the importance of classroom discipline was one of the participants' suggested guidelines. P3 suggested inviting motivational speakers like a church pastor occasionally to speak and motivate learners to stop misbehaving and obey school rules:

> *P3: And then even, we will try to bring someone like a pastor, to give them the religion… Probably the assembly, maybe on Mondays or on Fridays, invite a motivational speaker from outside – an external motivational speaker to motivate them.*

P6 mentioned involving other community members such as a lawyer or the police.

> *P6: Maybe to have somebody from the community, even to have somebody from the law, you know the policeman just to talk to them that, "If you start behaving from this young, then this is going to happen, then you grow up like that and then you end up going to jail."*

Participants 9 and 10 agreed that involving the police and other public figures like psychologists and nurses in talking to learners helped, as can be seen in the narratives below:

> *P9: We can ask people to come to the school like police to speak to them, we going to ask psychologist as well to come and speak about how or what bullying can affect or do to somebody, so they can learn from it.*

> *P10: So, having them there and sometimes it also like… when we bring in other public figures like the policeman and maybe a nurse or something like that, it shows them that adults are there for them, it is not just to shout and scream at them all the time.*

It is understandable that these respected figures in the community can assist in keeping discipline at schools as some of them enforce rules, control violence, abuse, and crime in the society. Involving them can lead to moulding the behavioural life of a growing child. I can agree that involving these community members or public figures occasionally to share moral lessons counsel, guide and advise learners in the assembly on the effects and consequences of misconduct to support teachers can assist in achieving discipline. Some studies (Belle, 2018a: 17; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 2) have agreed that there should be mutual participation of the local community in the life of the school to provide peace and order within the school and the community.

The DBE (2012:9) has indicated that implementing a rights-based, positive discipline approach successfully requires a coordinated approach that involves all the actors in the school community. Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014: 305) suggested professional support like psychologists or counsellors to be availed to the students with discipline problems. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 2) have maintained that discipline, peace, and order can co-exist when the local community takes ownership of a school.

Theme 7: Additional guidelines

Additional guidelines such as body language, verbal promise and reward, verbal praise, advice, telling stories of misconduct and the consequences and showing learners pictures or movies of misconduct incidences and victims were suggested by the participants. P1 suggested aligning verbal discipline with facial expression:

> *P1: Your verbal disciplining should be in line with your facial expression. Expression, yes. It's one of the guidelines that will help because, you know, body language is very important. Body language, it's very important.*

P2 mentioned promises and reward:

> *P2: Promises and fulfilling your promise. They can tell you even if I give others the stars and the sweets and the chocolate. Others are becoming jealous now they want to cry. So, I tell them, "If you behave like him or her, wena you are going to get those things."*

P4 indicated regular praise when the learners behaved well:

> *P4: Let's praise them every time when the learner gave you the right answer... Yes. If they behave well, just praise them. When they behave well. Even if they are clean. You say, "Oh, today my learners are so beautiful, you look beautiful." Just praise them. Through advice these learners will try to behave. Yes, because they will remember what you, as a teacher, said to them.*

P5 mentioned telling them stories of misconduct and the consequences:

> *P5: By always storytelling them of what happened to the naughty child in the past.*

P9 agreed that showing them pictures or movies of misconduct and consequences worked:

> *P9: Maybe even show them in a way pictures or movies and stuff to see what is wrong about that and what can happen to you, Yoh this one's difficult.*

The narratives above confirmed some of the participants' claims in categories 2 and 3 which were corroborated with related literature sources.

5.3.2 Findings from the document analysis

As discussed in Chapter Four (sub-section 4.5.3.2)**,** document analysis is an efficient means to engage organisational printed or electronic material in a critical and evaluative manner to make sense of its content (Penley, 2018: 59). Document analysis is used correspondingly as both data collection and data analysis techniques. An earlier study by Bowen (2009: 31) indicated that document analysis is a highly advantageous means of obtaining data if the researcher intends to gain background context to a specific phenomenon. Drawing from the above explanations, document analysis includes reviewing existing document/s to have background knowledge of a topic under study, especially if that study is linked to policy. In addition, a researcher doing document analysis examines a particular document in order to gain an adequate understanding of the specific issues being reviewed with the aim of generating particular empirical knowledge, which the researcher uses to interpret the phenomenon under study. As mentioned earlier, document analysis was necessary in this study because school discipline in South African is backed by policy documents in both school and national levels.

As indicated earlier, I collected the two schools' Code of Conduct for learners from the principals and downloaded the Alternatives to Corporal Punishment in the Classroom policy document from the internet for document analysis. The purpose of document analysis in this study was to have background knowledge of verbal discipline for triangulation purposes. After reviewing the documents to determine the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP, some findings emerged in line with the sub-research questions below:

- How do teachers understand verbal discipline?
- How do teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct?
- What additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct?
- What policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools?

5.3.2.1 How do teachers understand verbal discipline?

The policy document (Alternatives to Corporal Punishment in the Classroom) defines verbal discipline as one of the examples of disciplinary actions for misconduct inside the classroom and misconduct by breaking school rules carried out by teachers and the school higher authority (DoE, 2000: 25). This finding agrees with some of the participant narratives in themes 1 and 2 under category 1. However, both the rural and urban schools Codes of Conduct discussed nothing under this research question.

5.3.2.2 How do teachers use verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct?

The policy document mentioned verbal warnings as one of the disciplinary actions against learners that committed level 1 - misconduct (misconduct inside the classroom such as late coming, failing to complete homework, bunking classes, disobeying instructions and dishonesty) in line with other discipline measures such as community service, demerit, additional work, small menial tasks, detention (DoE, 2000: 25). In agreement, both the rural and urban schools' Code of Conduct for learners repeated the policy document verbatim. However, some of the classroom misconduct the participants encountered in the FP classroom under categories 1 and 2 such as noise making, incomplete homework, not asking for permission before leaving the class, not taking instructions, improper dress and disturbance in the classroom use verbal discipline as the recommended disciplinary action.

5.3.2.3 What additional strategies can facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline for classroom misconduct?

The policy document mentioned involving school stakeholders and consistency in implementing discipline and consequences (DoE, 2000:13-25) as some additional strategies to facilitate effective use of verbal discipline. This finding agrees with some of the participants' utterances in themes 2 and 7 under category 3. However, both the rural and urban schools' Code of Conduct discussed nothing under this.

5.3.2.4 What policy guidelines can be put in place to guide the effective use of verbal discipline in schools?

The policy document noted knowing your learners, modelling good behaviour, involving community stakeholders, and positive reinforcement such as praise (DoE, 2000: 25) as policy guidelines. This finding agrees with the participants' narratives in themes 1, 2, 6 and 7 in category 4. The schools' Code of Conduct mentioned nothing under this.

Based on the above analysis and discussion of the documents, in collaboration with the interview findings, the conclusion drawn is that verbal discipline is an established disciplinary action for levels 1 and 2 misconduct in both the rural and urban schools, which agrees with national policy documents. Additionally, teachers in the two schools used verbal discipline in accordance with the policy recommendation. The documents mentioned verbal warnings or discipline and other disciplinary actions without further clarifications on the usage to assist teachers implement them to achieve discipline in the classroom. For instance, the documents lacked information on verbal discipline specifically based on the interview findings.

5.4 SUMMARY

Both content and document analyses were employed to establish the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. Firstly, findings from the interviews conclude that teachers viewed verbal discipline as a repetitive, time consuming and stressful strategy to reprimand learners of the consequences of classroom misconduct. Teachers used soft and serious tones to prompt learners. Teachers used verbal reprimands, body language, private talk; verbal advice and motivation; verbal promise; and verbal praise to deal with classroom misconduct. School stakeholders were involved in disciplining learners verbally. The teachers suggested the use of body language, calm and polite talk; verbal promise and reward; firm or serious tone; and private talk as additional strategies. Teachers should remain professional and consistent in their disciplining practices. Involving school stakeholders was one of the additional strategies for effective verbal discipline. The teachers recommended understanding the learners, professionalism, and role models

as guidelines. Talking to the learners politely and privately, involving school and community stakeholders, and talking to the learners patiently were among the guidelines for effective verbal discipline. Additional guidelines such as body language, verbal promise and reward, verbal praise, advice, telling stories of misconduct and the consequences, and showing learners pictures or movies of misconduct incidences and victims were recommended to support effective verbal discipline in schools. Secondly, findings from the document analysis concluded that verbal discipline is an established disciplinary action for levels 1 and 2 misconduct in both the rural and urban schools, which agrees with the national policy document. Additionally, teachers in the two schools used verbal discipline in accordance with the policy recommendations based on the interview findings.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Classroom misconduct is the foremost talked about challenge facing teachers in South African schools (Lekganyane, 2011: 10). How to solve the persistent misconduct in the classroom is essential for teachers to achieve the teaching and learning objectives for a specific class. Verbal discipline is one of the most used disciplining strategies in schools. Verbal discipline or verbal warnings or reprimands are examples of disciplinary actions for misconduct inside the classroom often used by teachers (DoE, 2000: 25; DBE, 2012: 35). According to Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 177), verbal discipline is a reprimand to learners against minor acts of misconduct such as making a noise during lessons, using vulgar language, and wearing improper attire. Other classroom misconduct that may demand verbal discipline includes failing to be in class on time, bunking classes, failing to finish homework, not responding to instructions and being dishonest (DoE, 2000: 25); making noise or chatting in class, fighting or quarrelling (Okeke, 2018: 132). Although there have been various claims (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 177; Santos et al., 2017: 4) that verbal discipline has become a commonly used disciplinary strategy by teachers within different educational contexts, research on how teachers use verbal discipline as an effective alternative to corporal punishment in South Africa seems limited.

Given the above, I was motivated to establish the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP in an attempt to develop a guide to enhance the effective use of verbal discipline in schools. Before introducing this chapter, I want to summarise the previous chapters. In Chapter One, I discussed the background of the study including the theoretical framework – symbolic interactionism - which focussed on the meanings teachers attached to verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct, as seen in Chapter Five (sub-section 5.3.1.1). Related literature on classroom misconduct and verbal discipline was fully discussed in Chapters Two and Three. In Chapter Four, I outlined and discussed the research methodology employed in the study, while the empirical data and findings from the interviews and documents were analysed, interpreted, and discussed in relation to the literature reviews in Chapter Five. The current and last chapter summarises the key

findings from the literature review and the empirical study, recommends guidelines for effective verbal discipline, recommends areas for further study, and presents the limitations of the study and conclusion.

6.2 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND INTERVIEWS

Misconduct in the context of the classroom entails any behaviour that prevents other learners from feeling safe and secure while in the classroom (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 112). More serious classroom misconduct such as constant absenteeism, vandalism, theft, smoking dagga, bullying, examination dishonesty, assault, gambling and verbal assault on teachers are reported daily in both primary and secondary schools (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013: 5; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 2). Other forms of misconduct include incomplete homework, leaving school without permission, vandalism, and inflicting injuries on other learners (DBE, 2012: 35). Serame et al. (2013: 2) mentioned some of the most common forms of classroom misconduct South African teachers face in the FP as disruptive behaviour, untidy or incorrect attire, neglect of duty, telling lies, bullying, disrespect, being ill-mannered, using obscene language, impertinence, absenteeism and lateness for class. Other classroom misconduct that may demand verbal discipline include failing to be in class on time, bunking classes, failing to finish homework, not responding to instructions and being dishonest (DoE, 2000: 25); making noise or chatting in class, and fighting or quarrelling (Okeke, 2018: 132).

Within the classroom context, verbal discipline entails the teacher's spoken words (Lahr, 2014: 2; Soto, 2014: 11) that are directed at a learner to signify approval or disapproval of his/her classroom conduct. It is important to note that teachers can use verbal discipline to show their approval or disapproval of learner classroom behaviour. Firdaus (2015: 30) perceived verbal discipline as a strategy whereby the teacher uses consciously chosen spoken words in trying to redirect and manage learners' misconduct or reinforce good behaviour. In addition, Levy (2014: 11) suggested that verbal discipline entails the teacher's spoken responses to learners' behaviour in the classroom generally. Govender (2014: 35) noted that teachers often resort to verbal discipline to "get a message across" and Nkosana et al. (2014: 1581) reported that teachers use verbal warnings as an alternative to corporal punishment to correct learners for minor offences. What is common about the definitions of verbal discipline

above is the fact that teachers use some form of spoken words to control learners' behaviour in the classroom. Having said that, different types of verbal disciplinary measures have been identified in literature which include verbal praise, verbal redirection, and verbal reprimand (Rock, 2019: 1; Riedesel, 2019: 31; de Witt, 2021: 221).

How teachers use verbal discipline while in the classroom will have implications on how learners behave. Studies (Kelly & Pohl, 2018; Manzoor et al., 2015) have shown that teachers' praise for positive behaviour of an often-offending learner can be more rewarding than yelling in dealing with classroom misconduct. Kelly and Pohl (2018: 24) found praise to be more rewarding than punishment, which takes class time. Again, Manzoor et al. (2015: 38) found that using motivational expressions like 'well done', 'keep it up', 'excellent', and 'you have done well', helped the teachers in their study to change the learners' disobedient behaviour towards motivation for learning. Learners appear to be encouraged to be well-behaved when teachers acknowledge their good conduct. Mumthas et al. (2014: 304) found warning, giving advice, and counselling to be yielding the desired outcomes from the misbehaving learners. A study by Ntuli (2012: 112) also found mentoring to be a very effective method of reducing learner misbehaviour at school. Mentoring in this context refers to the teacher-learner conversational relationship that is aimed to communicate the desired and expected behaviour to the learner. Based on the empirical findings interpreted and discussed in section 5.3.1 of Chapter Five, this section summarizes the key findings from both the literature and interviews following the four main categories:

6.2.1 Teachers' understanding of verbal discipline

The study revealed that verbal discipline reminds learners of the consequences of misconduct. The participants used verbal discipline to caution and remind learners of the consequences of misconduct such as noise making, wearing improper attire, unattended homework, and disturbance, before incorporating other alternatives to corporal punishment in the classroom. Among the participants' narratives, P10 summarised their understanding of verbal discipline:

> *P10: Verbal discipline tells learners not to do a certain type of behaviour. When I'm telling them not to do that certain type of behaviour, they deserve that repercussion, or these types of privileges taken away from them.*

This finding agrees with Downs et al.'s (2019: 139) notion that teacher reprimands are statements to individuals or groups of learners indicating disapproval of inappropriate behaviour or a desire to stop specific behaviour. Firdaus (2015: 30) also concurred that verbal discipline is a strategy whereby the teacher uses consciously chosen spoken words in trying to redirect and manage learners' misconduct or reinforce good behaviour.

The participants believed that verbal discipline was challenging as learners disobeyed reprimands and repeated misconduct constantly despite persistent reprimands to change. The words of P4 clearly represented the participants' notions of attributing the non-compliance to the learners' developmental stage and phase:

> *P4: The same mistake that you have reprimanded, they will repeat that mistake again. I think it is because, maybe they are young, they are too small, or maybe...*

Kingwill (2016: 18) has argued that a FP learner behaves in a unique way, and there is a need for teachers to understand their behavioural uniqueness because of their developmental phase. Sun (2015: 94) acknowledged that classroom misconduct includes unruly behaviour with the intention to upset classroom order and hamper teaching and learning which could be seen in the participants' utterances about cautioning learners repeatedly, which could interrupt teaching and learning. Split et al. (2016: 6 - 9) have concluded that teachers who resort to the use of verbal reprimand in disciplining misbehaving learners reported cases of higher levels of oppositional and hyperactive behaviour.

It was clear from the empirical findings that the participants reprimanded learners on a daily basis. They accepted repeating the same misconduct and consequences every day without achieving compliance from the learners. The voice of P1 portrayed other participants' viewpoints on how they repeated themselves every day:

> *P1: Every day to the same learner. "Why are you not wearing your mask?" "Why are you not doing this?" "Why didn't you comb your hair?" "Where is your homework?" Every day timeously.*

A study by Davin (2020: 364) confirmed that young learners need constant repetition before they can truly understand and learn new facts. However, an earlier study by Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 67) emphasised that effective verbal discipline should

not involve continuous reprimand of the misbehaving learners, otherwise verbal warnings will become ineffective.

The participants viewed verbal discipline as stressful seeing that it took emotional energy to decide how to use it in particular circumstances, especially if it seemed ineffective at times. Verbal discipline seemed to be stressful and challenging for the participants as teachers spent most of their teaching time stressing and shouting at learners which affected them in their personal lives as well. Some of the participants' perceptions were represented by P8 who complained about getting drained, tired with headaches after talking and repeating same things in class every day:

> *P8: You repeat yourself to a point that you find that when you arrive at home it has drained you and you find yourself you have a headache, and you are drained; you are so tired*."

This finding is in accordance with De Witt and Lessing's (2013: 6) study that reported irritation, temper, feelings of depression, impatience, and aggression as part of the emotional life of teachers, resulting from learners' undisciplined behaviour. In agreement, Belle (2016: 256) revealed that learners often misbehave so frequently that teachers feel stressed and disempowered.

Despite the stressful and repetitive nature of verbal discipline, according to the participants, discipline was achieved in the long run. It is clear from the participants that verbal discipline is effective in dealing with classroom misconduct but requires ample time and patience. They also need to use it in an appropriate way – not necessarily through shouting. The participants gave positive feedback on how learners later comply. Participant 1's view was in accordance with other participants when he/she indicated how teachers achieved discipline in the classroom at the end:

> *P1: One positive thing about verbal warning is that at the end of the day, your word as a teacher is heard, the aim is achieved of warning the learner verbally.*

Rahimi and Karkami (2015: 58) agreed that a sufficient degree of classroom discipline is required to create an appropriate learning atmosphere. Segalo and Rambuda (2018: 1) acknowledged that dealing with classroom misconduct by establishing effective disciplining measures is considered a norm in ensuring the functionality of education in schools.

6.2.2 Teachers' use of verbal discipline

The participants disclosed using verbal reprimands or warnings often to deal with classroom misconduct. P9's narrative acknowledged other participants' views of emphasising the use of verbal discipline to indicate consequences of misconduct which seemed to work well with younger learners:

> *P9: I usually warn them, if they do something wrong that is disturbing somebody or in a way show disrespect to another learner, then I caution them and then they know my rules then they know okay if teacher's going to speak to me again, then I'm going to get one little thing to do or something.*

Kennedy (2010: 7-8) agreed that teachers are more susceptible to using verbal reprimands or warnings than using any other disciplining strategy in the classroom. Similar findings have indicated that teachers use verbal discipline to show disapproval of learner misconduct in class (Chikwature et al., 2016: 41).

The participants mentioned involving school stakeholders to talk to the misbehaving learners. They acknowledged inviting school stakeholders after failing to get the disruptive learners' compliance or when matters got worse. The words of P5 clearly represented the participants' indication of communicating and inviting parents, fellow teachers, the HOD and the principal to assist in talking to the learners:

> *P5: I also invite parents to talk to them. "Help me talk to your child because after I reprimanded your child, your child is still repeating the same thing."*

This finding is in line with Segalo and Rambund's (2018: 4) notion of parents playing a central role in the development of their children's character and overall well-being. Belle (2018a: 17) maintained that not having the collaboration of all school stakeholders hampers the effective implementation of daily disciplinary measures and suggested that every school stakeholder must take responsibility to contribute towards a sound and safe school environment for teaching and learning to take place in the most favourable school conditions.

The participants admitted using body language and non-verbal actions such as facial expression, sitting, or standing up, hitting the table or board and clapping hands to send messages of dissatisfaction to the misbehaving learners. P2's narrative was in

accordance with other participants' views, indicating the use of facial expression (angry face) to caution learners:

> *P2: I have to change my face, facial expression. Now they have to see that now I am angry.*

This finding confirms De Witt's (2021: 220) findings of using body language such as facial expression and body position to discipline young children. The finding also concurs with the symbolic interactionist thought or idea of combining language and significant symbols (gestures) in communication (Carter & Fuller, 2016: 932).

The participants revealed talking to misbehaved learners privately to understand reasons behind their unruly behaviour in the classroom. The narrative from P3 reflected most participants' views of not disciplining misbehaved learners before others, but rather taking them to the office for a private talk:

> *P3: Okay, sometimes I don't discipline the learners amongst others. I just take him out to my office and talk to him. Just discuss the matter, to show him that this thing is not right*.

Studies (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 146; Campbell, 2017: 22) show that not all misbehaving learners want to be corrected publicly in the classroom in the presence of other learners. Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 66) have established that effective verbal reprimand should not cause any form of harm or embarrassment to the learners, arguing further that verbal reprimand should not take place in front of other learners otherwise, the learners being reprimanded would become unnecessarily embarrassed.

The participants confirmed using verbal advice to instil discipline in learners who distracted other learners in class, failed to do their homework, did not want to read or pay attention to lessons. They agreed with using advice to get learners to behave in class. The following excerpt from the interview with P2 was in agreement with other participants' views of advising learners to stop interrupting teaching and learning and to concentrate, whilst mentioning the consequences of disruption during classes:

> *P2: I advise them yes. Sometimes I told them, "If you are not listening, you are not disciplined in class. So, number one, you disturb other learners, you're going to fail, because when I'm in front of you, sometimes I do the thing toward the learning and you are busy talking, you are going to be lost from the work which we are doing in the classroom. Again, when I'm going to ask you the question, you will not know the answers, so don't disturb other learners,*

because if you disturb other learners, you are going to fail. So, don't disturb those who want to learn."

The finding is in accordance with the study of Mumthas et al. (2014: 304) that warning, giving advice, and counselling yielded the desired positive outcomes from misbehaving learners. The advice above confirms Obadire and Sinthumule's (2021: 2) belief that advice and motivation contribute to learners' improved behaviour and academic achievement.

The participants disclosed praising and promising learners' incentives like sweets or chocolate, small presents, stars, or stickers to get them to behave and focus on the classroom. This approach to discipline is behaviouristic in nature and agrees with Skinner's operant conditioning/reinforcement to maintain or encourage desirable behaviour in learners (Skinner, 1965: 430; Skosana, 2017: 218). Skinner (1976: 90-115) has argued that human behaviour can be controlled by positive reinforcement, as well as negative reinforcement. In other words, teachers can control classroom misconduct by identifying what learners cherish to reinforce consistent and good behaviour. However, the danger with this approach to discipline within the classroom context, according to Sibanda and Mpofu (2017: 121), is that positive reinforcement collapses once rewards are withdrawn. The implication of this strategy is no incentive (chocolate or sweet), no good behaviour in the class, which is disastrous to teaching and learning. P2's narrative represented the common view of participants on promising learners' sweets or chocolate to conduct themselves in the classroom:

P2: I promise them, "If you are not talking, I'm going to give you sweets or chocolate." That is the one which is more effective.

This empirical evidence is in line with Mtsweni's (2008: 113) claims that the availability of rewards and praise motivates learners to consistently obey the school rules. In accordance with the above, Walters and Frei (2007: 6) have confirmed the participants' responses by adding that acknowledging well-behaved learners is also a way of encouraging good behaviour and motivating other learners to behave differently.

6.2.3 Additional strategies for effective use of verbal discipline

The study suggested using body language such as facial expressions (seriousness on the face), acting with hands, pointing, walking away from the class in pretence and coming back standing staring or gazing at learners (eye contact) to create consciousness of displeasure with the learners' misconduct. The participants termed body language effective in connection with verbal discipline in disciplining learners. P1's narrative concurred with other participants' views that facial expression always helped in disciplining learners as one needed to show seriousness through body language:

> *P1: Facial…facial expression always helps. I cannot be verbally warning you and smiling at the same time. The seriousness in the face. Yes, because the more you smile, the more they take advantage of you. Ah Ma'am is just joking you see, but your facial expression also speaks a lot to them.*

De Witt (2021: 220) also advocated the use of body language such as facial expression, body position, distance, and eye contact to discipline young children. Similarly, the finding confirms gestural reprimand by Riedesel (2019: 32) which entails the use of non-verbal or body language to caution misbehaving learners.

The participants suggested involving school stakeholders such as fellow teachers, DoE officials (Chief Directorate: Partnerships in Education and Chief Directorate: Care and Support in Schools), the school principal, and parents to talk to the learners to facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct. They found this strategy effective as some learners quickly adjust to rules because they do not want to be confronted by school stakeholders. The strategy by P1 portrayed the viewpoints of the participants on how the mention of inviting the principal or a fellow teacher made some learners uncomfortable:

> *P1: So, if I say, "I'm going to call the principal", then they start to say they are sorry and stuff, so that also helps. I also bring the other teacher to class to talk to them.*

The finding agrees with the DoE (2012: 9 – 10) guidelines on the whole-school approach of involving the school community (teachers, principals, parents, and other school authorities like the Department) to achieve positive discipline in schools. A study by Allodi (2010: 90) demonstrated that there are both short-term and long-term benefits resulting from the quality of the interactional relationships amongst the stakeholders

within the social learning environment on learners' classroom conduct. Correspondingly, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 2) have postulated that achieving learner discipline in schools calls for a strong partnership with all school stakeholders, involving parents, principals, educators, and other community members.

Many of the participants suggested that talking to the learners in a calm and polite manner helped as an additional strategy to facilitate the effective use of verbal discipline. They advised other teachers to approach misconduct calmly and politely while reasoning with the learners to understand what informed misconduct. They also indicated that learners find this approach friendly and comfortable. P2's narrative was in line with other participants who believed that shouting would not help and suggested talking to learners nicely:

> *P2: I don't think if you keep on shouting it helps, maybe it helps and then if you calm down also and try and talk to them the nice way, then they become right.*

This finding is consistent with a literature finding that advised teachers to avoid using angry tones, but rather calm and firm voices in reprimanding misbehaving learners about the seriousness of their actions while redirecting them to what is appropriate classroom behaviour (Lukowiak & Bridges, 2010: 65). De Witt (2021: 219), in agreement with the above finding, has suggested that teachers should use firm, calm and controlled speech (specific instruction) when disciplining young children to convey serious messages and authority in the classroom.

The study established holding private talks with the learners who misbehaved away from other learners or outside the classroom. The participants agreed to employing private talk to understand why some learners behave the way they do or to respect learners as some learners feel humiliated or embarrassed when cautioned in the classroom among other learners. A quote by P3 summarises the narratives of other participants on holding private meetings with misbehaved learners outside the classroom:

> *P3: Yes. So, you will have to. You will have to have one-on-one sessions. Like I said, I can take him out of the class.*

Walters and Frei (2007: 26) have suggested that when it comes to correction, it is generally more powerful and appropriate to correct learners individually and privately.

Other studies (Burnett & Mandel, 2010: 146; Campbell, 2017: 22) have concluded that not all misbehaving learners want to be corrected publicly in the classroom under the watch of other learners.

The study acknowledged that teachers should be professional and consistent when practising discipline in the classroom. P8, as well as other participants, suggested that teachers should maintain consistency with their disciplinary practices to prevent getting learners confused on the reasons for receiving a particular discipline:

> *P8: Consistence, if you warn the learners about something, about a certain behaviour and you say that this is what their punishment should be, then they will understand that every time we do this, these are the consequence. Consistency, that's all I can say, as a teacher you need to be consistent. In everything that you are doing, you must be consistent.*

The DoE (2000: 13) has recommended that teachers should be serious and consistent about the implementation of discipline in the classroom. Belle (2018b: 43) has argued that educators' irresponsible attitudes and behaviour are likely to encourage learners to challenge their authority, disobey orders and bunk classes to disturb classroom atmosphere. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021: 6) have concluded that teachers' professional and classroom management skills will help them to prepare well and apply the correct strategy to deal with learners' behaviour.

6.2.4 Policy guidelines for effective use of verbal discipline

The study suggested understanding the learners and their background as one of the guidelines for effective verbal discipline because some behavioural issues emanate from the learners as a result of their home context. P3's quote represented a common view of other participants on knowing the learners' background and problems to be able to approach misconduct without making situations worse:

> *P3: I have to make research about them – about the background. Yes. So that I can know how to talk to them. How... Maybe there is a serious problem about them – mentally or so. Maybe there is a treatment that he is undergoing, and... Yes. I have to first know the background.*

This finding is in line with the DoE's (2000: 13) assertions of understanding learners through relationship building as a guideline to solving disciplinary problems in the classroom. The participants further advised about finding reasons or causes of

misconduct before shouting or warning as sometimes possible danger like a snake or a bee in the classroom (especially in rural areas) could prompt screaming. The narrative by P10 clearly supported the participants' views of understanding reasons for misconduct, before verbal warning:

> *P10: I think a policy guideline would be that a teacher should use verbal warning, but the teacher needs to assess the situation before a warning is given. So, I cannot just walk into the classroom and my children are screaming. Obviously, they are screaming for a reason.*

Idu and Ojedapo (2011:86) have demonstrated that teachers' attitude towards learners' behaviour is a contributing factor to indiscipline among learners and therefore have cautioned teachers to devote time to understanding the reasons for a misconduct before disciplining.

The participants advised teachers to be careful with their classroom practices and model good behaviour as learners watch them; a notion that agrees with the DoE's (2000: 18) views that teachers should model good behaviour in the classroom. P7's narrative summarised the views of the majority of the participants in advising teachers to be self-disciplined and careful in appearance and speech to be able to discipline learners successfully:

> *P7: Because we are talking about discipline. You must also look disciplined in front of them. That is why you must be careful around the learners. Because now, if I am not disciplined, I cannot discipline somebody. The discipline should start with me. Yes. The appearance, and how I talk with the other teachers, how I talk with other learners, that also counts*.

Van Breda (2014: 1067) has argued that when teachers disregard the fact that their conduct and attitudes in the classroom may influence the learners' sense of belonging and conduct, it may affect classroom misconduct. Similarly, Walters and Frei (2007: 21) have asserted that teachers must establish themselves as appropriate authority figures and role models to achieve discipline.

It emerged that teachers should engage misbehaved learners individually after class to prevent embarrassing them before other learners. Govender (2014: 69) noted that learners who experienced being yelled at, presented feelings of humiliation and isolation, which affected their participation in class activities. The DoE (2000:17) has

recommended that teachers should use positive responses to encourage recurrence of good behaviour. P3, representing other participants' narratives, advised teachers to avoid shouting but rather to talk to the learners politely and privately:

> *P3: Stop shouting. Shouting is not the proper way, because now even when you are shouting, you cause a dialogue, because if you are shouting, then they will answer you back. But then if you are talking to them politely, I think they will somehow understand you. They will change if we talk to them politely or work on a one-on-one session.*

Moyo et al. (2014: 11) have posited that teachers have mistaken verbal warnings with shouting which can trigger anger and fear in learners. Lukowiak and Bridges (2010: 66) confirmed that effective verbal reprimand should not cause any form of harm or embarrassment to the learners. Certainly, teachers need to approach learners calmly, despite the gravity of the misconduct, to find facts behind the unruly behaviour.

The study encouraged teachers to be patient while disciplining FP learners verbally. The participants advised teachers to avoid anger in dealing with children. P3 summarised other participants' views by advising teachers to avoid getting cross and to talk patiently to learners:

> *P3: You don't have to be short tempered; you don't have to be short tempered; you have to be patient to talk to them.*

As indicated in sub-section 6.2.1, verbal discipline is a stressful strategy; teachers are advised to patiently deal with FP learners as they fall within the age bracket of six to nine years and simply need caring, accommodation and understanding from teachers. Although De Witt and Lessing (2013: 8) noted instances of increased irritability and bad temper amongst teachers in dealing with classroom misconduct, a recent study advised teachers never to lose patience with young learners (Davin, 2020: 364).

The participants suggested involving respected community members or public figures to speak and motivate learners on the importance of classroom discipline. P6, representing other participants' views, mentioned the positive influence by involving other community members such as a lawyer or the police:

> *P6: Maybe to have somebody from the community. Even to have somebody from the law, you know the policeman just to talk to them that if you start behaving from this young, then this is going to happen, then you grow up like that and then you end up going to jail.*

It is understandable that these respected figures in the community can assist in keeping discipline in schools as some of them enforce rules, control violence, crime, and abuse in the society. Involving them can lead to moulding the behavioural life of a developing child. For instance, they can assist in sharing experiences on the implication of someone landing in jail or being killed for committing a serious offence. I agree that involving these community members or public figures occasionally to share misconduct victim experiences, moral lessons, counsel, guide and advise learners in the assembly on the effects and consequences of misconduct to support teachers can assist in achieving discipline. Some studies (Belle, 2018a: 17; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021: 2) have agreed that there should be mutual participation of the local community and the school to provide peace and order within the school and the community.

Finally, other guidelines such as body language, verbal promise and reward, verbal praise, advice, telling stories of misconduct and the consequences and showing learners pictures or movies of misconduct incidences and victims such as recorded scenes of bullying, fights or abuse and the court hearing to punish the offender were suggested by the participants. P4's narratives agreed with other participants' perceptions indicating the motivational influence of regular praise when the learners behaved well:

> *P4: Let's praise them every time when the learner gave you the right answer, Yes. If they behave well, just praise them. When they behave well. Even if they are not clean. You say, "Oh, today my learners are so beautiful, you look beautiful." Just praise them.*

These praises, however, need to be truthful and real and not just mere words to get the learners behaved. If done with sincerity, the learners will do their best to make the classroom a friendly and conducive place for teaching and learning. Some of these findings confirm most of the empirical and literature findings discussed previously in sub-sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.3 above.

6.3 KEY FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Major findings from the document analysis, in collaboration with the interview findings and literature review discussed in section 5.3.2 of Chapter Five, established that verbal discipline is an established disciplinary action for levels 1 and 2 misconduct in both the rural and urban schools, which agrees with national policy documents in South Africa

(DoE, 2000; DBE, 2012). The participants in the two schools indicated using verbal discipline to caution learners that committed minor classroom offences, in accordance with the policy recommendations (DoE, 2000: 25). However, a major gap discovered in the documents was the mention of verbal warnings or discipline and other disciplinary actions without further clarifications on meanings, types, and usage to assist teachers to implement them judiciously to achieve discipline in the classroom. For instance, the documents lacked vital information on verbal discipline based on the interview findings.

6.4 GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE VERBAL DISCIPLINE

Based on the findings from the empirical study, document analysis and the literature review, the following recommendations were made to the Department of Basic Education, school, teachers, and parents for effective verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct:

6.4.1 Department of Basic Education

- The national policy document in South Africa concerning discipline – Alternatives to Corporal Punishment for Schools - needs a total review or a 2nd edition as many studies on positive discipline have emerged since the year 2000 that demands urgent revision to incorporate most of the vital findings into the document.
- There is a need to explain the meaning of verbal discipline and other disciplinary strategies in the document, as mere mentioning is not enough for teachers to know what these strategies entail and how to apply these strategies in the classroom.
- In the document it is also necessary to outline various types of verbal discipline such as private talk, calm and polite talk, verbal advice, verbal praise and promise and when to use them in the classroom.
- Numerous strategies and guidelines on the effective use of verbal discipline discussed in this study should be considered to be part of the document. I will approach the FSDBE to organise workshops where these findings can be shared in series to the DBE officials for implementation purposes.

- The DBE should endorse notable community members such as pastors, police, lawyers, nurses, psychologists, social workers and counsellors as partners with schools, so that they can be consulted or invited to speak to learners to support teachers in handling discipline in their classes.
- Educational psychologists, counsellors or social workers could also be made permanent support workers at schools to render support services to teachers and learners.
- These support workers should be permitted to teach learners moral lessons such as interpreting and explaining the Code of Conduct to them in the assembly hall weekly as part of the curriculum.
- The DBE should involve researchers of school discipline working in the higher institutions (lectures) in a series of workshops to assist in reviewing the policy document in line with some of the valuable findings and guidelines on positive discipline existing online.
- The DBE should organise workshops for teachers to assist them in dealing with misconduct and how to use verbal discipline effectively with the help of researchers of school discipline mentioned above.
- There is also need for a monthly or weekly national programme on the radio or television on school discipline matters organised by the DBE to educate staff members at schools and parents at home.
- The DBE should endeavour to produce the online policy document on discipline into hard copies and distribute them to the school and public libraries to be easily accessible to teachers, learners, parents, and the public.
- The DBE should also distribute the envisaged hard copies of the policy document to schools so that teachers, learners and parents can have copies.

6.4.2 Schools

- The Codes of Conduct of schools need to be reviewed but only after the national policy document on school discipline has been reviewed, given that guidelines and rules were copied verbatim from the national policy document.
- Both the teachers, learners and parents should be involved in reviewing the Code of Conduct to ensure a version all would understand.

- The Code of Conduct should be printed in A5 paper cover booklets available to all learners, teachers, and parents in a reader-friendly format and language. I was disappointed to be handed A4 printed materials as Codes of Conduct in both schools where the research was done. I, however, had 300 copies of A5 pamphlets delivered to the rural school in appreciation for participating in my study and, most importantly, to set an example on how the document should be adapted for the young learners
- The school should involve notable community members such as pastors, police, lawyers, nurses, psychologists, social workers and counsellors occasionally to share moral lessons, counsel, guidance and advice to the learners on the effects and consequences of misconduct to support teachers, as indicated by the participants in sub-section 5.3.1.4. They should not be invited only when there are problems in the schools with learners – partnership with schools should be considered.
- There is also a need for strong relationships between the school and parents or caregivers in monitoring learners' behaviour as the home is the starting point or major place the learners spend their lives.
- There is need for a meeting each term between teachers and parents to discuss disciplinary matters of learners – parents should not be involved only when there is a behavioural problem in the school.

6.4.3 Teachers

- Teachers should know FP learners (individual child's strengths, interests, behaviour, and needs) to be able to teach and discipline them with love, as verbal discipline requires time and patience.
- Teachers should remain professional in appearance and behaviour as role models to achieve discipline – principals should organise workshop in schools addressing dress code and behaviour of teachers. Organisations like SACE can be asked to contribute.
- Teachers should be consistent with disciplining and speak responsibly before the learners.

- Teachers should approach learners in a calm and polite manner for effective verbal discipline – the DBE should organise an annual school discipline seminar to equip teachers with training or skills to handle misconduct.
- Teachers should avoid embarrassing misbehaved learners in the classroom but engage them privately to understand the reasons behind their unruly actions.
- Teachers should be given workshops on how to patiently reprimand FP learners as these learners simply need caring, accommodation and understanding, given their age, stage and school phase.
- Teachers should organise parents' meetings to discuss possible disciplinary problems of the FP learners and give guidelines as to how to handle these at home to assist schools.
- Teachers should sometimes use body language such as facial expression, gazing or silence to disapprove misconduct and reprimand learners to behave well.
- Teachers should use verbal promises and rewards such as well-done stickers to motivate learners to keep behaving well, as reinforcement is very important in the FP classroom.
- Teachers should use verbal praise such as "well-done class", "keep it up" to appreciate and reinforce good behaviour in the classroom.
- Teachers should avoid shouting at learners and should instead use verbal prompts or body language such as facial expression or gazing to get them to listen to lessons, complete homework and behave properly in class.
- Teachers should tell learners stories of misconduct and their consequences or show pictures of misconduct incidences and offenders or even organise drama of such with the learners (roleplay) to remind them of the consequences of misconduct.
- Teachers should attend workshops and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training on teaching and learning matters, including classroom discipline organised by the schools or DBE.

6.4.4 Parents

- Parents are primary caregivers and children learn from them before they even get to school - they should always model good behaviour before their children to make the teachers' work easy.
- Parents should take the responsibility of instilling values and morals in their children and ensure that that they remain disciplined in the classroom. Churches can also assist homes in helping children achieve this.
- Parents should be patient while talking or advising their children in order to achieve gradual change, as verbal discipline seems to be repetitive and stressful to master. Schools should organise workshops to assist parents with the required skills to achieve this at home.
- Parents should also make themselves available to visit schools when invited to discuss their children's conduct and the way forward to assist the child and the school.
- Parents should have background information of the school's Code of Conduct in order to assist the child and school fully. It is expected that every parent should have a copy of the Code of Conduct.
- Parent-teacher-learner workshops should be organised annually by schools to get all involved and informed on school discipline.
- Parents should make time to engage their children in storytelling about the consequences of classroom misconduct such as suspension or poor performance to make children aware of their actions, as young children use stories to construct meaning.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

- This study was conducted in only one education district and school phase (FP) in the Free State province of South Africa. The same study needs to be conducted in other provinces and school phases in the country for generalisation purposes, although it is difficult to generalise qualitative studies.
- The study focused only on the views of teachers about the effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the FP. Perhaps the perceptions of learners on the effects of verbal discipline would ensure balanced views to improve alternatives to corporal punishment.

- Another important area that I think would really make an interesting further study relates to the relationship between verbal discipline and verbal bullying in schools. Research involving observation is necessary to establish if teachers do not mistake verbal bullying for verbal discipline.
- Finally, this was a qualitative study of ten teachers; further study is needed in the same area with larger sample sizes using the quantitative or mixed method research approach in order to generalise the findings.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I would like to draw the readers' attention to some of the decisions that I had to make during the fieldwork that may constitute limitations with reference to how the findings of this study may be interpreted. First, I had planned to obtain complementary information through observation of teaching sessions. However, I had to drop the idea following stringent COVID-19 regulations that were prevailing in the participating schools. Data from observation could have enriched the overall outcome of data analysis and could have enabled me to further triangulate information obtained from the interviews. Secondly, the COVID-19 regulations in participating schools meant that some of the participants preferred to be interviewed telephonically. Although the interviews via the telephone yielded equally rich data on the issues discussed, it is possible that some of the information I obtained from some of the participants may have been compromised. I, however, do not have any way to determine if some of the participants I interviewed by telephone withheld some information that might have impacted the quality of data obtained overall. Teams or zoom or video call could have assisted to eliminate this fear but would have been very expensive on the side of the participants. Apart from the COVID-19 regulations, the study has been fully funded by UNISA and went well without many challenges.

6.7 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

Verbal discipline is one of the most used disciplinary strategies to deal with classroom misconduct in the FP. The study revealed that teachers use verbal discipline to remind learners of the consequences of misconduct before exploring other disciplinary measures. Verbal discipline is stressful, challenging, and repetitive, but effective in achieving discipline amongst FP learners. It was clearly established that teachers used

verbal reprimands repeatedly to deal with classroom misconduct. Fellow teachers, principals, parents, and other school stakeholders are partners in disciplining misbehaved learners verbally. The study discovered that body language and non-verbal actions such as facial expression, sitting, or standing up, hitting the table or board and clapping hands are used to send messages of dissatisfaction to the misbehaving learners. Teachers engaged learners in private talks to understand the reasons behind misconduct and praised them when necessary to motivate good behaviour.

Additional strategies to facilitate effective verbal discipline included talking to the learners in a calm and polite manner, maintaining professionalism in the classroom and using disciplinary practises in a consistent way. Some of the policy guidelines to achieve verbal discipline in the FP involved understanding the learners and their background as some behavioural issues originate from the learners' home; modelling good behaviour before the learners; disciplining with a gentle spirit and patience and involving respected community members or public figures in speaking to learners.

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UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2020/11/11

Ref: **2020/11/11/50335731/34/AM**
Name: Mrs CC Okeke
Student No.: 50335731

Dear Mrs CC Okeke

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2020/11/11 to 2025/11/11

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs CC Okeke
E-mail address: 50335731@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0788588879

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof E. Venter
E-mail address: ventee1@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0124294751

Title of research:

The effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the Foundation Phase

Qualification: PhD Psychology of 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 2020/11/11 to 2025/11/11.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2020/11/11 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.

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Enquiries: MZ Thango
Ref: Research Permission: CC Okeke
Tel. 082 537 2654
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za

education
Department of Education
FREE STATE PROVINCE

37 Mon Cherie
Anna Neethling Pohl Street
Langenhoven Park
Bloemfontein
9301

Dear Mrs. C.C. Okeke

APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

Topic: The Effectiveness of Verbal Discipline in Dealing with Classroom Misconduct in the Foundation Phase.

1. **List of schools involved:**
2. **Target Population:** Ten Grade 1-3 Teachers at the selected Primary Schools.
3. **Period of research**: From the first week of February 2021 until 30 September 2021. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:

   4.1 The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process. 4.2

   A bound copy of the research document or a CD, should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein.

   4.3 You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.

   4.4 The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.

5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.

Yours sincerely

Mr. M.M. Sithole
DDG: Corporate Services

09/12/2020

DATE:

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PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I ..... the principal of Bloemfontein permit you to conduct research on "**The effectiveness of verbal discipline** in **dealing with classroom misconduct in the Foundation Phase classroom**" in my school with my teachers.

.....

Principal signature 25/03/21

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PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

I .....the principal of Bloemfontein permit you to conduct research on **"The effectiveness of verbal discipline in dealing with classroom misconduct in the Foundation Phase classroom"** in my school with my teachers.

.....

Principal signature

31/03/24

2021 -03- 31

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PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM (Return Slip)

I,_____ (Participant Code such as , Mr or Ms A, B, C, D, E is welcomed), confirm that the person seeking 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.

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.

I agree to the audio-recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

_____ _____

Participant signature Date

_____ _____

Researcher signature Date

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QUALITATIVE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

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SECTION 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dear Colleague,

Thank you once again for accepting to participate in my study.

I would appreciate if you could tell me little about yourself. Probes here may include but not limited to: participant's gender, age, grade, qualification, post, years of experience, etc. as indicated in the box below to capture your background information necessary for the study.

Date of interview	
Participant code	
Participant age	
Gender	
Qualification	
Teaching grade	
Years of experience	

SECTION 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Tell me about classroom misconduct in your schools?**
   - You are a FP teacher – what kinds of misconduct do you encounter in the class?
   - How do you think classroom misconduct differ now from the time that teachers used corporal punishment?

2. **How do you view classroom discipline generally in this post corporal punishment era?**
   - How do you think classroom discipline differs now from the time when teachers used corporal punishment?
   - What kind of classroom discipline do you find more effective?

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3. **Research has shown that verbal discipline is the starting point of classroom discipline in schools without resorting to corporal punishment - how do you view verbal discipline?**

- Tell me about the types of verbal discipline you use in your classroom to deal with classroom misconduct?
- Do you see verbal discipline as a successful strategy for classroom misconduct? Why/why not?
- Tell me your challenges in using verbal discipline to deal with classroom misconduct?

4. **What strategies do think will improve the effective use of verbal discipline to control classroom misconduct?**

5. **Given that verbal discipline is the most common discipline strategy in schools, what policy guideline do you suggest being put in place for effective use of verbal discipline to handle classroom misconduct?**

6. **Is there any other concern/s you want to draw my attention on verbal discipline and classroom misconduct in your school?**

Thank you once more for taking part in this study!

Tel: 011 787 0797
Cell: 076 389 3246
gill.hannant@outlook.com

Mrs G Hannant
28 Hillcrest Avenue
CRAIGHALL PARK
2196

14 January 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I certify that I have edited the PhD thesis

The Effectiveness of Verbal Discipline in Dealing with

Classroom Misconduct in the Foundation Phase

by

Charity Chimankpa Okeke

However, the correction of all errors/missing information remains the responsibility of the student.

G.C. HANNANT
BA HED