

Collaboration between secondary school governing bodies and School disciplinary committees towards improving discipline

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DECLARATION

I, Madika Majoro, declare that:

- i. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other institution.
- ii. This dissertation does not contain any other person's data or information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- iii. This dissertation does not contain any other person's writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. These sources have been acknowledged in the following way:
 - a. Information and ideas that have been paraphrased have been attributed to particular sources by citing and referencing them.
 - b. Where exact words have been used, the writing of the source has been placed within quotation marks, cited and referenced.
- iv. The work described in this dissertation was carried out in the School of Education at North-West University.
- v. An ethical clearance number (NWU-01277-20-A2) was granted prior to undertaking this study.

Madika Patricia Majoro

November 2022

Student's signature

Date

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents

Ketsahalo Elias Majoro

and

Seapehi Lea Makgotso Majoro

Mama and Papa, thank you for your support throughout my studies and career

I will forever strive to make you proud!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my late father's words, which always encouraged and motivated me throughout my studies.

He believed in my capabilities and forever told me that "O BOHLALE!" The words live within me to this day, for I know that "I have the brains to achieve anything I put my mind into ...".

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge my late mother, Seapehi Makgotso Lea Majoro, my sister, Maleshoane Alice Majoro, and my friend/partner, Lebohang Jacob Mahase, for the undying support that you all have shown to me throughout this journey. This journey was never easy, but your support and belief in me, saw me through. I had a lot on my hands, but you were there to take the load off me so that I could give time and attention to my academic work, and for that, I will forever be grateful. God bless you!

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the collaboration between school governing bodies (SGBs) and school disciplinary committees (SDCs) in dealing with discipline of learners. A case study of three secondary schools in North West province was done. The study's main aim was to examine the collaboration between secondary school governing bodies and disciplinary committees on improving learner discipline in three selected secondary schools in a rural township, and how their collaboration can be used to improve discipline in these schools.

Further aims of the study were to assess the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs in improving school discipline to suggest ways of improving the collaboration and to add more depth to the existing body of knowledge.

A qualitative approach to the study was followed and was set in the interpretivist paradigm. The 21 participants were selected through purposive sampling of members of SGBs and SDCs who were part of the disciplinary processes in these schools. The researcher collected the data by using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The data gathered was analysed through an interpretive data analysis process.

Ethical clearance for the researcher to conduct this research was obtained from the North-West University. Approval for the research to be conducted at the three selected schools was granted in writing by the circuit manager. The identity of participants was protected by using code names.

This study is based on a theoretical framework of collaborative governance. A review of literature pertaining to the management of ill-discipline at schools and the collaboration between SGBs and their subcommittees was done. The studies from the literature revealed that many of the challenges of learner ill-discipline encountered by South African schools were being experienced worldwide.

The findings of this research were enlightening because it revealed the often-unknown daily experiences of secondary school educators and SGB members regarding ill-discipline of learners and the lack of support and involvement from the Department of Education (DOE) and most of the learners' parents.

It was evident from the findings that the collaboration between all education structures must be strengthened to create a purposive and conducive learning environment. The formulation and enforcement of the code of conduct require collaborative efforts by learners, parents, educators, SDC and SGB members. There is a lack of knowledge on the part of the SGB,

SDC and parent members on the roles that they each must play to collaboratively improve discipline. One other finding was the availability and use of outdated and recycled codes of conduct, that do not incorporate changes in education.

It is recommended that the DOE must also play its role in ensuring that SGB and SDC members are trained and capacitated to execute their expected functions effectively. The learner code of conduct must be inculcated in learners not only in secondary schools but also in primary schools. In addition, parents, educators and learners must continuously be made aware of its existence and understand its purpose.

Key terms: discipline, collaboration, governance, school governing body, school disciplinary committee, code of conduct

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DBE	Department of Basic Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
DOE	Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
SDC	School Disciplinary Committee
SGB	School Governing Body
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SBST	School-Based Support Team

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Learner discipline in South Africa is one of the major problems currently hampering the development and future of education, as it impacts negatively on teaching and learning (Schlebusch *et al.*, 2022:2). Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:34) define ill-discipline or discipline problems as “disruptive behaviour that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, be treated with respect and to learn”. Learner misconduct is a serious problem that should not be ignored as it does not only affect the perpetrator of the behaviour but other learners and teachers who become victims through emotional, verbal and, sometimes, physical abuse or torture. Many educators are resigning due to feelings of disempowerment when dealing with undisciplined learners, particularly after the democratisation of education, which led to the abolition of corporal punishment that was commonly employed by educators during the apartheid era (Sekhwama, 2019:2).

New approaches to disciplining learners were introduced to educators as alternatives to corporal punishment in the year 2000 by Kader Asmal (Sekhwama, 2019:3). Instead of administering corporal punishment to learners, educators had to learn other measures to deal with ill-disciplined learners or those who act against authority (Monare, 2013:1). However, the use of alternative measures of disciplining learners is not the sole responsibility of educators. In most cases, all stakeholders are partners in the process and, therefore, must work together towards improving learner discipline. Hence, the “Tirisano plan” of “working together”, which was introduced in the early 2000s by the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, and concentrated on reviving leadership for improved discipline (Narain, 2015:2). However, the burning question remains, how should stakeholders collaborate towards improving school discipline? This question guides the focus of this study.

The study centred on how the secondary school governing bodies (SGBs) and the school disciplinary committee (SDCs) at three selected secondary schools in Macquassie Hills District, collaborated towards improving discipline. This was preceded by a growing concern stemming from the recently reported number of incidents of ill-discipline exhibited by learners towards both teachers and fellow learners. These incidents, including uncontrollable behaviour, have been extensively covered in news outlets, shared on social media platforms, and documented in newspaper reports. Furthermore, academic studies have also shed light on the issue of discipline in education.

Based on a report from an online newspaper, Times Live, in the year 2021, a teenage girl, aged 14, from Mbilwi High school in Sibasa outside Thohoyandou, took her own life because of an assault that took place at school (Mokhoali, 2021). Based on a study of Narain (2015:1) that was conducted at South African schools in KwaZulu-Natal, specifically in the Townships, Urban and Sub-Urban areas, about “15.3% of all pupils (learners) between Grades 3 and 12 have experienced violence in some form while attending school” and this was just a statistic given in the year 2008. There is no doubt that cases of learners injured and killed within the confines of South African schools are on the increase (Narain, 2015:27). Thus, it is important for researchers to continue to explore alternative approaches to improving school and learner discipline.

Learner misconduct may range from “less serious” misconduct, such as disobedience, tardiness, noisiness, homework not done and refusal to keep quiet when an educator wants to talk, to more serious acts of misconduct such as vandalism, absenteeism, theft, bullying, assault on educators and on fellow learners. These behaviours range from mild to severe and may include singing in the classroom, eating, sleeping, gaming, bullying, poking, verbal assault, frequent movement of learners from one place to the other, passing notes, excessive talking and writing of love letters in the classroom, vandalism, truancy, smoking, disobedience, intimidation, delinquency, murder, assault, rape, theft and general violence (Obadire & Sinthumelele, 2021:2). These authors further stress that disruptive behaviour can have negative effects not only on the classroom environment, but also on the school experience.

The growing occurrence of these kinds of behaviour questions the existence and effectiveness of structures put in place by the Department of education (DOE) to help school management and educators to deal with learner discipline, specifically the SGB and its subcommittee, the SDC, whose primary concern is learner conduct and ensuring a sound and conducive learning environment for all (Rossouw, 2003:424).

Mindful of other factors that may affect the discipline of learners in schools, which are outside the control of the school governing bodies and school disciplinary committees, this study prioritises the importance of analysing how the SGB and SDC undertake their responsibilities in ensuring a sound and conducive school environment for all. One way of doing this, would be by analysing the nature and approach of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC.

Collaboration is very important in improving the effectiveness of these structures; it is envisaged that to deal effectively with and improve learner discipline, the two structures must work closely together and work with other stakeholders, such as parents, educators, the School Management Team (SMT), learners, and other departments. However, this is not

always the case, as, in practice, the issue of learner discipline is seen to be a matter to be dealt with by educators and the SMT only. According to Okeke (2014:2), “although ... legislation appears to play both an empowering and a motivational role in parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling, there still seems to be a lack of actual involvement of parents in many of the school activities of their children”.

Regarding collaboration, the study focuses on both time and space for the structures (SGB and SDC) to interact in the process of dealing with ill-discipline. However, it is quite evident that beyond ill-discipline, the general success of a school depends strongly on effective collaboration between all structures and stakeholders, and on the relationships between members within the school, partnership processes, staff qualities or skills, and on support for the collaboration itself (Armstrong, 2015:3).

Hence, collaboration between and among structures of a school is not only important for the project of improving discipline, but for the general growth of a school. In practice, collaboration of the school governing body is complex because as the governance structure of the school, it must work with different subcommittees that help in effectively meeting all its functions. Thus, its strength depends on the effectiveness of each of its subcommittees and the general collaboration from every person within a school.

1.2 Background of the study

The notion of an SGB came into existence on 1 January 1996, through the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) which is aimed at promoting democracy within South African schools, whereby parents, learners, educators, and the broader community can get involved in education. Therefore, the SGB, as a product of the new democratic South Africa, was established with the intention of supporting the broad democratic education community to ensure the best possible education for all learners in South African schools (Baker, 2018:18).

According to section 20(1) of SASA, the SGB has multiple functions that must be performed, including determining policy and strategy, and appointing sub-structures within the schools to assist in carrying out of its functions. To better execute its core functions, the SGB requires collaborative efforts from all members of the whole school community (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:78).

Section 30(1)(a) of SASA stipulates that the SGB may establish committees to enable it to operate effectively. For the SGB to effectively render services to the school, it needs to work in collaboration with different committees or substructures within the school, of which the SDC is one (Mathebula & Runhare, 2021:2). Collaboration between structures improves the way

team members work together to solve problems. Such collaborative endeavours also lead to more innovation, efficient processes, increased success, and improved communication. Ideally, the more SGBs and SDCs collaborate, the greater the chance of developing innovative ideas to improve learner discipline and being successful. However, if they work in silos, it will be difficult to develop trust among team members and a clear vision of combating ill-discipline in schools. This may explain why disciplinary challenges are increasing at schools.

The focus of this study is on the collaborative approach between the secondary school SGB and SDC towards improving ill-discipline of learners. School governing bodies, with the assistance of the SDC, must develop a learner code of conduct, review, and implement it. This must be done in consultation with the whole school community. A failure of the SGB to involve the school community in the development of the code is a gross violation of democratic educational laws (Maphoke, 2017:159).

This background paints a comprehensive picture of the roles and responsibilities of the SGB and SDC in improving school discipline and the processes they must follow. However, the extent to which the two structures actually collaborate in ensuring school discipline has not yet been adequately researched and reported on. The effectiveness of the collaboration between the two structures is being questioned due to reports of increasingly disruptive learner behaviour in schools.

The objective of the study is to make known and encourage the realisation that the cornerstone of discipline should be firmly laid down and enforced in learners already at an early age for them to mature into responsible citizens who will shape and even reshape the future outcome of South African education. This must be done jointly by the SGB and the SDC through collaboration with the whole school community at primary and secondary level, with parents, in particular, being actively involved throughout.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The current study follows several studies that have been conducted on ill-discipline of learners, both at primary and secondary schools. However, most of the existing studies have primarily focused on the collaboration between SMTs and SGBs when addressing discipline-related issues. Alternatively, studies have concentrated on how either SMTs or SGBs, as separate entities within schools, manage discipline. One of these studies was by Pillay (2012) who focused on how the SGBs implemented the code of conduct for learners at their schools, and challenges experienced in their implementation of the code of conduct for learners.

So far, very little research has been done on structures and substructures, in particular, the SGB and SDC and their collaboration in improving learner discipline in South Africa and specifically in the North West province. Nonetheless, one thing that is common between this study and other related studies is the focus on the enforcement of the disciplinary policy for learners by the school community.

The researcher was motivated to conduct the study because of the countless incidents of ill-discipline continually being reported at schools and in media reports and newspaper articles, including violent attacks by learners on other learners and educators. This concerns the researcher who, as an educator, must frequently deal with unruly learners, and who constantly hears reports from colleagues at neighbouring primary and secondary schools about learners acting out against authority and being disrespectful towards the educators who are meant to love and nurture them in becoming responsible and disciplined adults in a future South Africa.

As an educator and former member of an SGB, the researcher realised that a lot had to be done because, regardless of the existence of SGBs and SDCs, disciplinary issues are still a problematic matter that needs attention. The main concern is how SGBs could work together with SDCs in improving and managing discipline. Once there is a form of collaboration, the next question would be what strategies or measures are implemented at schools by the broader school community to improve the current state of discipline at secondary schools in the North West.

The researcher believed that it would be worthwhile to research the different structures responsible for managing learner discipline to establish how they function and why learner misconduct is increasing despite all the strategies in place to guard against ill-discipline at schools. Research of this nature could contribute to improving the collaborative effort of SGBs and SDCs to empower educators with knowledge that could improve discipline of learners in their classrooms and the broader school environment and provide them with the required information and expertise to help themselves and the entire school community – educators, parents, SMTs and, most importantly, the SGBs and SDCs – to better deal with the problem of undisciplined learners.

1.4 Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in the theory of Collaborative Governance, which encompasses two key aspects relevant to this research: collaboration and governance.

Collaborative governance encapsulates the reconstruction of democracy, emphasising that decisions should be made based on transparency, consultation, collaboration, cooperation,

and stakeholder participation (Lima, 2021:2). Supporting this statement, Saleh, Hendrick and Nuh (2021:661) emphasise that in collaborative governance, members must be directly involved in the decision-making process, focusing on achieving goals made by consensus and adhering to the implementation of policies. Established policies require the cooperation and commitment of all stakeholders. Hence, all members of the school community need to be aware of all policies pertaining to discipline, such as the code of conduct, and need to be actively involved in ensuring their effectiveness.

1.5 Problem statement

Learner misbehaviour or ill-discipline in an unsafe school environment has been reported to be one of the leading factors that affect teaching and learning, learner performance, teacher morale and attitudes towards their profession and the safety of the school environment (Obadire & Sinthumele, 2021:1). In a study by Simofurosa and Rosemary (2014:80) it was further reported that learner safety, security and success in education are often adversely affected by disruptive behaviour or other forms of misconduct by fellow learners.

This is an indication that much still needs to be done to apply corrective measures for ill-disciplined learners and lack of safety in South African schools. The whole school community needs to start working together, specifically the SGB and the SDC, in dealing with ill-discipline at schools. It also implies that the more parents are actively involved in the educational activities of children, the more children will become better disciplined (Maphoke, 2017:10).

However, SGB membership consists mostly of parents who are often unable to understand policies and legislation pertaining to education and often also lack the necessary knowledge on the formulation and enforcement of educational policies (Baker, 2018:28). This makes it difficult for them to develop or even enforce the code of conduct, often leading to parents leaving the development and implementation part of the policy and other discipline related matters to the school principals and educators on the SGB (Mestry & Khumalo, 2011).

It is envisaged that if SDC and SGB members exercise their duties and responsibilities collaboratively, as expected, and adhere to policies on learner discipline, there will be fewer incidents of misconduct and ill-discipline. If the code of conduct for learners is correctly drafted and implemented in accordance with guidelines as stated in SASA, it might increase the chances of its success (Sebisha, 2015:56).

However, for all the different structures to undertake their responsibilities accordingly, all members need to be trained. According to Pillay (2012:1), it is the responsibility of provincial departments of education to provide training to capacitate SGBs. This must be done

consistently to assure that the SGBs have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out all their expected functions as the governance structure of the school. However, induction workshops or training sessions are not held as they are supposed to be. This could be one of the reasons for the inability of members of the SGB to effectively execute and implement their roles. Section 19(1)(a) and (b) of SASA clearly stipulate that funds shall be made available to each province to ensure that introductory and ongoing capacity training is given to SGB members for the effectiveness of their functions (Pillay, 2012:2).

The SGB lacking the knowledge to implement the code of conduct for learners may also jeopardise the credibility of the code if it is not implemented as expected by all educators, the SGB and the SDC. The success of the learner code of conduct relies heavily on the full implementation of the policy, regardless of a learner's level of intelligence (Sebisha, 2015:57).

The researcher is aware that some failure in managing discipline in schools might persist even if SGBs and SDCs are undertaking their responsibilities effectively. If the outcome of this study proposes that to be the case, a fresh debate will need to take place regarding the policy mandating the SGB to establish the SDC as a way of ensuring discipline in schools. There are many other variables of learner behaviour challenges. However, at this stage, it is critically important to explore and remove any possibility that the lack of discipline is because of SGBs and SDCs not undertaking their responsibilities.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The main aim of this study is to examine the collaboration between secondary school governing bodies and disciplinary committees towards improving discipline, and how their collaboration can be used to improve learner discipline in these schools.

Based on the main aim of the study, the objectives are to:

1. Analyse the collaborative approach between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline;
2. Explore the depth of the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline;
3. Determine the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline; and
4. Suggest ways of improving the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline.

1.6.1 Research question

The main research question of the study is as follows:

How do secondary school governing bodies and disciplinary committees collaborate towards improving discipline?

1.6.2 Subsidiary research questions

The following are the subsidiary research questions:

1. What is the nature and approach of the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline?
2. What is the depth of the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline?
3. How effective is the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline?
4. What could be done to improve the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs in dealing with learner discipline in schools?

1.7 Significance of the study

The study intends to examine and learn from the approach, and the processes involved in the collaboration between secondary school governing bodies and school disciplinary committees in managing discipline. It is hoped that the study will establish measures that could be used to improve the effectiveness of the collaborative effort of SGBs and SDCs in improving discipline.

The researcher intends to add important detail to what is already known about managing learner discipline in schools. Specifically, the study will provide information on how to tighten and improve the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs in terms of structure, function and commitment in ensuring discipline in schools.

It is envisaged that by uncovering challenges in the collaboration between SGBs and SDCs, and by drawing on lessons from partnerships between the two structures, the study will provide information that could be shared with other schools regarding good practices for effective partnerships and about how to best deal with issues of discipline. Based on the partnership experiences of SDCs and SGBs, other structures or subcommittees working with SGBs can learn about and strengthen their collaborative relationships. In so doing, school governance and management of the education system in South Africa can be improved.

It is also hoped that the findings of this study will play a significant role in the development, enforcement, and implementation of the learner code of conduct. Since the study is based on the importance of democratically developing learner codes of conduct through the collaborative involvement of parents, learners, educators, the broader community and management for a better and conducive learning and teaching environment, the study is envisaged to assist schools in better managing learner discipline.

The study also aims to help enhance collaboration with stakeholder departments (Social Development, the South African Police Services, Health and Correctional Services) to improve teaching and learning further. An important element of stakeholder involvement with other departments is the collaborative effort of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign in the North West province to achieve effective quality teaching and learning within schools. The study is expected to enhance collaboration between SGBs and other structures within education by raising awareness of the importance of working together to achieve common goals.

Recommendations for further research will be made by this study. This will bring a much-needed balance to the available body of research, as there have been few studies dealing with discipline at schools, with most studies evaluating SMT and SGB partnerships in dealing with school finance or promotion of effective parent-teacher relationships.

1.7.1 Delimitation and limitations of the study

This research was limited to SGBs and their substructure, SDCs, at three selected secondary schools in the North West province. The consideration of only one kind of substructure is a limitation, since SGBs work with other substructures for the effective management of schools.

Its focus was specifically narrowed to learner discipline at secondary schools, rather than broader issues of discipline affecting both primary and secondary schools. Hence, the findings may not reflect the state of learner discipline in districts and circuits of the North West province, in general.

The researcher experienced challenges regarding setting time for interviews. Time scheduled to meet was not honoured by participants, and some participants' working hours did not agree with those of the researcher, or they lived far from the researched schools, which for some required transportation. In mitigating the stated challenges, the researcher met participants on weekends while other participants were willing to make time available for appointments after school, which at most times was not enough as most had personal commitments after work

or workshops to attend. The researcher at times had to provide transportation for participants who made use of organised or public transportation to commute to and from work.

Another challenge was principals' adherence to appointment times, since they had busy schedules and perceived the research as additional to their jobs. Due to their busy schedules, the researcher used video calls and WhatsApp voice notes and voice calls. These methods of interviewing replaced some of the face-to-face interview sessions that were initially intended for this research study.

Conducting the interviews and document analyses after school, and after a long day of work, was another challenge, especially with staff meetings, workshops, intervention strategies and extramural activities which were mandatory for participants and the researcher. It was a challenge for participants to dedicate some of their time for the study during weekends or school holidays.

The Covid-19 pandemic threatened to become a major obstacle to the conduct of the research, especially during the data-collection stage. The pandemic started at a time when the researcher was busy trying to schedule appointments for interviews with participants. This research stage was then put on hold until the schools were declared open by the President and the Minister of Basic Education.

In making up for the time lost, the researcher had to accept whatever time was granted for appointments by participants; school holidays were sacrificed for interviews with participants who resided in the location where the schools were based. In the case of participants who were unavailable during school holidays, communication took place through voice recordings and WhatsApp voice calls during recess times.

Even so, with Covid-19 and its strict regulations, it remained challenging to make up for the time lost during the total shutdown. Participants were also reluctant about meeting in person for interviews because they did not want to come down with Covid-19. Principals along with teachers were forever busy with catch-up teaching and learning strategies.

The researcher compensated for these challenges by ensuring that appointments were arranged well on time and made regular follow-ups to ascertain the availability of participants a day or two before the arranged time for appointments.

Participants were reminded about the value that this research could add to their school and the knowledge they stood to gain regarding dealing with matters pertaining to SGBs, SDCs and learner discipline. Thus, the researcher ensured that participants understood the purpose

of the study and the important role they as participants played in it. The researcher made sure that participants understood that they were not obliged to participate in the study.

To further compensate for the time lost during the Covid-19 shutdown, the researcher proposed the use of voice recordings through WhatsApp for participants who were willing to record their responses and forward them to the researcher before the actual face-to-face- interaction could take place. After carefully going through the recordings, the researcher sent out follow-up questions until full understanding of responses was achieved. Sessions with some of the participants also took place on weekends at schools, to collect as much data as was needed.

1.8 Research design and methodology

The process and methods that were followed in carrying out this research is set out in this section. The section will also deal with the measures that were implemented to ensure trustworthiness and to conform to ethical principles.

1.8.1 Research approach

This study followed a qualitative research approach. This refers to an inquiry process of understanding during which a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, analyses, reports, detailed views of participants, and conducts the study in a natural setting (Maree, 2016:309).

A qualitative research approach was selected for the study because of the specific nature of the study, as it allowed the researcher to interact with participants in their own setting and allowed participants to make sense of their own surroundings and use words to communicate the meaning of those surroundings. This research approach attempts to find answers to questions by studying various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings, and further looks at how these settings can influence human actions and their behaviour. The researcher cannot understand human behaviour without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions and how they make meaning of and interpret their own experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:2).

Using a qualitative approach gave the researcher the opportunity to use more than one method of data collection, such as interviews, observations and document analyses, to study a phenomenon. This ensured that the issue was not explored through one lens, but rather, a variety of lenses, which allowed for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Maree, 2016:83).

In this study, the focus was on elucidating the purpose of the SGB and the SDC, their roles regarding the discipline learners, their structure, and the nature of their collaboration as they undertook their functions based on their structure from the perspectives of members.

1.8.2 Research paradigm

The research was based on the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm “is an approach that seeks to understand people’s lived experiences from the perspective of people themselves, which is often referred to as the emic perspective or the inside perspective” (Maree, 2016:52). This paradigm focuses on understanding participants’ own view of life or social phenomena. It considers participants’ subjective view and meaning of their own lives. The interpretivist paradigm requires the researcher to set aside personal biases and suspend personal judgement (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017:143).

This paradigm considers what participants say as a product of how they define their world, and this is taken as the initial point in understanding the case under study (Maree, 2016: 60). The interpretivist paradigm was used to inform the study and provide the researcher with a platform to experience or gather data first-hand from and with participants in their own world or natural setting. In this study, interpretivism was used for its potential to grasp participants’ perspectives, meanings, and experiences about learner discipline at the secondary schools under study. The paradigm was further used for its flexibility, as it gave the researcher the ability to find and understand the meanings of different people about one common entity, as “there can be multiple perceptions and experience of reality, rather than a single truth” (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017:143).

The researcher used interpretivism to make sense of the reality of both the SGBs and SDCs, paying attention to their collaboration in developing and implementing a code of conduct for learners. This was done through interacting with them and listening to them. SGB and SDC members’ ‘insides’ were captured and meaning made from it through interpretation.

1.8.3 Research design: Case study

According to Ravitch and Carl (2020:63), research design refers to the overall approach of a researcher (or research team) to “bridge theory and concepts with the development of research questions and the design of data-collection and analysis methods for a specific study”. They state further that a research design “is shaped by responding to the realities and perspectives of participants and contexts of a study” (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:63).

A case study refers to an inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon, such as a case set within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Maree, 2016:81). A case study design will be used to investigate the collaboration between secondary school SGBs and SDCs towards improving and managing ill-discipline at three schools selected for this study in one township in the North West province.

A case could be an individual person, group, organisation, episode, an event, town or city that a researcher would like to find more information about. A case study focuses on a case over time in depth, using various methods of data collection to extract as much raw and valuable data about the case under study (Rossman & Rallis, 2017:92). In this case, interviews and analyses of documents were used by the researcher in the extraction of such data needed for this study. This provided the researcher with the chance to comprehend how SGB and SDC members collaborated at the three selected secondary schools in improving and managing discipline at their respective schools.

Mariano (cited by Maree, 2016:55) states that the purposes of case study research may be exploratory, descriptive, interpretive, or explanatory. This study took the form of an exploratory research, whereby particular cases of learner ill-discipline at three selected secondary schools were studied in greater detail to gain a deeper understanding of how the SGB and SDC collaborated in addressing the cases and in improving ill-discipline at the three schools. An exploratory case study was chosen for its flexibility in collecting data for the study, as it did not confine the researcher to one method of data collection but allowed the researcher to explore various methods to yield the desired data as long as they were done ethically (Maree, 2016:55).

A case study was used, specifically, to analyse the nature and scope of SGB–SDC collaboration, the processes involved in the collaboration, and the effectiveness of such collaboration, aiming to yield results that may be valuable to other schools.

A case study also allowed the researcher to develop good working relations with participants and enabled participants to share their stories and experiences of their world freely. Another important feature about a case study was that it allowed the researcher to collect data in a natural setting (Maree, 2016:82).

1.9 Population and sampling

Population refers to a group of people or individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about what the researcher seeks to learn about and explore (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:83). The study population at each school consisted of SDC and SGB members, who might be able to yield

important data for this research. This study focused on three secondary schools in Borobalo Township in the North West. Secondary schools were selected based on the reported lack of active parental involvement experienced by educators at secondary, which might be impacting on the discipline and the performance of learners at this level. Some research studies suggest that parents become less involved in their children's education over time, especially after primary school (Maphoke, 2017:164).

One other reason for the selection of and focus on secondary schools was because at this level learners were members of the SGB and therefore should work collaboratively with both the SGB and the SDC in dealing with and managing learner ill-discipline; and, most importantly, played a role in the development and implementation of the learner code of conduct.

A sample is a group of subjects or participants from whom data is collected for a study (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:85). A purposive sampling strategy was used to select the participants at three secondary schools in one township in the North West province. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling whereby the researcher selects participants based on the researcher's opinion while having a specific purpose or idea in mind (Maree, 2016:85). Purposive sampling aims at selecting participants with certain characteristics that are suitable for the study; people who would be informative about the topic of interest (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:85). This sampling technique was chosen because it gave the researcher the opportunity to include people who had characteristics relevant to the study, such as expertise and knowledge. Participants are purposefully selected because of their expertise, experience, belief or attitude about a specific phenomenon, incident or group of people. Participants were selected firstly because of their membership in the SGB and the SDC. Principals and parents of learners were purposefully selected, as they, as members of these committees, were mandated to oversee learner discipline at schools through collaboration.

The researcher first interacted with principals of the three secondary schools, to get a clear perspective of discipline at the schools before meeting with members of the SGB and the SDC. The purpose of the first meeting was also to request their permission to conduct the study at the schools.

Principals were selected as they were managers of the school and members of the SGBs and the SDCs. As managers, they had to assist the SGB in the performance of its functions and responsibilities. The principals were also part of the study because they were members of the DOE representing the HOD (section 16A of the SASA). According to Maree (2016:238), "the

principal of a public school represents the Head of Department on the governing body when acting in an official capacity as contemplated in sections 23(1)(b) and 24(1)(j)”.

Members of the SGB were selected to take part in the study based on their knowledge, experience in the SGB, and the years they had served in the body and had dealt with ill-discipline of learners. SDC educator members from each secondary school had to control and manage learners during daily interactions with them in lessons and as members of the SDC had to deal with all disciplinary issues at the school jointly with the SGB.

SGB chairpersons were selected as in their membership capacity they were governors at the schools tasked with the responsibility of dealing with learner discipline and discipline related policies, such as the code of conduct. They were purposefully chosen because of their role as members of the school community representing the parent component who had the responsibility to work collaboratively with all the stakeholders (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:83).

Furthermore, an additional three SGB members were sampled. Three educator members of the SGB from each school were selected. Two SDC educators were also chosen based on their knowledge of disciplinary issues over a long time, as educators, during and after the apartheid era. Of the six educator participants, one was also a departmental head at the school, which made her a member of the SMT working closely with the principal in school management. These participants were involved in the study because they were believed to have knowledge of learner discipline and were dealing with ill-discipline daily.

1.10 Research instruments

Research instruments are tools by which qualitative researchers collect and generate data and these tools of data gathering may include interviews, observational field notes, and review of documents in a qualitative study (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:24).

This section focuses on the process that was followed to ensure that relevant information would be collected using various research instruments, such as interviews and document analyses. These methods were used to provide valuable data about the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving learner discipline in the schools under investigation.

1.10.1 Interviews

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks participants questions to collect data from them and to learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours (Maree, 2016:92). To gather valuable data, semi-structured interviews were used to gather

raw data to assist the researcher in understanding participants' construction of knowledge about their reality and the daily experiences of their collaborative SGB–SDC working relationship in ensuring school discipline and viewing the world from their own perspective.

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow the SGB and SDC members the opportunity to use words to construct their own meaning about the nature of collaboration and, at the same time, it granted the researcher the opportunity to understand and see things from the participants' perspective. Interviews were used to allow for personal interaction between the researcher and participants. Through interviews, the researcher was able to get immediate responses from participants and they, in turn, were able to ask for clarity in case they did not understand some of the questions.

This further allowed for a clear understanding of interviewee meanings and interpretations of their situation, as the researcher was able to ask clarifying questions when appropriate. Probing of responses given by participants was done by the researcher for further answers or information during interviews.

Interviews were organised in the form of spontaneous normal conversations but with the purpose of gathering valuable information. The interview questions were structured in a manner that allowed the spontaneous flow of information, since the researcher's questions were guided by what participants said or the answers they provided to questions as the researcher explored deeper.

Semi-structured interviews are useful to establish a level of structure, but with the liberty to adjust course as needed and make changes based on interview data and analysis. The researcher probed deeper as a way of accessing more information. This was done with the intention of exploring the ideas, perceptions, and beliefs of participants about the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving learner discipline (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:83).

1.10.2 Recording interview data

A tape recorder was used with the knowledge and consent of participants to record conversations during the interviews. A journal was used to take notes and record other valuable data during and after the interviews (Maree, 2016:94).

Tape recordings assisted in limiting distractions due to writing of notes during the interviews and served as a reminder of what was said during the interviews. Used together, they helped in reflecting on what took part during the interviews and further assisted in identifying questions

that needed to be asked during follow-up interviews or that required clarification (Maree, 2016:94).

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic and its limitations for close contact, WhatsApp voice recordings formed part of data gathering. Participants and the researcher forwarded voice recordings to each other to make up for the time wasted during the Covid-19 lockdown – this ended up delaying and lengthening the data collection process. However, as was indicated earlier by the researcher, WhatsApp voice recordings augmented face-to-face interview sessions which were the main mode of data gathering in this study.

1.10.3 Document analysis

Document analysis refers to written communication which the researcher carefully examines to obtain information that may be useful in shedding light on the issue under investigation. It provides rich, permanent data that may be used over and over for the purpose of analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:59).

The researcher examined relevant documents of the SASA regarding the SGB, SDC and collaboration between the two in improving discipline. The analyses of documents also provided valuable information on the collaborative effort between the SGB and SDC.

The study relied on textual data, namely journals, written records of meetings held by the SGB and the SDC, and schools' codes of conduct relating to discipline and school governance to gather valuable data on the nature of and approaches to collaboration between the SDC and SGB. Minutes of meetings were analysed with the permission and under supervision of school principals.

1.11 Data analysis

Data analysis refers to the organisation, explanation and sense making of data which has been gathered of participants' perceptions and experiences of the situation in question (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:109).

An interpretive approach to data analysis was employed for reporting purposes. An interpretive approach was applied to assist in omitting words that were not appropriate for publication and ensuring the quality of the research language. The interview was conducted with participants in their home language or a language of their choice and comfort. Therefore, in cases where Setswana or Sesotho was used, the researcher translated the information into English with editing by a language expert for academic purposes.

After each contact session with participants, the researcher listened to the tape recordings of the interviews and read the written records taken during interviews. This was done many times over to get a clear apprehension of participants' structuring of their world. This was followed by a transcription of the data collected through recording and note-taking while accurately reflecting participant communication. A feedback session was done before each subsequent interview session with participants. This permitted the researcher to briefly read the transcripts of the last interview to participants for them to verify if they were misunderstood or misquoted in any way. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to seek clarity where necessary.

The researcher then used inductive analysis, which is the process through which qualitative researchers synthesise and make meaning from their data, starting with specific data and ending with categories and patterns (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:234). The inductive analysis process included data organisation by breaking data into smaller practical portions, data transcription, data coding, data description; data categorisation to provide meaning; and development of patterns to help in the analysing process.

1.12 Ethical considerations

Maphoke (2016:57) states that some qualitative research deals with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people's lives, and ethical issues inevitably accompany the collection of such information. This was true for this study as it dealt with documents pertaining to learner discipline, including names of learners, and names of educators who were victims of sensitive acts of misconduct. Regardless of their status, all parties' identities were protected, all cases of misconduct were treated with confidentiality, and care was taken that no harm was inflicted on any of the participants (Maphoke, 2016:57).

Ethical clearance was obtained from the North-West University for the researcher to undertake this study. Permission for the research to be conducted at the three selected schools was granted in writing by the circuit manager after the purpose and the significance of the study was explained. The circuit manager furnished the researcher with letters to display at each of the schools in the researcher's first meeting with the principals to obtain their consent for the research to be conducted at their schools. Furthermore, the researcher requested permission from the principals to meet with members of the SDC and SGB to personally request permission from them as well.

Approval was granted by all participants after the relevant consent forms were signed so that the researcher could include them in the study. However, this was only done after the

principals had met with both members of the SDC and SGB and informed them of the researcher's request for them to participate in this research.

Permission was requested to record and take notes during interviews. The researcher informed all participants of the purpose and the value of the study to the school.

The researcher informed participants of their rights before the interviews: the right to confidentiality, respect, speaking in the language of their choice and not to be forced in any way to be part of the research or answer questions they might find uncomfortable. The researcher further clarified that there was no punishment or penalty for not participating in or withdrawing from the study at any point.

Assurance was given of the confidentiality and privacy of their names, names of the schools, information given through interviews, and information obtained through document analyses. The personal identities of participants were protected by using code names (pseudonyms) during data collection and analysis (Maree, 2016:44).

1.13 Trustworthiness of the study

The following important criteria need to be carefully considered by a qualitative researcher to ensure trustworthiness of a study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Maree, 2016:123). The researcher ensured credit was given to every author of documents and sources used in finding valuable and relevant data for the study. This was done through referencing each person's work that was cited in the study. As a result of continual interaction with the supervisor and using feedback notes to guide the research, the correct and appropriate research methods, research instruments, and research questions were applied.

1.13.1 Credibility

To guarantee credibility of the research data, a well-established qualitative research approach and research design (case study) was selected that adequately fitted the research question (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:168).

The researcher knew some of the educator participants through previous interactions with them as colleagues and through attendance of workshops that were held at some of these sites. When briefing the participants on the main aim of the study and getting their consent, the researcher formed a relationship with participants in advance, and further ensured participants' familiarity with the intended purpose of this study.

Other measures, used by the researcher to ensure credibility, included giving participants records of what the researcher collected to corroborate whether these were factually accurate information of what they had provided, and requesting them to affirm the researcher's interpretations of their meanings or conversations (Maree, 2016:123).

The researcher also made the final research results available to participants to check for omitted facts, errors or misinterpretations of their words and meanings. This was done after the researcher had consolidated the interview data (Maree, 2016:123).

1.13.2 Dependability

For a study to be “dependable” or to be “reliable”, credibility first must be ensured starting from the beginning of the research (Maree, 2016:123). This relates back to selection of the right research methods, main research question, methods of data collection and, most importantly, the research design to be used in the study and its implementation (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:168). For the study to be dependable, the researcher should be open to the possibility of incorporating other methods of collecting data to accommodate new and valuable data that may be discovered in the process of the study to strengthen it.

The intended methods of data collection in this study were interviews and document analyses. However, in the process of the study, the researcher had to accommodate participants' demanding work schedules, and the inconsistent school calendar due to Covid-19. Therefore, WhatsApp voice recordings, and video calls were used to make up for time lost during the Covid-19 lockdown, and to accommodate participants and the researcher in strengthening the stage and process of data collection.

It was significant that the researcher recorded evidence of decisions made during the research process of collecting and analysing data. According to Maree (2016:124), the analysis process should be documented so that another person can see the decisions that you made, how you went about the analysis and how you arrived at the interpretations.

At the end of each field work session, the researcher reviewed all the data gathered from interviews, recordings, and document analyses and the researcher's field notes. This was followed by verification of data by participants at the beginning of each follow-up session, so that participants could confirm whether the data agreed with their own true statements.

In reviewing the gathered data, the researcher's aim was to understand the data by looking at similar or differing patterns in the three schools' discipline related documents and listening to audio recordings from face-to-face interviews with participants.

The breaking down of the data into manageable chunks and differing patterns was done to allow the researcher to classify the data collected based on the three objectives stated in this study, themes that had emerged from the objectives, and sub-themes that might have materialised from each of the themes.

1.13.3 Confirmability

Based on a study conducted by Maree (2016:125), the term, confirmability, refers to the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not by researcher bias, motivation, or interest. In ensuring confirmability, researchers must be as neutral as possible in the way they report or interpret participants' words.

The use of member checking, as mentioned earlier in the study, proved to be valuable in securing confirmability. Member checking as "the process of continuous, informal testing of information by solidifying reactions of respondents to the investigator's reconstruction of what he or she has been told or otherwise found out and to the constructions offered by other respondents or sources, and a terminal, formal testing of the final care report with a representative sample of stakeholders" (Candela, 2019:1).

In this study, member checking was used to get participants' confirmation whether what was interpreted and understood by the researcher in report writing was a true reflection of what they, themselves, shared with the researcher. After an interaction or interview or before the beginning of each session, the researcher went through the previous interview report with participants for confirmability purposes.

1.13.4 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied or be relevant to other situations. To be transferable, the researcher must ensure that data gathered is authentic and relevant for use by other people or institutions. Findings from interviews and observations or any form of data collected in the study should be transferred to the reader as clearly as possible to allow for a connection between what is written and their own reality. The researcher consulted several studies related to the study topic and newspaper articles containing reports of incidents of ill-discipline by learners (Monare, 2013:33).

1.14 Structure of the study

Chapter 1: Overview of the study

This chapter explained how the educational system evolved from 1994 to date, specifically the democratisation and decentralisation of education, focusing on involving the school community in handling the ill-discipline of learners in schools. Also discussed, was the introduction of SGBs and their subcommittees, particularly the involvement of the whole school community in handling ill-discipline of learners. The chapter also referred to laws and policies that govern education and learner discipline.

The focus of the first chapter was on the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose and objectives, and the significance of the study. The chapter also briefly reviewed the research design and methodology, population and sampling, research instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This chapter will focus on the theoretical framework that will direct this study. The discussion will be on collaborative governance, exploring its essential components and the necessary processes that must be followed to achieve the shared goals of the SGB, SDC and the entire school community.

Chapter 3: Literature review

This chapter will provide a review of relevant literature on the collaboration between the SGB and its substructure, the SDC, in improving ill-discipline and the theoretical framework that underpins this study will also be discussed. The discussion will focus on the nature and approach of the SGB and SDC in improving ill-discipline; and on a review of policies, documents, and acts pertaining to education, specifically learner discipline. Findings of other researchers on learner misconduct and on collaborative efforts for improving discipline will be highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

This chapter will centre on the research design used in this study, the research paradigm, research methodology, population and sampling, research instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Data presentation, analysis, findings, and discussion

The focus of this chapter will be on the presentation, analysis, findings and discussion of the data gathered through the interviews with participants and analyses of documents, such as learner code of conduct, minutes of meetings that were held pertaining to learner discipline at

the selected schools and any other relevant documents used at these schools. Records of disciplinary hearing cases at each of the schools will also be included.

Chapter 6: Summary, recommendations, and conclusions

In this chapter, the focus will be on the conclusions drawn from this research and other studies related to the topic, and on recommendations for future studies.

1.1.4 Clarification of key concepts

1.1.4.1 Discipline

Discipline refers to “methods of training that enable individuals to become integrated into the more general demands of society” (Magaba, 2018:21).

1.1.4.2 Code of conduct

“A code of conduct is a collection of a number of binding rules and principles which reflect certain moral standards, ethics, principles, values and standards of conduct of the school” (De Atouguia, 2014:16)

1.1.4.3 School Governing Body

The term “School Governing Body” is used uniformly to describe an elected body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt school policies within the national, provincial and district vision for education and functioning, in terms of the Schools Act (Ndlela, 2015:14).

1.1.4.4 School Disciplinary Committee

School disciplinary committees exist to ensure that learners behave in a manner that is acceptable or expected based on the code of conduct, rules and regulations (Pillay, 2012:24).

1.1.4.5 Collaboration:

Highest level of functioning in a continuum of how information, knowledge, and working, together operate in any organisation (VanHorn, 2017:20).

1.1.4.6 Governance:

Governance or “governance structure” as defined by Zhao and Wang (2020:827), refers to the relationship between various interest groups in a public or private organisation.

1.15 **Summary**

This chapter provided a brief background of the study, the rationale, problem statement, aims and objectives, and significance of the study. In the chapter the following were also addressed: the research design and methodology, population and sampling, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

The following chapter will be on the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This study is grounded in the theory of collaborative governance, which encompasses two key aspects relevant to this research: collaboration and governance.

2.2 Collaborative governance theory

Collaborative governance encompasses the reconstruction of democracy which emphasises that decisions should be made based on transparency, consultation, collaboration, cooperation and participation of the stakeholders (Lima, 2021: 2). Supporting this statement, Saleh, Hendrick and Nuh (2021:661) also emphasise that in a collaborative governance, members must be directly involved in the decision-making process, focus on achieving goals made by a consensus and adhere to the implementation of policies. The policies established require cooperation and commitment of all relevant stakeholders. This means all members of the school community need to be aware of all policies pertaining to discipline, such as the code of conduct and be actively involved in ensuring its effectiveness.

Lima (2021:2) defines collaborative governance as a strategy to coordinate and integrate the goals and interest of multiple stakeholders. This collaboration includes a collaborative approach that involves the government, the private sector, and the community in achieving goals based on consensus of the stakeholders involved (Saleh, Hendrick & Nuh, 2021:657). "Collaborative governance is important because it bring together different sectors, which then pull resources and expertise together to handle the issues in the education sector" (Mustary, 2022:157).

This is whereby the SGB, SDC and the school as a community co-opt members with the necessary knowledge and expertise that will benefit the school. However, based on a study by Mustary (2022:156) this collaborative governance goes beyond co-opted members and expertise, it also brings in the private sector such as businesses to collaborate and invest in the education of the country. This view is supported by the definition that was used by Ansell and Gash (2008:5) in his study, collaborative governance is defined as "A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-orientated, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets."

In their definition of collaborative governance, Ansell and Gash (2008:4) further stress six important components that constitute the theory: the forum is initiated by government

institutions, participants in the forum include non-governmental actors, participants engage directly in decision-making and are not merely “consulted” by government, the forum is formally organised and meets collectively, the forum aims to make decisions by consensus and focus on public policy and public management.

These components are relevant to this study as they facilitate effective collaboration among the SGB (a governance structure), the SDC, and all other members of the school community. The inclusion of co-opted members and external government departments, along with the active participation of all stakeholders, enables the collective formulation and implementation of policies. Moreover, open communication through collective meetings is crucial for ensuring transparency and maintaining a collaborative environment.

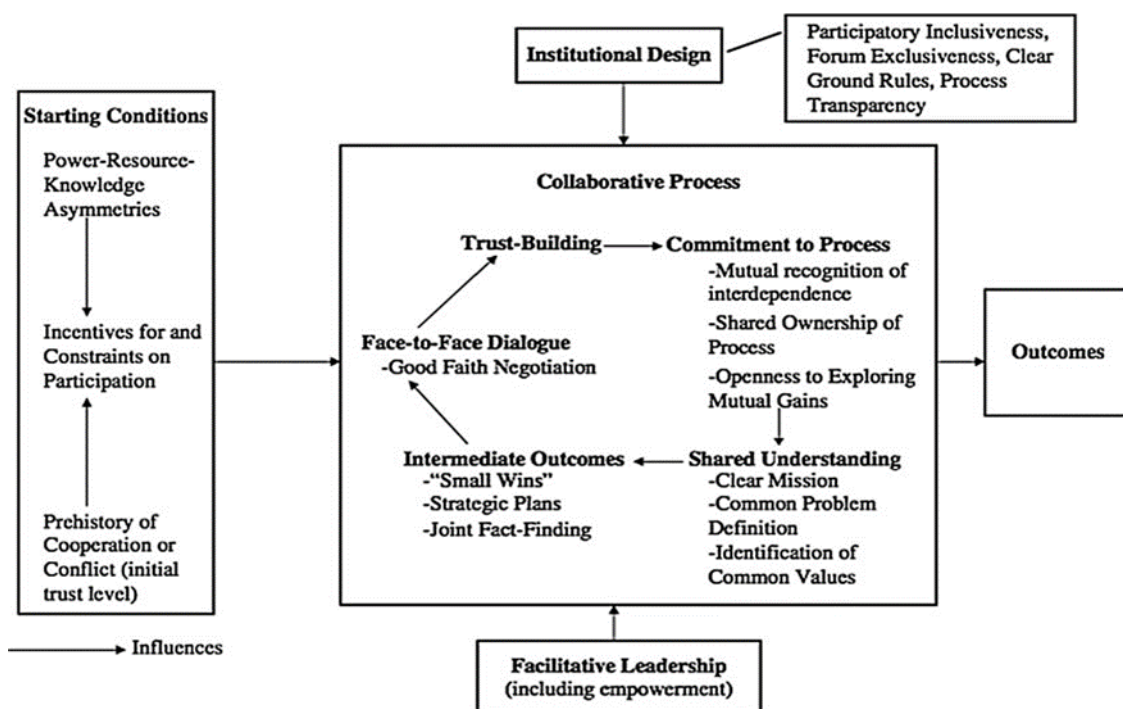
Collaborative governance can be used by the SGB as a strategy to coordinate and integrate the goals and interests of multiple stakeholders, such as the SDC, parents, learners, and educators. In a narrower sense, collaborative governance is a tool used to facilitate cooperation among the governance structure (SGB), the subcommittees (SDC), and all stakeholders within a school. In a wider sense, collaborative governance encompasses the reconstruction of democracy with the intention of giving voice to other role players, such as learners, parents and educators who are not members of either the SGB or the SDC (Armstrong, 2013:4). This theory relates to the study as it recognises parents and learners as important in ensuring a well-disciplined and purposeful school environment. They are key players in the governance structure of the school and collaborating towards improving discipline.

2.2.1 Collaborative model

Lima (2021:7) made use of the collaborative governance model by Ansell and Gash (2008:550) to emphasise the collaborative process that encompasses the procedure for collaborative school governance. The collaborative process emphasises that all stakeholders must be committed to the process of achieving a common goal based on mutual recognition of interdependence, shared ownership of the process, and openness to exploring the gains. The effectiveness and success of every plan or goal depend on the commitment of all stakeholders. All members of the school community must be involved from the initial stage of formulating policies to the implementation thereof (VanHorn, 2017:56). All members of the school community: parents, learners, and educators need to be aware of relevant policies, such as the code of conduct and its purpose. The other important aspect of this process is that all members must have a shared understanding of the mission, problems, and values of the institution or the school.

Furthermore, the institution needs to have intermediate outcomes resulting from joint fact finding and strategic planning which will yield “small wins” or desired outcomes. Openness and communication are integral to the collaborative process, requiring stakeholders to have face-to-face dialogues or meetings in good faith. According to VanHorn (2012:11), “Multiple opportunities for communication and feedback should be included throughout the process.” The last component of the process is stakeholder trust building through regular interactions, transparency, participatory inclusiveness, forum inclusiveness and adherence to the ground rules of the institution (Lima, 2021:8).

Collaborative governance model:



Source: Lima (2021:8)

2.3 Summary

This chapter discussed the theory of collaborative governance, its components and the processes that must be followed to achieve the common goals of the school community, the SGB and SDC. The collaborative governance model was explained by giving a breakdown of its processes.

The following chapter will cover the literature review.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The literature review is a critical and integrative synthesis of the ways in which various researchers have dealt with the problem under investigation (Sebisha, 2015:7). This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on SGBs and SDCs and their mandate, school discipline, learner code of conduct, and the collaboration between SGBs and their substructures.

The review will also look at the nature and approach of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline and a review of legislation and related documents pertaining to education, specifically discipline. The research findings of other studies on ill-discipline of learners and on collaboration for improved discipline will be highlighted in this chapter.

A brief historical background of the education system in South Africa will also be presented in the study.

3.2 Background of the education system in South Africa

South Africa's school system has had a very colourful life from the era of apartheid to the current democratic education system. Since 1994, new educational policies and laws have been developed changing the face of education and its governance. The Constitution primarily establishes the governance of the education system in South Africa through legislation such as the SASA and the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 with the aim of transforming the former discriminatory, inequitable, and fragmented education system into the current democratic system which involves the broader community in educational issues (Sebisha, 2015:1).

Schools in South Africa function jointly and democratically through the involvement of the broader community working together with principals in the best interest of the learners and the schools as institutions. The SGB was introduced through the SASA, with the aim of democratising decisions, power and authority, and for involving ordinary people. Parents are recognised as playing a significant role in the interest of their children's education and their overall conduct and value systems (Monare, 2013:12).

The SGB may further establish different subcommittees as a form of decentralising authority and power among stakeholders at schools (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:77). Subcommittees may also be constituted to support school governance in the execution of its functions and to ease or reduce the workload of the SGB. The SGB may delegate members of the SGB to these

subcommittees and co-opt additional members based on their expertise and knowledge (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:52). Using participatory leadership to achieve school goals, school leaders delegate various duties and responsibilities to individuals (teachers), parents or committees (Baker,2018:16).

3.3 Discipline

Discipline is important for effective teaching and learning to take place at a school. It creates an environment that is orderly, non-disruptive and safe for both teachers and learners. The term 'discipline' can be explained as a state of improved behaviour resulting from training or imposition of a relevant form of punishment; or as a system of rules for behaviour (Monare, 2013:11). It can further be defined as "methods of training that enable individuals to become integrated into the more general demands of society" (Magaba, 2018:21).

The understanding of the term 'discipline' may differ from one person to another depending on what it constitutes for them; but in this case, it may vary from one school to another depending on the values of the community being served and the values of members within the SGB and the SDC.

Joubert and Prinsloo (2008:107) distinguish among three types of discipline: *preventative discipline*, *corrective*, and *supportive discipline*. Preventative discipline is a type of discipline which is attentive to basic rights, a clarification of rules, and outlining of consequences in the school environment before any disruptive behaviour occurs. It focuses on preventing the likelihood of disruptive behaviour and not on learner misbehaviour after it has taken place. It involves adopting a holistic and integrated approach towards developing and maintaining a positive learning environment that always encourages and affirms appropriate behaviour (Monare, 2013:19).

Corrective discipline focuses on corrective measures, for instance punishment of ill-disciplined, antisocial behaviour of a learner. The action is undertaken after the behaviour has taken place. Supportive discipline focuses on ensuring that fair and reasonable measures are taken to offer support through developing positive and nurturing relationships with learners (Monare, 2013:19).

In support of a positive and nurturing relationship between educators and learners, a positive disciplinary approach was introduced to assist educators in dealing with learner ill-discipline at school. This approach focuses on instilling positive values in learners such as self-respect, empathy, respect for others and their rights (Schlebusch *et al.*, 2022:5). According to Coetzee and Minnie (2013) as cited by Schlebusch *et al.* (2022:5) "positive discipline pursues a

preventative approach rather than a punitive one and demands that discipline should be proactive rather than reactive.

The SGB and the SDC need to concur on and work collaboratively towards a specific type of discipline that will be implemented and guide the way they will jointly deal with discipline of learners at a school. In jointly applying one specific type of discipline, the focus will be on one common goal towards dealing with ill-disciplined learners and maintaining discipline in general. If, for instance, the SGB, together with the SDC, adopts preventative discipline, learners will continually be made aware of and be well-informed on the code of conduct and the sanctions. The SGB and the SDC will collaboratively make sure that the code of conduct is clearly explained to learners in a language understandable to them at their age level (Maphoke, 2017:17). The SGB in collaboration with the SDC will further work to ensure that parents are also cognisant of the learner code of conduct and that they are actively involved in all stages, from the review and adoption to the implementation (Maphoke, 2017:159).

3.3.1 The state of discipline in South African schools

Discipline in recent years has become one of the issues of concern with learner behaviour getting out of control and impacting negatively on teaching and learning at schools. This is mostly attributed to “the struggle against apartheid, which used learners to achieve democracy through violence, left a legacy of community violence, strikes by learners and a poor culture of observing education and schools as a national liberation tool” (Maphoke, 2017:26).

The fundamental right to safety of teachers and learners is being compromised daily at schools by ill-disciplined learners. Studies have highlighted several reasons for this, such as the overemphasis of human rights, lack of parental support, and incompetency on the part of stakeholders within and outside the school in dealing with learner discipline (Sebisha, 2015:1).

Discipline has become a problematic issue that is consistently raising questions of where we as South Africans went wrong when it came to values of respect and humanity or how this could all be rectified. Schools are becoming battlefields where learners are fighting against each other, murdering each other, and acting violently against their own educators who are meant to nurture and love them like their own (Monare, 2013:1). Monare (2013:20) further state that ill-discipline of learners has resulted in educators leaving the profession resigning early, the dignity of the profession being compromised, and professionally qualified educators changing professions altogether.

Schools have become a war zone where the safety of both learners and educators is constantly compromised by disruptive acts of ill-disciplined learners (Narain, 2015:16).

According to Monare (2013:20), ill-discipline is just one of the serious problems that continue to pose a threat to South African schools. The author mentions several publications or studies that were conducted with headings, such as “Pupils still victims of brutality at schools” (IOL, 2006) and reports, such as “Inside city school from hell” (Bateman, 2007:1).

Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:34) define ill-discipline or disciplinary problems as “disruptive behaviour that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, be treated with respect and to learn”. Learner misconduct is a serious problem that cannot be ignored or taken for granted as it does not only affect the perpetrator of the behaviour but other learners, and teachers who become victims through emotional, verbal and physical abuse or torture. It has become clear that schools are not all free to teach and learners are not all free to learn (Rossouw, 2003:416).

Despite the implementation of new strategies to discipline learners, such as alternatives to corporal punishment, discipline problems at school are still posing as a threat leading to a disruptive, disorderly and unsafe environment for both learners and teachers (Narain, 2015:16). Reports are continuing of learners bringing dangerous weapons to school, using drugs, and unruly and disrespectful behaviour towards their educators (Monare, 2013:22). According to Flannery (2005) cited by Monare (2013:22), most schools today are faced with serious learner misbehaviour.

Discipline can affect other learners’ overall performance and attitude to school and educators’ morale and their effectiveness in performing their duties (De Atouguia, 2014:3). It threatens the fundamental rights of others to safety and security, education and respect. In South Africa, educators, principals, and SGBs face one of the most important challenges in trying to create and maintain a safe, disciplined environment (Pillay, 2012:30). Magaba (2018:30) emphasises three measures that are necessary to help getting learners to abide by the school’s code of conduct, namely, parental involvement, mentorship, and suspension of learners for serious offences. Collaborative and democratic approach also plays a key role in ensuring that learners abide by the code of conduct, especially if they are involved from its formulation, the implementation thereof becomes part of their daily responsibility (Schlebusch *et al.*, 2022:7).

The state of ill-discipline at township and rural secondary schools affecting the safety of both learners and educators will be focused on next.

3.3.2 The state of discipline at township and rural schools

Discipline at schools in general has been reported as a problem disrupting teaching and learning and infringing the rights of others to education, safety, and respect. These acts of discipline may range from minor to serious incidents. In the case of serious acts of misconduct,

many secondary school educators complain of learners coming to school under the influence of toxic substances and often becoming violent towards fellow learners and teachers (Dhlamini, 2016:475).

Discipline is among the factors that affect teachers as much as it affects learners and leading to more educators resigning due to frustrations caused by the state of discipline at schools. This happens despite the national project that was launched by the South African government in 2000 meant to equip teachers with alternatives to corporal punishment (Monare, 2013:1). Ill-discipline at schools has been and still is an issue affecting many schools. Several cases were reported by Pillay (2012:25) of ill-discipline by learners at secondary schools.

In a study that was conducted by Narain (2015:12), ill-discipline of learners at schools in South Africa were attributed to the geographical areas in which the schools were situated. It was reported that most incidents of poor discipline were at township schools, followed by rural schools, with few reports at urban schools. The most important reason reported was that there seemed to be lack of collaboration between stakeholders, especially, at township and rural schools.

For instance, in the case of rural schools, it was reported that as the DOE was situated far from schools, they were less likely to be visiting such schools to enforce policies and regulations, and, therefore, principals were left to fend for themselves in challenging school environments. Mestry and Khumalo (2011:97) found that most SGB members, especially parent members, lacked the knowledge and skills to develop the code of conduct making it difficult to enforce the implementation thereof by learners. Parents were not involved in the day-to-day functioning of the schools and did not have a stake in the enforcement of the learner code of conduct.

The issue in township schools is complex as it relates back to the era of apartheid with the effects thereof thought to be a major cause of the state of ill-discipline at these schools (Narain, 2015:16). It was further stated by Narain (2015:16), that township schools experienced high rates of ill-discipline due to the socio-economic status, such as unemployment and poverty, of most residents. This leads to frustration and demotivation of the community with parents not participating in educational activities and assisting schools in dealing with discipline. It also leads to frustration and rebelliousness in the youth and higher rates of crime which affect learners and the rest of the school community. Masitsa (2008) noted that numerous township schools were experiencing increasing incidents of poor discipline and its escalation led to frustration among teachers and leaders (Narain, 2015:16).

As the next section will show, discipline is not an issue that is troubling South Africa alone – it appears as a general threat to the education fraternity all over the world.

3.3.3 A broader perspective on discipline

In a study that was conducted by Pillay (2012:15) it was reported that many learners in the USA were dropping out of school and losing opportunities for learning, while educators were leaving the profession due to frustration caused by ill-disciplined learners and a limited ability to deal with it, but even more as a result of the insufficient assistance and support from the Department of Education's district officials.

Educators were reported as complaining about education policies that were not working in their favour or for their protection. The focus of the policies was more on protecting the reputation of the school as an organisation and not on educators as employees in the very same schools. "Lack of parental support and fear of lawsuits are an ever-present concern for many educators who indicate that students are quick to remind them that they have rights or that their parents can sue them" (Pillay, 2012:15).

In a study that was conducted by Belle and Van Niekerk (2021:5) it was reported that about 34% of learners in Mauritius are physically aggressive inside the school premises at least once every year. Discipline of learners is still a major problem in the country despite the use of traditional approach to discipline (corporal punishment) still being used in schools. However, due to increasing rate of ill-discipline regardless of harsh disciplinary measures such as corporal punishment, Belle and Van Niekerk (2021:7) reports of a new approach that will focus on positive discipline as being "taught" rather than "imposed". This is whereby all members of the school community need to come together and collaborate.

Neighbouring countries, such as Botswana and Lesotho, have also been affected by this challenge of ill-disciplined learners. Botswana experienced challenges when it came to disciplining learners because of their acts against authority. One such incident was that of a learner who fought with a fellow learner over a borrowed plate and subsequently took his own life. Another related case was that of theft, where learners broke into the school's biology laboratory to steal ethanol – this incident resulted in mortality and blindness for some of the learners who were involved in this act (Pillay, 2012:16).

Lesotho is another country in this continent that was reported in a study by De Wet (2003:673) as having had experienced challenges of poor learner discipline. The results from this study revealed that learner verbal and physical abuse was prevalent at schools in Lesotho and violence against learners by other learners, learners against educators, and verbal and

physical humiliation of learners by educators. The use of drugs and possession of dangerous weapons were among the common challenges that were experienced at schools (De Wet, 2003:673).

The escalation of disciplinary problems at secondary schools in South Africa has been reported to stem from several factors. One that stands out has been unwillingness to take full responsibility by all those who are involved in learner discipline, from the learners themselves not abiding by the school's code of conduct to the committee tasked with applying for approval from the DOE for the expulsion of learners (Pillay, 2012:27).

Several articles mentioned learner pornography, distribution of sex videos, and the use of dagga at school. These articles attest to what educators and SGB members serving on the SDC must deal with (Pillay, 2012:28). One such incident occurred at Jules High School in Johannesburg where a 15year old girl and two boys aged 14 and 16 were filmed while having sex on the school grounds (Jones, 2010). One other recent report was from an article in the Alberton Record (2022) of a Grade 12 male learner from a local school in Gauteng who was charged with sexual assault of a female learner.

Makhitha and Botha (2017:17) conducted a study of teenage sexual activities at school grounds in South Africa. In their study conducted at Mauritius school, Belle and Van Niekerk (2021:3) further as reported of learners watching pornography on their phones inside school premises. In their study Makhitha and Botha (2017:496) they also mentioned the same incident at Jules High and reported that it resulted in various stakeholders challenging certain provisions of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act 32 of 2007 (Makhitha & Botha, 2017:496). The types of sexual activities that were popular among learners as reported by participants in the study ranged from engaging in less intimate behaviour to extremely intimate behaviour, such as kissing, touching, rubbing, mutual masturbation, penetration (vaginal and anal) and stroking.

Collaboration of stakeholders in disciplining learners at schools is needed and vital. All stakeholders should be involved and be willing and able to take full responsibility in ensuring a well-disciplined and purposeful school environment (Pillay, 2012:30). Discipline should take a holistic approach whereby all members of the school community are involved (Belle & Van Niekerk, 2021:34). The important role of SGBs in ensuring this, is discussed next.

3.4 Governance

Governance or "governance structure", as defined by Zhao and Wang (2020:827), refers to the relationship between various interest group in a public or private organisation. In addition,

Supriadi *et al.* (2021:798) emphasise that good governance is the process of managing schools for increasing the schools' development and accountability. They further emphasise that governance is a process of determining policy and rules at school by considering the law (Supriadi *et al.*, 2021:800). This means that the ideal governance structure should be a relationship with clear responsibilities and rights, mutual restriction and balance, and mutual assistance based on clear rights.

Furthermore, the implementation of good school governance will not only increase accountability but also member participation and transparency (Ndlela, 2015:2). The implementation of good governance at schools should rest on collaboration among all stakeholders, namely school, community, and government, to improve the education quality. The sole purpose of the development of governance structures is to emphasise the decentralisation and democratisation of power and authority among all members of the school community. Moreover, "[the] responsibility of governance in schools related to the SGB's power, is to adopt policies" (Ndlela, 2015:14).

3.5 The school governing body (SGB)

According to Ndlela (2015:14), the term "School Governing Body" is used to describe an elected body that is entrusted with the responsibility and authority to formulate and adopt school policies within the national, provincial and district vision for education and functioning, in terms of the School Act. All state schools need to have a democratically elected structure (the SGB) to govern and oversee how decision-making processes happen in education, in general, and within a school, specifically.

Representing all the stakeholders of a school community, the governing body must work in collaboration with the school principal, as the manager of the school, and staff members, learners and parents. Joubert and Prinsloo (2008) emphasise that democratisation includes the idea that stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners, and community members "must" participate in the activities of the school (Pillay, 2012:30).

The SGB was developed with the sole purpose of decentralising power and authority among all stakeholders within education including parents as key role players who were previously marginalised in school governance and discipline of learners. Parents now have an opportunity to express themselves through the SGB and have a voice in the education of their children (Ndlela, 2015:13)

The SGB must ensure that the school is run effectively according to a framework set by legislation and education policies to render the best possible education for learners (Pillay,

2012:12). However, to achieve effective teaching and learning, the SGB needs to work with all members of the school community.

3.5.1 Functions of the SGB

All the functions of the SGB are contained in the SASA. The SGB has general functions which *must* be carried out, as stated in section 20 of the SASA; it also has allocated functions, in terms of section 21, that *may* be performed in the enhancement of service delivery at respective schools. The mandatory functions include the development, adoption and enforcement of the code of conduct for learners, the development of the vision and mission statement of the school, and adoption of a constitution to guide all functions at schools (FEDSAS, 2006:8).

The above-mentioned processes must be performed by the SGB in consultation with the entire school community. The SGB must adopt a code of conduct that enshrines the values of all members and not only that of individual members within the mother body. Furthermore, the SGB should make sure that the contents of the code of conduct is informed by the values enshrined in the Bill of Rights (Lekalakala, 2007:4).

The consultation process emphasises the importance of collaboration in the democratic educational context. By being involved, parents, learners and other members of the school community will have a sense of ownership and pride in the enforcement of the code of conduct. Squelch (2000), cited by Monare (2013:2), opines that to achieve effective teaching and learning, good discipline should be maintained through participation by parents, learners, educators and SGBs.

This further applies to the development of the vision and mission statement of the school by the SGB – members of the school community must be involved so that there can be one clear shared vision for the school and how it should deal with discipline. There should be one goal and objective for the governance and management of the school in dealing with learner discipline. It is, therefore, important that before the SGB develops a vision and mission statement, each of the stakeholders is involved so that they can support the broader vision and feel a sense of ownership – the same vision and mission will be communicated through the code of conduct and its implementation (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:80).

However, this is not always the case at most schools, relating to personal experience as an educator for the past ten years and a member of an SGB. The SGB as the governance structure seems to exist to work only with educational management, which in most cases is the school principal. The entire school community is often consulted during the implementation

but not during the development of either the code of conduct or the vision and mission statement.

Research reveals that parents and learners are not always actively involved in the initial stages of formulating the code of conduct. They are sometimes intentionally removed because their inputs are not viewed as important as was communicated by one of the RCL participants in a study that was conducted by Narain (2015:261). The learner was quoted as saying “*We are not allowed to say our views*”. Conversely, the lack of involvement by the SGB of parents and learners was reported to be based on their lack of knowledge on matters pertaining to education and discipline (Narain, 2015:262). In terms of the capacity of the SGB, researchers such as Mestry and Khumalo (2011:98), Ndlela (2015:4) report in their rural schools’ study that the literacy levels of most of the SGB members, in particular parents, makes it difficult for them to design and enforce the learner code of conduct, even though the DOE may have provided training.

This must not be a reason collaboration through consultation with all stakeholders is not practised at schools as expected by the DOE and enshrined in the SASA. It must further not be a reason democratic decentralisation of education is not practised in a democratic country. It must also not be the reason learner ill-discipline is dealt with by school principals based on their own individual values that they impose on learners and educators.

Section 1(a) of the SASA clearly stipulates the first and most important function of the school governing body must be to promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school. Section 30(1)(a) of the SASA further stipulates that an SGB may establish different committees to make the task of the SGB more operational (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:77).

The SGB has many functions and cannot execute all of them without the assistance of all members of the school community. Apart from the mandatory functions, the governing body may apply for additional functions to be assigned by requesting the HOD in writing.

These functions include the maintenance and improvement of school property or buildings, determination of extramural activities and subject choice, purchase of educational materials or equipment for the school, paying for services rendered to the school, and provision of adult basic education (Ndlela,2015:32).

3.5.2 SGB membership

SGBs as participatory and representative governance structures consist of democratically elected members: parents of learners at the specific school, educators, non-teaching staff, learner representatives (RCL members) in the case of a secondary school (from Grade 8 upwards), the principal in their capacity as a representative of the state, and members who are co-opted because of specific expertise that may be useful to the school (Ndlela,2015:21)

The role of principals in the SGB is twofold: they serve as members of SGBs and are expected, on the one hand, to act in the best interest of SGBs when dealing with the provincial department and, on the other hand, to act as employees of the department with the responsibility of ensuring that SGBs act in accordance with the laws, policies and regulations set by the department. The principal serves on the SGB but does not have voting rights and may not serve as a chairperson (Narain, 2013:7).

According to section 29(1) of the SASA, a governing body must elect, from its members, office-bearers who must include at least a chairperson, a treasurer and a secretary. The chairperson must be an elected member of the parent component who is not employed at the school (SASA,1996). However, the principal is responsible for the professional management of the school under the authority vested in them by the department (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:76-77).

The number of members in the SGB is calculated using a formula published in the government gazette and determined by the Member of the Executive Council (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:76). It is clearly specified in section 23(9) of SASA that, *the number of parent members must comprise one more than the combined total of other members of a governing body who have voting rights* (SASA,1996).

3.5.3 The constitution of the SGB

The SGB must function in accordance with the principles and values enshrined in the Constitution. It is the responsibility of the SGB members to develop their own constitution and submit it to the HOD 90 days after they have been elected. According to section 18(1) of the SASA, the SGB must function in terms of a constitution which complies with minimum requirements determined by the MEC by notice in the provincial gazette (DOE, 2006).

Section 18(2) of the SASA clearly states the minimum requirements that the SGB is expected to comply with, such as meeting at least once a term, and meeting with subcommittees, learners, parents, educators and non-teaching staff at least once a year (Joubert & Prinsloo,

2008:77). The SGB may hold more meetings depending on matters that may warrant their immediate attention.

The SGB must keep minutes of meetings held, which must always be available to the HOD when requested; and they must report on activities and developments at the school to learners, parents, educators and non-teaching staff at least once a year (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:45)

The SGB is expected to oversee the disciplinary procedure at the school but, in most cases, the responsibility often rests upon the school principals and educators. Parent governors often do not turn up for meetings because of work commitments and other private matters and learners' parents do not attend SDC meetings or hearings, frequently leaving the responsibility and decision-making to the principal and educators in the SGB (Pillay, 2012:62).

Parent governors do not have the necessary knowledge of disciplinary hearing procedures due to a lack of training by the DOE; therefore, the duty to oversee these processes again lies with the principal and educators. According to Mncube (cited by Pillay, 2012:70), the lack of parents' interest in participating in the SGB might be due to their lack of familiarity of the contents of South African education policies, in particular, the SASA. The limited role of the SDC in dealing with discipline and of parent governors might be affecting the state of discipline at schools.

3.5.4 SGB committees

The SGB may establish different committees to support it in the execution of its functions (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:52). In these committees, the SGB may appoint individuals who are not members of the SGB, but who must be appointed based on their expertise and the interest that they have in the development of better education and the best interest of learners at the school (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:77).

The effective functioning of SGB committees such as the executive, finance, sport, cultural and disciplinary subcommittees is essential for good governance of the school (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008). Subcommittees must be chaired by members of the SGB who will have to report to the SGB on the progress of each subcommittee during its meetings (Monare, 2016:52). As a former member of an SGB, the only subcommittee that has ever communicated its mandate and plans to the SGB at the school where I was based has been the QLTC when it was first introduced. However, this should be the case with all the subcommittees. The SGB must be informed of the programmes each subcommittee plans to undertake each year. It needs to know on which dates the programmes will take place, the significance, and the

estimated cost so that the finance committee, a subcommittee of the SGB, can draft a budget based on the financial needs of each committee (FEDSAS, 2016:13).

Subcommittees differ from one school to the other based on the needs and goals of the school. This means the SGB must determine which aspects of its functions and activities require the establishment and assistance of subcommittees to operationalise its tasks (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:77).

All committees must function within the mandate given to them by the SGB regarding the extent of their activities and functions (Pillay, 2012:34). There should be collaborative governance and policymaking through committees, while working towards a common goal of whole school improvement in the best interest of learners.

SGB members must form part of these committees; and they must serve as chairpersons and report back during meetings of the SGB on the progress of these school committees (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:52). However, the SGB faces many challenges when it comes to parent governors and the roles expected of them in the committees. These challenges may range from unavailability of parent governors for SGB committee meetings or their lack of active involvement, which results in shifting of responsibilities to educators. This is an indication that collaboration is lacking, which might be impacting on the overall functioning of the school (Pillay, 2012:69).

3.5.5 School disciplinary committee

The SDC, as a substructure of the SGB, will be a focus of this study as it deals specifically with issues of learner discipline and conduct. It must work collaboratively with the SGB in ensuring a well-disciplined and conducive school environment that promotes the best education for all children and a safe working space for educators (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:123).

The SDC should comprise the principal, deputy principal, chairperson of the SGB, parent member of the governing body, an educator, a learner (in the case of a secondary school) and at least three co-opted members with expertise of learner discipline and/or educational law. This committee may be appointed for a period of a year after which new members may be elected, or the same members re-elected (Pillay, 2012: 61).

The SGB together with the SDC must make certain that learners respect and follow the disciplinary policy that is adopted and approved by the SGB. They must further make sure that

the code of conduct agrees with the contents of the Bill of Rights and SASA to ensure that the rights of all children in South Africa are always respected and protected.

It is the responsibility of the principal to refer a learner accused of serious misconduct to the SGB, as they do not hold the power to suspend or expel a learner. The matter must be dealt with by the SGB in collaboration with the SDC. However, the SGB can only suspend a learner after proper procedures have been followed and all policies dealing with the school's code of conduct have been adhered to (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:119). Suspension of a learner from school for a period of 14 days must follow approval of the HOD after the SDC and SGB's referral of such a recommendation (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:121).

The scope of the SDC is limited when it comes to dealing with daily learner discipline at school. The SDC is expected by law to deal only with serious cases of misconduct warranting the suspension or expulsion of learners, and to only meet when needed to discuss serious cases of ill-discipline that may lead to a disciplinary hearing (Pillay, 2012:61).

Sebisha (2015:15) holds that learner ill-discipline should be a matter that needs consistent and joint effort by all stakeholders from minor to serious acts of misconduct. SGBs in South Africa should learn that to enhance collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders, effective communication needs to be maintained at all times (Monare, 2013:41). This suggests that the SGB and SDC should be involved in learner ill-discipline during all stages to ensure collaborative decisions by all concerned parties.

The collaboration between the SGB and its subcommittee, the SDC, is mostly exercised during disciplinary hearings for the suspension or expulsion of learners. The due processes and procedures they need to follow in case of disciplinary hearings will be discussed next.

3.5.6 Disciplinary procedures

Disciplinary procedures must be undertaken at school level to promote and maintain learner discipline (Bray, 2005:134). The code of conduct for learners must clearly state measures to be taken in case a learner acts against the code, and these violations must be dealt with fairly and in an objective manner and must be explained to all members of the school community (Sebisha, 2015:15).

As stipulated in section 8(5) of SASA, *a code of conduct must contain provisions of due process safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings* (SASA, 1996).

Disciplinary procedures should be aimed at correcting behaviour without violating learners' rights or causing emotional or physical torture in any way, as expressed in section 12(1) of the Constitution.

The code of conduct and school policy should be explained to all learners from primary to secondary school level and this should not be the responsibility of only the SGB and SDC but a collaborative effort by parents and educators. This goes back to the point that the collaboration of the SGB, SDC, and the school community must begin at the development stage so that the implementation and adherence become easier for all parties as they would feel a sense of ownership.

In addition, Sebisha (2015:9) avers that the committee responsible for drafting such a policy should contextualise and formulate it in accordance with local conditions and practices. However, not understanding the laws pertaining to education and to the discipline of learners is hampering the effectiveness of the SGB and SDC collaboration in most instances, especially during disciplinary hearing procedures. Most SGB parent members, according to Sebisha (2015:19), were struggling to differentiate between minor and serious acts of misconduct, while the code of conduct was not in line with either the Bill of Rights or SASA.

Pillay (2012:20) further emphasises the point above about the code of conduct, by saying that it must be the result of a collaborative effort of all members of the school community, inclusive of learners, educators, and parents. The statements by these two researchers confirm that the effectiveness of the SGB and SDC collaboration depends on the involvement and support of the entire school community.

The SGB and SDC, collaboratively, must adhere to the stipulations on managing discipline in section 8 of SASA to ensure a fair and justifiable disciplinary hearing for learners. However, to ascertain a fair judgement for a learner, "disciplinary investigations and hearing must be conducted to collect the necessary evidence, which will determine whether or not there are sufficient grounds for a disciplinary hearing (enquiry)" (Lekalakala, 2007:29).

The disciplinary proceeding is the most important stage of the SGB and the SDC collaboration, as the two are expected to actively collaborate in making decisions which may warrant the suspension and expulsion of learners from compulsory attendance.

In dealing with a case of minor misconduct by the learner, the matter can be handled by an individual classroom educator. The individual educator concerned may choose to inform the disciplinary committee about the incident, so that they may take the necessary precautionary measures in case a rule has been violated. However, the extent to which educators report

minor incidents is uncertain and, therefore, not reflected in literature, unless the learner is unruly and pose a threat to the educator. This contravenes the process of dealing with and improving learner ill-discipline, when all are not informed or involved in a decision regardless of the level of the offence (Sebisha,2015:15).

The SMT, more specifically, the principal in collaboration with deputy principals can also step in and handle cases that educators cannot handle on their own. This must be done in accordance with the learner code of conduct. The class educator or subject educator has a responsibility to keep a record of learners' daily misconduct which establishes a profile of learners' behaviour, records of sanctions enforced, and records of communication to parents who were called to school to discuss any of the incidents (Pillay, 2012:73). If a profile is kept, it might serve as a record of a learner's behaviour, clearly stating the number and level of offences the learner has committed, but in most cases this does not happen. This profile can be useful when a learner commits a serious offence, and the learner is referred for a disciplinary hearing.

In case of a serious offence, the incident will be reported to the school principal who will inform the SGB and the SDC of the incident. Parents will also be informed about the date and venue of a disciplinary hearing (Pillay, 2012:82). The notice to parents must include information about the alleged offence. According to Dzivhani (2000:57), it was stated that literature confirms that collaboration is exercised at this stage when the SGB, SDC, learner's parents, educators, and learner representatives come together in the best interest of the child.

The responsibility for learner discipline should not solely be that of the principal. Educators must enforce classroom rules to ensure that learners get accustomed to school rules (Dzivhani, 2000:30). In so doing, the responsibility of learner discipline becomes a joint effort in a school. The disciplinary measures implemented for a learner must be in line with the misconduct and a proper decision must be taken by the principal, educators, SDC and SGB based on the code of conduct. In case of a serious act of misconduct, the SDC and SGB must make sure that the right of a learner to a fair hearing and judgement is granted.

The SGB and the SDC must work together to ascertain that disciplinary procedures are always fair and just, corrective and educative, and that learners are not mistreated, or their rights infringed (Dzivhani, 2000:58). During all these procedures, it is important that parents are informed of a learner's misconduct and the process that will unfold in disciplining the learner and their expected role as parents of the learner (Pillay,2012:20). Furthermore, learners and parents must also be informed of their right to appeal any decision taken against a learner. It is further stated in section 9(5) of SASA that *a learner or the parent of a learner who has been*

expelled from a public school may appeal against the decision of the Head of Department to the Member of the Executive Council.

3.5.7 Developing a code of conduct for learners

The SGB as the governance structure at a school must develop and adopt school policies, for example, on school hours, school uniforms, language, religion, dress code, learner code of conduct, and the mission and vision of the school. It must also develop the school budget and attend to developmental priorities (Pillay, 2012:36).

According to Bray (2005:134), “in adopting the code of conduct for learners, the governing body must act within its powers and in the best interests of the school and all the learners”. The code of conduct for learners must include the appropriate behaviour expected from them whether they are within or outside school premises and must state explicitly the ways in which the code is to be enforced to always ensure acceptable learner behaviour (Dhlamini, 2016:582).

The development of the learner code of conduct must be done jointly with all stakeholders in the school to ensure that they all own the content and the implementation thereof. Development of the code of conduct must first include awareness of the purpose of the code and how it will be beneficial to the school and discipline of learners. Then it must include information gathering from and consultation with learners, parents, and educators to get their views and beliefs about general discipline at the school (Sebisha, 2015:7).

After the process of information gathering, the SGB must draft the code of conduct incorporating all the values and beliefs of the broader school community. The code of conduct must be revised based on the comments and suggestions of the school community, and a final draft must be written and presented for approval to the SGB (Dzivhani, 2000:28).

The content of the code of conduct for learners, such as the rules, policies and procedures must be clearly communicated to learners, parents and educators before it is implemented. The code of conduct must be continually reviewed and revised to adapt to changes within the school itself and when a new SGB is elected. This will enable the committee to add to or amend some of the rules and consequences contained in the code (Sebisha, 2015:17).

The developmental process of the code of conduct for learners is not always followed at schools with adherence to every detail, as some SGB and the SDC members, especially parents, are not always involved in the development process of this policy. The SGB educator members together with the school principals seem to be the driving force behind the codes of

conduct which are often developed without or with limited consultation (De Atouguia, 2014: 42).

Dhlamini (2016:482) emphasises the importance of collaborative engagement of learners in the development and formulation of the school code of conduct and school policy as that will help them respect the school rules because they were part of the process.

3.5.8 Implementation of the code of conduct

The code of conduct for learners should be founded on common values and beliefs of the school and the community in which it is situated but still guided by values enshrined within the Constitution's Bill of Rights. Implementation of the code of conduct follows the formulation of a school vision based on suggestions of the school community, after which a final draft is written and presented for approval to the SGB (Sebisha, 2017:7).

As indicated by Bray (2005:138) "the implementation and enforcement of the code of conduct is a very important school governance matter". It therefore needs to be implemented with judiciousness to see to it that the rights of learners are not violated in any manner possible.

As the first part of implementation, the content within the code of conduct must be clearly communicated to learners, educators and parents. They must be made familiar with the rules and the policies which influenced the code, such as SASA and the Bill of Rights, and procedures to be followed in case a learner acts against the code (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:119).

The implementation of the code of conduct at schools is often severely deficient, and often only done as a last resort and proper procedures are often not followed. The reason most cases are not referred to the SGB for a disciplinary hearing is often because there is not enough evidence in the form of record keeping sanctioning a learner based on the seriousness of the offence (Pillay, 2012:82).

Poor learner discipline will continue to pose a problem at township and rural schools if there is a lack of full compliance to the disciplinary policy. If there is inconsistency in the implementation of the code of conduct, non-uniform implementation of discipline will occur at schools ranging from minor to serious acts of ill-discipline. There must be joint efforts in implementing the code of conduct – discipline by one should be discipline by all – and it must agree with the policy. The school community needs to be unified with one voice. It is necessary for parents and educators to work with learners and the SGB and SDC in implementing the code.

3.5.9 The relationship between the code of conduct and classroom rules

The purpose of school rules and the learner code of conduct is to govern the system of the school, including relationships between the principal, educators and learners; classroom rules must be specifically organised to regulate the relationships and interactions between educators and learners in the classroom. The code of conduct for learners must include the school rules that will apply to all learners and inform class-based educators in developing classroom rules for learners (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:119).

In developing classroom rules, it is important to guarantee that they are consistent with the values enshrined in the learner code of conduct and must be the same for all learners and all classrooms (Monare, 2013:23). Dhlamini (2016:474) emphasises that the code of conduct should be inclusive and must ensure that classroom discipline reflects the school policies, established ground rules, and consistently implemented classroom rules. Classroom rules and the code of conduct should be clear and concise for all to understand and follow.

The code of conduct is often not consulted when developing classroom rules. Classroom rules are frequently not the same across the school, when class managers develop their own rules based on their personal values. This results in many classroom rules that do not talk to the vision and mission of the school and do not relate to the learner code of conduct. This is also due to the lack of collaboration that exists in schools when it comes to disciplining learners and dealing with ill-discipline (Dhlamini, 2016:474)

Not sharing a common vision may also contribute to the state of ill-discipline at schools, especially for learners in grades 4–7 and 10–12 who are taught by different subject educators in different classes. The rules may therefore be different in each classroom they enter and for each educator they get into contact with. This might be leading to confusion and instability for learners.

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011:40), secondary schools are often seen by parents as large bureaucratic organisations, which are unwelcoming, and as one of the reasons why there is a tendency for higher levels of parental involvement in primary than in secondary schools.

3.5.10 Code of conduct

“A code of conduct is a collection of a number of binding rules and principles which reflect certain moral standards, ethics, principles, values and standards of conduct of the school” (De Atouguia, 2014:16). Section 8(2) of the SASA stipulates that a code of conduct *must be aimed*

at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process (SASA, 1996).

The content of the code of conduct differs from one school to the other based on each school's mission and vision statement. The code of conduct must address components such as the preamble which sets out the values and overall culture of the school. The preamble must be in accordance with the values within the Constitution and SASA (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:70). In addition, Sebisha (2015:10) indicates that the code should not conflict with the any other laws of the country, including any applicable legislation, instructions or policies of the DOE.

Included in the code must be the rules of conduct for learners which clearly state the expected and unexpected behaviours from learners. These rules must also contain fair punitive actions to be taken in case a learner acts against the rules, and rewards and incentives to promote acceptable behaviour. The purpose of including both punishment and reward in the code is to inform learners and parents that learner behaviour, whether positive or negative, will always have consequences depending on the type of behaviour exhibited by the learner (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:119).

The policy should contain a code of appropriate behaviour that applies whether learners are inside or outside the school and should state the ways in which that code must be enforced. As learner ill-discipline dents the reputation of the school, it is important that disciplinary measures are in place and communicated so that all know and understand (Dhlamini, 2013:481).

Learners should know the repercussions of acting against the code of conduct and take responsibility for their actions. Punishment thereof should be informed by the code of conduct and be exercised in a manner that is fair and does not infringe learners' rights. Sebisha (2015:12) holds that when punishment is meted out to a learner, it is imperative that the educator explains the punishment to the learner and what school rule has been broken.

The learner code of conduct should contain clear descriptions of expected and desired behaviour, forms of punishment and appropriate corrective measures to be undertaken in case the learner acts against the code, a description of incidents to which the code will apply and rules for processes to be followed in the case of disciplinary proceedings (Joubert & Prinsloo, 2008:125).

The content within the code of conduct should not be explained to or discussed with learners only, but to all stakeholders within the school; and must form part of the agenda at all staff

meetings. All stakeholders should be actively involved from its development to the daily implementation of the policy. All must be aware of its existence and its intended purpose. “The lack of collaborative efforts to engage educators and other stakeholders in decisions, such as the formulation of the code of conduct for learners, is a gross violation of democratic educational laws” (Maphoke, 2017:159).

3.6 Collaboration

Collaboration is a joint effort that entails association and the sharing of expertise towards achieving a common goal by groups (Basson & Mestry, 2019:2). Collaborations may be internal, where a matter is only handled by members of an institution, or external, where external stakeholders are called or consulted to assist based on their knowledge of or expertise on the matter at hand (Armstrong, 2015:3.)

According to Armstrong (2015:3), the governance structure at the school should adopt the emerging idea of models of shared governance to accommodate inter-school collaborative arrangements. Armstrong (2015:3) emphasises that the more formal of these models include joint governing bodies between groups of schools in addition to their individual bodies.

Appropriate approaches to policy making, such as the involvement of all stakeholders, are required for the implementation of the code of conduct for learners, bringing the collaboration of external and internal stakeholders together as a collective in decision making. The move towards a more collaborative style of governance has played an important role in progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs); therefore, collaboration will certainly help at school level to ensure that all members of the school community, including the SGB and its substructure, the SDC, work collectively towards the common goal of dealing with discipline of learners (Lima, 2021:2).

Based on Armstrong’s study, inter-school collaboration was reported to have had a mixed impact on the improvement in learner attainment at schools. The success of collaboration was reported to be better in formal external collaboration when good practices were shared among governance structures and their knowledge improved. This gives an indication that through formal external collaboration SGBs can learn from each other and help develop each other leading to a major improvement in dealing with ill-discipline of learners on a broader scale.

Inter-school collaboration can also provide opportunities for training and development of SGB members. Consequently, members will have increased opportunities to take on their responsibilities both within and between schools and work with, learn from, and observe other

schools. The overall picture indicates that discipline can be effectively dealt with by a mixture of inter-school and external collaboration.

Collaboration in and between schools is an important aspect of leadership and leadership styles and is valuable in ensuring that learner discipline is managed through a collective effort. The way the principal leads and manages the school has an impact on the improvement of discipline or success of education in general. Their leadership style may shift from being a traditional institutional leader to becoming a collaborative leader who focuses on building good teamwork, relying on the support and strength of others, and valuing their contributions towards a common vision and goal for the majority (Monare, 2013:17).

School principals, as managers, and the SGB, as governors, need to work collaboratively with members of the school community and delegate responsibilities to the relevant officials with the necessary expertise for the success of the school to deal successfully with discipline in agreement with the code of conduct for learners. This will ensure co-ownership and co-responsibility when it comes to dealing with discipline. Parent governors on the SGB are not always at school, therefore principals must make use of educators and learners who are members of the SGB and the broader school community to ensure that discipline is effectively dealt with daily.

Monare (2013:17) holds that at schools where collaborative leadership is practised and where there is mutual respect between the leader and the staff all feel valued and recognised for their contributions. Consultation leads to parents, learners and educators feeling valued as contributors and active role players in the establishment and enforcement of the code of conduct at schools.

According to a study by Armstrong (2015:4), the impact of inter-school collaboration has proven to lead to major improvements in areas such as learner attainment, staff professional development, career opportunities and innovation, a reduction and re-alignment of the principal's workload, and organisational and financial efficiency. This is an indication that collaboration, whether formal or informal, might yield desired results in improving learner discipline if only all stakeholders in education can work together.

This can also be extended to governance whereby different SGBs work collaboratively between groups of schools, sharing good practices that may lead to success in managing discipline, specifically as a societal issue.

In a school environment, external stakeholders are educators and principals from other schools or officials from the DOE with expertise on a particular challenge the school may be

facing; for instance, a dispute within the SGB or disagreement on decisions reached by the SGB during a disciplinary hearing with learners, parents, and the members of the SDC. It may be that the SGB, despite discussions during a disciplinary hearing, did not follow fair procedural processes in reaching a decision against a learner, which may result in their decision being challenged. The HOD may first be consulted regarding a recommendation of expulsion or suspension of a learner by the SGB. Joubert and Prinsloo (2008:123) suggest that another kind of external collaboration is the involvement of the MEC to intervene against an unfair expulsion of a learner, as stated in section 9(4) of the SASA.

Furthermore, a combination of these two types of collaboration may be used depending on the matter an institution may be faced with. Schools collaborate for a multitude of reasons and with varying degrees of success in terms of impact and sustainability.

3.6.1 Nature of collaboration between the SGB and its committees

Collaboration within a school means the school community, parents, management, learners, SGB and its committees agree to follow shared goals in a unified collective manner, to make decisions, and solve problems (Basson & Mestry, 2019:2). This means that the SGB cannot function on its own without support from the school community and subcommittees, especially the SDC. The collaboration of the SGB and SDC is a very limited one, in the sense that it becomes active only when there is a serious misconduct that warrants suspension or expulsion of a learner. Decisions regarding suspension or expulsion of a learner must be collaboratively reached by the SGB and SDC with the involvement of all parties affected, including learners and parents.

The current education system requires joint working relations between stakeholders within education and in the school as an institution (Dhlamini, 2016:483). This must be a system where roles and responsibilities are shared among members and structures to ensure joint decision-making and successful implementation. Co-ownership by and co-responsibility must be evident from all stakeholders within the school and externally (Monare, 2013:55). It must also apply to SGB–SDC collaboration in the development of policies and the code of conduct and must not only be restricted to handling of serious incidents of misconduct by learners (Monare, 2013:47).

Stakeholders within the school must collectively play their part in dealing with discipline at schools. Educators need to implement the code of conduct in their interaction with learners daily, parents should be involved in and be responsible for their children's education, and the

DOE should offer the necessary support and training to all members of the SGB so that they can carry out their roles effectively (Monare, 2013:55).

Good governance of a public school relies heavily on collaborations or partnerships among structures within the school (Armstrong, 2015:8). This further means that the entire school community should be involved in the development of the disciplinary policy for learners, as co-owners of the policy, and they need to respect and adhere to the rules as they were part of the process.

The active involvement of the SDC seems to be evident only when it must deal with serious incidents of misconduct that warrant their presence and involvement in the disciplinary process (Dhlamini, 2016:483). Therefore, learner ill-discipline will continue to be a problem because it is not given the attention it deserves.

Collaborative governance should be used by the SGB as a strategy to coordinate and integrate the goals and interests of multiple stakeholders, such as the SDC, parents, learners, and educators. In a narrower sense, collaborative governance is a tool used to facilitate cooperation among the governance structure, the subcommittees, and all stakeholders within a school. In a wider sense, collaborative governance encompasses the reconstruction of democracy with the intention of giving voice to other role players, such as learners, parents and educators who are not members of either the SGB or the SDC. All these stakeholders must work together towards a common goal and implement governance systems with transparency, accountability, and legitimacy (Armstrong, 2015:24).

Collaboration between SGB members should be formalised by including regular meetings between SGB and its subcommittees (at least once per term) on the school's annual calendar. At these meetings, all pertinent aspects related to ill-discipline of learners at the school should be discussed. This collaboration can only result in more effective and efficient management of ill-discipline (Bray & Joubert: 2007:130).

One other subcommittee of the SGB that has not been mentioned when the other subcommittees were discussed is the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) committee. It focuses on ensuring quality learning for learners, and quality teaching and education by educators supported by management and the broader community. Nonyane (2016:56) states that the DOE noted a weakness in the structure of the SGB and decided to add a subcommittee to the SGB, known as the QLTC, comprising most external stakeholders in education. This is a confirmation that the strength of the SGB as a mother body within the

school is dependent on its collaborations with all the committees, and that continued support is needed for its functionality and the execution of its functions.

The DOE (2018:3) confirms that the QLTC is geared towards mobilising every stakeholder to play a role and take responsibility towards the attainment of quality learning and teaching. This structure involves educators, parents, departmental officials, learners and the community as a whole. This stresses the importance of consultation and collaboration by the SGB with the QLTC committee which must be applied to all subcommittees of the SGB.

The composition of the QLTC is made up of one member of the governing body who serves as the chairperson of the committee, the school principal, one teacher representative from each teachers' trade union, one parent, one district or circuit representative and one RCL representative in the case of a secondary school. The composition of the QLTC committee is detailed unlike that of the SDC where it is not clear who should serve in the committee. This implies that equal attention is not given to learner ill-discipline including the collaboration of the SGB and SDC. There is a lack of support in disciplinary matters at schools from educators and from learners' parents. According to a study by Narain (2015:35), there were reports that educators were not supportive of the processes and disciplinary procedures as they felt that they were too slow in curbing learner ill-discipline. This also influenced their overall compliance with the disciplinary policy.

One of the roles of QLTC is to ensure that everyone has a role to play, and that role does not exist in isolation, as for it to be fulfilled one needs to rely on the other (DOE, 2018:8). This is where co-responsibility and collaboration are exercised. The QLTC relies heavily on partnerships or collaborations within the school and by external stakeholders for its effectiveness. The QLTC is a prime example of the importance of collaboration, as it is receiving the much-needed attention and support from the management team and from schools, for example, in the Macquassie Hills subdistrict of the North-West province. It would yield valuable results if the same weight invested into the QLTC could be invested into the SGB–SDC collaboration on discipline with support from all relevant stakeholders.

3.7 Summary

The literature on learner discipline, learner codes of conduct, and collaboration between the SGB and its substructures, with the focus of improving school discipline, was reviewed. A review was done of the legislation and other documents pertaining to discipline in education, with the view of informing the nature and approach of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline. Collaborative governance as the theoretical framework for this study was

discussed. The findings and recommendations from other studies on learner discipline and on collaboration by governance structures in improving discipline informed this study. A brief overview of how South Africa's education system has transformed since the era of apartheid to the current decentralised education system was presented as an introduction.

The next chapter will discuss the research design and methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the process followed in the study will be defined. The focus will be on the research approach, research paradigm and research design, data-collection methods and data analysis, measures used to ensure trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research approach

A research approach is a tool that is used by researchers to collect reliable, valid data about social phenomena, either from individuals, or from groups of people, artefacts, and texts. It is also a mode through which researchers collect and generate data (Ravitch & Carl, 2021:124). Data-gathering tools in a qualitative study may include interviews, observational field notes, and review of documents.

This study followed a qualitative research approach. This term refers to an inquiry process of understanding where a researcher develops a complex, holistic picture, undertake analyses, and report on detailed views of participants; it is conducted in a natural setting (Maree, 2016:309).

This research approach was selected because of the specific nature of the study, as it gave the researcher the opportunity to interact with participants in their own environment and allowed participants to construct meaning out of their own experiences and beliefs and to use words to communicate these meanings. This research approach attempts to find answers to questions by studying various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings to see how these settings influence human behaviour. The researcher cannot understand human behaviour without understanding the framework within which subjects interpret their thoughts, feelings and actions (Ravitch & Carl, 2021:5).

Ravitch and Carl (2021:4) further emphasise “that a qualitative research approach involves systematic and contextualised research processes to interpret the ways that humans view, approach, and make meaning of their experiences, contexts, and the world”.

Following a qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to use more than one method of data collection, namely interviews and documents such as minutes of SDC and SGB meetings and records of learner misconduct. The use of interviews allowed the researcher to probe participants’ answers to questions posed; in doing so the researcher obtained a deeper meaning and understanding of the problem under study. This ensured that

the issue was not explored through one lens but, rather, through a variety of lenses which allowed for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood (Maree, 2016:83).

The researcher did not only analyse minutes and records of learner misconduct but also sought further clarification on them to get a deeper understanding of collaboration between the SDC and the SGB in dealing with specific cases of ill-discipline. Qualitative research is not concerned with numerical representativity but with a deepened understanding of a given problem (Queirós *et al.*, 2017:370),

In this study, the researcher's aim was to understand the purpose of the SGB and the SDC, their functions in relation to disciplinary processes, their structures and the nature of their collaboration in the management of discipline from their own perspective.

4.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is defined by Saldaña and Omasta (2017:143) as “a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations shared by members of a research community.” Maree (2016:52) further explains a paradigm as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world view – it addresses fundamental assumptions taken on faith, such as beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between knower and known (epistemology) and assumptions about methodologies. This study is underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm.

4.3.1 Interpretivist paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm is an approach that seeks to understand people's lived experiences from their own perspective. The interpretivist paradigm further emphasises that humans are the primary instruments in such a study (Ravitch & Carl, 2021:5).

This research focused on understanding participants' views of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards the discipline of learners from their own point of view. Hence, there were interactions between the researcher and participants through interviewing them to get a deeper apprehension of collaborative relationships between SDC and SGB regarding discipline at each selected school. It further considered participants' subjective view and meaning of their own life and experience. In using the interpretivism paradigm in this study, the researcher set aside personal biases and suspended personal judgement. The researcher had to guard against participants not influencing each other's views or responses during the

interviews. That was why the researcher opted for individual interview sessions with participants rather than a focus group where participants might rely on each other's opinions or views which would bias the findings (Maree, 2016: 61).

This paradigm considers what participants say about the collaboration between SGB and SDC in improving learner discipline as a product of how they define their world, which is highly important, as it forms the initial point of understanding. The researcher also studied articles, texts, previous studies on related topics and documents associated with learner discipline, including those that were made available at the research sites. This was done to interrogate the texts to find the manner (the "way") in which the participants make meaning of their lives (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017:143).

An interpretivist paradigm was used to inform the study and provided the researcher with a platform to experience and gather data at first hand from and with participants about their own world rather than in a controlled lab experiment like a quantitative study which allows limited interaction between the researcher and participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:5).

In this study, the interpretivist paradigm was further utilised for its potential to grasp participants' points of view, meanings and experiences about how the SGB and SDC collaborate in terms of structure and activities in curbing ill-discipline of learners at the schools under study. The paradigm was further used for its flexibility, as it gave the researcher the ability to find and understand meanings of different people about one common entity as there are multiple, situated truths and perspectives of reality, rather than a single truth (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:5).

4.4 Research design: Case study

A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data (Rossman & Rallis, 2017:92). It outlines the way data will be collected to answer research questions in a study. A case study refers to an inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon such as a case set within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear (Maree, 2016:81). Moreover, a case could be an individual person, group, organisation, episode, an event, town, or city that a researcher would like to know more about. A case study typically relies on a variety of techniques for gathering data to obtain multiple perspectives and is conducted over time (Rossman & Rallis, 2017:92).

This study employed a multiple case study to understand the similarities and differences between the cases and to ensure that evidence generated, and the information collected were

strong and reliable in their representativeness (Gustafsson, 2017:9; Maphoke, 2017:65). The focus in this study was on the collaboration between the secondary school SGB and SDC towards improving discipline of learners at three selected secondary schools in North West.

The researcher purposefully selected more than one school for the study, as she believed that there were multiple realities, and that these realities were best discovered through understanding each participant in their own settings and through the way they construct meaning based on their own differing experiences. In selection three secondary schools, the researcher had the opportunity to explore similarities and differences between the cases, as stated above. According to Rossman and Rallis (2017:92), “one case study may, by analogy, shed light on or offer insights about similar cases”.

According to Mariano (cited by Maree, 2016:82), the purposes of case study research may be exploratory, descriptive, interpretive or explanatory. The purpose of this study was exploratory as it focused on investigating and understanding the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline at three selected secondary schools. In exploring the collaboration of the SGB and SDC, the researcher looked at multiple cases of discipline within each setting and across settings.

The case study approach was further utilised to analyse the effectiveness of SGB–SDC collaboration in managing discipline with the aim of yielding valuable results that would be important to other schools. Another benefit was that it allowed for a closer working relationship between participants and the researcher, and enabled participants to share their stories and experiences of their world more freely while being interviewed in their own environment. A further benefit was that it allowed for investigating the broad problem of managing discipline within controlled and focused school environments that would hopefully yield rich and valuable data for this study (Rossman & Rallis, 2017:91).

4.5 Population and sampling

A study population refers to a group of people or individuals who are particularly knowledgeable about what the researcher seeks to explore and learn about (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:83).

A sample is a group of subjects or participants from whom data is collected for the study. A sample is found within the population. Sampling is identifying or selecting the person or a group of people who will contribute (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:85).

In this study, the population were SGB and SDC members of secondary schools in the North West. Three secondary schools were selected in Borobalo Township, a small township situated in the Dr Kenneth Kaunda District Municipality. These schools were selected because they were based in a township where school discipline had been reported to be a challenge. A sample of SGB and SDC members from these three secondary schools was purposefully selected.

These schools were purposefully selected because they were in the same township where the researcher worked which reduced the travelling costs for interactions and for interviews with participants in their own natural settings (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:87). These schools were also selected because of the researcher's concern about the state of ill-discipline in township schools as reported in the media and other studies conducted on learner discipline.

Secondary schools were also selected because of the reported lack of parental support experienced by educators at secondary school level which might have an important effect on the discipline and the performance of learners at this level. One other reason for the selection of and the focus on secondary schools, was because at secondary school level learners are members of the SGB and should therefore work collaboratively with both the SGB and the SDC in dealing with and managing learner ill-discipline; most importantly, they are required to play a role in the development and implementation of the learner code of conduct.

4.5.1 Sampling technique

Sampling refers to the parameters and procedures used for selecting the respondents or participants for a study (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:160).

In this study, participants were selected through purposive sampling, which meant that participants with certain characteristics that were appropriate for the study were selected. These were supposed to be people who would be informative about or representative as regards the topic of interest (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:160). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where the researcher selects participants based on her own judgement of them. This type of sampling is used where the researcher has a specific purpose or idea in mind (Maree, 2016: 85).

Samples of qualitative studies are inclined to be small to support the depth of case-oriented analysis that is fundamental to this mode of inquiry. This was why participants were sampled because of their capacity to provide rich information on the topic in question unlike in random sampling. The sample size decision was guided by the idea that qualitative sample sizes must be large enough to allow for the unfolding of a "new and richly textured understanding" of the

phenomenon under study but small enough for “deep, case-oriented analysis” (Vasileiou *et al.*, 2018:183).

In this research, not all members of the SGB, the SDC and the entire school community were sampled to be part of the study. As much as all stakeholders needed to work in collaboration in dealing with ill-discipline, it was necessary that this research comprised a small enough sample size of participants who were to provide deep and much-needed information for this study on ill-discipline.

Participants for this study comprised school principals, SGB and SDC educators and parent members. These participants were involved in the study because they fitted the inclusion criteria for this study and could provide valuable information on learner ill-discipline and the collaboration between SGB and SDC. The school principals were part of the research as managers at the schools and because of their responsibility to assist the SGB and all its subcommittees in the performing their core duties. The principals were also part of the study in their capacity as members of the DOE representing the HOD (Maree, 2016:238).

The SGB chairpersons, were purposefully selected in their membership capacity as governors of the schools tasked with the responsibility of dealing with discipline and related matters, such as the code of conduct. They were chosen because of their role as members of the school community who had the responsibility to work collaboratively with all stakeholders (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:86).

Furthermore, four educator members of the SGB and SDC from each of the schools were sampled to be part of the study, which made it a total of 12 educator members, most from the SGB and some from the SDC. Out of the number of educator participants, one was also a departmental head at one of the secondary schools which made her a member of the SMT that worked closely with the principal in school management. These participants were involved in the study because they were believed to have a thorough knowledge of learner ill-discipline as they were dealing with ill-discipline daily as educators.

Thus, seven participants were selected from each school which made it a total of 21 members who participated in the study. However, the number was reduced to 15 as will be explained later in the research report.

The selected schools were given the code names of Ketsahalo, Mokokoane, and Tau to protect the identity of the schools and of the participants, and to ensure confidentiality. The names were that of male figures who made a significant impact on the researcher’s upbringing

and life in general: Ketsahalo being the researcher's deceased father, and Mokokoane and Tau being the researcher's two deceased paternal uncles.

Table 4.1 presents the number of participants per school based on designation, gender and their participation in the SGB and SDC. *As reflected in the table, the initial number of participants was 21, with seven participants per selected school.*

Table 4-1: The initial number of participants from each of the selected schools

Name of school	Participants per school	Designation	Gender	Participation
1. Ketsahalo	7	Principal	Female	Represents the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in the SGB and all subcommittees and other structures
		Educator	Male	SDC/SGB
		Educator	Female	SGB
		Educator	Male	SDC
		SGB Chairperson/ Parent	Male	SGB
		Educator	Male	SGB/SDC
		Parent governor	Male	SGB
2. Tau	7	Principal	Female	Represents the DBE in the SGB and all subcommittees and other structures
		Educator–HOD	Female	SDC/SGB
		SGB Chairperson/ Parent	Male	SGB
		Educator	Male	SGB/SDC
		Educator	Male	SDC
		Educator	Female	SDC
		Parent	Female	SGB
3. Mokokoane	7	Principal	Female	Represents the DBE in the SGB and all subcommittees and other structures
		Educator	Female	SGB
		Educator	Male	SGB/SDC
		Educator	Male	SDC
		Educator	Male	SDC
		SGB Chairperson/ Parent	Male	SGB
		Parent governor	Male	SGB
Total = 21				

As reflected in Table 4.2 below, there was a reduction in the sample size due to factors which will be explained in Chapter 5 of this study.

Table 4-2 The actual number of participants from each of the selected schools that took part in the study

Name of school	Participants per school	Designation	Gender	Participation
1. Ketsahalo	5	Principal	Female	Represents the DBE in the SGB and all subcommittees and other structures
		Educator	Male	SDC/SGB
		Educator	Female	SGB
		Educator	Male	SDC
		Educator	Male	SGB/SDC
2. Tau	5	Principal	Female	Represents the DBE in the SGB and all subcommittees and other structures
		HOD	Female	SDC/SGB
		Educator	Male	SGB/SDC
		Educator	Male	SDC
		Educator	Male	SDC
3. Mokokoane	5	Principal	Female	Represents the DBE in the SGB and all subcommittees and other structures
		Educator	Female	SGB
		Educator	Male	SDC/SGB
		Educator	Male	SDC
		Educator	Male	SGB
Total = 15 (reduced from 21)				

Table 4-3 Motivations for the selection of each participant in the study

Population	Motivation
1. Principals	Chosen because of their capacity as managers of schools and ex-officio members representing the HOD in the SGB.
2. SDC members	Educators represent the educators' component and provide valuable information as they deal with learners and discipline in the classroom and as they are also part of the committee that deals with discipline at the school.
3. SGB members	Part of the study because of the knowledge they possess in dealing with discipline and educational matters, their first-hand experience of dealing with learners in the classroom and being part of school governance.
4. Parents	SGB chairpersons: selected because of their membership as governors at the school tasked with the responsibility of dealing with learner discipline and discipline related policies such as the code of conduct for learners; and their duty as members of the school community representing the parent component who is responsible to work collaboratively with all stakeholders.

4.6 Research instruments

According to Ravitch and Carl (2020:130), “research instruments are the tools that you use to collect the study data”. A research instrument is a tool for collecting data to answer the research question. This section focuses on the process that was followed in ensuring that relevant information was collected using various research instruments. Qualitative data was gathered using interviews which were recorded using a field journal and audio recorder. Document analysis was also made use of in gathering data for the study. These methods were used to provide valuable data on the collaboration between the secondary school SGB and SDC towards improving discipline at the three selected secondary schools in the North West.

4.6.1 Interviews

An interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer uses questions to collect data from participants and to learn about their ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviour (Maree, 2016:92). “The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on specific matters” (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017:93)

The aim of using interviews was to allow participants the opportunity to use words to construct their own meaning about the nature and approach of collaboration between the SGB and SDC

and at the same time grant the researcher the opportunity to understand, hear or see things from participants' points of view. Interviews were used to allow for personal interaction between the researcher and participants. Through interviews, the researcher was able to get immediate responses from participants and they, in turn, were able to ask for clarity when they did not understand some of the questions posed to them during the interviews. This further allowed for a clear understanding of interviewees' meanings and their interpretations of their situation as the researcher was able to ask clarifying questions when needed. Probing of responses given by participants was easily done by the researcher during the interviews (Maree, 2016:92).

Multiple in-depth interviews were conducted with individual participants to collect data for the study. Such types of interviews were spontaneous and organised in the form of a normal conversation but with the purpose of gathering valuable information. The interview questions were unstructured to allow for the spontaneous flow of information, since the researcher's questions were guided by how participants responded. Unstructured interviews were used because of the freedom and flexibility they provided to the researcher (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017:92).

Probing questions were asked with the intention of exploring the ideas, perceptions, and beliefs of participants, in particular, regarding collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline.

4.6.1.1 Recording interview data

Audio recordings were made during the interviews to ensure minimal disruption for the researcher and the participants. This was done with the knowledge and consent of participants. Used together with a field journal, the recordings helped in reflecting on what took place during the interviews and further assisted the researcher to identify questions that needed to be asked during follow-up interviews or that needed clarification or further probing (Maree, 2016:94).

Note-taking was for jotting down facts for follow-up questions. A field journal was used by the researcher for keeping record of her impressions and experiences shared by participants, and for consolidating information gathered during the interviews. This helped the researcher in her analysis of data and its presentation. The notes further assisted the researcher to triangulate the data gathered (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017:38).

Triangulation was done by cross validating the two methods of data collection to find similarities and differences between the data collected through interviews and document analyses. The researcher compared data collected from minutes of meetings, disciplinary hearings, codes of conduct and participant interviews. The researcher also compared similar incidents of learner ill-discipline within a school and across schools to compare whether the incidents were dealt with in the same manner, namely, whether similar processes and procedures were followed and whether the same patterns in incidents of learner ill-discipline were recurring. The approaches, processes, and strategies of each SGB–SDC collaboration within a school and across schools were also compared.

4.6.2 Document analysis

Document analysis refers to written communication which the researcher carefully examined to obtain information that could be useful and could shed light on the research topic. It usually provides data that is rich, permanent and that may be used over and over for the purpose of analysis (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017:74). This method of data collection was put into operation in this study for the rich base of reference that it might provide on educational policies, procedures and laws that governed discipline and the improvement thereof. The method also provided information on the collaborative efforts between the SGB and SDC.

The study relied on textual data such as minutes of meetings held by the SGB and the SDC, minutes of learners' disciplinary hearings, communiques inviting parents to appear before a disciplinary hearing, and schools' code of conduct. The minutes of SGB and SDC meetings and disciplinary hearings were analysed for the purpose of understanding the nature and approaches of the SGB and SDC in dealing with discipline of learners at the schools. The minutes of the meetings further allowed the researcher to understand the processes which were followed and strategies which were applied by the SGB and the SDC in dealing with discipline of learners. Due to the sensitivity of the aforementioned documents, permission was requested and given for the researcher to analyse the documents on-site and under supervision of the school principal.

4.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is the intentional, systematic scrutiny of data at various stages and moments throughout the research process (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:234). Maree (2016:109) explains that qualitative data analysis is used by a researcher to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences to approximate their construction of phenomena.

According to Maree (2016:109), this is best achieved through a process of inductive analysis with the main purpose to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data without the restraints imposed by a more structured theoretical orientation. Inductive analysis was used by the researcher to make meaning from the data collected by starting with specific data and ending with categories, themes, and sub-themes.

The inductive analysis process included the organisation of data by breaking it into smaller practical portions, transcribing data, coding data, describing data, categorising data to provide meaning, and developing patterns from the prepared data (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:235).

Continual double-checking was done by the researcher to ensure that the analysis and interpretation of collected data remained a true reflection of what participants communicated in the study (Maree, 2016: 109).

The researcher listened several times to the audio recordings of interviews to get a clear understanding of participants' interpretation of how the SGB and SDC dealt with and worked towards improving discipline. This was followed by transcribing the data collected, and then reading the transcripts to ensure that they were a true reflection of what participants shared about the collaboration between the SGB and the SDC. A follow-up session was done with participants after each interview session for the researcher to fill gaps in answers to questions.

Before each follow-up interview session, the researcher would go through the data collected during the last interview session with each participant. This was done to ensure that the data recorded by the researcher was a true reflection of the data participants communicated. Then the researcher read the transcripts of the previous interview to participants for them to verify that they were not misunderstood or misquoted in any way. This also afforded the researcher the opportunity to seek clarity where necessary. The main aim in data analysis was for the researcher to interpret and make sense of what was in the data using creativity, discipline, and a systematic approach (Maree, 2016:111).

4.8 Preparation of data

This is an important stage in the process of data analysis. Saldaña and Omasta (2021:190) explain that it is the process researchers undertake after consolidation of all preparatory matters, field work, and data collection. The researcher must ensure careful recording and collection of data for later use and checking of data to be able to locate information if and when needed.

In a qualitative research approach, data collection and analysis are interactive, ongoing processes. It is important that the researcher can trace provisional results of the analysis back to the original context for the data. To achieve these goals, several vital steps were followed in the preparation of data analysis, such as a description of the participants based on their gender, age, and educational background, and an in-depth discussion of the context in which the study was done.

Of the 15 participants, six were women and nine were men. All principals from the selected schools (Ketsahalo, Mokokoane and Tau) were women. The researcher made use of pseudonyms to ascertain that the identities of all those who participated in the study were protected. Each of the sampled members were trusted to have insight regarding the topic at hand and each provided information that was valuable to the study.

The second step was the organisation of the data. The researcher had a system in place that helped in identifying the data. She kept the different data sets (field notes, observation data, interview data) separate and marked each bit of data clearly in terms of its identifying characteristics such as where, how and why it was collected (Saldaña & Omasta, 2021:191).

The third stage in preparation of data was transcribing all the data collected to construct the meaning behind each non-verbal and verbal communication during interviews. According to Maree (2016:115), audio recordings must be transcribed verbatim, namely, written down word for word.

In the preparation of data, the researcher had to make sure that she “got to know her data” which meant familiarising herself with the data by reading, proofreading and listening to recorded data several times to ensure that valuable data was captured and that it was a true reflection of what participants communicated during interview sessions (Maree, 2016:115).

4.9 Ethical considerations

The necessary ethical clearance (NWU-01277-20-A2) was obtained (Appendix A) before starting the process of data collection. The ethical clearance certificate was shown at schools together with letters seeking permission from the circuit manager for the study to be undertaken at three secondary schools. The circuit manager authorised and supported the study. The circuit manager furnished the researcher with a permission letter that she had to show to each principal on her first visit to the schools to secure an appointment for the study.

The principals were briefed on the main aim of the study. The researcher was then referred by the principals to each member of the SGB and the SDC for a one-on-one briefing between

the researcher and the referred members on the purpose of the study. Participants were asked to sign consent forms (Appendix B), personally agreeing to be part of the study.

A permission letter written to schools by the circuit manager (Appendix C), indemnity forms (Appendix D) and confidentiality forms (Appendix E) were issued to school principals to further distribute to all participants selected for the study. Each of the forms was also explained to each participant during their first encounter with the researcher. The purpose of the letters was to explain to them why they were selected to participate in the study, make them aware of their rights, and to clarify that no penalty would be exercised for declining to participate or withdrawing from the study.

Maree (2016:44) highlights the ethical considerations that are essential, such as the protection of participants' identities, letters of consent, obtaining permission to be interviewed, and undertaking to destroy audiotapes after completion of the study. These aspects were observed in the study.

4.10 Trustworthiness of the findings of the study

Careful consideration was given to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as criteria of trustworthiness (Maree, 2016:123).

The researcher gave credit to every author of all documents which were used in finding valuable and relevant data for the study. This was done through referencing each person's work and mentioning every person whose work was used in the research. The researcher used correct and appropriate research methods, instruments, and questions; interacted continually with her supervisor; and followed feedback notes and comments to guide the research. The researcher further used theoretical underpinning that was aligned with the main research question and sub-questions. Regular debriefing was done with participants, whereby at the beginning of each interview session the researcher would communicate her understanding or interpretation of the data collected and would ask or give the participants the opportunity to verify whether what was recorded was a true reflection of what they had initially communicated.

According to Lincoln and Guba (cited by Maree, 2016:123), *credibility* is enhanced through the development of an early familiarity with participants and participating organisations, but also through well-defined, purposive sampling, detailed data-collection methods and triangulation. In further ensuring credibility of this study, the researcher met with each participant in person, briefed each one of them regarding the purpose of the research and the

significance of their participation. All participants were aware of what was expected of them from the beginning of the study, and no one was coerced in any way.

Participants were purposefully chosen due to their membership of the SGB and the SDC, as that meant that they would be able to provide the necessary information about the collaboration of the SGB and SDC in dealing with learner discipline. The methods of data collection were carefully selected for the specific purpose of this study. Interviews were selected because they allowed the researcher the opportunity to ask participants to verify the researcher's interpretations of their shared information. Lastly, regular discussion and feedback sessions between the researcher and the supervisor helped ensure the credibility of the study.

The researcher made available the result of the research to participants to check for omitted facts, errors or misinterpretation of their words and meanings. This was done after the researcher had consolidated the data from the interviews (Maree, 2016:123).

Dependability refers to the stability of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2020:171). For a study to be "dependable" or to be "reliable", credibility first must be ensured from the beginning of the research. This relates back to selection of the right research approach, main research question, methods of data collection and, most importantly, the research design to be used in the study and its implementation (Maree, 2016:124). For the study to be dependable, the researcher was open to the possibility of incorporating other methods of data collection to accommodate new and valuable data that may be discovered in the process of the study to strengthen it. Hence the use of interviews and document analysis in this study.

It was also important for the researcher to keep a record of decisions made during the research process while gathering and analysing data and making observations. According to Maree (2016:124), the analysis process should be documented so that another person can see the decisions that the researcher made, how the researcher went about the analysis and how the researcher arrived at the interpretations.

A record of all the decisions and changes made during the study regarding data collection and the analysis process was kept in the researcher's journal. The categories, themes and sub-themes that emerged and evolved as the study progressed were also kept and recorded in the researcher's journal for revision purposes. In this study, the researcher ensured dependability by making sure that at the end of each field work with participants, the researcher reviewed all the collected data, recordings, document analysis and field notes. This was followed by verification of data with participants, whereby at the beginning of each follow-

up session with participants the researcher would communicate her understanding and version of the data collected from the previous sessions, so that participants could confirm whether the data was a true reflection of what took place and was communicated during interviews.

In reviewing the data gathered, the researcher's aim was to make sense of all the data, looking at similar or differing patterns that might have occurred from all three selected schools' discipline related documents, audio recordings, and from face-to-face interactions with participants.

4.11 Summary

This chapter explained how the data was gathered and analysed through a qualitative research approach. It also focused on the ethical considerations, trustworthiness and measures taken to guarantee confidentiality, privacy, protection of schools and participants, and the data they provided.

The following chapter will present the findings of the study by reporting on data gathered through interviews with participants and from analyses of documents interrogated at research sites.

CHAPTER FIVE: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter outlined the research design and methodology used in this study. This chapter will be on the presentation, analysis, findings, and discussions of the data gathered through the interviews with participants and analyses of documents, such as learner code of conduct, minutes of the meetings pertaining to the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in ensuring learner discipline at the selected schools and any other related documents used at those schools. This also includes records of disciplinary hearings that took place at each of the schools being studied.

5.2 Challenges encountered in the collection of data

The initial number of participants was reduced because of various challenges that were encountered. Some participants changed their minds about participation. They withdrew from the study for varying reasons: some refused to grant the researcher time for the interviews; others said they had no knowledge about or awareness of any collaboration between the SGB and SDC and, therefore, did not want to participate; and some resigned from the SGB before their term ended and were never replaced.

Initially, participants from each of the schools were supposed to consist of a principal, two SDC educator members, two SGB educator members, SGB chairperson, and one additional SGB parent member. This came to seven participants per selected school and a total of 21 participants altogether. However, the sample size was reduced to 15 participants due to the above-mentioned challenges that were beyond the researcher's control.

Securing appointments with the parent member component was also never an easy task because unlike educators, parent members were not always at the sites, with some working far away from the sites or working long hours at their respective places of employment. As a result of this, the number of parent governors had to be reduced to three focusing only on parent members who were also chairpersons of SGBs.

The data collection stage was planned to start during April 2020. This, unfortunately, coincided with the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and the national lockdown with closure of schools. Most educators, including the researcher, went back home during the school recess. Data collection had to be suspended until the re-opening of schools in July 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic, as well as its consequences, was one of the main reasons that led to the reduction in sample size. Because of the loss of time, the initial number of 21 participants

became too large a number for face-to-face sessions in the time remaining for data collection. Initial interview sessions with follow-up sessions and data checking and verification in between needed a lot of time. Participants and the researcher also needed time to adapt to the challenges of the post-Covid-19 lockdown period.

When the researcher asked participants for assistance in providing and sharing information for the study, she was often passed from one educator to another. Some participants were at first reluctant to participate as they feared that the research was an investigation and that the information given by them would be used by the DOE, despite constant assurance by the researcher that it was not a monitoring tool of the DOE. This was another reason for reducing the sample size.

Some participants were seemingly not comfortable to be interviewed and questioned about the way they dealt with learner discipline, specifically ill-discipline at their respective schools, in the fear of being judged on their effectiveness and their knowledge of or adherence to the policies and procedures in dealing with ill-discipline and improving discipline.

Principals and educators were often complaining of being occupied with work or being held up in meetings and that they therefore did not have time to spare for interviews. This resulted in appointments being rescheduled at the last minute, often on the researcher's arrival at the site.

However, despite all the time lost pleading with participants for their time, the researcher slowly managed to secure appointments with them during different days and times that were convenient for each one of them, which meant that data collection took longer than planned. Some follow-up sessions had to be done using WhatsApp voice recordings.

5.3 Actual sample size

The sample size was reduced to a total of 15 participants with expert knowledge and extensive experience of ill-discipline and related policies and documents. The reduction in the sample size did not compromise the quality of the study as the research design allowed the researcher to continue asking questions until the data collected reached saturation.

5.4 Dependability and credibility of the data collected

Even though there was a reduction in sample size, enough data was collected to ascertain that the quality was not compromised. Participants appeared knowledgeable about matters pertaining to learner ill-discipline and policies involved. Many participants had worked for the DOE for a long time and accumulated much experience in ill-discipline that was valuable for

this research. Some had served in this committee for a longer period than usual and were still continuing with their responsibilities as members of the SGB and the SDC.

The researcher had several follow-up sessions with each of the participants for clarity and verification purposes. A record of each of the interviews was kept and the researcher went through each recording and all field notes to verify what was recorded and written in the researcher's journal.

5.5 Presentation of data

The main aim of the research was to examine the collaboration between the secondary school governing bodies and disciplinary committees on improving learner discipline and how their collaboration can be used to improve learner discipline in these schools.

Based on the main aim of the study, the objectives were to:

1. Analyse the collaborative approach between SGBs and SDCs towards improving learner discipline;
2. Explore the depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline;
3. Determine the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline; and
4. Suggest ways of improving the collaborations between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline.

Table 5.1, below, presents the data gathered from interviews with participants based on the study objectives. The data is organised and divided into several main components, such as main objectives of the study, categories, themes, and sub-themes with quotes from the researcher's encounter with participants.

Regarding the first objective, its category, and its theme, the SGB and the SDC in their collaboration made use of multiple approaches, some of which were mandatory and some of which were extra commitments from their side when dealing with and managing discipline at the schools. The following sub-themes emerged as mandated approaches: collaborative engagement in the development and implementation of the code of conduct, meetings on discipline, use of disciplinary hearing and referrals, keeping of records of learners' misconduct and reports to stakeholders. In relation to sub-theme 2 (extra commitment by the SGB and SDC), the following sub-themes emerged: grade/phase meetings on discipline and internal mentoring and development of members.

For objective 2, the following categories emerged: the depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC, and varying degrees of collaboration ranging from lack of collaboration to inconsistent collaboration to strong collaboration. The following sub-themes emerged: In relation to strong collaboration, two sub-themes: collaboration with other government departments and collaboration with other school committees (e.g., the School Based Support Team). In relation to lack of collaboration, the sub-theme irregularity in training and mentorship emerged; and for inconsistent collaboration, the sub-theme of inconsistent collaborative efforts by stakeholders emerged.

In relation to objective 3, theme 1 surfaced as moderately effective collaboration and in relation to this theme, the following sub-themes emerged: sub-theme 1 as collaborative efforts of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline and the impact of external collaboration on discipline. Theme 2 under the same objective and category emerged as moderately ineffective collaboration with the following sub-themes: lack of active involvement impacting on the efforts of SGB and SDC, and the limited and inconsistent role of the SGB and SDC collaboration on discipline.

The first three objectives impacted significantly on the fourth objective of suggesting ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline. The results suggested that there was a need for ongoing departmental workshops and training on discipline and the disciplinary policy for learners, monitoring of the effectiveness of collaboration, implementation of the code of conduct at schools, and collaboration between primary and secondary schools to improve discipline.

Table 5-4 Presentation of data gathered from interviews with participants

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-Themes	Quotes
<p>Objective 1: Analyse the collaborative between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline</p>	<p>The collaborative approach between SGB and SDC in improving learner discipline</p>	<p>Use of multiple approaches Mandated approaches</p>	<p>Collaborative engagement in developing and implementing the code of conduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of collaborative engagement in the development and implementation of the code of conduct ● Lack of knowledge to participate in the development and implementation of the code of conduct ● Lack of interest by parents to participate in the development of the code of conduct 	<p><i>“Parents are called at the beginning of the year to discuss the content of the code of conduct but majority of them never come to such meetings.”</i></p> <p><i>“Parents do not have knowledge because they do not want to attend meetings when they are called, or they do not want to engage.”</i></p> <p><i>“They are not interested because they believe that discipline is the school’s responsibility not theirs.”</i></p>
			<p>Meetings on discipline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Irregularities in meetings between SGB and SDC ● Annual meetings with learners/parents 	<p><i>“The SGB and SDC are mandated to meet for disciplinary hearing cases.”</i></p> <p><i>“Meetings between the two structures are mainly conducted if and only when there is a need, in this case to discuss a serious misconduct that may have taken place at the school.”</i></p> <p><i>“At the beginning of each year, learners and parents are invited to a meeting whereby they are made aware of the existence and the importance of the code of conduct and their role in its development and implementation.”</i></p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of disciplinary hearings and referrals 	<p><i>“SGB with the SDC refer the learner’s case to the Head of Department who will further look into the case and take necessary steps.”</i></p>

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-Themes	Quotes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keeping and sharing records of misconduct 	<p><i>“Record of learner ill-discipline plays a major role at disciplinary hearing to make sure a corrective measure is taken, or a learner is sanctioned accordingly.”</i></p>
		Extra commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade/phase meetings on discipline ● Internal mentoring and development of members 	<p><i>“SGB and the SDC together with educators organise meetings with parents/learners on the status of discipline per grade/phase.”</i></p> <p><i>“We as the school principals are often left with the burden of mentoring members because of the lack of training by our department.”</i></p>
Objective 2: Explore the depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline	The depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC in improving discipline	Varying degrees of collaboration ranging from no collaboration to inconsistent collaboration to strong collaboration	Strong collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration with other government departments ● Collaboration with other school committees (e.g., School Based Support Team [SBST]) 	<p><i>“Our resident social worker and police (ADOPT-A-COP) are always invited at our school during disciplinary hearings with learners and parents present, as well parent–learner meetings.”</i></p> <p><i>“SBST, is a school-based committee that has been working and helping deal specifically with learners projecting problematic behaviour at school.”</i></p>
			No collaboration on training and mentorship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Irregularity in training and mentorship 	<p><i>“Our department’s focus when it comes to training is mostly on financial management and personnel recruitment, while issues like learner discipline are totally ignored until something serious happens at a school and the SGB, untrained as it may be, is expected to procedurally try cases.”</i></p>

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-Themes	Quotes
			Inconsistent collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent collaborative efforts from stakeholders 	<p><i>"Not all educators are using the code of conduct in disciplining learners. The code of conduct seems to be used when they are forced to..."</i></p>
Objective 3: Determine the effectiveness of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC	The effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC	Moderately effective collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative efforts of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline The impact of external collaboration on discipline 	<p><i>"The collaboration between the SDC and SGB in the context of our school is tolerable (obtaining 2 on a scale of 1-5) in the sense that it's not all SGB and SDC members who often display the kind of initiative to involve themselves actively in the disciplinary issues of the school..."</i></p> <p><i>"The impact has been positive in the sense that discipline in our school no longer becomes the burden of those involved inside the school only, but it now becomes a community matter."</i></p>
		Moderately ineffective collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of active involvement impacting on the efforts of the SGB and SDC The limited and inconsistent role of the SGB and SDC collaboration on discipline 	<p><i>"Lack of involvement by educators is due to the many responsibilities and the administrative work they are faced with daily."</i></p> <p><i>"The SGB and SDC have restricted roles as they're expected to only deal with serious acts of misconduct."</i></p>
Objective 4: Suggest ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC	Ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC	Multiple approaches Internal and external efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal efforts Ongoing departmental workshops and training on discipline and code of conduct 	<p><i>"We need proper training and development on issues pertaining to learner ill-discipline."</i></p>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular monitoring on the collaboration and implementation of the code of conduct at schools 	<p><i>"It was back in 2008, when Mr... [former principal], was still in position, we had Whole School Evaluation done here at the school."</i></p>

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-Themes	Quotes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration of primary and secondary schools on discipline 	<p><i>“Our colleagues leave the burden on us; learner discipline is perceived to be an issue to be dealt with only by us at secondary schools.”</i></p>
			<p>External efforts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consistent use and adherence to the code of conduct by all always 	<p><i>“We must all use the code of conduct in our daily interactions with learners”.</i></p>

Table 5.2, below, presents the data gathered from documents that were analysed by the researcher at each of the research sites. The data is presented according to main objectives, categories, emerging themes, and sub-themes. The table gives an outline of the suggested ways of improving discipline in reference to documents that were analysed. The researcher discovered that the sub-themes under each of the themes might be among the suggested ways of improving collaboration of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline.

Based on the results of the data from the document analysis, presented below, it may be construed that there are ways that the SGB and SDC can further improve their collaboration in improving discipline. From these results, the researcher developed an impression that there was a need for extended collaboration of all committees within schools towards improving discipline, for a continual collaborative assessment and update of the learner disciplinary policy, and for SGB and SDC involvement and collaboration at all levels of offences. There is also a need for external efforts and support, such as ongoing monitoring of the functionality of the SGB and SDC by the DOE, developmental training on discipline, and productive and convenient channels of communication for parents on discipline related issues.

Table 5-5 Data gathered from document analysis

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-themes
<p>Objective 1: Analyse the collaborative approach between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline</p>	<p>The collaborative approach between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline</p>	<p>Use of multiple approaches</p> <p>Mandated</p>	<p>The use of documents and strategies to improve discipline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Daily records of learner misconducts</i> ● <i>Contracts with learners</i> ● <i>Commitment agreements by learners and parents</i>
			<p>Correspondence with parents for repeated transgressive behaviour by learners</p>
			<p>Disciplinary hearing meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Correspondence letters for disciplinary hearings</i> ● <i>Referral letters to SGB and SDC</i>
			<p>Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>SGB and SDC meetings for disciplinary hearings</i>
		<p>Extra commitment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Regular grade and phase meetings with parents and learners on discipline</i>

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-themes
<p>Objective 2:</p> <p>Explore the depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline</p>	<p>The depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC in improving discipline</p>	<p>Varying degrees of collaboration</p> <p>Lack of collaboration</p> <p>Inconsistent collaboration</p> <p>Strong collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No evidence of training for SGB and SDC members by the DOE on discipline ● Lack of attendance of meetings by parents, educators, and members of the SGB and SDC ● Inconsistent collaborative efforts in the implementation of documents and policies on discipline ● Extended collaboration with other committees ● School Assessment and Irregularity Committee (SAIC) ● Extended collaboration with other government departments
<p>Objective 3:</p> <p>Determine the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline</p>	<p>The effectiveness of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline</p>	<p>Effectiveness</p> <p>Effective in relation to developing policies</p> <p>Ineffective in terms of implementation of the policies and monitoring of the SGB and SDC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability of school code of conduct ● Availability of minutes of general meetings on discipline <p>Code of conduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Code of conduct not updated ● Non-uniformity in the implementation of disciplinary documents at schools <p>Minutes of meetings</p> <p>Lack of evidence of minutes of SGB and SDC meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ineffective monitoring of SGB and SDC functionality

Objectives	Categories	Themes	Sub-themes
Objective 4: Suggest ways of improving the collaboration between the SGB and SDC towards improving discipline	Ways of improving the collaboration of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline	Multiple approaches: Internal efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extended collaboration with all committees in improving discipline ● Continuous collaborative assessment and update of the code of conduct ● SGB and SDC involvement and collaboration at all levels of offences
		External efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing monitoring of the functionality of the SGB and SDC ● Developmental training on discipline ● Productive and convenient channels of communication with parents

5.6 Findings and discussion of data collected during interviews

5.6.1 Objective 1: Analyse the collaborative approach between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline

5.6.1.1 The collaborative approach between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline

The themes and sub-themes emerging from objective 1 and the category on the collaborative approach between SGB and SDC in improving school discipline will be discussed below. The data suggested that schools applied multiple approaches in the collaboration. Some were mandated, and others were based on extra commitments made by the structures in improving school discipline. The mandated approaches were those that the SGB and SDC applied in their collaboration based on a policy directive whereas the extra commitments were efforts of SGB and SDC of particular schools going the extra mile to improve school discipline. Some of these actions were not mandatory.

The sub-themes that emerged under the mandatory approach (main theme 1) included collaborative engagement in developing and implementing the code of conduct, meetings on discipline, use of disciplinary hearing and referrals, and keeping and sharing records of misconduct. As for approaches based on the SGB and SDC making an extra commitment (main theme 2), the following sub-themes emerged of grade/phase meetings on discipline and internal mentoring and development of members.

Use of multiple approaches (mandated approaches)

Collaborative engagement in developing and implementing the code of conduct

Lack of collaborative engagement in developing and implementing the code of conduct

One of the approaches to SGB and SDC collaboration was their collaborative engagement in the development of the learner code of conduct. However, these sessions (for the development of the disciplinary policy) were not always effective. All members of the school community were required to be actively involved in the development of the code of conduct. Based on reports by participants, there were meetings with parents, learners, and educators to discuss the content of the code of conduct. More meetings were held after the development and adoption of the code of conduct.

The meetings were more about familiarising learners, parents, and educators with the content. Few meetings were about the process of development or the assessment of the code of conduct for learners. This could be one of the reasons why there was a lack of engagement in implementing the code of conduct. The extent to which the implementation will succeed was dependent on the level of engagement of the different stakeholders, such as parents, educators, and learners (Dhlamini,2016:483).

All stakeholders were required to be involved in the development of the code of conduct, so that they would know what was in this policy, understand its objective and know how and when it should be implemented. The code of conduct should be guided by the views and suggestions from all the stakeholders within the school, and its final draft be jointly approved at a parents' annual general meeting with all members of the school community present or represented. The adoption stage of the code of conduct should have been done after consultation with all the stakeholders (Sebisha, 2015:7).

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“Parents are called at the beginning of the year to discuss the content of the code of conduct but majority of them never come to such meetings.” SGB educator, Ketsahalo

“We as the SGB and SDC together with other educators call learners to the assembly, whereby we give each one a copy of the code of conduct and explain its purpose and the content within.” SGB/SDC educator, Tau

In support of the statements made above, Joubert and Prinsloo (cited by Pillay, 2012:62) affirm that governing bodies of a school can and should play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of sound discipline and that although the principal, the SMT and other educators normally form the most visible front in the process, the SGB should realise that a statutory or legal duty rests upon the SGB to establish, in terms of section 18A(2) of the SASA, a disciplined and purposeful school environment.

Dhlamini (2016:483) also reports the collaborative formulation and implementation of the code of conduct as one of the approaches of SGB and SDC collaboration towards improving discipline. This is where all stakeholders collaborate in the review and can give inputs and suggestions on the formulation of the code of conduct for learners. Dhlamini (2016:483) further states that the collaborative involvement of members in the formulation will enforce an easy implementation process if they are willing to participate from inception. This will enforce co-ownership and co-responsibility. Based on a study that was done by Sebisha (2015:7) it was reported that a lot of schools were not implementing the code of conduct as was expected, and instead were resorting to corporal punishment of ill-disciplined learners.

“We do our best to try to involve them but it’s only a few that show interest.” SGB/SDC educator, Ketsahalo

It was found by this study that parent members of the SGB and SDC and parents, in general, did not normally honour invitations to come to parental or grade meetings which made the process to involve them in policymaking a challenging exercise. However, the reason for the lack of engagement by most of them, appeared to be either due to a lack of knowledge of disciplinary processes or to a lack of effort by the SGB and SDC to involve parents in the process of commenting and giving suggestions before the final draft was presented for approval.

Despite parents’ lack of knowledge, they have a responsibility to support and ensure that learners, their children, obey the rules enshrined in the code of conduct according to section 3(1) of the SASA (Sebisha, 2015:11). In so doing, they will gain knowledge and full understanding of the purpose of the code of conduct and the roles they can play in further helping the school with implementation of the code of conduct in improving discipline (Sebisha, 2015:11).

The effectiveness of the enforcement of the disciplinary policy for learners depends on the effective engagement of all stakeholders in the development and adoption of this policy.

Lack of knowledge to participate in the development and implementation of the code of conduct

Participants indicated that the lack of engagement could be because of parents and educators not having the necessary understanding of or expertise in the development and formulation of the code of conduct for learners. This lack of knowledge might have led to a lack of engagement in matters concerning the disciplinary policy and overall discipline, which might often have resulted in the development and implementation resting on the shoulders of the principal, educators, and the SMT.

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

“School principals often have to take the lead in the code of conduct.” Principal, Ketsahalo

“Parents do not have knowledge because they do not want to attend meetings when they are called, or they do not want to engage.” SGB/SDC educator–HOD, Tau

“Most of our educators you find that they themselves do not know the content in the code of conduct because they are not interested.” SGB educator 1, Mokokoane

Sebisha (2015:18) argues that the lack of knowledge about legislation because of a lack of training and illiteracy of SGB and SDC members is contributing to the poor drafting and implementation of a school code of conduct. He also emphasises that the three-year term in office is too short for members to become accustomed to their roles and responsibilities and acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective governance (Sebisha, 2015:18).

This study has found that educators’ lack of engagement might also be attributed to their ignorance of the significance of the code’s usage. Participants reported that even when the code of conduct was available, many educators did not adhere to it or use it in their daily interactions with learners, unless or until they were confronted with a serious misconduct by a learner.

Lack of interest by parents, in general, to participate in the development of the code of conduct

Participants in this study reported a lack of interest by parents in the development of the code

of conduct, which they perceived to be based on parents' lack of attendance of meetings which were arranged for the discussion of the development the policy and its implementation. Participants stated that in most instances this led to the code being reviewed by only some members of the SGB and SDC without input from parents.

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

"They don't show interest when it comes to learner discipline, even if you call a parent to school for even minor incident, they will still not show up." Educator SGB/SDC, Mokokoane

"In most cases we as the teachers are expected to be the ones who always have to deal with enforcing the discipline on learners because they are with us most of the day at school." SGB/SDC educator 2, Ketsahalo

They are not interested because they believe that discipline is the school's responsibility not theirs." Educator-SDC, Mokokoane

In this study, the lack of interest to engage in the overall formulation and enforcement of the code of conduct or attend discipline related meetings or discussions, could be due to the lack of support and training by the Department of Education that had been reported by participants on several occasions. Their knowledge of policy and procedure and a desire to work to a common vision for the school could drastically influence discipline (Narain, 2015:188).

Another factor could be that the illiteracy of parents forced them to refrain from discussion of the legal matters pertaining to discipline which they might have viewed as belonging to the authority of those who were educated. Language used in the code of conduct might have been one other element, which implied that this policy should have been translated for each school in a language which most learners and their parents spoke. A last factor might have been the perception of parents that discipline was a problem of the school, and not their responsibility, but part of a skill that learners had to be taught at school.

Meetings on discipline

In their approach to collaboration and improving discipline, the SGB and SDC arranged and held various kinds of meetings with the school community. These meetings included annual meetings with learners and parents, grade/phase meetings, quarterly meetings on the enforcement of the disciplinary policy for learners, and regular report meetings with stakeholders.

According to reports from participants, the meetings were attended by members of the SGB and SDC, including educators from the school(s) concerned, parents, and in some of the meetings, learners, and external collaborators. The annual and quarterly meetings were either chaired by the school principal or the SGB chairperson, and often, grade or phase meetings were held by grade/phase educators representing the departmental head responsible for the grade/phase affected or the HOD.

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

“Grade or phase meetings are arranged by educators who teach the learners in those grades because they are the ones who experience challenges as they work with the learners on a daily basis.” Principal, Ketsahalo

“We sometimes inform or invite the principal, all members of the SGB and SDC to the meeting but sometimes you will find that it is just grade/phase teachers, HOD, parents and learners.” SDC/SGB educator, Tau

Matters discussed at these meetings were often about learner discipline at the school(s) and its impact on teaching and learning, and on the importance of collaboration by all stakeholders. These matters were openly discussed and suggestions for improvements or amendments were presented, and a final majority decision was taken.

Participants expressed their view in the following quotes:

“Learner discipline and the code of conduct form part of each and every meeting at our school.” Principal, Ketsahalo

Deficiencies in meetings between SGB and SDC

According to participants, joint meetings of the SGB and SDC only took place when there was serious learner misconduct needing their intervention. The SGB and the SDC are supposed to jointly meet prior to a disciplinary hearing, formally inviting parents (or guardians) and learners concerned as assurance that a fair hearing will take place.

Based on reports from participants, meetings of the joint SDC and SGB executive committee was not often scheduled. Matters were shared by representatives who sat on both committees, for instance a member of the SDC, who was also a member of the SGB, would brief the SGB on issues of discipline that were handled by the SDC on their own deciding that it did not necessitate the other committee’s urgent attention.

Participants expressed their views as follows:

“The SGB and the SDC only meet if there is a case that the disciplinary committee cannot handle on their own. As the disciplinary committee, we invite the SGB after following all the steps that we need to move through as stipulated in our learner code of conduct, such as having one-on-one sessions with the learners and calling parents for interventions.” SDC educator, Ketsahalo

“Meetings between the two structures are mainly conducted if and only when there is a need, in this case to discuss a serious misconduct that may have taken place at the school.” Principal, Ketsahalo

“They only sit when there is a serious misconduct, they sit first to discuss the proceedings of the forthcoming case before the actual disciplinary hearing case.” SDC/SGB educator 1, Ketsahalo

It was found in this study, based on reports from participants as seen in the above quotes, that the collaboration of the SGB and SDC in dealing with discipline was not as effective as it could be. If they only met when there was a serious case of misconduct, it meant that their collaboration was limited. Their scope was also limited as they did not have to deal with minor acts of misconduct which educators were confronted with daily. This limitation might be impacting on the overall discipline, as minor incidents were not given the same level of attention mostly given to serious cases of misconduct.

Annual meetings with learners and parents

Participants communicated that after its review, the code of conduct was distributed to other members of the school community (educators and parents) during a first joint parental evening of the year, and the content was communicated and discussed with all present at the meeting. If needed, changes were made, and it was only then that the policy was adopted and used to guide learner discipline at the school.

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

“When discussing code of conduct with parents and teachers of the SGB and SDC as well as parents and teachers in general, only a few numbers of them engage, others just do not show any interest or just plain do not attend such arranged meetings. Worse part, this includes teachers who are believed to have the knowledge of such a policy and supposed to understand its purpose.” SGB/SDC educator–HOD, Tau

“It is pointless to even engage with other members in the formulation and the review of the code of conduct because few of them will participate. Educators do not even want to be part of the SGB to engage fully in policies pertaining to education and the school.” SGB/SDC educator 2, Ketsahalo

It was communicated as a common practice at schools that the code of conduct was given to learners at the beginning of every year. It was also shared word for word with learners at the assembly and explained jointly by the principal and SGB and SDC members to ensure that they understood the code. This was done with all the other educators present. Each learner was then given a copy to give to a parent or guardian to read and sign as proof that they had received, read, and understood the code of conduct (Pillay, 2012:65).

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

“Most our children do not bring back the code of conduct signed, others do not give to parents as expected.” SDC educator 1, Tau

“As a school we do not have the assurance of whether parents have seen or signed the code of conduct as other learners would say they have lost it before giving it to parents or others would say they have forgotten to take it from parents. It is always one issue after the other when it comes to the collection or submission of codes of conduct.” SDC educator, Ketsahalo

The above-mentioned issue was raised by most participants as a common challenge that they had experienced over the years. It related back to the matter of lack of participation by parents or guardians. It was unclear whether parents did not participate because of a lack of communication from schools, or the form of communication, or the way the communication was distributed, or just because they lacked interest in participating in matters of education.

In a study conducted by Pillay (2015:66), some parents and even members of the SGB communicated that their lack of engagement was due to a lack of proper communication as they had never received the codes of conduct and/or had to sign acknowledgement slips accompanying a code of conduct given to learners to give to their parents. This confirmed that parents were not communicated with or engaged in the formulation of the code of conduct in sites researched in Pillay’s study. The SGB and SDC might have developed the policy themselves and only invited parents to annual meetings to make them aware of its existence and what it expected of them.

The quote below was from one of the participants:

“It is very rare, especially at a secondary school to have a parent willingly come to school to enquire about the progress or general conduct of their child; such only happens in town schools.” SGB/SDC educator, Mokokoane

Use of disciplinary hearings and referrals

Another approach used by the SGB and SDC in their collaboration towards improving school discipline is disciplinary hearings and receiving referrals from educators and principals and submitting referrals to the HOD depending on the level of the contravention by a learner.

The responsibility of the SGB and SDC is to deal with contraventions that are referred to them that might be beyond the class manager, subject educator, departmental head, or even the principal as the school manager.

The responsibility of the SGB and SDC is to hold disciplinary hearings for serious acts of misconduct perpetrated by learners. These disciplinary hearings are held to implement corrective measures in managing and improving discipline rather than resorting to punitive measures (Narain, 2015:35). Only matters that are beyond their legal power are referred to the HOD; these are matters that may warrant a learner to be expelled.

The SGB and the SDC do not have the authority to expel any learner. In such cases a recommendation must be directed to the HOD to determine whether the misconduct displayed by a learner qualifies for such a learner to be expelled which must be done in accordance with SASA and the school code of conduct for learners as informed by SASA. The HOD has the authority to expel a learner if found guilty of a serious misconduct after a fair hearing, and the HOD also has the responsibility to refer or find an alternative school for the expelled learner.

Participants' views are expressed below:

“As the disciplinary committee alone, we do not have the authority to sanction a learner, the decision lies with the SGB as the mother body of all committees.” SDC, Ketsahalo

“The SGB and the SDC deals with contraventions of a more serious nature such as level 4 and 5 of the disciplinary policy. The SGB and SDC can only suspend a learner, but their jurisdiction does not allow them to expel any learner from compulsory attendance. They can only put forward an application or suggest for expulsion to the Head of Department where deemed necessary.” Principal, Ketsahalo

“In a case of serious misconduct, SGB and SDC refer the learner's case to the Head of Department who will further look into the case and take necessary steps.” Principal, Tau

Data from participants confirmed that the disciplinary hearings and meetings for referrals offered a space for collaboration between the SGB and SDC towards improving discipline, as both the SGB and SDC conducted their mandate as per responsibility given by the DBE and as stated in the code of conduct. Where the matter was outside their jurisdiction, it was referred to the next higher level: the SDC referred to the SGB, and the SGB to the HOD, when deemed necessary.

During interviews with participants, not much was said about the rights of learners and parents to appeal if a case was not considered to be fair. This might be because there were no appeals by parents/learners because all the cases undertaken were fair and just, or there was lack of knowledge by all the relevant parties pertaining to this right, or cases did not reach this stage. The participants emphasised the point of disciplinary hearings being a corrective and not necessarily a punitive measure, which could have been the reason that the stage of expulsion with appeal was never mentioned as it had never taken place at their schools.

5.6.1.1.1 Keeping and sharing of records of misconduct

One other approach in the collaboration of the SGB and SDC is the keeping and sharing of records of misconduct. The importance of record keeping, and sharing was emphasised by participants saying that educators at school level had to keep records of learners' daily misconduct ranging from minor to serious offences and their sanctions. The sanctions had to be in accordance with the offences as stipulated by the school's code of conduct. Record keeping was reported by participants to be essential when serious cases of misconduct are handed over to a higher level.

These records of learners' misconduct were said to be useful as they served as evidence of what had been done at the school level, when referring a learner to organisations or departments that were believed and proven to be better equipped in assisting the learner in any way possible or for disciplinary hearing.

Participants said the following:

“Record of learner ill-discipline plays a major role at disciplinary hearing to make sure correct a corrective measure is taken or a learner is sanctioned accordingly.” SDC educator, Ketsahalo

“Most of us educators see this as too much administration on our part that we have to record each and every incident, many of us know the significance of record keeping and the role it plays at disciplinary hearing but in honesty we often do not do it due to time and workload.” SDC educator, Tau

“As the principal, I keep my own daily records of learner misconduct and emphasise the importance that this document holds to educators at every staff meeting or interaction I get with them. As time consuming it may seem, it is vital that it be kept for evidence of corrective measures taken towards a learner as well as for referral purposes to the SGB/SDC as well as for further referral to the HOD.” Principal, Ketsahalo

This study found that it was important to keep and share records of learners' misconduct so that a suitable corrective measure could be taken for the learner in terms of the code of conduct. The importance of the code of conduct and adherence to it by all relevant parties were also emphasised because for a learner to be sanctioned it had to be in accordance with the code of conduct to see to it that the rights of the learners were not infringed in any way.

However, based on the above quotes by participants, keeping and sharing of records was also an administrative duty that was communicated to be time-consuming and may at the same time be impacting on teaching and learning. But if done right this process could ensure that discipline of learners was done correctly according to law.

5.6.1.1.2 Reports to stakeholders

One other approach used by the SGB and SDC in their collaboration towards improving school discipline is regular reports to stakeholders. Quarterly reports are given to the SGB as the mother body of all substructures within the school. This also includes the SDC as one of the substructures of the SGB that deals with discipline at the school.

According to reports from participants, the principal also had to update or report incidents of misconduct during meetings with the SGB and SDC. The SGB and SDC further engaged or reported to parents during parents' meetings to update them on the status of discipline at the school and to appeal for their support in collaboratively dealing with discipline of learners at the school. Further reports were those from educators during staff meetings on daily misconduct that they might have encountered with learners.

One of the participants expressed the following view:

“Discipline makes part of every agenda of meetings we hold with parents as well as staff meetings with educators.” Principal, Tau

Participants' view on regular reports were as follows:

“We are expected to submit quarterly report of incident encountered at the school or the status of discipline at our school for the term.” SDC educator 2, Tau

“All the subcommittees have to report quarterly to the SGB, and reports are further submitted to the Department of Education/Circuit Manager upon request.” Principal, Ketsahalo

As found in this study, reports were used as a form of communication to update all stakeholders on the status of discipline, so that they could collaboratively work towards improving the state of discipline for the next quarter.

5.6.1.2 Multiple approaches based on extra commitment

Grade/phase meetings on discipline

Meeting with parents also emerged as an approach to collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline at schools. Learners’ parents were invited to parental evenings, phase meetings or grade meetings to be briefed on the state of discipline.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“We usually hold phase meetings at the school to talk to parents about the status of discipline at the school and the overall teaching and learning.” SGB/SDC, Mokokoane

“Parents are also called to school to discuss a learner’s behaviour on an individual basis.” Principal, Mokokoane

Through these meetings the SGB, SDC, principals and educators reminded parents about the importance of collaboration at schools. These meetings were used to inform parents on the progress of their children and report on issues that educators wanted parents to help with in improving discipline. By actively participating, parents could work jointly with the entire school community to produce strategies in improving and managing discipline at schools.

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

“At the beginning of each year, parents are invited to a meeting whereby they are made aware of the existence and the importance of the code of conduct and their role in its development and implementation.” Principal, Ketsahalo

“We are expected as schools to have at least quarterly parental evenings with parents, or more than one such meeting, if necessary, based on contextual factors at the school. At least we try to call them once a term but still most will not show up.” Principal, Mokokoane

“During each meeting with parents, learner discipline is always on the agenda to inform parents of the status of discipline at the schools and how they can be of assistance and further work together with the schools to assist where needed.” SGB educator, Ketsahalo

“Our previous principal, the now current circuit manager always had a turn-up of parents showing up to his arranged parents’ meetings when he was still in position.” SDC, Mokokoane

However, the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving school discipline with the participation of parents was dependent on how parents responded to the invitations. Data from participants suggested that some parents did not attend the meetings on discipline or any meetings at all even after they had received invitations from the school. This made it challenging for the SGB and SDC to implement their recommended collaborative approach to addressing discipline (see White Paper 2 on the organisation, governance and funding of schools), which required parents to play a central role. This might have been a contributing factor to challenges involved in the use of such meetings to ensure learner discipline and prevent a rise in learner ill-discipline. The following participants echoed these views:

“Parents are not very supportive as we would like them to be, they will be invited to meetings, but a few will show up and a few will engage.” SGB educator 2, Mokokoane

Lack of attendance by parents to meetings or whenever they are called to school has an impact on the implementation of the disciplinary measures we take.” SDC educator 2, Ketsahalo

The SGB and SDC members, and educators had a major role to play in disciplining learners, but parents were required to work together with all other stakeholders in ensuring a well-disciplined school environment.

Internal mentoring and development of members

Another important approach forming part of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC communicated by participants is mentorship and development of members. It was emphasised by participants that for the SGB and SDC to collaborate and be able to effectively deal with discipline at schools, the school principals often took the responsibility upon themselves to mentor members. Participants indicated that training and development of members was the responsibility of the DOE. According to section 19(1)(a) and (b) of SASA, funds shall be made available to each province for introductory and ongoing capacity training of SGBs and their substructures to facilitate their effectiveness (Pillay, 2012:2). However,

participants reported that it was never done which prompted school principals to do it themselves.

Participants expressed the following views:

“We as the school principals are often left with the burden of mentoring members because of the lack of training by our department.” Principal, Ketsahalo

5.6.2 Objective 2: Explore the depth of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC towards improving discipline

5.6.2.1 The depth of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC towards improving discipline

Data from participants and from the document analysis suggested that there was a varying degree of collaboration between SGBs and SDCs in schools and that this was based on their mandated functions and on the level of commitment of the members of these structures. The data revealed that there were situations of close and strong collaboration and situations where the collaboration varied from partial to non-existent. The data also revealed that there were situations where the collaboration was stronger and more effective between the structures or between the SGB/SDC and other structures. These other structures were either internal structures in the school or departmental structures. In cases where the structures were compelled to adhere to their mandated responsibilities, there was evidence of collaboration. However, this was only evident in the documents and functions that related to the development of a disciplinary policy in the schools. In the matter of application or enforcement of the disciplinary policy, collaboration varied from partial to non-existent. This finding was based on views expressed by the participants which were captured in the themes and sub-themes below.

5.6.2.1.1 Varying degrees of collaboration (strong collaboration)

Collaboration with other government departments

SGB–SDC collaboration, in dealing with discipline, also made use of extended collaboration with external stakeholders, such as government departments. As mentioned by participants, these external stakeholders were the South African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Social Development (DSD), Department of Health (DOH) and Department of Correctional Services (DCS). These departments were invited to schools by the SGB and SDC to offer awareness programmes to learners, especially targeting those regularly acting out against authority.

According to participants, these programmes were held quarterly or whenever there was an incident that warranted it. Armstrong (2016:4) mentions two forms of collaboration, one of which is external collaboration, whereby external stakeholders are involved to work collaboratively with the internal stakeholders for a purposeful school environment. Such external collaboration may also be useful during investigation of disciplinary hearing cases.

Participants provided the following comments on collaboration:

“Our resident social worker and police (ADOPT-A-COP) are always invited at our school during disciplinary hearings with learners and parents present, as well as parent–learner meetings.” Principal, Ketsahalo

“There is a deviation programme offered by the Department of Social Development through an appointed social worker known as “KHULISA”, aimed at offering psycho-social support to learners at schools.” SDC/SGB educator 1, Ketsahalo.

“We call on the social workers to help us on OUT-REACH programmes for learners who might be abused or are from child headed households. They are the ones who go out for us to assess the background of the learner and how it might be affecting behaviour of performance of a learner.” SGB/SDC educator–HOD, Tau

It was highlighted by participants that serious misconduct classified as level 4 and 5 called for the participation of the SGB and SDC and often required the engagement of external stakeholders. For instance, in a case of serious bodily harm, the SAPS had to be informed and involved.

Participants made the following remarks:

“DSD and SAPS play an integral part at our school. They are very active in the QLTC, Safety and SBST committees at the school; we have good relations with them.” SDC/SGB educator–HOD, Tau

“Some cases are beyond us as educators, SMT or the DoE. We need to work closely with other departments. Even though our departments sometimes expect us to be (jack of all trades) and play all these roles to/for these learners.” Principal, Tau

These remarks emphasised the importance of both internal and external collaboration. It is evident that the discipline of learners at schools was a matter that often had to be dealt with by sourcing expertise from other departments.

Collaboration with other school committees

The data suggested that the success of the SGB and SDC collaboration towards ensuring school discipline depended on how well they collaborated with other substructures in the school environment. The SGB as governance structure at schools has the function to appoint committees to assist in the execution of its functions (Pillay, 2012:62). Section 30(1) of the SASA stipulates that a governing body must establish committees, including an executive committee, and may appoint persons who are not members of the governing body to such committees on grounds of expertise, but a member of the governing body must chair each committee (SASA, 1996). One such committee of the SGB is the School Based Support Team (SBST).

The involvement of other school committees is evidence of the depth of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC. According to participants, this collaboration assisted in the improvement of discipline and strengthened the collaboration of all stakeholders.

Participants reported that the collaboration between the SBST and the SDC was specifically in relation to learning, but it also attended to social problems that may impact on discipline of learners at schools. The contribution of the SBST in the collaborative relationship with the SGB and SDC in improving school discipline was expressed by participants thus:

“School Based Support Team is a school-based committee that specifically deals with learners projecting problematic behaviour at school. They work with learners to help find the core problems that may be leading learners to be troublesome, misbehaving.” SGB/SDC educator, Tau

“In most cases, here at school we often discover that learners who are problematic are acting out in unacceptable resorting to acting against authority due to frustration brought forth by psycho-social problems they may be experiencing. They act out in such ways to gain attention.” SDC educator 1, Tau

According to participants, the SBST often discovered that learners who were misbehaving required special attention and the collaborative efforts of SGB and SDC together with SBST to ensure that the underlying cause of their misconduct was also attended to. The active involvement of parents, educators, and the DOE also played a major role in this extended collaborative relationship in ensuring that such learners were referred to special schools or got assistance from the DSD.

Participants supported these views in the following quotes:

“Most learners often display behavioural problems or act out as a result of an underlying problem they may be going through, so we need to go deeper when dealing with discipline.”

SDC educator 2, Tau

“We as educators, parents, guardians need to work together to first focus on the cause of discipline problems before we can work on the effect.”

SGB educator 1, Mokokoane

Based on participants' inputs, it was evident that if all stakeholders, in particular, the SGB, the SDC, and the SBST, could work together in dealing with discipline by first understanding the cause of the problem, proper measures would be taken to deal with learner behaviour, and they would not only be sanctioned according to the code of conduct.

However, it was found that parents were reluctant to effectively support the process. This was attributed to a lack of understanding and/or acceptance on their side that their child might be misbehaving. It is important that parents are assisted in understanding that “if they work together, they will contribute to the total upbringing of a child as a complete human through the home, school and community education” (Maphoke, 2017:14).

The following comments by participants supported the above findings:

“Parents are often reluctant to work jointly with the school and the department because they fear that a learner, their child will be referred to a special school, and they forfeit the child support grant directly being given to them.”

SDC/SGB educator–HOD, Tau

“In most instances you may find that parents are in denial to an extent that they will change a child from one school to another with the belief that the problem lies with the educators or the school; not the underlying issue which may be leading to their child misbehaving.”

SGB/SDC educator 1, Ketsahalo

5.6.2.1.2 No collaboration, training and mentorship

Deficient training and mentorship

Based on responses by participants there had been deficiencies in training, specifically when it came to discipline at schools. The focus by the DOE was more on offering training on finance and recruitment. This forced school principals to step in and mentor members of both the SGB and SDC. Furthermore, despite the deficient training by the DOE, members of the SGB and SDC were still expected to oversee the process of disciplinary hearings without the necessary training to ensure that they could effectively deal with discipline at schools. Lack of training by

the DOE impacted negatively on members of the SGB and SDC as they might then be reluctant to engage in issues of governance through the SGB and SDC and engage with disciplinary issues (Sebisha, 2015:19).

Participants expressed the following views:

“Since being part of the SDC, there has never attended a training arranged by the department that dealt with learner discipline or any policy on learner conduct. I have learnt all that I know from experience and ... eh my passion for children. We basically learn as we go but we rely heavy on SASA to guide us along the way.” SDC/SGB educator ♦1HOD, Tau

“I don’t remember when last I saw an invitation from the Department on training of SDC and SGB on learner discipline.” SDC educator, Mokokoane

“Our department’s focus when it comes to training is mostly on financial management and personnel recruitment, while issues like learner discipline are totally ignored until something serious happens at a school and the SGB untrained as it may be, is expected to procedurally try cases”. Principal, Ketsahalo

The DOE is responsible for ensuring that the necessary training is offered and that there are funds available for this. According to section 19(1)(a) and (b) of SASA it is clearly stipulated that funds shall be made available to each province to ensure that introductory and ongoing capacity training are provided to the SGB and its substructures for the effectiveness of their functions (Pillay, 2012:2).

However, the department seemed to have left the responsibility for training on disciplinary matters to school principals who also often did not have the necessary training.

This view was expressed in the following quotes by some of the principals:

“As the principal, I always had and continue to empower myself so that the ship can keep on floating and not sink but often times I rely on experience”. Principal, Ketsahalo

“We also need training so as to ensure that we do justice to learners in dealing with discipline and also share our knowledge.” Principal, Tau

5.6.2.1.3 Inconsistent collaborative efforts by stakeholders

To ensure strong and effective collaboration, all stakeholders need to be actively involved from inception up to the enforcement of the code of conduct for learners and other related policies. According to responses by participants, not all educators, parents, and members of the SGB

and SDC attended meetings dedicated to this matter, which impacted heavily on the effectiveness of the collaboration and the implementation of discipline related documents.

Participants expressed this view in the following quotes:

“There are majority of parents, educators as well as our members who do not attend meetings.” SDC/SGB, Mokokoane

Participants further also shared that most educators did not comply with the content within the code of conduct for learners which weakened collaborative efforts towards improving discipline at schools.

Participants expressed these views in the following quotes:

“Not all educators are using the code of conduct in disciplining learners. The code of conduct seems to be used when they are forced to....” SGB educator 1, Mokokoane

“We do our best to try to involve them, but it’s only a few that show interest.” SGB educator 2, Tau

This study established that parents, educators, and members of the SGB and SDC did not attend meetings consistently which severely challenged collaborative efforts towards improving discipline at these schools. Furthermore, educators made this worse because of their non-compliance with the code of conduct for learners.

5.6.3 Objective 3: Determine the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC

5.6.3.1 The effectiveness of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC

Data from participants and from the document analysis suggested that there was both effective and ineffective collaboration between SGB and SDC in schools. The data revealed that the effectiveness of the SGB and SDC collaboration depended mostly on the efforts of members and their extended collaboration with external structures. The data also revealed that there was a level of ineffectiveness which was based on the lack of active involvement by parents, educators, learners, the department and some of the members of the SGB and SDC which was impacting on the overall effectiveness of the collaboration in dealing with discipline at the schools. The views as expressed by the participants and evident in the analyses of documents are captured in the themes and sub-themes below.

5.6.3.1.1 Effective collaboration

Collaborative efforts and functionality of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline

The effectiveness of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving learner discipline is determined by the collaborative efforts and functionality of the SGB and SDC. The collaboration between the SGB and the SDC at most schools was reported to be “functional” in the sense that the structures did exist: the schools had an SGB in place and an SDC committee to deal with discipline. However, the SGB, SDC and the school community were still confronted with the issue of poor learner discipline, despite the collaborative efforts by members. These findings were reflected in responses by participants.

Participants expressed their view in the following quotes:

“Discipline it is still a problem but we as educators are doing our best. We all need to work together and support each other in disciplining learners.” SDC/SGB educator, Mokokoane

“We try as a school, the committee to ensure a well-disciplined school environment, but we cannot do it on our own. We need the support from other our colleagues as well as parents.” SGB/SDC, Tau

Participants admitted that the SGB, SDC, and the entire school community, still had much to do in their efforts to deal with discipline. Better adherence to the code of conduct was also required. This view was expressed by one of the participants in the following statement:

“We need to deal with misconducts of learners uniformly, most of us educators do not want to refer to the code of conduct when disciplining learners, which means one incident will be dealt with differently because of not consulting the code of conduct.” SDC educator 1, Tau

Participants reported that educators often did not comply with the code of conduct especially when dealing with minor incidents; they complained about the administration that was involved (record keeping/filing/reporting), the time required for detention of learners, and for individual meetings with the parents of the ill-disciplined learners after hours. This was echoed in the following response:

“Educators often deal with discipline of learners in their respective classrooms or the school yard as possible and reasonable as they can at that point in time. This means that most often than not, them not referring to the code of conduct.” SGB educator 1, Mokokoane

Participants reported that effectiveness could be improved through regular training of members. Currently, they were trying to fix the problem by helping each other and learning from each other, but that was not enough.

Despite the limited training and insufficient knowledge of school principals, they continued to do their best to ensure the effectiveness of collaboration.

Armstrong (2016:5) states that the success of both internal and external collaboration often relies on the leadership style of the school principal. Monare (2013:17) supports this statement by saying that school principals must move away from being traditional leaders and become collaborative leaders who can encourage members of the school community to work together towards the common goal of effective learner discipline management.

Confirming this view, a principal from Ketsahalo said, *“The collaboration between the SDC and SGB in the context of our school is tolerable (obtaining 2 on a scale of 1-5) in the sense that it’s not all SGB and SDC members who often display the kind of initiative to involve themselves actively in the disciplinary issues of the school, based on a couple of reasons, one being not having the necessary expertise and confidence towards improving learner discipline and having to engage with the code of conduct ”.* Principal, Ketsahalo

The impact of external collaboration on discipline

Participants reported that external collaboration had a moderately positive impact on the improvement of discipline at the schools and on the collaboration between the SGB and SDC. DSD, DOH and SAPS were playing an active role in the improvement of discipline and the overall conduct of learners. Through the collaborative efforts of the SGB, SDC, educators, social workers, and SAPS, reports of misconduct by educators became fewer. Learners were becoming more aware of the code of conduct and its purpose.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“SAPS and Department of Social Development have been helping us a lot with ill-discipline of learners, as we often invite them to schools to intervene and help us in matters where we feel they are needed.” SGB/SDC 1, Ketsahalo

There is a resident social worker, and we also have ADOPT-A-COP who is an employee of the South African Police Services. They are either invited to schools or they come to offer awareness programmes to learners.” Principal, Tau

External collaboration also improved SGB and SDC collaboration as they had to be present at the school during all the awareness and enrichment programmes offered to learners by the departments. The focus was on teenage pregnancy, gangsterism, drug usage and abuse. The active engagement of internal stakeholders during interventions by external collaborator departments was an indication of the effectiveness of collaboration and unity that could exist at these schools in dealing with discipline.

A participant expressed the following view:

“The impact has been positive in the sense that discipline in our school no longer becomes the burden of those involved inside the school only, but it now becomes a community matter. This now gives a picture of unity and learners see the school as a united front with the community and a continuity of expectations of behaviour from the community into the school. They also enjoy knowing that matters that cannot find solutions inside the school can be referred somewhere to be resolved.” SGB/SDC educator 2, Ketsahalo

5.6.3.1.2 Ineffective collaboration

Lack of active involvement impacting on the efforts of the SGB and SDC

In the view of some participants, educators were often not willing to deal actively with learner discipline at schools because of the day-to-day responsibilities of teaching and the expectation from the DOE that they would be active members of committees. Educator participants in the SGB and the SDC reported that being a member of SGB or any of its subcommittees required time, especially when dealing with discipline which constantly needed attention. In support of the statement, participants expressed the following views:

“Educators should not be part of committees if they do not have the passion to serve in such committees, a person who is not interested in dealing with learner discipline should not be forced to be in such a committee just because they are expected to form part of committees, as part of their job description.” SDC educator, Mokokoane

“Lack of participation by educators is due to the many responsibilities and the administrative work they are confronted with on a daily basis.” SGB educator 2, Mokokoane

The lack of involvement by parents or guardians of learners was also communicated to be impacting on the improvement of discipline and on the effectiveness of the collaboration of the SGB and SDC. According to participants, the reason parents were not actively involved might be owing to their lack of knowledge or understanding of the process of disciplining at the

school. However, there was a perception that some were not willing to participate in the education of their child.

“Parents will be called on several occasions to come to school concerning learning problems or conduct of the child but choose not to.” SDC educator, Mokokoane

“Parents who are members in the SGB and SDC mostly do not actively participate due to lack of knowledge.” SDC/SGB educator 1, Ketsahalo

According to Maphoke (2015:26), “the new system introduced new laws and policies that expect parents and guardians to play a crucial role in the education of their children; parents have to share the responsibility of education with the SMT in schools”.

This lack of knowledge communicated, should be solved through training and workshops that should be provided to parents and educator members of the SGB and SDC.

Furthermore, participants were questioning the lack of knowledge of ordinary parents or guardians that was impacting on the effectiveness of collaboration, despite the *annual meetings and quarterly meetings* that were taking place where the formulation and the enforcement of the code of conduct was shared and discussed. This finding appears to contradict the earlier finding of meetings taking place to share and discuss matters of discipline and the code of conduct.

The limited and inconsistent role of the SGB and SDC collaboration in managing discipline

There were differing reports from participants on the role of the SGB and SDC, as most voiced their dissatisfaction with the limited and inconsistent collaborative role that the SGB and SDC were expected to play in improving discipline. The SGB and the SDC have minimal roles in dealing with discipline, especially regarding minor or daily acts of misconduct, in that the two only had to meet when they had to deal with serious acts of misconduct. According to participants, this meant that the principal, SMT and educators had to take on less serious cases of learner misconducts which did not need the SGB and SDC intervention as per the code of conduct.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“The SGB and SDC deal with serious act of misconduct, while educators deal with minor acts of misconduct on a daily basis.” SDC educator, Tau

“SGB which is the mother body together with the Disciplinary Committee deal with offences such as level 4 and 5 and disciplinary cases which require that a learner be suspended or expelled.” Principal Tau secondary

Therefore, the ineffectiveness of the SGB and SDC was reported by participants to be attributed to their limited scope in their roles as stated in the code of conduct. As communicated, the code of conduct stated that the SGB and SDC dealt with level 4 to 5 offences which were of serious nature. This meant that level 1 to 3 offences were responsibilities of the school principal and educators. This had an impact on the functionality of the SGB and SDC, according to participants, as educators were often not complying with the code of conduct when confronted with minor acts of misconduct until a serious act of misconduct took place that warranted the attention of the SGB and SDC. This further impacted on functionality because the SGB and SDC needed to have a record of learner’s past offences to make an informed decision against a learner during a disciplinary hearing.

Participants expressed these views in the following quotes:

“Most times educators deal with daily incidents of misconduct in classrooms themselves not following the proper procedures as outlined in the code of conduct on level of offences and sanctions. Some cases do not get reported as they should so that proper steps be taken.” SDC/SGB educator–HOD, Tau

“In most cases the SGB and SDC are not consulted, the principal and educators often times deal with matters themselves in any way they see fits at that point in time.” SGB educator 1, Mokokoane

“Educators do not follow or consult the code of conduct or refer cases accordingly which makes the task of the SGB and SDC most times difficult.” SDC educator 1, Tau

The comments made above by participants presented the view that there was somehow a problem in how discipline was dealt with at the schools. It seemed that, despite the existence of the code of conduct, some educators chose not to adhere to it in their interaction with learners. This might have had an impact on the effectiveness of the SGB and SDC. As part of their role, they needed to make informed decisions in disciplinary hearings, decisions that might lead to suspension or expulsion and decisions to refer learners to external collaborators. Their functionality was therefore dependent on the effective collaboration of the school community.

Furthermore, based on what was reported and found in this study, the SGB and SDC appeared to exist at schools to do damage control. However, based on the current communicated state of discipline at schools, it would be advisable that for effective functionality the scope of their responsibility in dealing with discipline be broadened. This might not only improve their functionality but further strengthen the collaboration of the SGB and SDC, and most importantly of all the stakeholders.

5.6.4 Objective 4: Suggestion of ways for improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC

5.6.4.1 Ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC

According to data from participant interviews and from the analyses of documents it was indicative that there were gaps in the collaboration of the SGB and SDC, both internally and externally. In closing these gaps and ensuring the improvement of the collaboration, multiple approaches surfaced during interviews with participants and from the lack of evidence of workshops and training materials or circulars from the department or minutes of meetings where training was given to the members.

The first approach suggested is for internal efforts within the schools, such as extended collaboration with all committees internally, continual collaborative reviews and regular updating of the code of conduct, SGB and SDC involvement and collaboration in all levels of offences, and productive and convenient channels of communication with parents.

The other approach requires external efforts by the department to provide ongoing monitoring of the functionality of the SGB and SDC and developmental training on discipline for all members. These will further be discussed in the themes and sub-themes below.

5.6.4.1.1 Multiple approaches (internal approaches)

Consistent adherence to the code of conduct by all stakeholders

In accordance with the views as expressed by participants, the code of conduct for learners must be utilised at the schools to manage and resolve acts of ill-discipline by learners through precise adherence to it as a lawful policy. It serves as a guide that directs how incidents of learner misconducts or discipline should always be managed at a school. Although the code of conduct may differ as communicated and clarified by participants, it must still contain in it the basic minimum information such as the preamble, the school's mission and vision, principles and values, responsibility of parents with respect to the code of conduct, punishment, disciplinary hearing procedures, and an appeal process. The participants

reported that their school code of conduct was in accordance with SASA and included all the above-mentioned minimum requirements.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“We must all use the code of conduct in our daily interactions with learners.” Principal, Mokokoane

“As a school we make sure that learners, parents and colleagues are well-informed of the code of conduct and its purpose every chance we get in the hope to ensure that all members of the school community understand and adhere to it.” Principal, Ketsahalo

According to participant responses, the codes of conduct at schools stated exactly what had to be done, at which stage and by whom, as offences were classified according to levels, from minor to serious misconduct, including measures that needed to be taken, and the persons responsible to deal with the misconduct displayed by learners. It was therefore important that all parties get acquainted with the content within the code of conduct and the responsibilities expected of them as enshrined in it.

Level 1 and 2 offences may be dealt with by the teacher and grade head/HOD at the school. If the learner repeats the offence the deputy principal, delegated by the school principal, may be called in to intervene; parents may also be involved, and corrective measures may be implemented depending on the nature of the offence. This may differ from one school to another. However, each school’s code of conduct must be informed by the SASA to ensure that the rights of learners are not contravened when it is drafted. According to a study by Narain (2013), the rights of learners and their protection from harm are among “the central objects of the Schools Act”. Sebisha (2015:9) adds that community norms and values are also central objects in the development of the code of conduct.

Participants expressed their views on the code of conduct in the following quotes:

“The code of conduct has to be informed by SASA, the constitution, because as a school we cannot just create or come up with what is lawfully right or not.” SGB educator, Ketsahalo

Level 3 offences could be referred to the principal who would assess them, and if needed, get referred to the SDC and the SGB to handle them further. Parents often formed an integral part of the disciplinary process of the learner and would as a result be invited to be present when the SDC was sitting and deliberating on the case at hand.

In this study, the schools' codes of conduct were analysed through interview responses and participants confirmed that the above-mentioned matters were all included in each of the schools' code of conduct. However, it is one thing to have all these important issues included in the schools' code of conduct but another thing to implement them. According to participants, the code of conduct was available at each of the schools and was implemented.

5.6.4.1.2 Multiple approaches (external approaches)

Ongoing departmental workshops and training on learner discipline and code of conduct

Based on reports from participants there was a need for intervention, such as workshops and training for the SGB and SDC, to enable them to perform their expected duties. Such training or workshops should be done continually to adapt to changes taking place within the DOE and the school regarding discipline. Furthermore, training would enable the SGB and SDC to actively perform their duties with confidence and be able to adhere fully to the disciplinary policies.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

"We need to be trained on policies and how to deal with discipline, the department is failing us when it comes to training on discipline and the code of conduct."

"Workshops or training need to be as often as possible because we are confronted with discipline problems daily and were unfortunately expected to act and deal with the problem as it takes place."

According to responses from participants, it was mandated for the DOE to provide support and training for the SGB and SDC. Their focus should be on discipline and not only on financial management and recruitment processes of the SGB. All stakeholders must be trained and educated on their rights and responsibilities, duties and functions in the SGB and SDC and other committees in collaboration with the SGB. Pillay (2012:73) states that "most provincial departments do not have the resources to do, which makes it extremely difficult for the provinces to provide adequate training for SGB members." This confirms that the lack of training should not only be attributed to the district DOE, but also to the MECs, Minister of Basic Education and the Minister of Higher Education for lack of allocation of funds on training of all stakeholders in dealing with disciplinary matters at the school level.

Participants expressed their views as follows:

“Now of recent we as the SGB executive members with the principals were invited to a department organised SGB Induction workshop on the roles of being a signatory in the SGB, totally nothing to do with discipline.” SDC/SGB educator–HOD, Tau

“We need training on how to deal with discipline, on matters that we are confronted with concerning learners on a daily basis.” SDC educator, Mokokoane

In support of the statement made above, section 19(1)(a), (b) and section 2 of the SASA, stipulates that the HOD must provide induction programmes for newly elected SGBs and SDCs to enable them to perform their functions and continual training to improve the effectiveness of their functions. The HOD must ensure that principals and officials of the DOE render all necessary assistance to SGB in the performance of their functions in terms of the SASA (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:46).

There is a lack of support and training by the DOE which may be impacting on the effectiveness of the schools in dealing with discipline, as reported by Sebisha (2015) and Pillay (2012). Mncube (cited by Pillay, 2012:70) “contends that the lack of parents’ interest in participation in SGBs might be due to their lack of familiarity with the contents of the South African School Education Policies, namely the South African Acts of 1996”.

Furthermore, instead of training, it was reported by participants that the department often only issued information to schools whenever there were media reports of incidents of ill-discipline on the news or in newspaper articles. One participant referred to such an article on an incident that took place at a secondary school in Limpopo where a learner who was bullied by another took her own life. She alluded to the fact that soon after the incident took place, the DBE began dispensing information to schools about bullying; the South African Council for Educators (SACE) also followed with their release of a handbook titled “Teachers’ Safety and Security in South African Schools” aimed at providing information to educators on their rights and responsibilities, how to protect themselves and actions they needed to take to decrease the risks of violence perpetrated at schools against educators by learners and their own colleagues.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“DBE can desist from being reactionary and not only apply pressure when things fall apart just because they fear media attention. The department is and has not been offering the necessary training, they are merely bombarding us with copies of information which they often issue out after an incident has occurred and without clarity or explanation.” Principal, Tau

“We need proper training and development on issues pertaining to discipline.” SGB/SDC educator, Ketsahalo

It was concluded in this study based on responses from participants and document analysis that there were shortcomings in the training supposed to be given by the department. Although some training was taking place, the focus was rarely on discipline or the formulation and enforcement of the disciplinary policy for learners. The department should shift its focus to matters that affect the SGB in its collaboration with its substructures and matters that must be dealt with daily at schools. This might improve discipline and strengthen the collaboration between the SGB and the SDC.

Regular monitoring of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC

Monitoring was one of the suggestions to ensure that all the functions of SGB–SDC collaboration are performed. Based on participants view and experience, monitoring should follow after support and training had been provided by the DOE. Monitoring should include specific and continual monitoring of SGB–SDC collaborative development and enforcement of the code of conduct, and whether the state of discipline at schools was improving.

The following view was expressed by a participant:

“Monitoring should be used to develop us, not to punish us, it needs to be done to check which kind of help we need or where are we lacking.” SDC/SGB educator–HOD, Tau

Most participants voiced their dissatisfaction of the DBE focusing on the executive members of the governing body and the principals in dealing with finances at the school. They suggested that the DOE expands its focus from monitoring finances to monitoring the functionality and effectiveness of the SGB–SDC collaboration in dealing with matters of discipline.

One of the participants expressed his dissatisfaction thus:

“They fail to support us, so why do they come to monitor...!” SGB/SDC educator, Tau

According to participants, monitoring and evaluation should firstly be done to identify areas of need and not always to find mistakes in the SGB–SDC collaboration. Furthermore, it should be done with the sole purpose to empower members of the SGB and the SDC. Feedback should also be provided alongside monitoring and evaluation. Members of the SGB and SDC should be made aware of their mistakes, areas of improvement and their progress. Monitoring should ensure the implementation of uniform standard operating procedures at all schools.

“It was back in 2008, we had Whole School Evaluation done here at the school. They came to monitor everything, from learners to management as well as the involvement of parents. SGB’s functionality as well as committees were looked into The report was given to the principal on areas we as the school needed support and areas, we did good. They were here for about 2–3 days.” SGB/SDC educator–HOD, Tau

Monitoring should also be done to give credit where it was due to motivate members to continue doing their best for learners.

The study found that there were deficiencies in monitoring the work of the SGB and its subcommittees. The finance committee of the SGB had been reported on more than one occasion to be receiving the attention of the DOE. The SGB and SDC seemed to be the less recognised collaboration when it came to training and monitoring, until a serious incident of misconduct took place that involved the DOE or the media for that matter. It was only then that the availability and enforcement of the code of conduct for learners would be given attention.

The DOE needed to play its role in the effectiveness of the collaboration of the SGB and SDC and all other SGB subcommittees. They needed to monitor areas of development so that they would be able to offer the needed support.

Collaboration between primary and secondary schools on matters of discipline

Participants reported a lack of collaborative support given by secondary schools to stakeholders at primary schools regarding learner discipline. Participants suggested a need for joint efforts by all members of the SGB and SDC from primary level to secondary level of schooling. If collaboration could be strengthened, and proper disciplinary measures were already used with learners while they were still at primary school, including teaching them about the code of conduct, the poor discipline at secondary schools could be improved.

Participants expressed their views in the following quotes:

“Our colleagues at primary school are ignorant when it comes to the code of conduct.” SDC educator 1, Tau

“Learners are not taught of the code of conduct, learners at primary schools in our locations are not even aware of its existence and what is it used for. They start to hear of it from us and it takes time for them to understand its purpose.” SGB educator 2, Mokokoane

According to a study that was conducted by Sebisha (2015:21), it was found that the code of conduct at primary schools differed greatly from that at secondary schools; in primary schools,

the focus was more on work and play while learner self-discipline was only emphasised in secondary schools. This discrepancy may be partly responsible for poor discipline at secondary schools.

If discipline had been given the attention it needed from an early age and the use of the code of conduct emphasised already at primary schools, learners would have been knowledgeable about the code of conduct, the behaviour expected of them, and the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.

“Most of these primary school teachers still use corporal punishment and are feared by learners, so they do not see the point in informing learners of the code of conduct because they themselves do not use it when disciplining learners.” SDC educator 2, Tau

Like the practice at secondary schools of informing learners of the code of conduct at the beginning of the year, primary schools’ management, including SDCs, should ensure that the code of conduct for learners is explained to them at their level of understanding. Section (5)(1)(d) of the SASA clearly states that “each learner should be provided with a copy of the school rules at the beginning of each school year: younger learners at primary schools be informed verbally of school rules.”

The following view was expressed by a participant:

“Our colleagues leave the burden on us; learner discipline is perceived to be an issue to be dealt with by us secondary school teachers.” SGB educator, Ketsahalo

Parents should be urged to continue to be actively involved with their children at secondary school and in SGB and SDC activities.

“There is a perception that learners start to display ill-disciplined behaviour once they come to us because we do not care about them, they are left to do as they wish, and often times it our fellow colleagues who have these preconceptions about secondary school teachers.” Principal, Tau

An important aspect in the collaboration between primary and secondary schools, is the handing over of disciplinary records by primary schools. In a learner’s application to be admitted in the first year at secondary school, a profile of the learner should accompany their Grade 7 school report. This profile should contain a report on the learner’s conduct at primary school.

As the learner is promoted to the next year, the profile should be handed over to the next class manager of the next grade, continuing until the learner completes Grade 12/Matric. The profile is an important tool to be used in understanding the learner's conduct, challenges, or any important factor related to learner discipline that can be used as a point of reference in disciplining or referring a learner.

5.7 Findings and discussions from document analysis

5.7.1 Objective 1: Analyse the collaborative approach between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline.

5.7.1.1 The collaborative approach between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline

Interviews with participants and the analyses of documents suggested that the SGB and SDC should make use of multiple approaches in their collaboration towards improving discipline. There are mandated functions that the structures are compelled to adhere to and there are extra levels of commitment shown by SGB–SDC collaborations at some schools. However, there was a varying degree of availability of evidence from the schools on the specific nature and approaches of collaboration at the selected schools. This aspect will further be discussed in the themes and sub-themes below.

5.7.1.1.1 Use of multiple approaches (mandated approaches)

5.7.1.1.1.1 Use of documents and strategies

Daily records of misconduct

Daily records of learner discipline surfaced as one of the approaches by the SGB and SDC in their collaboration towards improving discipline. These daily records of misconduct by two of the selected schools were kept as evidence of any minor transgressions by learners. There was some evidence of records of misconduct that were kept together with correspondence letters informing parents of such incidents, the nature thereof and the date of upcoming meetings to discuss the misconduct, depending on the level of the offence by the learner.

These records contained various kinds of information, such as dates of incidents, summary of learners' transgressions, actions taken by the educator(s) concerned and the names of the parties who were involved during the incidents. They also indicated measures taken to resolve the case, and persons who had attended to the case as stipulated in the code of conduct for learners.

However, at one of the schools there was no evidence of daily records being kept. This appeared to confirm that at this school collaboration of the structures was not evident, parents were either not invited or not involved in learner discipline which contradicted some of the respondents' answers during interviews. This further appeared to confirm that the SGB and SDC were not taking the necessary measures as stipulated in the school code of conduct to improve their collaboration and to improve learner discipline at this school. The code of conduct was also not being updated, as their code of conduct still had the previous year's date. This further showed the lack of monitoring by the DOE of the effectiveness of the SGB and SDC.

The lack of proper procedures being followed could be attributed to the dissatisfaction of educators with the expectations from the DOE regarding discipline management, that they reported to be too time-consuming and, therefore, hampering the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Pillay, 2012:15).

The information that was given to the researcher during interviews contradicts the evidence that was brought to her attention. According to participants, educators kept their own records of the incidents which took place in their interaction with learners. At the schools that made records of daily misconduct available, there were also deficiencies in the way these records were kept. They were referred to as daily records of misconduct, but they did not prove to have been kept daily and not by most educators at these schools. The schools offered either a notebook or an exercise book stating these to be a record of the misconduct, whereby all incidents were brought to the principal's attention with the educator concerned signing these as evidence. There was no evidence of individual educators' records book or file brought to the researcher's attention.

Based on the documents that were available at the schools, it was evident that educators' individual daily records of incidents with learners were not kept, which contradicted with the data gathered from participants through interviews. This gave the perception that the SGB and SDC and all stakeholders at the school did not have a system in place that was being followed in keeping records of incidents by learners on the overall improvement of discipline. This also confirms that this approach was not effectively used at the school in improving discipline.

These incidents books were kept or left in the principals' offices, which raised a concern to the researcher that each time an incident took place in the classroom the educator had to leave learners unattended to attend to one or a few acting out of authority. This meant the approach of incident book was not effective in improving discipline, instead was adding to the problem as in the absence of the educator more incident can take place.

Further reports by participants were that the purpose of these daily records was to inform the SGB and SDC of learners' history of behaviours or incidents of misconduct when a learner had to be referred to them. In most cases whereby a learner repeatedly misbehaved, there was to be proof of whether it was the learner's first offence so that decisions to be taken by the SGB and SDC would be informed by the evidence from daily records of misconducts.

In relation to daily records of learner misconducts at one of the schools, the researcher was given an exercise book that the principal kept in her office on which was written "*Parents records*". These were records of incidents that were reported to her office by either parents or parents and educators. Perusing this book, the researcher found only a few incidents of learner ill-discipline that were brought to the principal's attention by parents.

These records confirmed that there were some parents who had taken their role in discipline seriously and had reported matters concerning their child/children to the principal. However, there was no evidence of what transpired following the reports from parents. This on its own communicated the ineffectiveness in the use of daily records without proof of suitable interventions.

These findings concerning learners' parents contradicted most reports by participants during interviews, who had communicated that parents were not willing to collaborate in helping the SGB and SDC deal with and improve discipline. This confirms that some parents were involved.

Contracts with individual learners

One other evidence confirming the nature and approach of the SGB and SDC collaboration was through the use of a contract with individual learners. Learners were given contracts of behaviour by either class educators, subject educators or an educator concerned who might have experienced or witnessed the learner's transgression(s). The contracts were given to the transgressing learner as a measure of improvement in their behaviour. This, however, seemed to have applied to minor incidents of behaviour that were handled without needing the involvement of the SGB and SDC, such as level 1 offences.

In the said contract form, the learner had to state explicitly what took place on the day and time of the misconduct, and what steps would be taken as a way of correcting the misconduct. Incidents of such nature were later referred to the principal in situations where the learner did not comply with the standard, they set for themselves in the contract. Sebisha (2015:16) states that a learner contract of behaviour could be a useful strategy for educators in dealing with minor misconduct by learners and may even be effective in cases of serious misconduct.

“Such a contract may include the setting of specific goals that must be achieved within certain specified time frames and also certain conditions.” (Sebisha, 2015:16)

Extract from the letter of contract by the learner, the letter was written in Setswana and translated by the researcher. In the letter, the learner promised to listen in class during lessons, apologise to the educator, refrain from playing outside during lessons, be a learner and do her schoolwork all the time.

“Go retsa mo phaposing, go ikopela maitsharo, le gosa tlhole ke tsamekela kwa ntle, ke nne ngwana wa sekolo, ke dire tiro ya sekolo malatsi otlhe.”

In the case whereby a learner deviated from any of the commitments, the form clearly stated that parents were to be called, and further referrals were to be made to the SGB and SDC. There was a certain level of collaboration as per requirements of the contract form at each stage of attempts to improve or manage discipline at the school, as it appeared and stated to request the collaborative involvement of the learner, educator, witnesses to the incident and the principal. The contract forms were stapled together with daily incidents of learner behaviour as was found in the principal’s “Notebook”. However, parents did not sign all contracts; some only had learners’ signatures on them. This confirms that parents were often not part of this process. In perusal of the other two schools’ document, there was no evidence of such a form.

Commitment agreements by learners and parents

In dealing with minor incidents of misconduct, it was found from records of one of the selected schools that there was evidence of another separate form that was given to the learner to complete and sign together with either parents or guardians in the presence of the subject educator and the principal. The incidents were also recorded in the educator’s daily record of incidents and signed by both the parents, the learner and the educator.

The principal of the school kept an incident book that was separate from those kept by educators in dealing with classroom misconduct. This daily commitment agreement confirmed that the SGB and SDC had scheduled meetings with learners and parents for discipline purposes. Evidence confirmed that most of the meetings were individual or one on one with a particular learner and parents.

It was reported by one of the educator participants from the particular school that the form was used for Grade 12 learners as a way of monitoring their performance to ensure good results at the end of the school year. However, the school decided to make use of the form across all

the grades following the impact its usage had on performance and discipline. This form had a section that was completed by the learner, acknowledging failure to comply on a specific subject at a specific date – this was stated as a level 2 offence in the code of conduct. The form also had a section, where learners had to promise to be responsible in doing their schoolwork, failing which, further serious steps would be taken according to the school's code of conduct for level 2 offences.

The commitment agreement was recommended as one of the strategies that could be helpful in dealing with problematic or aggressive learners. It placed the responsibility on educators to ensure that learners were actively involved in lessons and given responsibilities that would encourage a change in their behaviour while they in turn had to commit in writing how they would change their behaviour (Sebisha, 2015:16).

Parents had to acknowledge and agree to the measures taken regarding the learner, and had to promise, by signing the form, to be available continually for assisting their child with any school related work. The availability of these completed and signed forms was evidence of the level of effectiveness of the collaboration of the SGB and SDC at this school.

However, most of the forms were missing parents' information and signatures. It was proof that not all parents were actively involved in learner's school related matters. Some of the forms did not provide all the information and others were not fully completed

These deficiencies might have had a negative impact on discipline, resulting in some learners continuing with the misconduct realising that the form was not taken seriously and that no further steps would be taken against them. The forms that were made available to the researcher appeared to be only those of a few educators. There was also a record of a learner who was referred by an educator to the SGB and SDC for intervention but no evidence of follow up and feedback was found.

This indicated to the researcher that some educators were not collaborating in stopping such types of misconduct even though the SGB and SDC were trying to assist them. Records also showed that other educators were merely not keeping or reporting records of such nature to the relevant structures.

Letters to parents for repeated transgressions by learners

Letters were issued to parents about a learner's transgressing behaviour. They were formal documents, with the name of the school, the letterhead, address, contact details and date it

was addressed to the parents. The letters explained to the parents what led to the action by the school, inviting them formally to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

In these letters it was stated that learners were to be released and were expected to come back with their parents, honouring the invitation and making themselves available for further discussions on the learners' repeated behaviour. This also confirmed data from interviews that suggested that parents were invited to work with the educators, principal, SGB and SDC in dealing with and improving discipline. However, this confirmed that they were not involved in daily disciplinary issues. They were only invited periodically.

These letters were formally signed and issued to learners by the principal to give to their parents/guardians. In the letters there were no clear indications that collaborative discussions took place between the SDC educator members and the principal, and that conclusions were reached by all parties to invite parents. The only evidence was that members had knowledge of the letters and their content, as the letters were either given to them to read or to keep as a reminder of the date set for meetings with the parents. The researcher concluded this because she saw the word "*ATTENTION*" handwritten on top of each of the letters followed by the names of members and their signatures. This confirmed data from interviews that principals frequently made decisions on discipline related matters on their own or with the SMT, while side-lining the SGB and SDC, educators, learners and parents.

It was evident from records that most parents did not arrive for the meeting and/or were not willing to take steps to assist in improving learner discipline. There was evidence of acknowledgements slips that were returned unsigned by learners.

Disciplinary hearings

Records of disciplinary hearings would prove that SGB–SDC collaboration led to such hearings to improve learner discipline at schools. Disciplinary hearing minutes were made available to the researcher at one of the schools. Most cases involved a fair representation by members of the SGB and SDC as per attendance registers accompanying each of the minutes provided. This gave an indication that there were discussions and joint conclusions. Records were kept in an exercise book with evidence of copies of invitation letters sent/given to parents and members of the SGB and SDC stapled to the book. The records were from previous years up to the current year of 2021.

The minutes of the hearings dated back to 2021, and they detailed offences by learners, measures taken on the day of the offence and the date of the actual hearing by the SGB and SDC, and whether any other external structures were involved. The records confirmed to a

certain extent the interview responses from participants that disciplinary hearing processes and procedures were handled collaboratively with the inclusion of external stakeholders. However, there was still more work that needed to be done to improve the collaboration through attendance and active engagement by all stakeholders.

In perusal of the school's records of learner misconduct, the researcher came across several records where there was evidence of collaboration by internal and external structures, such as other government departments, officials from the DOE, enrichment programmes and some indication of attendance by parents/guardians of learners. However, this was not evident in all the minutes.

In one specific record from the school, the hearing involved the intervention of the circuit manager who individually conducted one-on-one intervention sessions with each one of the four learners who were reported of bunking classes and refusing to do schoolwork. This confirmed that the disciplinary hearing cases were indeed, as based on interview data, a measure to correct learners' behaviour rather than punish the learners.

In a record of a disciplinary hearing, a statement was found by a principal emphasising that collaborative efforts were needed for disciplinary hearing processes: *"Thuto ya ngwana ke ho mokopanela"* simply translates to *"A child's education is dependent on collaborations"*

In another record of a disciplinary hearing, a Grade 8 learner had pointed a toy gun at one of the educators during his Social Sciences period. The case was referred to the SGB and SDC and was referred to Social Development for intervention. A copy of a formal learner referral letter was kept in the principal's daily records of learner misconduct, and one was reported to have been given to the parent to produce to Social Development on their arrival.

"A parent came to school and requested a referral letter to Social Development – ADOPT-A-COP was invited to school for intervention."

This was extracted from reports of the principal at Ketsahalo. A letter was given to the grandfather to provide to the social worker which indicated that the learner had been referred for the second time to DSD.

The school in most cases had sourced the assistance and intervention of enrichment programmes offered by DSD such as *"KHULISA"*. Several learners following such a programme improved their behaviour as they had agreed to in the *"LETTER OF COMMITMENT"*.

In each of the disciplinary records given to the researcher, learners were informed of their rights and responsibilities as enshrined in the disciplinary policy. This was evidence that the schools were attempting to improve learner discipline, through ensuring learners were well-informed before they committed to act in accordance with the code of conduct and disciplinary system.

At the other schools' evidence of cases brought forth were of previous years dating back to a period between 2011 and 2014 and 2013 and 2015. The records indicated that conclusions in some cases were reached in a meeting with parents, principal, SGB and SDC members. The absence of recent records was however a clear indication that members at the two schools were not doing what they were expected to in terms of section 7(5) of the SASA which states that "every educator is **responsible for discipline at all times** at the school and at school related activities. Educators have **full authority and responsibility to correct the behaviour** of learners whenever such correction is necessary at the school. **Serious misconduct must be referred to the principal** of the school" (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:74)

Participants from two schools reported that they did not have serious incidents of misconduct leading to disciplinary hearings for a long time. This might either indicate that the schools dealt with all offences, whether minor or serious, in a similar way, or that the code of conduct was not adhered to leading to all cases being treated in the same way. This also implied that parents were not consulted/involved. These deficiencies would hamper the improvement of learner discipline by the school.

The files that were provided by the two schools were those of their previous principals dating back to the years stated above. In the previous years' files, there was a certain level of indication that committees worked in collaboration with the SGB. Matters of discipline were discussed in participation with the SDC and SGB members, parents, learners and educators.

This evidence confirmed a report that was made by one of the educators at one of the schools when asked by the researcher to provide the disciplinary hearing file; the educator said that they did not have recent records because they have not had serious cases of misconduct leading to disciplinary hearings for learners.

The last statement by the SDC educator and evidence from the two schools, confirmed that they were merely handling disciplinary cases as they wished with no adherence to the code of conduct and that regular monitoring was not done at the school. This confirmed that the SGB and SDC were not actively and effectively collaborating to deal with and improve learner discipline at these schools.

Correspondence letters for disciplinary hearings

Incidents were brought to the attention of the principals by educators. The principals forwarded the cases reported to the SDC; the referrals depended on the level of the incident based on the schools' code of conduct. Invitation letters were given to both parties, the perpetrators and the culprits in the case to further give the letters to parents for the case to proceed.

However, some of the cases took place without parents' availability due to reasons that were not recorded in the minutes. Members of the SGB and SDC were also informed by the principals of the cases, the level of their severity and the dates of the cases. These were communicated either verbally or in writing, as some meetings had evidence of invitation letters attached, while some letters were missing or not filed but, in those minutes, there were some references made to all the letters.

Based on the letters, it seemed as if it was the principal's responsibility to refer a learner to either the SDC or SGB as they were the only ones listed to formally sign the letters. There was no indication on the letters of other members having the authority to do so. Nevertheless, the incident book at one school and previous years' files from the other two schools showed evidence of only minor incidents being discussed by educators concerned, the departmental heads, some members of the SGB and SDC, the learners. Parents were involved and informed through letters and invited before the matter could escalate. The SGB and SDC were also furnished with copies of the letters to acknowledge that the incidents had been brought to their attention.

Referral letters to SGB and SDC

These letters outlined the name of the learners concerned, the grades, types of misconduct and the dates on which the offences took place, times, persons involved, assets – weapons used in case any were used – and the level of transgression according to the code of conduct. These letters also stated the corrective measures undertaken while the matter was referred to the SGB and SDC. Attached were also evidence of attempts that were undertaken to correct past incidents.

5.7.1.1.2 Use of multiple approaches (extra commitments)

Regular grade and phase meetings with parents and learners on discipline

The schools had records of parent–learner meetings per grade. These meetings were held to inform parents of learners' academic performance and their overall behaviour. According to

records, these meetings were held quarterly, some more than once, depending on whether incidents of misconduct occurred.

At one of the schools, one such meeting was held for the purpose of discussing an escalation of gangsterism affecting not only the safety of learners and educators, but also of the community where the school was situated. This was accompanied by vandalism of school property. The meeting was followed by a disciplinary hearing for some of the learners at the school. Based on the information in the records, the learners were alleged gang members and were suspected to be responsible for the vandalism at the school.

The meeting was attended by members of SAPS, DSD, members of the SGB and SDC, a teacher liaison officer, parents, RCL members and educators. The records at the school, therefore, substantiated the reports of extended collaboration by participants.

5.7.2 Objective 2: Explore the depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC in improving discipline

5.7.2.1 The depth of the collaboration between SGB and SDC in improving discipline

The document analysis at schools under study revealed that the level of collaboration between the SGB and SDC varied greatly and was based on adherence to their mandated functions. Some extra commitments to strengthen collaboration towards improving discipline was found at some of the schools. The collaboration at the schools ranged from none, to inconsistent, to strong.

5.7.2.1.1 Varying degrees of collaboration

5.7.2.1.1.1 Lack of collaboration

No evidence of training or workshops offered by the DOE on discipline

The responses from some participants of never having attended training on the code of conduct or on discipline, was verified by document analysis as there was no indication in the files or documents brought forth to the researcher of any circular on any developmental training or any disciplinary related policy from the DOE.

5.7.2.1.1.2 Inconsistent collaboration

Collaborative efforts in the development of documents and policies on discipline

The schools made use of the following documents and policies in their approach to improve and manage learner discipline. The documents and policies were informed by the SASA, and this was referred to in their code of conducts.

In support of reports from participants, document analysis demonstrated to an extent that the codes of conduct offered to the researcher at each of the schools were developed in collaboration, judging from the signatures that were evident on the last page of the documents. However, the signatures in some of these codes of conduct indicated that the codes of conduct were just recycled. This was evidence of the inconsistency at the schools in regularly reviewing the code of conduct.

The codes of conduct made available listed offences according to level, suitable sanctions and the persons who were responsible for dealing with such offences. One of these codes of conduct displayed the mission and vision of the school on the first page of the document. Nonetheless, these codes of conduct did not come across as formal documents that were taken seriously or respected at the schools.

Inconsistency in the minutes of disciplinary hearings

Disciplinary hearing minutes were found in the records of Ketsahalo. There was evidence of attendance by the SGB, the SDC, educators concerned, and learners and their parents/guardians. A note was found, stapled to the records of the disciplinary hearing, of a parent who could not make it to the hearing which was then rescheduled for another day.

There were suggestions that schools should set up meetings on days that can accommodate parents who are working and who must travel far to schools (Pillay,2012:82). The date, place and time of the meeting must be communicated to parents and other stakeholders before the set date. The purpose of the meetings must also be communicated.

According to the documentary evidence, external collaborators and members from other school committees, such as the School Assessment and Irregularity Committee (SAIC) also attended. SAIC members attended as it was alleged that Grade 12 learners had stolen an exam paper. The case was first reported to SAIC and was referred to the SGB and SDC.

The hearing minutes were not properly organised, were handwritten and kept in exercise books with minutes of other meetings. The minutes were recorded in English, and some in Setswana. There was no evidence of cases which were referred to the HOD for expulsion. All the cases were handled by the SGB, SDC, parents, learners, educators and the principal joined by other internal and external stakeholders when they were needed. In the documents

that were given to the researcher, there was no evidence of letters to parents informing them of the hearing.

It was found in this study that there was an inconsistency in how the schools handled serious incidents of misconducts and applied the code of conduct. In documents that were offered to the researcher at the other two schools, there were no records of disciplinary hearing cases that had taken place.

5.7.2.1.1.3 Strong collaboration

Extended collaboration with other committees

In perusal of the documents offered to the researcher, there were minutes of meetings that were held at one particular school on learners' misconducts that specifically took place during examination sessions. These meetings were attended by the SGB, SDC and the SAIC. Based on this evidence, there seemed to be strong collaboration at this specific school between the SAIC and members of the SGB and SDC.

These records reflected that these misconduct cases referred to the SGB and SDC for disciplinary hearings were for learners who had cheated during an examination session, stolen question papers, and were found to be under the influence of drugs.

At these meetings like at any other disciplinary hearings, parents were invited, learners who transgressed, invigilators/educators concerned and the SAIC. In accordance with the learners' code of conduct, trading examination material for personal monetary gain was categorised under level 4–5 offences, which may lead to community service, detention or even expulsion from school.

These records confirm collaborative efforts of the SGB, SDC and the SAIC in dealing with and improving discipline at the particular school.

5.7.3 Objective 3: Determining the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving learner discipline

5.7.3.1 The effectiveness of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline

It emerged from interviews with participants and from the document analysis that the SGB and SDC collaboration is effective to a certain extent. The effectiveness is in relation to the availability of the code of conduct that were reported to have been developed in collaboration with other stakeholders. However, despite the availability of these codes of conduct, some of

them were not updated or reviewed periodically as expected and there was also inconsistent application of the policy at the schools, which resulted in the overall implementation being somewhat ineffective in improving discipline. Furthermore, the ineffectiveness of the collaboration also included the DOE's ineffective monitoring system of the SGB and SDC functionality. This will be further discussed in the themes and sub-themes below.

5.7.3.1.1 Effective to an extent

5.7.3.1.1.1 Effective in relation to developing policies

Availability of the code of conduct for learners

Based on the analysis of data, it was observable that the code of conduct was available at the three selected secondary schools. In analysing the documents, the codes of conduct differed in their formats, the school emblems and the fonts used. However, they each contained the basic minimum information, such as the preamble, the school's mission and vision, principles and values, responsibility of parents with respect to the code of conduct, punishment, disciplinary hearing procedures and an appeal process. They were also in accordance with the SASA.

The policy and the codes of conduct at the schools also stated exactly what had to be done, how, at which stage and by whom. Offences were classified according to their levels, from minor to serious misconduct, and actions or measures that need to be taken and the person or persons responsible to deal with the misconduct displayed by a learner(s) were also present.

According to these codes of conducts, Level 1 and 2 offences could be dealt with by the teacher and grade head/HOD at the school while parents had to be kept informed. Level 2 offences could be dealt with by the deputy principal if the behaviour is repeated. The way this information was outlined in the code of conduct differed from one school to another, some were clearer and more explicit than others. The goal in each school's code of conduct was to ensure that the rights of learners were not contravened when applying the sanctions in accordance with the offences. According to a study by Narain (2013), the rights of children and their protection from harm are among "the central objects of the Schools Act". Sebisha (2015:9) adds that community norms and values are also central objects in the development of the code of conduct.

The codes of conduct were available according to documents reviewed by the researcher. However, they were not frequently updated in compliance with review dates that were found in some of them.

5.7.3.1.1.2 Ineffective in terms of implementation of the policies and monitoring of the SGB and SDC

Codes of conduct not being updated

The codes of conduct for learners were available in the records but they were not neatly typed, the font was so small that they were difficult to read, and the school emblem was missing at some of the schools. At one school in particular, the code of conduct was last signed in 2018, with no proof that it was reviewed and re-adopted since then. This indicates ineffectiveness of the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline.

No amendments were made in the codes of conduct of all the schools to adapt to changes, for instance disciplining learners under Covid-19 regulations, such as the wearing of masks and sanctions for the refusal to wearing a mask.

Documents revealed that at the other two schools: Tau and Mokokoane, the code of conduct dated back two terms before the current SGB. The codes of conduct still had the then members' signatures and those of previous principals. These codes of conduct were last updated when the previous principals were in position, and they dated back to between 2011–2015. The old code of conduct that was in the file from one of the schools (Ketsahalo), had each level of offence followed by the sanctions and responsibilities of all stakeholders outlined orderly according to level of offence.

The SGB, SDC and other stakeholders were not collaborating in improving discipline of learners, as some educators and principals were dealing with cases of learner misconduct as they saw fit. There were no common goals and collective efforts in the improvement of discipline at the schools. The SGB, SDC and SMT at the schools continued for about two to three consecutive terms in office without having updated policies or at least changed the stamps and signatures on the codes.

This gave a perception of ignorance of learner discipline and the role that should have been played by SGB members during those. Monitoring by the DOE of the effectiveness of SGB–SDC collaboration seemed to not have been done. Two schools used outdated codes of conducts and school policies, which were reviewed six years ago. There were reports of schools with incomplete code of conducts with the exclusion of important information such as learners' responsibilities, disciplinary hearing cases and informing learners of their right to appeal (Sebisha, 2015:19).

Codes were not adapted to cater for Covid-19 and the use of cell phones at school or during school holidays. Most educators were expected to plan and communicate lessons to learners via technological methods, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown of schools.

Codes of conduct were written in English which is the language of instruction at the schools. However, most learners at these schools are Setswana speaking and so are their parents. This policy, therefore, did not accommodate learners and their parents, and there was no indication of an attempt to ensure that all parties understood the content within the code of conduct. Even educators seemed to have little knowledge of the offences within the school's code of conduct and which sanctions had to be applied for which transgression.

Non-uniformity in the implementation of disciplinary documents at schools

Analysis of documents offered to the researcher at the schools, revealed that they were not using the same policies for disciplining learners. Two schools, Mokokoane and Tau, did not use the same documents found at Ketsahalo. There was no system in place for daily records of learner misconduct, and no contract forms and commitment agreement forms. These documents were used at Ketsahalo as a strategy of dealing with discipline at their school.

According to a study conducted by Sebisha (2015:16), a contract of behaviour or a "formal written contract" can be used strategically by educators not only for dealing with minor misconduct by learners but also for more serious cases of misconduct. These contracts of learner behaviour must be accompanied by goals set by learners.

The unavailability and non-uniformity of such documents might impact on the state of overall discipline at these schools. Based on records at schools, it is evident that not all educators are adhering to the policies, documents and strategies as mandated by the DOE. This further reflects poorly on the state of collaboration at these schools.

5.7.3.1.1.3 Minutes of meetings

Lack of evidence of minutes of meetings on discipline

Although there was documentary evidence of minutes of meetings held at the schools, such as quarterly meetings with parents, with discipline usually an item on the agenda and minutes of these meetings, there was no evidence of specific meetings on discipline, formulation, and enforcement of the code of conduct for learners. Not all minutes had attendance registers. There was evidence of attendance by only one external collaborator, the SAPS. Some meetings had better attendance than others.

There was no evidence of correspondence letters that were given to parents inviting them to these meetings to check whether poor attendance might have been due to parents only knowing a week or days prior about the meetings. Some meetings were held on weekday afternoons and others on weekends, particularly on Sundays; attendance on weekend days were better than during the week. This could have been because parents were at work during the week. In some meetings not all members of the school community were present but there were apologies written in most of them for members of the SGB, SDC and educators as they themselves were part of the meeting. Attendance of educators was poorer on weekends than on weekdays.

Ineffective monitoring of SGB and SDC functionality

An SGB functionality tool surfaced during document analysis. It was found in an SGB file of the previous principal at one of the schools, dated 29 November 2008. In the tool report, monitors commented that the SGB's constitution was not endorsed by the structure, learner code of conduct was outdated, and disciplinary meetings by the SGB were rated zero. Recommendations were made to the SGB, that meetings be convened, and they were advised to investigate issues of policies as a matter of urgency. There was no evidence of a follow-up meeting or feedback sessions held with members to provide clarity on exactly how things should be done for them to improve.

The date of 2008 on the functionality tool reflects a lack of regular monitoring of the effectiveness of the SGB, SDC and other subcommittees. Ineffective monitoring done by the departmental officials reported through interviews was firmly established during document analysis.

5.7.4 Objective 4: Suggestion of ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline

5.7.4.1 Ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC towards improving discipline

Based on interviews with participants and from the document analysis, there were suggestions that the SGB and SDC can make use of multiple approaches in their collaboration towards improving discipline. These approaches are internal efforts that could be taken by the SGB and SDC in collaboration with members of the school community, such as parents, learners and educators. In addition, there should be external approaches by the DOE that could further strengthen the collaboration of the SGB and SDC in improving discipline at schools. These approaches will be discussed further in the themes and sub-themes below.

5.7.4.1.1 Multiple approaches (internal efforts)

5.7.4.1.1.1 Extended collaboration with all school committees in improving discipline

Based on data from the documents analysed, confirmed by interviews with participants, it was evident that the SGB and SDC worked closely and collaboratively to a large extent with some of the school committees/substructures in improving discipline.

Through document analysis, it was evident that not all school committees were involved; therefore, there was a need for joint efforts from within the school to ensure collaboration by all stakeholders. Discipline should not be a matter of the SGB and SDC alone but the whole school community must be actively involved.

5.7.4.1.1.2 Continual collaborative review/updates of the code of conduct

The codes of conduct that were made available to the researcher were outdated and not updated in years. The schools seemed to have been recycling the code of conduct of previous years. There was one school out of the three which had a recent year's date on their school's code of conduct. At the other schools, signatures were those of previous years' principals and members who some were no longer part of the SGB or the SDC. The researcher through the analysis of documents noticed that there were possibilities that the code of conduct might not have been used at these schools; hence, the outdated copies which were given to the researcher.

There needs to be a continual collaborative update of the code of conduct during each new term of the SGB and SDC. According to a study conducted by Pillay (2015:67), parents, educators and learners had differing views on the revision of the policy, with some suggesting that it should be revised whenever a need arises, and others of the view that it should be revised annually. The update or review of the code of conduct needs to be done in a collaborative manner by all stakeholders to ensure familiarity with the content enshrined in the policy (Narain, 2015:34). To ensure familiarity and ownership, there needs to be consultation with all stakeholders, such as learners, parents and educators.

Evidence suggested that there was a need for the code of conduct to be updated continually to accommodate the changes in education, and the broader contextual factors that might be affecting teaching and learning and the discipline and conduct of learners. One such broader contextual factor being the current issue of Coronavirus disease and its impact on the day-to-day teaching and learning.

In all the codes of conduct made available to the researcher, there was a lack of communication of rules and processes, for example, for the wearing of masks by learners, for social distancing, and a listing of the level of offences and their sanctions.

For the code of conduct to be effective, it must be current and practical and contain procedures that will assist the school to deal with learner misconduct (Pillay, 2015:67).

The continual update of the code of conduct, if done correctly in engagements and agreements with all members of the school community, might have a positive impact on the overall discipline of learners. The continual update might also foster adherence to and ownership of the code of conduct, and increased knowledge and understanding of this policy. In support of the statement, Narain (2015:34) stated that “the premise is, once ownership is bestowed over the rules and regulations compliance becomes easier.”

5.7.4.1.1.3 SGB and SDC involvement and collaboration at all levels of offence

Based on analysis of documents and reports from interview data, the SGB and SDC collaborate to deal with serious acts of misconducts considered as level 4–5 offences. This meant that the two only assembled or collaborated to discuss issues pertaining to serious incidents of misconduct by learners, when a case was referred to them by the school principal.

There was limited scope of the SGB and SDC when it came to discipline at schools according to the documents analysed, which might have had a negative impact on the behaviour at the schools. The state of discipline according to document analyses indicated that collaboration of all stakeholders in discipline should be evident from minor to serious acts of misconducts. If all were jointly and collaboratively working towards a common goal, there might be a positive impact on discipline and strengthened collaborative relations of the SGB and SDC with all other stakeholders. This means that collaboration must be uniform across all offences stipulated in the code of conduct. Minor incidents of misconduct should not only be the responsibility of class managers or individual subject educators, but the SGB and SDC should also be involved.

This suggested that all cases should be discussed, and decisions reached collaboratively for all offences. Consequently, there might be fewer cases of serious misconduct that warranted the attention of the SGB and SDC for suspension or expulsion because issues of discipline would be dealt with collaboratively before they could escalate to major or serious incidents.

5.7.4.1.2 Multiple approaches (external efforts)

5.7.4.1.2.1 Ongoing monitoring of the functionality of the SGB and SDC

Based on reports by participants and analyses of documents by the researcher, it was evident that there was a serious lack of monitoring to assess the functionality of the SGB and SDC. According to the documents that were made available, there had never been monitoring by the DOE, in particular the area/circuit office of the department, or by the principal at school level.

In improving collaboration, evidence showed that it could be important for school principals to have their own internal monitoring and functionality tool that would help them to check on the status of the SGB and SDC collaboration, and its effectiveness in dealing with and improving discipline.

Internal monitoring might be of assistance in encouraging SGB and SDC and the entire school community to be consistent in their collaboration and in dealing with and improving discipline because they know that monitoring will be done. Internal monitoring should be extended to include external monitoring with the collaboration of the area/circuit officials. The monitoring channels or processes need to be a chain that is handed over from school level until national level not only to check on functioning and effectiveness but to use monitoring as a tool to develop and empower all stakeholders.

5.7.4.1.2.2 Developmental training on discipline

Training and capacitation of the SGB and SDC surfaced as one of the ways of improving the collaboration towards improving discipline. It emerged that most stakeholders were lacking adequate knowledge on issues pertaining to learner discipline. Therefore, the SGB and SDC and all other stakeholders must be equipped with the necessary information pertaining to discipline and all disciplinary related documents, to ensure the effectiveness of their collaboration and improvement in discipline.

Based on analysis, it was evident that each selected school dealt with learner discipline differently. This was evident in the findings of discipline related documents that were not uniformly used by the schools. The documents in question were daily records of discipline, contracts of behaviour with learners and commitment with learners and parents on the improvement of discipline at one school but not available or used in others.

This suggests that most stakeholders, if not all, need to be trained and be well-informed on all the necessary documents which are needed for dealing with learner discipline at schools. All

should clearly understand all the processes and procedures which need to be followed and the relevant persons to undertake such procedures.

There was documentary evidence of specially arranged SGB training for members at one of the schools. This organised training only followed a complaint laid by the chairperson of the SGB and was done without the knowledge and collective agreement of members of the SGB. The said meeting was held in June 2021. It was stated in the minutes that the principal took the decision with the school's administrative clerk, without having consulted other members.

The training following the meeting was then held at the school on 8 July 2021. The training covered functions and duties of members, roles of the principal, SGB and other committees. It also addressed the dissimilarities in the management role of the principal and the roles of the SMT and the SGB. In the records of the training, the departmental official who conducted the training, acknowledged that their office had been slow in training the SGB and the principals on matters of governance and management, and that it could be the reason for the lack of communication, trust, knowledge of roles and responsibilities and teamwork among SGB members and their subcommittees. According to Maree (2016:237), "it can also be concluded that this distinction may give rise to conflicts between the governing body and the principal of the school, especially if they do not know who is responsible for what and who is accountable to whom."

One other piece of evidence of training was a copy of an invitation letter from the DOE that was only addressed to principals and executive members of the SGB (secretary, treasurer and chairperson). This confirmed that there was a lack of training for members on learner discipline, while the DOE focused on the finance committee of the SGB. This was reported on many occasions by participants and was verified during the researcher's analysis of documents available at the schools.

In the letter from the circuit manager, reference was made to the SASA, stressing the importance of training.

"In accordance to SASA 84 of 1996 section 19(a) as amended, an introductory training for newly elected governing bodies should be provided to enable them to perform their functions and 19 (b) to provide continuing training governing bodies to promote effective performance of their functions or to enable them to assume additional functions"

This confirms that training is needed for all members and not only a selected few to empower them to effectively take on their roles in improving discipline. The more informed members are, the more active and effective they will be. Their knowledge and comprehension of the

disciplinary policy and of discipline could have a positive impact on the overall state of discipline at the schools.

5.7.4.1.2.3 Productive and convenient channels of communication with parents

Schools communicated with parents, according to the evidence of registers of meetings and acknowledgement slips. The invitation to parents was in a letter format accompanied by acknowledgement slips to be signed by parents as a proof that they received the letter and were aware of its content. However, the majority of acknowledgement slips that were filed were unsigned by parents. This could mean that they did not receive the letters from learners or did not care to accept the invitation which might be a reason for their lack of attendance in meetings (Pillay, 2012:66). Consequently, there was poor communication with parents regarding rules and legislation.

The mode of communication with parents was clearly ineffective. This might have led to a lack of parental involvement in meetings to discuss discipline. The first stage of communication to parents, on the formulation of the code of conduct should be through newsletters which explain the plans and the importance of their involvement in this process (Sebisha, 2015:17). This further suggested that schools' principals, the SGB and SDC must produce more effective and convenient ways of communicating with parents and inviting them to schools. The mode of communication should be accessible to all learners and parents alike.

5.8 Synergy between data from interviews and document analyses

According to participants, a lack of collaborative engagement was reported which was ascribed to insufficient knowledge and a lack of interest by parents and educators in the code of conduct. The lack of engagement was also evident in analyses of documents as attendance registers for meetings showed lack of parent turn-up and engagement in meetings, especially in discussions of discipline. The lack of knowledge and interest was found to have negatively impacted on educators' and parents' engagement and commitment when it comes to discipline at schools.

The concept of collaborative governance requires a joint effort and shared decision-making when it comes to the formulation and implementation of policies (Mustary, 2022:154). In this study, although the code of conduct was available as reported in interviews, it was found that some codes of conduct were not updated or reviewed; furthermore, in some instances, codes of conduct were not implemented as was communicated in interviews by participants. It was evident that collaborative governance principles, such as fairness, as required by rules and

laws, were compromised. This impacted negatively on the existing lack of knowledge that was one of the findings of this study.

Based on data from participants, there were daily records of misconduct by all educators. However, there were some contradictions in analyses of documents as not all educators and principals made their records available, and not all the schools kept similar documents or records of dealing with minor incidents of misconduct. This is evidence that there was lack of communication and transparency that are needed at the schools to ensure collaborative governance in improving discipline.

There was an agreement in the data collected from both interviews and analyses of documents on the collaboration of other government departments with the SGB and SDC. There were reports that the DSD, DCS, and SAPS have been actively working with the schools in assisting with outreach programmes, awareness programmes, and other discipline-related issues. Based on records and reports the collaboration has proven to be of assistance in managing overall discipline of learners at the schools. The findings are an indication that collaborative governance was used at the schools through the involvement of both internal and external stakeholders. This emphasises that “Collaborative governance constitutes the coming together of different sectors that have the same interest in education” Mustary, 2022:153).

SBST and SAIC subcommittees were also actively involved in collaboration with the SGB and SDC in improving discipline. This was reported in interviews and was evident in the documents that were given to the researcher for analysis. The minutes of meetings were available even though they were not in all the schools’ files or documents. Based on the reports, there was a certain level of communication and feedback through meetings.

One other thing that interview data and document analysis had in common was the lack of departmental workshops and training on discipline and code of conduct. It was reported by participants and evident from records that the DOE never scheduled workshops or any other form of training for the SGB and SDC in dealing with discipline. The focus, instead, was on training executive members of SGB and the finance committee. Based on these findings, accountability was not exercised by the relevant department to ensure development of members and the improvement of learner discipline. Collaborative governance in this study suffered due to the government’s (DOE) lack of investment in discipline compared to other areas of governance, for example, finance (Mustary, 2022:155).

5.9 Summary

School principals are responsible for training and mentoring educators on their roles in school committees, specifically the SDC and the SGB, in managing ill-discipline at schools. Most participants have reported that the DOE was not providing training or workshops to school committees, specifically the SDC and SGB, in dealing with learner discipline.

There are collaborative efforts by external stakeholders, such as SAPS, DOH, and DSD, but less support from the school community of learners, parents, and educators at each school. Most support is given and is available to a school that shows willingness to work in collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders towards improving and managing learner misconduct.

The school code of conduct, as a policy document that deals with managing learner discipline daily was often only used at schools when there was a serious misconduct, which according to most responses by participants from two of the schools had not taken place in recent years; this was confirmed during document analysis as there was no evidence of disciplinary hearing proceedings available at these schools. Minor incidents seemed to be matters that were superficially dealt with in isolation by an educator with the implicated learner. There were few to no records of class or daily incident books available at these two schools.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapters presented the introduction of the study, a review of the relevant literature relating to this study, the research design and methodology used, and a discussion of the findings on the collaboration between the secondary school SGB and SDC towards improving discipline in the North West province.

This chapter will present a summary of the study, provide recommendations based on the findings, and conclude the study.

6.2 Summary of the study

This study focused on the collaboration between the secondary school SGB and SDC to examine the approach and depth of the collaboration towards improving discipline.

This study provided a review of relevant literature on the SGB and its substructure, the SDC, learner discipline in schools, learner code of conduct, the extended collaboration of the SGB with the SDC and relevant stakeholders, such as learners, parents and educators.

The focus in this study was on the collaboration between the SGB and SDC in improving discipline within three selected secondary schools. The study was based on an interpretivist paradigm using a qualitative research design. Collaborative governance was the theoretical framework used to direct the study. A case study approach was employed: the case was the collaboration between secondary school governing bodies and disciplinary committees towards improving discipline at three secondary schools in North West. Purposive sampling was used, consisting of the principals, SGB chairpersons, SDC educators, and parent members. Data was collected by means of interviews and document analyses.

The findings showed that decentralisation of education to members of school communities played a major role in promoting a conducive environment for quality education of learners and a collaborative governance for all stakeholders. It showed that parents, educators, and learners must be engaged and actively involved in ensuring a purposeful environment for learners and educators alike.

It was further indicated in this study that in improving discipline, the SGB and SDC must collaborate in a consistent manner with other school committees, and with government departments, reaching all stakeholders. The extension of this collaboration must start with ensuring that all stakeholders are actively involved in the formulation and review of the

disciplinary policy to the total implementation and adherence to it. For active involvement to be achieved, all members must be aware of their roles and responsibilities in their collaborative governance. Good collaborative governance is based on shared responsibilities, interdependence and joint efforts, where goals and strategies are built by a collective, not in isolation.

In addition, it was highlighted that training and development of members play an integral role in the consistency and effectiveness of collaborative efforts to improve discipline – all members need to know and own their duties and responsibilities. Training and development of members is vital in a collaborative governance, as it will enhance their commitment as well as improve their performance towards a common goal.

In ascertaining effective collaboration, the SGB and SDC must make use of various approaches, such as implementing discipline related policies and documents, continually engaging parents, including them in meetings where indicated, and extending their collaboration to other school committees and other government departments. This is whereby external stakeholders also need to be brought into this collaboration governance towards improving discipline at schools or the education in South Africa.

There were important challenges the SGB and SDC encountered which had an impact on their effectiveness, such as inconsistent collaborative efforts in implementing disciplinary policies, ineffective monitoring of their effectiveness, and the lack of training and support by the DOE regarding disciplinary matters. For this reason, collaborative governance must be intensified to achieve the goals of education, specifically improve the state of discipline in our schools.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

6.3.1 Training and regular support

The DOE must make it a priority to support and train the SGB and SDC on disciplinary matters, in the same way that it supports and provides training on finance, and recruitment and placement of educators. They must avoid only reacting when things fall apart creating the impression that they only care about preventing negative media attention. The education and training provided to SGBs and educators should give special attention to their legislative rights and responsibilities as set out in the SASA, so that they would be able to enforce discipline without contravening learners' rights.

SDC and SGB members must be equipped with the necessary skills to implement the processes and procedures they must follow in dealing with incidents of serious misconduct and the holding of disciplinary hearings.

Training should be provided on the differences in the responsibilities of the SGB, as a governance structure, versus those of the principal, as the manager of the school, so that the conflict that was evident in the study could be avoided in future. Each one needs to “know who is responsible for what and who is accountable to whom” (Maree, 2007:237). Schlebusch *et al.* (2021:14) suggest that “training on positive discipline should be part of the pre-service educator training curriculum”.

Monitoring of the work expected from the SGB and the SDC should be done regularly at schools to check on their functionality. In collaborative governance, monitoring is important because it can enhance the formulation and implementation of policies (Mustary, 2022:156). This will motivate the SGB, SDC, the principals and educators to do the work and keep records of the work; but, more importantly, monitoring will give an indication of areas where support and training are needed the most. Provincial and national government also need to facilitate various activities at the district level, such as mentoring, workshopping and training of stakeholders, aimed at significantly improving education quality at school level (Mawar *et al.*, 2021:381)

The DOE must empower educators with knowledge and skills to enable them to deal with each case of ill-discipline that arises at schools. More developmental workshops are needed for educators on dealing with poor discipline. The focus must be on issues that affect learners daily.

Learners must be provided with knowledge and understanding of the purpose of the learner code of conduct. This must be the responsibility of the whole school community and not only educators, SGB and SDC. The code of conduct should be applied daily at schools, especially for minor incidents; and should be displayed in classrooms for learners to accept that the code of conduct forms part of their daily lives. For this to be achieved, commitment is needed from all internal and external collaborators (Mawar, 2021:387).

6.3.2 Parental involvement

Parental involvement plays a major role in education and the overall upbringing of a child. Therefore, parents must be involved in each aspect of their child’s education. Based on most reports by participants, learners from dysfunctional families or child headed households were prone to display poor behaviour to gain attention from educators. Therefore, educators need

to build trust with both learners and their parents so that they can develop good relationships that will focus on improving learner behaviour (Mawar *et al.*, 2021:388). This shows the importance of support and active involvement of parents/guardians and their potential impact.

Parents should be cautioned about the code of conduct, its purpose and how it is used at school by both learners and educators to ensure order and maintain discipline. They should know their roles and responsibilities as parents in helping the school with learner discipline, which include offering support to the school, enforce observance of rules of the code of conduct by the learner, and attend all meetings of the SGB arranged for them (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2009:74).

Parents can only know and understand if they were made part of the initial formulation process of the code of conduct. Therefore, the code of conduct should not only be discussed with parents at the first annual meeting but at every interaction with them. Improved communication between educators and parents is necessary to create and sustain a democratic community supportive of school improvement efforts (Maphoke, 2017:2).

Parents need to be involved in the learner code of conduct already from primary school level and be involved throughout the child's school experience.

6.3.3 Implementation of the code of conduct at primary school level

Learners need to be taught the purpose of the learner code of conduct at an early age including their responsibility to adhere to each rule and the consequences of not complying. In collaborative governance, this requires the training of primary school educators and school committees (Mawar *et al.*, 2021:385). Sanctions must be adhered to, and procedures must be uniformly followed so that learners will know that for each misstep, there will be a suitable reaction.

Educators and parents of learners in primary schools should also be made aware that learner discipline affects them as well, and, therefore, it is their responsibility to assist in moulding the primary school learner to become a well-disciplined learner before they reach secondary school level. "Training on positive discipline practices should be conducted to educators, parents, learner representatives and community leaders" (Schlebusch *et al.*, 2022:13).

6.3.4 Support and internal collaboration

The QLTC committee must play its role through active community involvement. If the committee exists and is functional throughout the year as is expected, participants believed

that there might be fewer incidents of discipline, more parental involvement, more involvement of the inter-school community and, most importantly, increased collaboration between the school community and the extended community.

It is this committee's responsibility to ensure that there is effective collaboration by all stakeholders in the development and nurturing of a child as part of the school community. The effectiveness of the QLTC is believed to feed into the overall effectiveness of other committees within the school as its effectiveness is also fed by all other school committees. For this reason, "Collaborative governance is important because it brings together many different sectors, which then pull resources and expertise together to handle the issues in the education sector" (Mustary, 2022:157).

In a collaborative governance support of external stakeholders also play a significant role in the achievement of goals. "The weakness of collaboration process in essential education services is the absence of private sector" (Mawar *et al*, 2021: 382). Therefore, the SGB and SDC need to intensify its collaboration with other committees within the school, importantly QLTC as it involves members of the private sector. By so doing, they will be improving relations among education sector, other government departments and the private sector (NGOs) towards improving school environments.

6.3.5 Record keeping and follow-up measures

A file must be kept by each educator for each class they teach. Each learner must have their own file within the class master file kept by each educator for that specific classroom or grade. There must be evidence of follow-up sessions and measures taken regarding a learner incident since the last recorded incident. This necessitates formal or informal meetings with members of the school community, depending on the level of the offense. According to Mawar *et al.* (2021:386), communication and meetings, play a very important role in collaborative governance process.

School principals must also have a master file of learner daily incidents, that is well-organised for easy access and includes important documents relating to each case the principal personally records in their master file. Each record of an incident should be kept together with communiques to parents and referral letters to SDC/SGB. Files must have a cover page indicating the name of the school, the emblem, contact details, and physical address, and must be handled with the appropriate level of respect and confidentiality by all who encounter the file.

6.3.6 Updating the learner code of conduct

According to a study by Mustary (2022:155), “Collaborative governance plays a vital role in ensuring some strides are made in the education sector through the formulation and implementation of educational policies”. Thus, schools must periodically and collaboratively update the learner code of conduct and other policies that are required to provide guidelines to address disciplinary situations and problems arising at schools daily. Moreover, policies should be reviewed at least every three years to accommodate changes in communities and in the education sector.

The code of conduct for learners should be reviewed when important events take place that necessitate appropriate changes, such as the use of masks, or different modes of teaching, that became necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.3.7 Improving adherence by learners and parents to the learner code of conduct

The code of conduct should be written in a language that can be understood by both learners and parents, be continually communicated to them not only at the beginning of the year but through the entire year until it forms part of their daily lives (Sebisha, 2015:18).

Levels of offence should be clearly indicated with accompanying sanctions for each level of offence, so that learners and parents are clear on what measures will be taken when a learner deviates from the code of conduct. The code of conduct should continually be explained to learners, both primary and secondary, so that they know and understand the offences and sanctions stated within the code.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings of this study and literature reviewed, there is a need for further research on:

- The effectiveness of the management of learner discipline by school principals and School Management Teams (SMTs);
- The cause of learner ill-discipline at secondary schools; and
- Reasons for the lack of active parental involvement in learner discipline in primary and secondary schools.

6.5 Conclusion

This study confirms that discipline in schools remains a matter of concern that requires joint efforts and collaboration by all the members of the wider school community. Proper management of discipline should start with the decentralisation of the development and implementation of the code of conduct. All members of the school community must be consulted and engaged.

Departments of education from district up to the national level must take responsibility and contribute to the much-needed development and training of all members of the school community, including members of the SGB, SDC, parents, learners, and educators, to ensure that they all play their roles collaboratively in the formulation and enforcement of the code of conduct.

Primary and secondary schools must work together to ensure that the purpose of the code of conduct is known and understood by learners from an early age. Discipline should not be a matter of the SGB and SDC alone. Internal and external collaboration is needed in the efforts towards improving discipline.

The SGB and the SDC as patrons of discipline at schools should be actively involved in all matters of discipline from minor to serious offences. All stakeholders should collaborate to ensure improved management of learner discipline.

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[Lima/publication/347790898_Collaborative_Governance_for_Sustainable_Development/links/6162cdd00bf51d481765f1f1/Collaborative-Governance-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Valesca-Lima/publication/347790898_Collaborative_Governance_for_Sustainable_Development/links/6162cdd00bf51d481765f1f1/Collaborative-Governance-for-Sustainable-Development.pdf)

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APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Faculty of Education

(Research entity details)

Tel: 018 111 1111
Email: Name.Surname@nwu.ac.za

(Recipient name)
(Recipient address)
(Recipient address)
(Recipient address)

Date 16 June 2020

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

I herewith wish to request your consent to participate in this research, which involves three selected secondary schools at Maquassi Hills district in North West Province. Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Collaboration between School Governing Body and School Disciplinary Committees towards improving school discipline in secondary schools in the North West Province

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: *Dr Andre Bechuke*
CO-SUPERVISOR: *N/A*
ADDRESS:
CONTACT NUMBER: *018 299 1068*

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: *N/A*
ADDRESS: *N/A*
CONTACT NUMBER: *N/A*

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also asked from the provincial Department of Basic Education, District office manager relevant body as well as the school principals from the three selected schools.

What is this research about?

The main aim of the study is to analyse how the SGB and SDC collaboration is used to improve learner discipline in selected secondary schools.

The aims of this research are:

- Analyse the nature and approach of the collaboration between SGB and SDC in managing discipline.
- Establish the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC.
- Suggest ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC.

Participants

Principals of three selected schools (Ketsahalo, Mokokoane and Tau secondary schools)
 SDC member (three educators, one from each selected school)
 SGB member (Parent component from each selected school)
 RCL member (Chairperson from each selected school)

What is expected of you as participant?

Valuable information that might be beneficial to other schools in improving learner discipline.
 Honesty and openness
 Time
 Ask questions for clarity
 Report any discomfort to the researcher

Benefits to you as participant

Sharing of knowledge and good practises with other schools in improving learner discipline.

Risks involved for participants

Human interaction with the researcher.
 Face to face interview sessions.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Pseudonymous names will be used for participants' names and for the three selected schools.
 The information will be used for academic purposes.
 Participants will not be forced or penalised for wishing to withdraw from the study.
 Permission will be granted and consent letters to be given to each participant.

Dissemination of findings

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

Yours sincerely
 Miss Madika Patricia Majoro
 083 88 35 309

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:

By signing below, I agree to take part in a research study entitled:
 Collaboration between School Governing Bodies and School Disciplinary Committees towards improving school discipline in secondary schools in the North West Province

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) _____ on (date) ____/____/20____

Signature of participant

Researcher

APPENDIX 2: PERMISSION LETTER: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL / OTHER RELEVANT PERSON



(Recipient name)
(Recipient address)
(Recipient address)
(Recipient address)

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Faculty of Education

(Edu-Lead)

Tel: 018 111 1111
Email: Name.Surname@nwu.ac.za

Date 16 June 2020

PERMISSION LETTER: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/OTHER RELEVANT PERSON

I herewith wish to request your permission for [details of participants] to participate in this research, which involves [enter details]. Prior to granting permission, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Collaboration between School Governing Body and School Disciplinary Committees towards improving school discipline in secondary schools in the North West Province

ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Dr Andre Bechuke
CO-SUPERVISOR: N/A
ADDRESS:
CONTACT NUMBER: 018 299 1068

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: xxx
ADDRESS: 773 Taole Street, Nyakallong , Allanridge
CONTACT NUMBER: 083 8835 309

FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also obtained from the provincial Department of Basic Education/other relevant body.

What is this research about?

The main aim of the study is to analyse how the SGB and SDC collaboration is used to improve learner discipline in selected secondary schools.

The aims of this research is:

- Analyse the nature and approach of the collaboration between SGB and SDC in managing discipline.
- Establish the effectiveness of the collaboration between SGB and SDC.
- Suggest ways of improving the collaboration between SGB and SDC.

Participants

- Principals of three selected schools (Ketsahalo, Mokokoane and Tau secondary schools)
- SDC member (three educators, one from each selected school)
- SGB member (Parent component from each selected school)
- RCL member (Chairperson from each selected school)

What is expected of the participants?

Valuable information that might be beneficial to other schools in improving learner discipline.

Honesty and openness

Time

Ask questions for clarity

Report any discomfort to the researcher

Benefits to the participants

Sharing of knowledge and good practises with other schools in improving learner discipline.

Risks involved for participants

Human interaction with the researcher.

Face to face interview sessions.

Confidentiality and protection of identity

Pseudonymous names will be used for participants' names and for the three selected schools.

The information will be used for academic purposes.

Participants will not be forced or penalised for wishing to withdraw from the study.

Permission will be granted and consent letters to be given to each participant.

Dissemination of findings

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

DECLARATION BY PRINCIPAL/OTHER RELEVANT PERSON:

By signing below, I agree to give permission for the research to take place with the identified participants in the study entitled:

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

Collaboration between School Governing Body and School Disciplinary Committees towards improving school discipline in secondary schools in the North West Province

I declare that:

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of the participants in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and participants will not be pressurised to take part.
- Participants may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- Participants may be asked to leave the research process before it is completed, if the researcher feels it is in their best interests, or if they do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) _____ on (date) ____/____/20____

Signature of School Principal/Relevant person

APPENDIX 3: INDEMNITY FORM



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520
Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education
(EduREC)

The Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Office and Education, Management, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMHS-REC) of the North-West University are acknowledged for the use of their document with minor adjustments made by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (EduREC) of the North-West University.

INDEMNITY FORM (EduREC)

I, the undersigned

(Full name)

hereby indemnify the North-West University ("NWU") and/or any of its office-bearers and staff (temporary or permanent) against any liability in respect of personal losses and/or damages suffered by me or any other person arising from or resulting as a consequence of my participation in the research entitled

(Project/study title)

(Ethics number)

(the "Research"), and hereby hold harmless the NWU against above-mentioned liability.

I confirm that I voluntarily consent to participate in the Research, and that I was in no way forced or coerced by the NWU to participate in the Research, and that the waiver and release shall apply to any claims that may arise during and/or after the Research.

I declare that I am aware of the risks involved in the Research, as explained to me, and of the implications of this waiver and release, and agree that this document will also be binding upon my executor, curator or other assigns.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 4: CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

CONFIDENTIALITY UNDERTAKING

entered into between:

I, the undersigned

Prof / Dr / Mr / Ms _____

Identity Number: _____

Address: _____

hereby undertake in favour of the **NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**, a public higher education institution established in terms of the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997

Address: Office of the Institutional Registrar, Building C1, 53 Borchard Street, Potchefstroom, 2520

(hereinafter the "NWU")

Title of study/project: Collaboration between School Governing Bodies and School Disciplinary Committees towards improving school discipline in secondary schools in the North West Province

Ethics number: _____

1 Interpretation and definitions

1.1 In this undertaking, unless inconsistent with, or otherwise indicated by the context:

1.1.1 "Confidential Information" shall include all information that is confidential in its nature or marked as confidential and shall include any existing and new information obtained by me after the Commencement Date, including but not be limited in its interpretation to, research data, information concerning research participants, all secret knowledge, technical information and specifications, manufacturing techniques, designs, diagrams, instruction manuals, blueprints, electronic artwork, samples, devices, demonstrations, formulae, know-how, intellectual property, information concerning materials, marketing and business information generally, financial information that may include remuneration detail, pay slips, information relating to human capital and employment contract, employment conditions, ledgers, income and expenditures and other materials of whatever description in which the NWU has an interest in being kept confidential; and

1.1.2 "Commencement Date" means the date of signature of this undertaking by myself.

1.2 The headings of clauses are intended for convenience only and shall not affect the interpretation of this undertaking.

2 Preamble

2.1 In performing certain duties requested by the NWU, I will have access to certain Confidential Information provided by the NWU in order to perform the said duties and I agree that it must be kept confidential.

2.2 The NWU has agreed to disclose certain of this Confidential Information and other information to me subject to me agreeing to the terms of confidentiality set out herein.

3 Title to the Confidential Information

I hereby acknowledge that all right, title and interest in and to the Confidential Information vests in the NWU and that I will have no claim of any nature in and to the Confidential Information.

4 Period of confidentiality

The provisions of this undertaking shall begin on the Commencement Date and remain in force indefinitely.

5 Non-disclosure and undertakings

I undertake:

5.1 to maintain the confidentiality of any Confidential Information to which I shall be allowed access by the NWU, whether before or after the Commencement Date of this undertaking. I will not divulge or permit to be divulged to any person any aspect of such Confidential Information otherwise than may be allowed in terms of this undertaking;

5.2 to take all such steps as may be necessary to prevent the Confidential Information falling into the hands of an unauthorised third party;

5.3 not to make use of any of the Confidential Information in the development, manufacture, marketing and/or sale of any goods;

5.4 not to use any research data for publication purposes;

5.5 not to use or disclose or attempt to use or disclose the Confidential Information for any purpose other than performing research purposes only and includes questionnaires, interviews with participants, data gathering, data analysis and personal information of participants/research subjects;

5.6 not to use or attempt to use the Confidential Information in any manner which will cause or be likely to cause injury or loss to a research participant or the NWU; and

5.7 that all documentation furnished to me by the NWU pursuant to this undertaking will remain the property of the NWU and upon the request of the NWU will be returned to the NWU. I shall not make copies of any such documentation without the prior written consent of the NWU.

6 Exception

The above undertakings by myself shall not apply to Confidential Information which I am compelled to disclose in terms of a court order.

7 Jurisdiction

This undertaking shall be governed by South African law be subject to the jurisdiction of South African courts in respect of any dispute flowing from this undertaking.

8 Whole agreement

8.1 This document constitutes the whole of this undertaking to the exclusion of all else.

8.2 No amendment, alteration, addition, variation or consensual cancellation of this undertaking will be valid unless in writing and signed by me and the NWU.

Dated at _____ this _____ 20__

Witnesses:

1

2

(Signatures of witnesses)

(Signature)

APPENDIX 5: LEARNER MISCONDUCT – CODE LIST

LEARNER MISCONDUCT – CODE LIST		
Level 1 Minor violation of general classroom discipline	1-01	Failing to attend class on time
	1-02	Leaving class without permission
	1-03	Cheating in class test
	1-04	Failing to complete homework
	1-05	Dishonesty with minor consequences
	↓ ↓	
	1-99	
Level 2 Minor violations of school code of conduct or rules	2-01	Frequent repetition Level 1 infringement
	2-02	Possession or use of tobacco/ cigarettes
	2-03	Truancy of several classes
	2-04	Cheating during examinations
	2-05	Verbally threatening safety of another person
	↓ ↓	
	2-99	
Level 3 Serious violations of school code of conduct or rules	3-01	Frequent repetition Level 2 infringement
	3-02	Minor injury to another person
	3-03	Possession or use of alcohol
	3-04	Severely disruptive behaviour
	3-05	Possession of a dangerous weapon
	3-06	Theft/Vandalism
	↓ ↓	
3-99		
Level 4 Very serious violations of school code of conduct or rules	4-01	Frequent repetition Level 2 or 3 infringement
	4-02	Threatening with a dangerous weapon
	4-03	Intentionally causing physical injury to somebody
	4-04	Extortion of another person's property
	↓ ↓	
4-99		
Level 5 Criminal-serious violations of school code of conduct or rules but also of civil law	5-01	Frequent repetition Level 4 infringement
	5-02	Possession and peddling of narcotic substances
	5-03	Assault
	5-04	Sexual harassment or abuse
	5-05	Robbery or major theft
	5-06	Intentionally using a dangerous weapon
	↓ ↓	
5-99		

APPENDIX 6: DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES – CODE LIST

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES - CODE LIST

<p>Level 1</p> <p>Minor violation of general classroom discipline</p>	1-01	Verbal warning
	1-02	Detention
	1-03	Demerits
	1-04	Menial task e.g. cleaning classroom
	1-05	Extra work
	↓ ↓	
	1-99	
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Minor violations of school code of conduct or rules</p>	2-01	Any level 1 disciplinary action
	2-02	Disciplinary talk with learner
	2-03	Talk with parent or guardian
	2-04	Written warning
	2-05	Behavioural contract with learner
	↓ ↓	
	2-99	
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Serious violations of school code of conduct or rules</p>	3-01	Any level 2 disciplinary action
	3-02	Referral to counsellor, social worker etc.
	3-03	Suspension from extramural activities, support
	3-04	Written final warning
	↓ ↓	
	3-99	
<p>Level 4</p> <p>Very serious violations of school code of conduct or rules</p>	4-01	Any level 3 disciplinary action
	4-02	Referral to relevant outside agency
	4-03	Application to department for limited suspension
	↓ ↓	
	4-99	
<p>Level 5</p> <p>Criminal- serious violations of school code of conduct or rules but also of civil law</p>	5-01	<p>Note: to be carried out by higher school authority, SGB and Department</p>
	5-02	
	5-03	
	5-04	<p>Application to the Department for expulsion or transfer from the school after a tribunal hearing</p>
	5-05	
	↓ ↓	<p>Law Enforcement Authority involvement</p>

APPENDIX 7: CONTRACT WITH THE LEARNER

CONTRACT WITH THE LEARNER (contract no:)

KONTRAKA YA MAITSHOLO A MOITHUTI

na _____ mo mophatong wa _____, Ke
kgalemetswe (tlhalosa maitsholo) mabapi le _____

ke morutabana _____, Ke dumalane le morutabana go
baakanya maitsholo a me ka go dira: tse di latelang

Fa nka retelelwa go tokafatsa maitsholo a, go tla bidiwa batsadi kgotsa ga tsewa dikgato
tse di maleba tsa kgalemelo.

Signed: _____ (Moithuti) Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Educator) Date: _____

Signed: _____ *PARENT/*
(Witness) Date: _____

APPENDIX 8: LEARNER COMMITMENT

School:

Learner Commitment

I,, a learner at School, understand the rules and their implications and hereby commit to:

- Abide by the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary System.
- Behave in a courteous and considerate manner and respect other learners, the LRC, all members of staff and visitors to the School.
- Treat everyone with respect regardless of differences in culture, religion, ability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation or social class.
- Take responsibility for my learning by attending regularly and punctually and completing all my assessment tasks on time.
- Cooperate with my teachers and other School staff.
- Assist in making the School a safe place for all.
- Seek help if I need it.
- Let the School know if I feel my rights have been infringed, or if I experience any other difficulty.

.....
Learner

.....
Parent/Guardian

.....
Date

APPENDIX 9: THEETSO YA KGALEMO

THEETSO YA KGALEMO

Rra / Mma: _____

Taletso e mabapi le ngwana wa gago _____ mo mophatong wa _____
yo o tla tlhagelelang fa pele ga lekgotla kgalemo ka fa tlase ga thulaganyo e e latelang:

Letlha: _____

Letsatsi: _____

Nako: _____

Lefelo: _____

Theetso e tla ikaega ka ditatofatso tse di latelang:

Ngwana o letleletswe go tla le moemedi yo o ka nnang Motsadi, Moithuti yo mongwe kgotsa motlhokomedi. A ka tla le dipaki tsa gagwe.

Mogokgo

Moithuti

Letlha

KAMOGELO

Moithuti

Letlha

LETLHA : _____

NAKO : _____

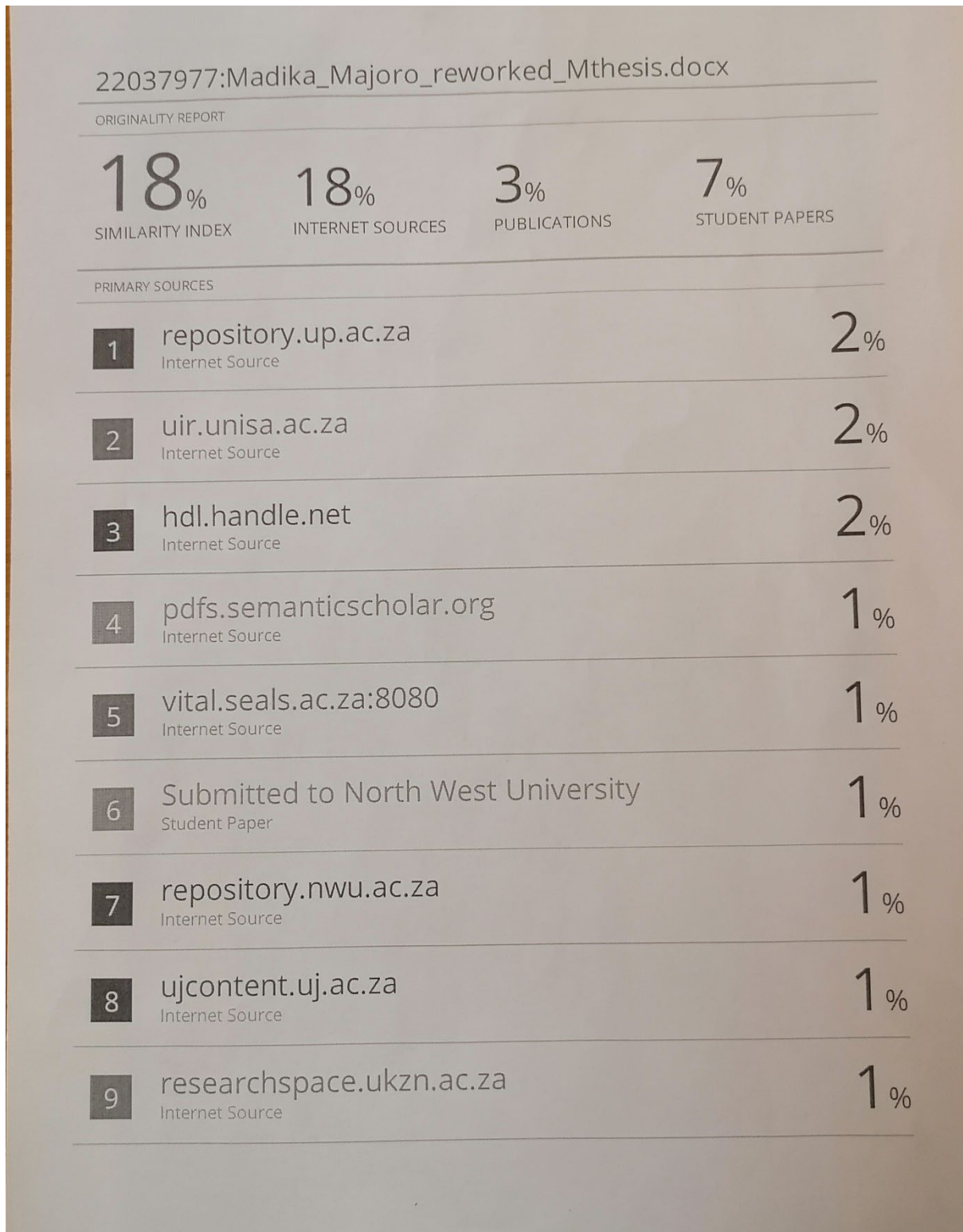
LEBAKA LA KOPANO KE LE LE TSHWAILWENG FA TLASE:

TSHWAYA

1. GO NNA KWA NTLE KA NAKO YA DITHUTO.	
2. GO SA DIRE TIRO YA SEKOLO	
3. GO NYATSA BARUTABANA KA PUO, MAITSHOLO etc.	
4. GO KGORELETSA THUTO MO PHAPOSING/SEKOLONG	
5. GO LWA/ GO TLHEKETLETSA BAITHUTI/ LELOKO LA SEKOLO	
6. GO GOROGA THARI MO SEKOLONG/ PHAPOSING BORUTELO.	
7. GO TLHOKA TIRISANO MMOGO MO DITIRONG TSA SEKOLO.	
8. GO DIRISA DIRITIBATSI/ MOTSOKO / DINO TSE DI SA DUMELLWANG	
9. GO TSHOLA KGOTSA GO DIRISA DIBETSA	
10. GO THUBA/ GO SENYA THOTO YA SEKOLO.	
11. TLOLO MOLAO E E SA KAIWANG FA GODIMO- TLHALOSA FA TLASE	

TLHALOSA TLOLO MOLAO: _____

APPENDIX 10: TURNITIN REPORT



- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;
- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EduREC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
 - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The EduREC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EduREC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof JAK Olivier
Chairperson NWU Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930) C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm
8 November 2018

Current details: (22351930) M:\DSS18533\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ES-REC Ethical Approval Letter.docm
5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

APPENDIX 12: DECLARATION OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING AND PROOFREADING



Arie Verburgh
Associate Member

Membership number: VER005
Membership year: March 2022 to February 2023

083 465 6890
averburgh@gmail.com

www.editors.org.za

17 October 2022

Declaration of Professional Editing and Proofreading

**Master of Education in Education Management and Leadership Thesis:
Collaboration between secondary school governing bodies and disciplinary committees towards
improving school discipline
Author: Madika Majoro**

I declare that I have edited and proofread this dissertation. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style, and formatting of headings and captions. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Certificate of Competence in Editing for Professionals from the University of Witwatersrand Language School.

As the language editor, I am not accountable for any changes made to this document by the author or any other party after my edit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AV' with a flourish.

Professional Editor, Public Health Specialist & Patient Safety Expert
MBChB (UP), MMed (Public Health) (UP), MBA (NWU)
Postgraduate Diploma in Health Management (Economics & Financial Planning) (UCT)
Diploma in Datametrics (Computer Science & Information Systems) (Unisa)
Certificate of Competence: Just Culture (David Marx - Plano, Texas, USA)
Certificate of Competence: Editing for Professionals (Wits)