

**THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE BY FEMALE
PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE BOJANALA REGION OF
NORTH-WEST PROVINCE**



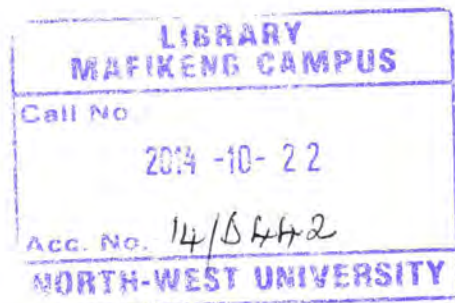
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**Mini dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree *Master of Education in Educational Management* at the Mafikeng Campus of
the North West University**

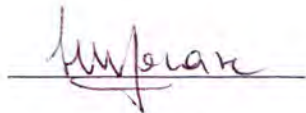


SUPERVISOR:PROF C B ZULU

DECEMBER 2013

DECLARATION

I, Lesego Maria Monare, declare that THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNER DISCIPLINE BY FEMALE PRIMARY SCHOOLPRINCIPALS IN THE BOJANALA REGION OF NORTH-WEST PROVINCE is my own work, and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this mini-dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L. Monare', is written over a horizontal line.

MONARE L.M.

2013

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My sincere gratitude to:

God Almighty for His grace that has been sufficient to give me strength and courage to persevere and complete this study. Glory to His Name.

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To all those who made this study a success, my thanks are due.

DEDICATION

This achievement is firstly dedicated to my late parents, Solomon and Christina Monare, who inspired me to greater heights with their love and support as well as to my daughter, Olerato, my siblings and all the family members who stood by me during this testing time. To them I say, “God is Great. He will also guide you to fulfill your dreams”.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the management of learner discipline by female primary school principals in the Bojanala Region of the North-West Province. The main focus was on strategies used by female primary school principals to manage learner discipline and the challenges they encounter in managing learner discipline in their schools.

A qualitative research approach was used. Participants included four female principals, four deputy principals as well as four senior teachers in primary schools. Data was collected by means of an open-ended qualitative questionnaire and semi-structured interviews.

Data analysis began as soon as the first set of data was collected. Recorded data was transcribed verbatim.

The main findings were that the gender of the principal does not matter in the management of learner discipline and that it all depends on the character and the leadership style of the principal. Female managers are capable of changing behaviours and attitudes of their subordinates and handle discipline by applying effective discipline strategies in the running and managing of primary schools. Role modeling and use of guidelines for discipline in the school are some of the strategies used by female principals. Disciplinary problems stem from both the home and the school and this presents a challenge for the effective management of learner discipline.

It is recommended that a uniform well-communicated system of discipline and effective leadership styles be adopted in order to manage learner discipline appropriately.

KEYWORDS

Female principal

Primary schools

Management

Learner discipline

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The abolition of corporal punishment in South African schools in 1995 brought about an upsurge in disciplinary problems. Yet, teachers were still expected to maintain discipline in the face of increasing discipline challenges. In response to a public outcry, the government launched a national project on discipline in South African schools in 2000 (DoE, 2000). Many of the recommendations emanating from the project were published in a booklet entitled *Alternatives to corporal punishment: The learning experience*, which was distributed to all schools in South Africa in 2001 by the National Department of Education. The booklet containing guidelines on alternatives to corporal punishment was disseminated in an effort to combat the escalating disciplinary problems in schools.

However, in spite of this effort, the authority of teachers continued to be undermined and they were overwhelmed as they had insufficient training in the implementation of these alternative methods of discipline. Even today, many principals and educators are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain discipline in schools in the wake of the new education legislation that regulates discipline and punishment in schools (Squelch, 2000:1).

It is not possible to teach or learn in an environment that is disorderly, disruptive and unsafe (Lekalakala, 2007:1). Naong (2007:283) maintains that the abolition of corporal punishment in schools has left a gap which cannot be filled and that it has led to all kinds of disciplinary problems in schools. Creating and maintaining a safe environment is one of the important challenges facing principals, especially educators and parents in schools (Squelch, 2000:1).

The new laws, including the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) protect the rights of learners from the abuse and the misuse of punishment – especially corporal punishment in schools and classes. Corporal punishment

and the use of other punitive measures are often regarded as synonymous with good discipline. In spite of the prohibitive legislation, such measures are still being used in South Africa (Van Wyk, 2001:1).

The South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996(SASA), section 81(TSA1996a), stipulates that a code of conduct for schools should be drafted specifically to deal with disciplinary issues in schools. Subject to any applicable provincial law, the governing body of a public school must assist in the maintenance of learner discipline in schools. In the light of poor discipline in schools, specifically in the Bojanala region, it has been discovered that parents serving on the school governing bodies are poorly educated and have little or no ability to draw up or implement a code of conduct for learners within the framework of the South African Schools Act (SASA, 1996) as well as the provision of the Republic of South Africa of 1996(RSA, 1996b). To achieve effective teaching and learning, good discipline should be maintained through participation by parents, learners, educators and school governing bodies (Squelch, 2000:1). Good behaviour is a necessary condition for effective and quality teaching and learning to take place and an important outcome of education which the society expects (Squelch, 2000:2).

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The abolition of corporal punishment in South Africa should be central to any study of learner discipline. In primary schools, for learner discipline to be effective, expectations have to be clearly communicated to all role players. The South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996, section 8) indicates that poor learner discipline impacts negatively on the delivery of quality education, because educators spend much time on disciplining learners. In addition to taking up time intended to be used for learning and teaching, the constant need to be involved in disciplinary practice adds to the stress that teacher's experience. This, in turn impacts on their delivery of quality learning and teaching.

According to Coleman (2000:45), learner discipline was always an issue at schools. Discipline impacts negatively on teachers who are constantly dealing with disciplinary problems on a daily basis rather than teaching learners (Coleman, 2000:135). An

awareness of its causes and impact, in combination with a fair and consistently applied disciplinary plan, facilitated the effective management of learner discipline.

However, discipline is not inborn. It can be taught to children. One of the core suggestions is that a uniform, well communicated code of conduct for learners needs to be developed. The code of conduct should become a valued and used document in which the effective methods of discipline are highlighted to all stakeholders.

Section 8(5) stipulates that a code of conduct must make provision for legal process to safeguard the interest of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings. According to these provisions, learners have a constitutional right to study in a safe school environment.

Prinsloo (2005:8) asserts that currently one of the most prominent factors influencing the learning environment in South African schools is the conduct of learners. He points out that maintaining discipline is seen by educators to be a major problem and source of stress. Smit (2010:1) states that a school's code of conduct could play a significant part in case of a law suit, as school rules constitute a particular form of subordinate legislation. Therefore, it is important that schools should have a legally defensible code of conduct. In many schools, both primary and secondary, maintaining learner discipline is fraught with challenges. Primary school learners have their own discipline challenges, and because most primary schools are headed by females, it is a logical choice to focus on primary schools to study how female principals maintain learner discipline.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In South Africa, particularly in schools of the North-West Province, learner discipline problems are a growing phenomenon. In schools of the Bojanala region of North-West Department of Education, female principals are battling to come to grip with learner discipline in the post corporal punishment era. Principals, in general, have little or no training in alternative methods of maintaining discipline prior to their appointment, but still have to deal with the worsening levels of learner discipline. It is in the context of this perceived erosion of learner discipline that this study is undertaken. It is grounded in the belief that a positive conducive environment is essential for effective teaching and learning

to happen consistently. Discipline impacts strongly on the quality of education as offered and received at schools. It also affects the ability of teachers to maintain consistently high education standards.

The management of discipline at schools is literally dependent on the management style and systems present at the school. This study, therefore intends to focus on how female principals manage learner discipline in their schools.

1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

Against the background of the preceding discussion, the main research question can be formulated as follows:

- How do female primary school principals manage learner discipline?

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

- What is the nature and scope of learner discipline?
- What challenges do female principals encounter in managing learner discipline in their schools?
- What strategies do female primary school principals use to manage learner discipline in their schools?

The objective of the study is therefore to:

Describe the nature and scope of learner discipline, determine the challenges female principals encounter in managing learner discipline in primary schools, determine the strategies female primary school principals use to manage learner discipline, and make recommendations for the improvement of learner discipline in primary schools.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed two methods of research, namely, a literature study and an empirical research.

1.5.1 The literature study

The literature study focused on effective discipline through the implementation of learners' code of conduct where guidelines for positive behaviour, disciplinary measures and dealing with transgressions were presented. Leadership styles of female school principals and the learning environment were explored. To obtain information on these topics, the researcher consulted relevant education journal articles, books, dissertations and theses in the library and from the internet.

1.5.2 Empirical investigation

1.5.2.1 Research design

Research design explains the rationale behind the methodology employed, how the research was conducted and the procedures were followed to ensure validity and reliability of the study. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009:29) describe research design as a master plan on how data that is relevant in answering the research questions were collected and analyzed.

In this study the qualitative research design based on an interpretive orientation was followed. Nieuwenhuis (2010:50) defines qualitative research as research that is conducted within the natural environment in which the phenomenon occurs by finding out what people involved have to say about it.

Morrison (2007:24) refers to the core task of the researcher as gaining insight into a phenomenon from the perspective of those that are directly involved with the phenomenon. Working within the interpretive paradigm provided me with an opportunity to find out how learner discipline is handled at primary schools by female principals in the Bojanala Region.

The following section will discuss the research method which includes participant selection, data collection and analysis.

1.5.2.2 Participant selection

The research was conducted in four primary schools in the Bojanala Region. Purposeful sampling was employed to select school principals, deputy principals and senior teachers to participate in the study.

In order to obtain in-depth information and a balanced view of how female principals handle learner discipline, it was important to hear the views of others who are involved in learner discipline. In this regard, members of the school management teams of the four primary schools of Bojanala Region were selected. A total number of four female principals, three female Deputy Principals, one male deputy principal and four female senior teachers were selected.

The following criteria were used:

For principals, a minimum of 10 years' experience in school leadership and management which includes at least 5 years' experience with the implementation of Departmental policies, i.e., Code of conduct for learners and educators.

With regard to the School Management Team (SMT) members, at least 10 years of continuous service and in depth knowledge of school leadership and management were required.

1.5.2.3 Data collection

Data was collected by means of the following methods: Semi-structured interviews and qualitative open-ended questionnaires. An audio-tape and notes were used to record interview data which were later transcribed verbatim. Details are described in Chapter 3.

1.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis began as soon as the first set of data was collected. Recorded data was transcribed verbatim.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 461) indicate that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns. Most categories and patterns emerge from the data, rather than being imposed on the data prior to data collection. Data analysis in this study involved coding, categorizing and clustering data. Coding refers to the process of dividing data according to a classification system (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001: 461). Categorizing on the other hand refers to a stage where the identified codes, which talk about the same thing, are grouped together. Therefore, the researcher developed a coding system to organize data into units of meaning. Developing a coding system in this study involved searching through data for regularities and patterns.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008: 112-113) proposed four criteria that should be considered by researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study. They include: Credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

In order to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher used triangulation, which, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 347) is the cross validation of data sources, data collection strategy, time periods and theoretical schemes.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:347) indicate that to find regularities in the data, the researcher compares different sources, situations and methods.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant because its findings will assist school principals and stakeholders in the North-West Department of Education to cope with challenges of the management of learner discipline, which is ranked as one of the major concerns in the education system of South Africa. The study will add to the existing body of knowledge about practical skills needed to facilitate effective learner discipline. Moreover, the research has the potential to be of value in advancing a reasonably uncharted look at how female principals manage

learner discipline in schools. The performance of the female school principals in the management of learner discipline has not been sufficiently profiled in the South African context. This study is important as it contributes to the body of knowledge about male principals' ways of learner discipline management.

1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Management is broadly defined as the process of getting things done through and with people to achieve goals and objectives effectively and efficiently (Leaman, 2005:145) according to the study, it refers to how learner discipline should be handled.

School Management Team comprises of the School Principal, Deputy Principal and Head of Departments. Its duty is to ensure that the proper implementation and maintenance of discipline take place in the school.

Learner is a person under the age of fifteen who receives education in public primary school.

Learner discipline means a constructive, educative and a corrective approach whereby order in learners is restored. It is a process by which teacher's foster work in learners in an effort to assist them to become responsible for their own actions.

The concept "**discipline**" means to assist children by developing self-control, motivating, leading and assisting them so that they feel good about themselves and develop thinking skills (Masalila, 2006:3).

Hardin (2004: 4) indicates that educators may view discipline as what educators and principals do to help learners to behave in an acceptable manner in the school. Discipline may also be referred to as a set of rules established to maintain order in a school.

Primary school is an institution in which children receive the first stage of compulsory education. It is also known as elementary education. Children generally attend primary school from around the age five until age twelve.

1.10 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is focused on how female principals handle learner discipline in selected primary schools in the Bojanala region of the North-West Province.

1.11 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1: Orientation

In this chapter the background, statement of the problem, aims and research questions, significance of the study, research design, Participant selection and the definition of terms that are relevant were discussed.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Central to any research project is the literature review. It provides the researcher with a broad picture of the knowledge that exists within the field he or she is researching. The literature was reviewed to gain a broad understanding of learner discipline. Local and international literature on learner discipline and was reviewed. The female leadership style was discussed alongside literature on forms of discipline and alternative strategies to handle discipline.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter highlighted the research methodology used in the study to gain greater insight on how female principals manage discipline at primary schools in the Bojanala Region of North-West Province. A qualitative research design was used and semi-structured interviews were conducted with female principals. Selection of participants was explained and measures of trustworthiness were discussed and ethical issues were addressed.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and presentation

This chapter gave a detailed report on the findings from the data collected in this study of management of learner discipline by female principals. The qualitative data collected was summarized and presented in narrative form under key headings.

Chapter 5: Summary, Findings and Recommendations

In this chapter a brief summary of the study was made, including the main findings of the research on the nature and scope of learner discipline and the strategies that female principals use to manage learner discipline. Recommendations emanating from the findings were made.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides insight into what research has revealed about learner discipline in schools and what school principals and educators can do to manage disciplinary challenges. Alongside learner discipline, the chapter provides a glimpse of female leadership, as the study deals with female principals and their management of learner discipline. Hence learner discipline is discussed in the context of female leadership. This chapter also explores the meaning attached to the term “discipline”. It outlines discipline challenges, different forms of discipline problems and also alternative discipline strategies that are employed by schools and those that are recommended by different researchers with the intention of finding effective strategies that could be employed by female primary schools principals in managing learner discipline in the Bojanala Region of North-West Province.

Local and international literature on learner discipline and female leadership style are reviewed. The review also includes official documents related to the study.

2.2 WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

There are many views regarding what discipline is. The Collins English Dictionary (2000) defines discipline as “training or conditions imposed for the improvement of physical powers and self-control and systematic training in obedience to regulations and authority; the state of improved behaviour resulting from such training or conditions; punishment or chastisement or a system of rules for behaviour”. Charles (2002:7) states “that discipline is sometimes inaccurately conceptualised as being what educators do when learners misbehave at school or what educators do to stifle misbehaviour when it occurs and that discipline must rely on elements of fear backed by force to be effective.”

2.3. DISCIPLINE VERSUS PUNISHMENT

It is very important for teachers to avoid making learners feel bad in response to their own behaviour. However, punishment does not teach a learner anything other than that it is alright to hurt others (Zaibert, 2006:2). Instead teachers should strive to discipline their children in order to help them better themselves and their situations. Properly disciplined children will grow to be happy, healthy and productive members of not just the family, but society as well (Sprague and Walker, 2004). In clarifying the motives behind discipline and punishment, Ramadiro and Valley (2005:4) make the comparison which shows that the usefulness of any disciplinary measure is dependent on the motive behind it and the manner it is administered.

2.4. LEGAL BASIS FOR LEARNER DISCIPLINE PRACTICE

The signing into law of the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996b) and the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) has impacted radically on the management of learner discipline in school. Although the principal, the school management team and educators normally form the most visible front in the disciplinary process, the SGB has a statutory or legal duty to ensure that correct structures and procedures are put in place so that any disciplinary measures taken against ill-disciplined learners are administered fairly and reasonably in accordance with the above-mentioned laws.

Both Section 8 and Section 20 of the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) make it mandatory for all SGBs to develop and to adopt a code of conduct for a learner which is aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to improving the quality of the learning process. The code of conduct must include appropriate disciplinary processes for disciplining learners, and measures that will be followed in disciplinary processes. This will ensure that SGBs manage learner discipline fairly and justly in line with the provisions of Section 12(1) of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996b), which provide for the right of everyone to freedom and security of the person, including the right not to be tortured in any way, and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. The basic approach in the formulation of a code of

conduct should be positive and preventive, in order to facilitate constructive learning (Rossouw, 2007:80; Bray 2005:135).

Research has shown that a punitive approach does not lead to change the learner's behaviour. Rossouw (2007:80) maintains that what should be promoted is positive discipline and self-discipline, and that exemplary conduct should be rewarded to the same or a greater extent as the reaction to or punishment of misconduct. Furthermore, in the formulation of the code of conduct the development level of the learners should be kept in mind, and the language used must be easily comprehensible to make the content accessible.

According to Joubert and Bray (2007:80), the code of conduct should contain a set of moral values, norms and principles in accordance with the ethos of the school and that of the wider community.

The research is framed by the view that regardless of the community served or type of learner who attends the school, the system of discipline is the creation of the teaching staff of the school (Adams, 2004). It holds further that this discipline impacts strongly on the quality of education offered and received. How behaviour and discipline at schools is managed is not dependent on the environment from which learners come, but rather on the management and leadership skills employed at the school. This then impacts on the quality of education offered. Situated within this framework are the following concepts:

- Learner discipline
- Management and
- Leadership style

These concepts are central to the study of learner discipline by female principals at Bojanala Region, and a clear, understanding of these concepts is essential. They are considered key because they all have a vital impact on the running of schools. This discipline then impacts on the delivery of education (Adams, 2004).

2.5 THEORETICAL BASIS FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP: FEMALE LEADERSHIP STYLE

The following section presents the female leadership style as a theoretical basis for the present study which is concerned with the management of learner discipline by female principals in primary school.

There are a number of research findings which hold that females in leadership positions employ a style that is participatory and democratic rather than the aggressive style which males apply. Lad (2002: 86), for instance, points out that female leadership styles represent a caring attitude, creativity, intuition and respect for individual differences. She further contends that female principals communicate goals better and are ahead of men in supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, professional development and providing rewards for living.

According to Agezo (2010: 694), women exhibit unique leadership practices when they manage discipline at their schools. Above all, they display emotional intelligence which is critical in inspiring teachers and building relationships. He describes them as transformational leaders because they are efficient in achieving set goals and objectives of their schools.

Hall (1996, 145 – 159) argues that a number of feminist texts on management and gender work propagate notions that women as a collective are nurturing and good at interpersonal relationships. She also states that female principals maintain that their behaviour is shaped by the role and context in which they perform their duties.

In her research, Coleman (2000:25-27) concludes that the predominant management style of women is collaborative and people-orientated, although a small percentage display male characteristics. From the foregoing, it is apparent that women leadership and management literature emphasizes that women have a different and unique style of leadership. It is this unique style of leadership in relation to learner discipline that this study hopes to reveal.

Coleman (2000) indicates that female principals use an interactive style of management called transformational leadership. In her study, Coleman (2000) found that this leadership style was correlated with several management skills associated with success. Female

principals reported somewhat higher perceived effectiveness in management skills, such as coaching, developing and communicating. The findings also suggest that female principals receive more developmental opportunities than their female colleagues. Females as transformational leaders develop positive relationship with subordinates in order to strengthen employee and organizational performance with regard to learner discipline, they persuade their subordinates to believe in work towards the mission statement of the school and its attainability (inspirational) motivating and also manage discipline by meeting the emotional needs of both learners and employee (individual consideration).

Lad (2000) describes female leadership as “a feminine style of managing people which comprises of caring, creativity, intuition, awareness of individual differences, non-competitiveness, tolerance, subjectivity and informality is appropriate to educational organizations”. Lad (2000) contends that female principals are better in the area of communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, maintaining high visibility, promoting professional development and providing incentives for learning.

Female primary school principals as educational leaders provide inspiration and vision to the school. They are good at teambuilding, communication, influential skills rather than authority. They are also effective at managing a diverse workforce because they are more tolerant of individual differences and less bound by social traditions. They have strong personalities which enable them to embrace empowerment through showing trust, motivating, coaching and mentoring their followers.

They are believed to possess: transformational, charismatic, visionary and collaborative leadership styles (DoE, 2004). The section below discusses the different types of leadership commonly associated with females in leadership.

2.5.1 Transformational leadership

Leadership today is at the forefront of education because it is a search for understanding the thoughts and actions of leaders and investigations into the improvement of performance and motivation of individuals (Luft, 2012:1). What must be known is that leadership is grounded in theoretical constructs that offer a framework for understanding multi-faceted dynamic of

educational leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2005, Howell & Costley, 2006). Howell & Costely (2006: 10) share the view that transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation that encourages the delivery of content for teaching and learning.

According to Luft (2012: 8) transformational leadership contributes to efficacy beliefs through working together in a collaborative culture.

Transformational leadership provides enhancement of employee skills, encourages innovation and develops educator potential (Chang & Lee, 2007). According to (Luft 2012: 18) the goal of transformational leadership is to transform people and organisations in a literal sense, to change their minds, hearts, enlarge vision, insight and understanding. Transformational leadership bring contains four components: charisma, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

Luft (2012: 13) views transformational leadership as the style which _meets the needs of all stakeholders in the academic process. This approach advocates a shared leadership in which school administrators, along with faculty and staff, participate in decision making focused on effective curriculum development and instructional practices.

Lezotte and McKee, (2006:23) state the effective leader must be committed to implementing a collaborative process and must encourage others to participate and take leadership roles based on knowledge and expertise for effective change to take place.

Friedman (2004:209) found transformational leadership change the workplace culture and productivity by appealing to high ideals, by changing attitude assumptions, and by building commitment to common goals and objectives.

Transformational leadership promotes empowerment which is attained through participatory management (Luft, 2012:35).

Transformational leadership is characterised by innovation. It appeals to followers' values and their sense of higher purpose. Female principals are transformational leaders because they focus on arousing awareness and consciousness that elevates school goals and purposes to the level of a shared covenant that bonds together leader and follower in a moral commitment and performance. Individuals who work with transformational leaders may willingly expand their job descriptions. They become self-motivated rather than relying on receiving motivation from others. Furthermore, they do not resist self-development and

frequently demonstrate through their personal sacrifice an enhancement commitment to their tasks, other teachers and the school. In a continually changing environment the success of the school depends on the ability of the leadership at all levels to develop, motivate, stimulate and inspire the followers.

2.5.2 Charismatic leadership

This type of leader is said to possess qualities or powers that set female principals apart from ordinary beings. They appeal to their followers without saying a word! A charismatic leader is a leader with substance. In this way they are visionary, attain goals through confidence and thrive on relational and referent expressive power. Charismatic leadership is based on a directive style, yet people are drawn to and influenced by the charisma of the leader. Skilful female principals behave assertively; impart information with respect rather than in a patronising manner.

2.5.3 Visionary leadership

The visionary leadership style is the ability to craft and create an attractive and appealing vision, which you persuade followers to embrace as their vision. The ability to articulate realistic vision that impacted upon the current situation characterise a good visionary leadership style.

2.5.4 Collaborative leadership

Female principals who use collaborative leadership style build good teams because they rely on people's personal power, capabilities, differences and contribution to achieve the desired results and a shared vision. Teamwork and delegation are success factors of this leadership style. The collaborative leader models a way of working that is based on an expression of a set of well integrated values and attitudes. In schools where collaborative leadership is practiced, there is mutual respect between the leader and the staff because they all feel valued and recognised for their contribution.

Having discussed female leadership styles, the next section turns to a discussion of discipline and what it means.

2.6 DISCIPLINE AND THE SCHOOL

Discipline is the practice of care and respect for others and self. It is about safeguarding the rights of people who are exposed to uncooperative, aggressive or blocking responses by other. In support of this, Oosthuizen, Roux and van der Walt (2003) say that the application of discipline is not solely confined to a clamp-down on unruly, mischievous and disruptive behaviour, but as a means of entering into a loving, caring and guiding relationship with learners. According to the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996, section 11(2), discipline should be corrective and nurturing.

The term “discipline” is derived from the Latin word “disciplina” which means to teach. Rosen (2005: 1) confirms that and indicates that the term could mean; training that develops self-control, character, orderliness or efficiency, strict control to enforce obedience, a system of rules and treatment that controls or punishes.

Thus the term “discipline” may be thought of as any training intended to develop moral character or produce a pattern of behaviour and a coercive in learner discipline. The concept may be thought of and be a coercive mechanism or a collaborated process of building character, accepted behaviour and good morals in learners within learning institutions.

The reality of the matter is that different meanings are attached to the word “discipline” and the following paragraphs elaborate this fact.

2.6.1 Discipline as formation of moral character

Rossouw(2003: 420) viewed discipline from a biblical perspective, associates the term discipline with “discipline or fellowship. he says a discipline, i.e., a disciplined person, is a person who does not only possess the wisdom to hear the word of God but also understands his word and is prepared to act accordingly (doing the right thing).

Rossouw (2003: 420) contends that discipline should equip the learner and help him to be prepared to act as a responsible and effective member of the society.

Oosthuizen, Roux and Van der Walt (2003: 375-387) point out that discipline can be regarded as the overarching goal of schooling and education in general and that it means guiding the learners on the right road to correct deviant behaviour in a loving and caring way, and to warn and support where necessary.

The definitions outlined so far focus mainly on discipline as the formation of moral character which is preventative in nature.

Educational researchers have examined both the prevention and the remediation aspects of school discipline, these findings about both are cited in this dissertation.

2.6.2 Discipline as both preventative and corrective

Discipline is seen as a form of activity that regulates children and maintains order in schools. In this way the term refers to learners complying with the code of conduct often known as the school rules. The term may also refer to the punishment that is the consequences of transgression of the code of conduct. However, Charles (2002: 3) combines prevention control and correction in his definition of discipline. Thus, he says that discipline is intended to prevent, suppress and redirect misbehaviour.

2.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF DISCIPLINE

A disciplined person is regarded as one who has orderly habits, is observing rules, regulations and authority so that (s) he can improve behaviour and exercise both self-direction and self-control based on this general analysis. Mtsweni (2008: 27-29) describes the characteristics of discipline as follows:

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

Discipline implies the development within individuals and the necessary personal controls to train themselves for adult life and develop their personalities. It is considered as serving a number of particular functions in the growth process of learners on their way towards

responsible adulthood. It also assists them to acquire characteristics of a positive nature such as self-control, self-discipline and persistence (Mtsweni, 2008: 27).

2.7.2 Discipline is used to establish order

The purpose of discipline is to maintain a sense of order in the learning environment. Therefore, every school must have a policy on discipline, which includes details of the school rules, expected behaviour and the consequences of deviating from the school rules. All school activities will be regulated by such rules and the behaviour of learners will be checked accordingly. The rules may assist learners to develop self-control, self-direction and social responsibility.

2.7.3 Discipline is used to teach learners about a degree of social conformity

Discipline is indispensable to maintain a certain standard of social conformity so that community can function in an orderly and fearless manner. Learners must be brought up to set standards. In this respect, schools should help learners to be self-reliant, free and responsible.

Through discipline, learners will realize the necessity for order in the world. If there is effective learner discipline in primary schools, a culture of learning and teaching will be successfully established and maintained.

2.8 DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

Discipline problems can be defined as “disruptive behaviour that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect and to learn” (Rossouw, 2003: 416). Although it is a serious problem in South Africa, disciplinary problems are not limited to the South African public schools system. Van Wyk (2001: 196) points out that “the prevalence and gravity of discipline problems in schools is a universal concern”. The extent and seriousness of learner misconduct in South Africa should not be underestimated. Research by Maree (2000:1) highlights that some South African schools are increasingly

beginning to resemble war zones. It has become clear that all schools are not free to teach and all learners are not free to learn.

Learner indiscipline is still among the most serious problems which educators must deal with and a contributory factor in their leaving the profession. Rossouw (2003:414) asserts that currently one of the most prominent factors influencing the learning environment is the conduct of learners. Supporting Rossouw's assertion, Steward (2004; 318) points out that maintaining discipline is seen to be a major problem and is a source of stress to educators and, consequently, a major cause of resignations from the profession.

The fact that learner discipline constitutes an acute problem in South African schools is also clear from studies conducted by De Klerk and Rens (2003), Maree and Cherian (2004), and Oosthuizen, Roux and Van der Walt (2003), and from the popular South African media reports with headings such as "Inside city school from hell" (Bateman, 2007: 1), "Pupils still victims of brutality at school" (SAPA, 2006:6) as well as the speeches delivered by the former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor with heading such as "Legislation supports the creation of safer schools" (Department of Education, 20 October 2006) and "School discipline and safety" (Department of Education, 21 November 2006).

2.9 CHALLENGES THAT SCHOOLS ARE FACED WITH

According to Flannery (2005:5), the majority of schools today are faced with serious learner misbehaviour. They began bringing weapons to school in classrooms, they still cheat, lie and vandalize and keep iPod earphones dangling from their ears. Flannery (2005:22) argues that learners verbally assault educators regularly.

This challenge that is highlighted by Charles Flenny is a reality in most schools in South Africa. Bateman (Pretoria News, 28 May 2007) reports that educators at Silverton High School were assaulted, verbally, abused and threatened. This is an indication of how unruly and violent learners may be in some schools.

The seriousness of the matter is expressed by the minister of education, Naledi Pandor in her speech "(Legislation supports creation of safer schools)," (South African Government

Information, 2006). In her address, the Minister of education confronts the state of South African schools and the shocking statistics of violence, lack of discipline and drug abuse. She states that if schools can no longer be regarded as safe places, then as a community we have failed our children. This is a failure to infuse appropriate social values and attributes in those who make up our school communities.

In her speech addressing “ school discipline and safety” (South African Government Information, 2006), the Minister of Education indicated that many commentators, angry parents, well-wishers and general and general members of the public have written to her with advice suggestions and criticism. All agreed that the presence of ill-discipline, bullying, sexual abuse and violence in South African schools point to a deep malaise that requires determined and urgent action. In her address, the Minister also reminded school principals and parents about a range of powers available for schools to instill discipline, and appropriate behaviour in learners.

The Minister’s address also confirms the concerns raised by Flannery (2005:22) with regard to parental role in learner discipline, and thus supports her arguments. The Minister of education is convinced that parents or guardians bear primary responsibility for the conduct and discipline of their children and she therefore calls in parents to support educators and share a burden of inculcating discipline and states that “schools are not mini-prisons and educators cannot be expected to serve as correctional officers of wild and unruly learner” (Daily, Dispatch, 28 November 2006).

2.10 DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE EMPLOYED BY SCHOOLS

The following proactive discipline strategies can be considered for the promotion of learner discipline in schools.

2.10.1 Educators should provide educational assistance to learners

Educators should guide learners towards judging their own behaviour, instead of passing judgement on violators’ actions that encourage learners to judge their own behaviour. They should stay focused, and if necessary, help learners to accept ownership of their problems.

2.10.2 Schools should inculcate values and thus develop learner's character

Discipline is not possible without inculcation of values, because values develops character and enables learners to distinguish between right and wrong. It is thus the role of the school principal and educators to inculcate values and to be good role –models for learners.

2.10.3 Democratic style of leadership

Principles should adopt a democratic style of leadership, thus, abandoning autocratic and permissive style of leadership. This means that they should provide firm guidance but should not promote rebellion. Learners should be allowed to make decisions and also be helped to internalize that they are expected to assume responsibility for what they do and face the consequences of their actions. In this way learners will assume self- discipline.

2.10.4 Schools should have discipline policies in place and these should be implemented

It is imperative that all schools must have discipline policies in order to function successfully. Schools need to work out policies on suspending and expelling learners because of their behaviour. This means that all educators have to follow the same procedures at a particular school in order to ensure that all learners are treated fairly. The policies should describe what is expected, behaviour and actions that will be taken by class educators when rules are breached, as well as contact with families and length of time learners can be suspended. Proper administration procedures with disciplining learners should be followed as prescribed in section 8-10 of the South African Schools Act and section 33 of the constitution (Republic of South Africa).

2.10.5 Classroom rules

Classroom rules are regarded to be generic behaviour standards or expectations that are to be followed. Rules guide the way learners interact with each other, preparation for class and conduct themselves during the classes. Classroom rules ensure that the classroom policy is carried out.

2.11 THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF DISCIPLINE

Asmal (2000:5) says that change in managing discipline is brought about by the fact that South Africa is a signatory to convention on the rights of the child, which compels it to pass laws and take social measures to protect the child from all forums of abuse. He (Asmal, 2000: 5) further states that the African Charter, on the rights and welfare of the child, commits its members to take steps to ensure the child that is subjected to discipline must be treated with dignity humanity.

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (NEPA), section 4 (a) in the Education Labour Relations Council (2003:A-4), emphasizes the protection of learner rights as stipulated in section 10, 11 and 12 (1) (c) and (e) of the Constitution of South Africa. Section 10 (1) of South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) condemns the administering of corporal punishment to a learner at school and sub-section.

Sub-section two (2) states that any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable for conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault. The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa enacted abolition of Corporal Punishment Act 33 of 1997.

2.12 HOW TO HANDLE DISCIPLINE ISSUES

This section discusses ways in which learner discipline problems can be handled. Chisholm (2007: 12) found that the issue of children's rights within the context of disciplinary measure is critical in the dispensation of modern education. As a result of the emphasis placed on children's rights, it should be stressed that these rights have limitations and one important observation is that an individual's rights should not interfere with the rights of others. For example, Matsitza (2008: 240) observes that children in schools now engage in criminal activities that are "injurious to teachers and fellow learners and hamper academic activities". This implies that educators need to act professionally and administer the necessary disciplinary measures in order to ensure a conducive learning environment for the majority of the learners (Tauber, 2007: 4).

The above view is significant in scenarios where indiscipline in schools is exacerbated by the feeling of antagonism that exists between educators and learners. This is usually a negative effect of 'top-down' management styles. Learners may feel issues are imposed on them and naturally resist them, so disciplinary situations may get out of hand. The effectiveness of any given disciplinary measure could, therefore, be assessed by the extent to which it enables the fulfilment of the following parameters: ability to deter offenders, ability to deter others, teaching self-discipline and teaching behaviour accountability (Gershoff, 2002). It is also measured by its ability to teach conflict handling strategies, ability to help the offender understand the offence committed, teaching responsible behaviour, helping to teach the offender to consider rights and feelings` of others (Wolfgang, 2001). An effective disciplinary measure should also have the ability to involve learners in its formulation and implementation and should be commensurate with the offence committed. Therefore, it should be implemented soon after offence is committed (Gershoff & Vally 2005:4).

The Department of Education (2000:9) has provided some of the following guides which the female principal can take into cognisance in managing discipline in the realisation that understanding and managing learner behaviour has become a challenge for schools in South Africa:

- Positive discipline has as its goal the whole development of the child.
- Engaging with learners and considering their needs requires effective systems, skills and a positive attitude.
- The management structures in schools should give clear guidelines on the management of learner behaviour.
- The educator has an important responsibility to facilitate a climate for the development of positive learner behaviour.
- The role of the parent, as primary educator and partner in the shaping of the learner's character is indispensable.
- Schools must create the space and offer the opportunity for learners to develop leadership.
- The code of conduct for learners serves as the basis for the development and promotion of positive learner behaviour.
- Practical skills are needed in times of crisis, when learners are experiencing emotional stress.

2.13 SUMMARY

This chapter has given an overview of current disciplinary problems, challenges faced by female primary school principals and discipline strategies that could be employed by the school as well as the leadership styles of female principals. The legal right of learners and disciplinary methods and ways on how to handle learner discipline were examined from the South African perspective. Punitive measures as stated in the South African schools Act, such as detention and suspension, were also discussed. They are referred to as different preventative measures for positive discipline.

In order to come to a better understanding of what perpetuates indiscipline in learners in schools, the next chapter presents a detailed description of the design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two dealt with the literature review on learner discipline. This chapter will outline the empirical process undertaken in the research. It will outline the research paradigm, research methods, data collection, and data analysis followed as well as measures of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

This research followed the interpretive approach. According to Henning *et al.* (2004:21) “interpretive research is concerned with meaning and seeks to understand social members, definitions and understanding of situations”. In this study, the researcher sought to understand how participants, who are female principals, make meaning of ‘learner discipline’ in their school contexts. The main research question guiding this study was: “How do female primary school principals manage learner discipline?”

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Creswell (2007:154) research design refers to the plan according to which relevant data is collected. This study was conducted within the interpretive framework and social constructivist worldview. Creswell (2013:24) states that in social constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas.

Qualitative research according to Airasian (2003:13) seeks to probe deeply into the research setting with the intention of obtaining a deep understanding about the way things are, as how participants perceive them. This provides insight into what people believe and feel about the way things are.

This study, which is on the management of learner discipline by female primary school principals in the Bojanala Region of the North-West province, followed a qualitative research paradigm. The researcher used this approach for the following reasons:

The researcher viewed qualitative research as the best approach for the research because it provided her with an opportunity to understand the management of learner discipline from the participants' perspective. Understanding was acquired by analysing the many contexts of the participants and by narrating participants' meaning which included their feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts and actions regarding the handling of learner discipline in primary schools.

The researcher used a qualitative approach because it is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and experience events and the world in which they live. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:373) a number of different approaches exist within the wider framework of qualitative research but most of these have the same aims, namely, to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

According to White (2002:82) "qualitative researchers operate under the assumption that reality is not easily divided into discrete measurable variables. Qualitative researchers are often described as being the research instrument because the bulk of the data they collect depends on their personal involvement (interviews, observation) in the setting".

Bogdan and Biklen (2003:109) argue that data refers to any information the researcher collects from the research site. Hallwell, Lawton and Gregory (2005:45) indicate that data collection in qualitative research involves the gathering of information for a research project through a variety of data sources. Qualitative researchers sometimes reject the term "collection of data". They use instead the term: "Generating Data". This term is considered more appropriate in qualitative approaches because researchers do not merely collect and describe data in a natural and detached manner but are involved in a more creative way (Hallwell, Lawton & Gregory 2005:45). In this study semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires were used as data collection instruments on the management of learner

discipline by female primary school principals in the Bojanala Region of the North-West province.

3.3.1 Selection of research sites and participants

3.3.3.1 Research sites

The research study was confined to Bojanala district in the North-West province. Four primary schools were purposively selected from a list of schools with contact details of each school and principal, supplied to the researcher by Bojanala Region.

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2006:378) purposive sampling seeks information-rich participants who are likely to be knowledgeable and well-informed about the phenomenon under investigation. The selected schools all had female principals and were representative of different socio-economic backgrounds. This was done in order to present a balanced view of learner discipline management.

3.3.3.2 Research participants

The research participants selected for this study were four female primary school principals, four deputy principals and four senior teachers. The participants were selected because they were “information-rich and knowledgeable” about learner discipline issues in their schools. The researcher sought to understand how female principals managed learner discipline and more specifically, what challenges they encountered and what strategies they used to manage learner discipline in their respective schools.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION AND RECORDING

Data for this study was collected by means of semi-structured interviews which involved interaction between the researcher and female primary school principals. In addition to semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires were given to deputy principals and senior teachers.

3.4.1 Collection of data using semi-structured interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect data from four female primary school principals. According to Nkhata (2005: 30) semi-structured interviews allow the researcher and the participants to discuss the given topic in detail and require participants to answer predetermined questions. The semi-structured interview is used to corroborate information emerging from other data sources. It ensures a certain line of questioning while at the same time allowing a deeper probing into new themes that may emerge (Nieuwenhuis, 2010: 87).

The interviews were conducted with female principals of selected primary schools. Interviews took place either at the school or at the participant's home at an agreed time. The interviews lasted between 10 -20 minutes. Participants were given an informed consent form to read before they were interviewed. Each interview schedule comprised six questions, which were posed to the participants beginning with the least threatening according to Barbour's (2008:115) advice that the schedule "should start by asking questions that are least threatening in nature". Questions were asked and follow-up probes were made to obtain detailed information. Field notes were taken and observations made during the interview process and questions were adjusted depending on the need. Berg (2007:95) maintains that questions asked in a semi-structured interview can reflect awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways. After each interview, the tape was played back to ascertain if everything was in accordance with what had actually taken place.

3.4.2 Collection of data with open-ended qualitative questionnaires

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaire were given to Deputy Principals, Heads of Departments and Senior Teachers to complete. Creswell (2002:228) indicates that open-ended questionnaires are used to support what has been discovered in literature, and they can also be useful in finding out the reason behind the responses. In this study questionnaires were developed with the purpose of finding out what the views of the principals' subordinates were on the management of learner discipline. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Annexure B.

3.4.3 Recording of data

Niewenhuis (2010:89) advises that recording of interview data should be done in a very detailed and precise manner. The researcher made use of digital voice recorder to record the interviews. The information was transcribed to provide a written account of what was said. Following Creswell's (2009:183) advice, the researcher also took notes on an interview protocol form (Annexure B) that was designed to ensure that the interview data was captured correctly and to ensure that gaps in the interview should be identified for possible follow up as suggested by Niewenhuis (2010:89).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis began as soon as the first set of data was collected. Recorded data was transcribed verbatim.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 461) indicate that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns. Most categories and patterns emerge from the data, prior to data collection. Data analysis in this study involved coding, categorizing and clustering of data.

Coding refers to the process of dividing data according to a classification system (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:461). Categorizing, on the other hand, refers to a stage where the identified codes, which talk about the same thing, are grouped together. Therefore, the researcher developed a coding system to organize data into units of meaning. Developing a coding system in this study involved searching through data for regularities and patterns.

In this study the researcher analysed, compared and identified the patterns and relationships of themes. The researcher also identified information from the interviews that supported the topics in the interview questions by underlining or highlighting it. Thus, research findings were presented in a descriptive and narrative form supported by direct quotations from the raw data that serves to illustrate the important findings (McMillan& Schumacher, 2006:420).

3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008:112-113) proposed four criteria that should be considered by researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study. They include the following:

- Credibility;
- transferability;
- dependability; and
- confirmability.

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility deals with the question of how congruent the findings are with reality. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008: 113) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. In an effort to enhance reliability in the data for this study, the following strategies were combined to reduce threats to reliability: Verbatim accounts, mechanically recorded data and participants review, and piloting of instruments.

A pilot study using open-ended questions was conducted with one senior teacher and deputy principal in one school. One female principal was also interviewed in Bojanala Region of North-West province. This was done to determine if the desired information would be gained from the questions posted and whether the method of questioning, was suitable to attain in-depth information. At the end of the pilot study, the researcher took note of the time required to conduct interviews and completion of a questionnaire.

The validity of information in this study was primarily determined by the extent of participants' willingness to share with me freely their experience about the estate of discipline in the primary schools. For instance, the extent to which school principals and SMT members were willing to describe their experiences of learner discipline in the school and classroom environment contributed to credibility.

Triangulation was achieved through various techniques of data collection, namely, in-depth semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires and field notes – in natural settings that reflect reality (Schumacher & McMillan, 2000: 212). Different data sources, namely, principals, SMT members and learner representatives were used.

As a qualitative researcher, I was concerned with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the participants. To ensure reliability, all data was constantly analysed and interpreted during the investigation.

3.6.2 Transferability

Cohen and Manion(2001: 5) state that validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. Since the findings of a qualitative research are specific to a small number of individuals, it is not generally expected for research to demonstrate that findings and conclusions are generalizable. However, for purposes of transferability the researcher should provide all the contextual information about fieldwork sites.

The results of a qualitative study have to be understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the organizations and geographical area in which the field work was carried out. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008: 78) add that a thorough description of the context of the research and the processes followed in carrying out the research at the research site that allows a reader to judge if there is “a fit or match between the research context and other contexts” should be done. In this study, detailed information was given about the research sites, the participants and their views on the issues under investigation.

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to whether one can track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008: 78). In this study, details of data collection and analysis were provided. As much of the data as possible was included in chapter on findings.

3.6.4 Confirmability

The concept “Confirmability,” is the qualitative investigator’s comparable concern to objectivity; (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008:113). Steps are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. In this study, the researcher ensured that her views and opinions did not overshadow those of the participants.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES OF THE RESEARCH

It was of vital importance that the researcher complied with the ethical standards outlined in the ethics committee of Faculty of Education at the North-West University. The following were the key issues that were considered: Permission from the authorities, confidentiality, anonymity of participants, full information to participants.

In every discipline it is considered unethical to collect information without the knowledge of participants, their informed willingness, and expressed consent. Informed consent implies that participants are made adequately aware of the type of information you want from them. Ethical measures are principles which the researcher should bind herself with in conducting the research (Schulze, 2002:17). In addition, the researcher considered the following research ethics:

3.7.1 Permission to conduct the research

In order to conduct research, approval for conducting the research is obtained before any data is collected (McMillan& Schumacher, 2006:195). In this study the researcher first sought permission from the Bojanala Regional Manager before collecting data in the affected schools. Before questionnaires were distributed and interviews conducted, permission for the survey was granted.

3.7.2 Informed consent

In the Bojanala Region, principals were given enough information about the study before data collection. In this study the participants were also given adequate information on the aims of the research, the procedures to be followed, the possible advantages and

disadvantages to the participants, the credibility of the researcher and the way in which the results would be handled. The participants were also informed of the right to abstain from participation in the study or withdraw consent to participate at any time without reprisal (Hallowell, Lawton and Gregory, 2005: 147). This enabled the participants to make an informed decision on whether they wanted to participate in the research or not. No form of deception was used to ensure participation of the participants (Blanche, Durrheim& Painter, 2008: 72).

3.7.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

A researcher must be responsible at all times, vigilant, mindful and sensitive to human dignity (Mouton, 2008:243). This is supported by (McMillan& Schumacher, 2001:142) who stress that information on participants, should be regarded as confidential unless otherwise agreed through an informed consent. In this study, participants' confidentiality was not compromised as their names were not revealed in the collection of data. No private or hidden information was divulged as the right to confidentiality of the participants was respected (Walliman&Baiche, 2001:213). For this reason, no concealed media was used. Only the researcher had access to data to ensure the confidentiality of any information given.

3.7.4 Dissemination of the research findings

As a mark of the researcher's gratitude for their participation, participants were assured that they would be informed of the findings of the study (Schulze, 2002:19). Each school would be given a hard copy of the final recommendations of the research.

3.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter the research paradigm, including the types of instrumentation, methodology, participant selection, data collection and analysis were discussed. Data collection instruments, such as semi-structured interview questions and open-ended questionnaires, were explained in detail. Issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations were addressed. Chapter four will focus on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study was to investigate how female primary school principals in the Bojanala Region of North–West Province manage learner discipline. This investigation was undertaken by means of a literature study and an empirical investigation. This chapter will present the findings from data collected by means of interviews and open-ended questionnaires. It will also present the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008: 147) have pointed out that qualitative data, by its nature is more open to ambiguity and requires the identification of key themes for it to be organised collated and interpreted. Burton *et al.* (2008: 144) advocate that data presentation and analysis are combined in a holistic approach. They (Burton et al. 2008:144) note that data analysis should take into account the research question, data relating to past research findings and concepts from the literature. This study follows Burton *et al.*'s (2008) holistic approach for presenting and analysing data.

The process of data analysis as suggested by Creswell (2007: 147) consists of preparing and organizing data for analysis then reducing data into themes through a process of coding and finally presenting the data in discussion.

Interviews were conducted with four female primary school principals and open-ended questionnaires were administered to deputy principals and four senior teachers of the same schools. Interview questions were divided into six categories with category A focusing on leadership and management experience, category B focusing on causes of disciplinary problems, category C focusing on the role of the principal in discipline management, category D focusing on discipline challenges, category E focusing on discipline strategies and category F focusing on the involvement of other stakeholders in learner discipline.

After introducing herself to the interviewee, the researcher presented an informed consent form and took the participants through the contents of the letter to emphasise that participation was on a voluntary basis, and assured participants that confidentiality would be maintained. Participants were made to feel at ease and relaxed. Questions that were not clearly understood by participants were clarified to ensure thorough understanding.

The open-ended qualitative questionnaire was organised under key topics. Topic 1 focused on the nature and scope of learner discipline, Topic 2, on causes of learner disciplinary problems, Topic 3 on discipline challenges, Topic 4 on discipline strategies, Topic 5 on stakeholder's involvement and Topic 6 focused on issues of gender.

Qualitative design involves fewer respondents with the intention of understanding and developing phenomena (Schulze, 2002: 13). In this study the researcher interviewed four principals of the four selected schools, and the rest of the participants, namely, four deputy principals and 4 senior teachers responded to the open-ended qualitative questionnaire.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW AND OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

4.2.1 Interview data

Data for the interview were derived from verbatim transcripts of interviews with four primary school principals (Annexure F). The interview consisted of open-ended questions. In analysing the transcripts and field notes, the process of data analysis described in 3.5 was followed. Guidelines on qualitative data analysis, interpretation and reporting were noted during this process.

4.2.2 Open-ended questionnaire data

Data from the open-ended questionnaire were analysed following a similar process to the interview data.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEW DATA

This section presents findings from the interviews based on the following topics derived from the interview schedule:

- Experience in school management and leadership;
- causes of discipline problems;
- the role of the principal in discipline management;
- discipline challenges;
- discipline strategies; and
- stakeholders' involvement in learner discipline.

The findings discussed under each main heading are presented according to the interview schedule and the order in which the questions were posed.

4.3.1 How many years of experience do you have in school management and leadership?

The participants' experiences in school management and leadership ranged from three to eight years and from five to fourteen years in the teaching profession.

4.3.2 What are the causes of learner discipline problems in primary schools?

The causes of learner discipline problems identified by the principals are as follows:

The principals indicated that problems emanating from learners' homes had a negative impact on learners. The home background of a learner may influence a learner's behaviour. For instance, the school may try to instill the notion of respect towards others in the children while respect may be something unheard of in the life of the child whose parents normally resolve their differences by using obscene language. The school's attitude to inculcate such moral values in the learners might meet with a serious rebuff.

External factors are generally blamed for the behavioural problems of learners. Educators attributed learner misconduct to factors outside the school (Van Wyk 2001: 10). Parents

forget that they are primary educators and, thus, do not do their duty as expected. Moreover, some participants claimed that poverty at times compels parents to engage in criminal activities to survive. This may set a poor example to the children in the home thus modelling bad behaviour (Van Wyk, 2001:10-11). In addition, the participants also pointed out that poor socio-economic conditions may negatively influence school discipline.

Principal C commented as follows:

“(1) It might be violence at home, by violence at home I mean that violent home breeds violent children (2) Another one is lack of parental involvement 3. Teachers who do not prepare for their lesson presentation (4) Policies not formulated and if they are there they are not implemented, then the other one is the emotional needs of children being ignored, children who have been hurt by adults in a way that harms development, bullying at school, disruptive behaviour, aggressive teachers who feel that their authority is undermined, learners with learning disability, language of teaching and learning and the curriculum itself can be a problem that causes ill-discipline at school”.

4.3.3 What is your role in discipline management in the school?

The principals mentioned the following as their roles in discipline management:

The principal's role is to do with day to day administration and organization of teaching and learning. Their main role is support teachers and to ensure that the school policy on discipline matters is implemented.

Principal A sums it up this way:

“As a principal I've got two primary roles the other one is that of being the preventative role where I need to have policies, regulations and structures that need to take care of disciplinary issues in the school. 2. The other one is the collective one that is to ensure that whenever there are disciplinary problems in school there are programmes set aside to correct those problems 3. My other role is that one of the moral roles to sort of teach my children or encourage them in a moral way and that is normally to emphasize

morality, 4. The other one is to ensure there is a collaborative system for discipline whereby all the stake holders that are constantly in contact with learners like parents and teachers they work together with me in terms of ensuring discipline in the school”.

4.3.4 Which discipline challenges do you encounter in maintaining learner discipline in your school?

The following are the discipline challenges experienced by primary school principals who participated in the study:

Principals indicated that they do experience various discipline challenges in their schools. They cited late coming violence, bunking of classes, failure to do homework, swearing at teachers and other learners, use of cellphones in classes, bullying and possession of dangerous weapons (CF: 18).

Generally, principals find it difficult to manage discipline in their schools. The struggle is more daunting with some schools than with others. Those who have never relied on corporal punishment seem to be coping whereas those who have relied on it feel frustrated by the new system of education. The new curriculum in schools is also cited as a contributing factor to the discipline challenges. However, some principals are being innovative and have made great efforts to put in place systems that enable them to manage discipline in their schools.

Principal A commented as follows:

“The issue of classroom discipline - sometimes I find that teachers who are unable to manage learner discipline in schools, even if there are all this disciplinary rules and all this procedures they are unable to manage discipline. Another is the lack of classroom management - sometimes they find it hard to find the best ways of dealing with the disciplinary issues. We’ve got also the problem in my school, the problem of bullying where the other learners would bully other children, we don’t have much of drug abuse and pornographies. We’ve got little ones - I’m saying bullying because one would always

report that the other one took his/her food, those are minor issues, and we don't have serious ones like drugs and hectic stuff."

4.3.5 Which discipline strategies do you personally use in addition to those employed in your school?

Principals do not use the same disciplinary strategies. Each school has a strategy that it believes works. This is proved by participant A, who relied on the merit system. Participant B relied mainly on school disciplinary policies but incorporates other disciplinary strategies such as detention and point system (merits and demerits). Participant C does not seem to understand the application of detention as a disciplinary strategy

Principals in some schools are guided by "The alternative measures to corporal punishment" on the application of disciplinary strategies that are used in their school, whereas in some schools principals just use their discretion and make their own choices. The following is a comment by Principal B:

"My strategies concerning discipline together with other members employed in the school is that I always encourage them to refer especially to the school policies that are given to school by the government because they will always assist us on discipline measures and we always sit down to strategize on how the school can be helped to make sure that discipline is well maintained in the school".

4.3.6 In what ways are other stakeholders involved in learner discipline?

The respondents involved in the study indicated that for discipline to be maintained in school in general, the stakeholders such as NGO's, social workers, parents, health workers, community policing forum and psychologists should be involved in all school activities in order to assist with behaviour management in learners.

Participant D

“As a school we have made joint partnership with community policing forum, they are invited once every term to come and address learners on issues such as substance abuse, gangsterism, theft and burglary. Ever since we invited them to our school, learner behaviour has improved. Health workers and social workers are also invited to come and address girls on teenage pregnancies and sexual harassment by elderly males in the community and how to take good care of themselves”.

4.4 FINDINGS FROM OPEN-ENDED QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

Data for this section were derived from written responses of eight participants: four primary school deputy principals and four primary school senior teachers. The data are organized under topics derived from questions posed in the questionnaire.

4.4.1 General perception of discipline in schools

Participants were asked to give their general perception of discipline in schools. However, Participant E voiced her frustrations at the prohibition of corporal punishment. She commented:

“Since the banning of corporal punishment, we don’t know what to do to the children. They do what they want. They don’t do their homework and assignments and there’s nothing that you can do. You try to involve the parents but they will tell you that they also have a problem with disciplining learners at home”.

The majority of the participants felt that since the abolition of corporal punishment there is no discipline among learners. Learners misuse their rights; do not respect adults, teachers or parents. Schools encounter challenges due to lack of support from parents. One participant’s perception was that there is discipline, but what is required is daily monitoring of it.

4.4.2 Causes of learner indiscipline

Participants were asked to respond to this question: What do you think are the causes of discipline problems in schools?

In the questionnaires the majority of participants raised the following factors as causes of learner indiscipline: Peer group pressure and lack of parental involvement.

4.4.2.1 Peer group pressure

Participants indicated that peer group pressure was one of the factors that caused learner misconduct. They further asserted that there were gangsters from the community in which learners are members, and during school hours, these groups cause serious ill-discipline in schools.

Participant D

“Learners who befriend gangsters in the community have a very bad influence on others at school because they force them to join them in breaking school rules otherwise, they fight with them”.

Coleman and Bergin (2001:113) assert that peer group pressure and gang violence are some of the factors causing learner misconduct in schools. The pressure may be extremely strong and hard to resist. During learner teen years, children spend more time with their peers and without their parental supervision. They also break away from their parents' images and develop identities of their own.

The need for acceptance, approval and belonging is vital during the teen years, because children who feel isolated or rejected by their peers may engage in risky behaviour in order to fit in with a group. In such situations, peer pressure can impair good judgment and lead to risk taking behaviour.

4.4.2.2 Lack of parental involvement

If parents are not actively involved in their children's education by attending meetings and intervention meetings called by the school, learners start neglecting their work and do not attend classes as expected. This poses a very serious disciplinary problem to the school.

Participant B

“Our learners come from a situation where, you know, parents are no longer together because they fought they fail to assist their children and attend to meetings, so this affects their children's education — they no longer concentrate in the school and sometimes they get angry with the teachers”.

4.4.2.3. Inconsistencies by teachers in maintaining discipline

Majority of participants fell into the category of inconsistencies on the part of the teachers. They indicated that discipline was not being administered consistently in learners that they are no functional discipline policy in place and that learners continually got away with ill-discipline at schools.

Participant C

“Some teachers are not fair in disciplining learners, they are inconsistent with rules and this poses a serious disciplinary problem in the school”.

4.4.3 Discipline challenges

4.4.3.1 Which discipline challenges do you find yourself faced with in your school?

Participants indicated the following challenges:

Teachers in schools that are located in low-economic areas face challenges such as lack of resources, learners are withdrawn and the educator-learner relationship is poorer than in schools located in affluent areas.

Most of the teachers are struggling to find alternatives that will enable them to feel in control of the learners they teach. As a result they suffer from stress and some leave the teaching profession because of difficulties in dealing with learner misconduct. Participant B commented: *“I find that teachers who are unable to manage learner discipline in schools even if there are all this disciplinary rules and all this procedures they are unable to manage discipline”*.

Some learners are not co-operative towards teachers and turn to violent and aggressive behaviour and carry dangerous weapons. This confirms what is expressed by Flannery (2005:22) where he mentions that “learners constantly disrespect, disrupt and demean.”

Another challenge is late coming and bunking of classes, particularly by learners whose homes are child-headed. If learners do not do their work properly, it becomes difficult for teachers to discipline them and this affects their learning. Learners who are commuting also tend to come late to school. Daily supervision of learners in the morning and during lessons is of vital importance as late coming of learners destabilises the school and brings about poor learner performance.

4.4.3.2 How does (in) discipline affect quality teaching and learning in the school?

Participants were asked to respond to how learner indiscipline affects teaching and learning.

It was evident from the responses of participants that indiscipline affects learning and teaching in a very negative way. It was indicated that educators waste a lot teaching time reprimanding learners, controlling late coming and at times curbing unnecessary noise-making, fighting and bullying. It is possible to waste up to 10 minutes in a 30 minute period talking to learners to keep quiet and pay attention before lessons can start.

Participant G sums up the feeling of others in this manner:

“Teachers are unable to complete the required learning outcomes due to lack of discipline. Ill-disciplined learners disturb those who want to do their work. Our learners really do not want to behave properly”.

4.4.4 Discipline strategies

4.4.4.1 Participants were asked to list the strategies employed in their school which they thought were effective in dealing with learner discipline, and to say why the strategy was effective.

Several positive discipline strategies were mentioned, such as: walking around to see what was happening, keeping learners busy by preparing lessons well, talking to learners and telling them how to behave, inviting parents to school or phoning them about their children’s behaviour, praising good behaviour, adopting and implementing a code of conduct. Only one participant advocated the use of light corporal punishment as a strategy.

In one school, an innovative strategy was implemented whereby a quality learning campaign was launched where all stakeholders were invited to pledge how they would assist the school. A learner attendance policy was developed and implemented.

Some discipline strategies are regarded as effective by some teachers and by others they are not. My conclusion here is that challenges could be in the application of discipline strategies by teachers.

4.4.4.2 Participants were also asked to indicate which of the alternative measures to corporal punishment recommended by the Department of Education they used

The majority of participants mentioned using detention after school, followed by demerit system, parental involvement, keeping disciplinary record books, community service, losing privileges, extra work in the library and homework system.

Participant A

“Learners can be detained after school and be made to lose privileges they had before if they misbehave in school”.

4.4.5 Stakeholder’s involvement

Which role is played by parents in learner discipline?

The main role played by parents is their involvement in drawing up the learner code of conduct, attending intervention meetings, being involved in their children’s discipline by talking to them, and ensuring they obey school rules and paying school fees for their children.

Participant E

“Parents must support the school principal and participate actively in the education of their children by assisting them with homework, ensuring that they attend school on time and obey the laws”.

From the responses of some participants it is evident that some schools do get sufficient parental support, while others get minimal parental support. Parents must not shift the responsibilities to teachers as they are also primary educators of learners.

In what ways are the School Governing Body members involved in learner discipline?

The main role of the School Governing Body (SGB) members is to draw up the school’s code of conduct and deal with serious matters such as disciplinary hearings and suspensions. The SGB also ensure that the school is a safe and crime-free environment.

Participant F

“The SGB is working in collaboration with the disciplinary committee by developing policies and code of conduct as they are juridistic body in the school”.

4.4.6 General issues

Do you think the gender of the principal matters in the management of learner discipline in your school?

The general response to this question was that the gender of the principal does not matter. What matters is how the principal approaches her staff and community and learners, as well as the character and leadership style of the principal.

The participants felt that female managers, due to their charisma, are capable of changing behaviours and attitudes of their subordinates and handle discipline by applying effective discipline strategies and are also effective in running and managing primary schools.

Participant D responded as follows:

“Gender does not matter – what is important is the effective and efficient leadership that creates and enhances quality learning in a conducive school environment.”

4.5 SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

The findings from the interviews with the principals and those from the open-ended questionnaires completed by the deputy principals and senior teachers are synthesized below under the main themes: Causes of disciplinary problems, discipline challenges, discipline strategies, involvement of stakeholders, and types of misconduct experienced in primary schools of Bojanala.

Causes of disciplinary problems

The findings from the open-ended qualitative questionnaires and interviews elicited that the main causes of disciplinary problems are laid at the feet of learners’ home environment, school policies that are not formulated and implemented. Poor connection of learners with

educators and engagement in lessons are serious challenges to learners. They also made it clear that learners who fail to wear proper school uniform also pose a serious problem.

Learner discipline challenges

Teachers have indicated that they are facing serious problems of working with learner who are not obeying the school rules, disrupting lessons and absenting themselves from school. They further mentioned that these challenges make it difficult for them to cope with the situation and this lowers this morale, passion and dedication in teaching.

Lack of parental involvement

Principals and school management teams agreed that lack of parental involvement was a challenge to learner discipline management. Responses indicated that generally parental involvement was seen as key to addressing discipline problems at schools. With regard to problems such as substance abuse and gangsterism, it can be asserted that parental involvement is crucial for these forms of misbehaviour to be managed. It is evident that parents who fail to attend intervention meetings called by the school encourage learners to neglect their school work, break the rules and not respect teachers.

Discipline strategies

Principals and School Management Teams attested that for effective management of learner discipline, a well communicated system of discipline and code of conduct must be adopted and fully implemented. Some other positive discipline strategies such as walking around the school and the establishment of quality learning and teaching committee were agreed upon.

Involvement of stakeholders

It is evident that some schools do not receive a sufficient parental support and that parents have shifted their responsibility to teachers. Principals have indicated that schools should make a joint partnership with community policing forum, health and social workers to come and assist them with behaviour management in their schools.

Types of misconduct experienced in primary schools of Bojanala

Responses from interviews with female principals and open-ended questionnaire administered to deputies, principals and senior teachers in the Bojanala Region revealed the following types of misconduct:

- Fighting and bullying

Fighting and bullying was indicated as one of the major problems. This is a big threat to school discipline especially as it often results in injuries, some fatal. This often leads to the formation of gangs and resultant revenge attacks. It was clear that teachers were helpless regarding this and expressed views that the involvement of law enforcement agencies was necessary.

- Late coming, noise making in classes and school work dereliction

It was pointed out that learners who come late to school, noisy in classes and neglect the school work destabilizes the school and make it dysfunctional. Teachers made it clear that the situation leave them frustrated, demoralized and depressed. This also impacts negatively on the quality of teaching teachers could offer and leads to a stunted class progress.

From the findings of this study, it is clear that discipline problems at schools are not only a mere manifestation of unruly behaviour but a result of various causes, some of which are situated at school, at home and within learners themselves.

The discussion in this chapter has highlighted the need for a holistic approach to school discipline and has revealed inadvisability of relying on quick fixes and on the spot solution to correcting misbehaviour. The question that needs to be answered at this stage relates to what discipline problems are experienced by schools and how they can be assisted to institute discipline measures that address the whole schools discipline needs.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter presented and integrated the empirical data, from interviews and open-ended questionnaires. The next chapter will present the summary of the study, the main recommendations as well as suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The foregoing chapters have presented the introduction to the study, discussed the literature review, explained the qualitative research design followed in the study and presented and discussed the findings of the study on the management of learner discipline by female primary school principals in the Bojanala Region of North-West. This chapter will present the summary of the study, the research findings, and recommendations with regard to the management of learner discipline by female primary school principals. Suggestions for further research will be provided, limitations will be indicated and a final concluding statement on the study will be made.

5.2 SUMMARY OF STUDY

According to the data collected from female primary school principals, deputies and senior teachers, it is evident that learner discipline is a major problem in many schools. The discussion highlights the main thrust in so far as maintenance of discipline in schools is concerned. It also highlights that the literature on learner discipline focuses mainly on prevention of misbehaviour and a positive attitude towards learner behaviour. It indicates those traditional forms of discipline such as suspensions and expulsion, detention and many other forms of human sanctions which are regularly written about. This research advocates addressing discipline problems holistically and in a way that addresses the whole school environment. While this indeed is a challenge and can be frustrating to teachers and principals that seek to effect immediate solutions, a whole school approach seeks to address the real causes among learners. Following is the summary of the study according to chapters.

Chapter 1 outlined the rationale of the study and presented the research methodology, problem statement and main research question. The research design outlined the research instruments, participants, sampling and also details about the research procedure.

Chapter 2 outlined the status of discipline in South African schools, alternative strategies and classical approaches to discipline and female leadership styles as well the challenges they face in managing and handling learner discipline based on the literature study.

Chapter 3 focused mainly on the qualitative research paradigm, research methods and measures to ensure trustworthiness, data analysis and reporting.

Chapter 4 presented, analyzed and interpreted the data from interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Findings were listed in terms of in details the data analysis and interpretation, research findings in terms of causes of discipline problems, how learner indiscipline affects teaching and learning, discipline challenges and effective strategies that could be applied to manage discipline in schools.

Chapter 5 summarizes the research study, presents findings from the research, offers recommendations and suggests ideas for further study. A final concluding statement is made.

5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

The study set out to investigate how female primary school principals manage learner discipline. In addition, the views of members of the school management team (deputy principals and senior teachers) were solicited. The study was guided by these objectives:

To describe the nature and scope of learner discipline'

- to determine the challenges female principals encounter in managing learner discipline in primary schools;
- to determine the strategies female primary school principals use to manage learner discipline; and
- to make recommendations for the improvement of learner discipline in primary schools.

The main findings on each of these objectives are presented.

On the nature and scope of learner discipline, findings from the literature and empirical investigation revealed that the development of common understanding of the learner discipline is vital and it is to be addressed properly and should be viewed as an educative process and be regarded as a way of encouraging and promoting self-discipline, co-operation, self-respect and responsibility.

Regarding challenges encountered by female primary school principals, the main ones revealed were lack of parental involvement in the discipline of their children.

Regarding strategies used by female primary school principals to manage learner discipline, the findings revealed that strategies such as merit system, modelling of good behaviour, daily report sheet, invitation of parents to meetings and establishment of quality learning and teaching committee are currently used and regarded very effective by female principals in the management of learner discipline in their schools.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made with regard to the findings on management of learner discipline by female primary school principals.

5.4.1 Discipline challenges

In light of these, effective classroom management and good team work among teachers as well as whole school approach to discipline are recommended.

5.4.2 Discipline strategies

A uniform and well-communicated system of discipline must be adopted. The code of conduct should also be adopted by parents, the School Governing Body and learners. It must also be properly implemented to know what is expected.

5.4.3 Involvement of stakeholders

All the stakeholders in the school community must be taken on board and be encouraged to play an active part in the management of learner discipline. Teachers should be consistent when disciplining the learners in their classrooms. The inclusion of parents in the School Governing Body should be seen as key and a good partnership that works towards the improvement of discipline in schools. The Department of Education should also give schools the maximum support in this regard.

5.4.4 Types of misconduct

It is recommended that different forms in discipline such as late coming, dereliction of work, fighting and bullying and the use of substance abuse be given a serious attention by all the stakeholders involved in the education of learners.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In view of the findings and the gaps that have been identified, further research could be conducted on:

- Causes of poor parental involvement in learner discipline in primary schools; and
- perceptions of male and female principals on the management of learner discipline in primary schools.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study may be the exclusion of the male perspective in handling learner discipline. However, despite the gender differentiated sample and restricted data set, detailed descriptions of the research sites, data collection and analysis methods may make it possible for principals in other schools to decide if similar ways of managing learner discipline can work in their own schools.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the indiscipline problem in primary schools in the Bojanala region must receive an urgent attention. The literature and the empirical investigation revealed that the inclusion of parents through the School Governing Body is in principle a good partnership process because it aims at improving discipline in schools. The use of legislation through documents such as the South African Schools Act and alternatives to corporal punishment prohibited certain practices such as use of corporal punishment and allowed learners to claim certain rights which teachers feel uncomfortable with. The SASA (RSA 1996a) stipulates the code of conduct for schools that should be drafted and implemented and in so doing, it is hoped that learner discipline within our schools can be improved. The study explored the different meanings that were attached to the word discipline, the causes of discipline problems, challenges that teachers and principals are faced with as well as discipline strategies that are currently employed by female principals in order to manage discipline in their schools. The findings of the study revealed that the female principals should enforce the implementation of disciplinary policies and related legislation to address and manage the current discipline problems in primary schools as speedily as possible.

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ANNEXURE A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

PARTICIPANTS: FEMALE PRINCIPALS

1. How many years of experience do you have in school management and leadership?
2. What are the causes of discipline problem in primary school?
3. What is your role in discipline management of the school?
4. Which discipline challenges do you encounter maintaining learner discipline in your school?
5. Which discipline strategies do you personally use in addition to those employed in your school to manage learner discipline?
6. In what way are all the stakeholders involved in learner discipline?

Thank you for your kind co-operation.

ANNEXURE B

QUESTIONNAIRE

PARTICIPANTS: - DEPUTY PRINCIPALS, HODS AND SENIOR TEACHERS

A. Nature and Scope of Discipline

1. What is your general perception with regard to discipline in school?

B. Causes of Disciplinary Problems

2. What, in your opinion, are the main causes of discipline problems at your school?

C. Discipline challenges

3. Which discipline challenges are you faced with in your school?

4. How does (in) discipline affect quality teaching and Learning in your school?

D. Discipline Strategies

5. Which discipline strategies are used in your school to manage learner discipline? Mention a strategy and explain how it is applied?

6. Which strategies employed at your school do you regard as effective and why?

7. Which of the alternative measure corporate to corporate punishment recommended by the Department of Education (2001) in the document:

Alternatives to corporal punishment: A practical guide for education, do you use

E. Stakeholders involvement

8. Which role is played by parents in learner discipline?

9. In what way are other support structures involved in learner discipline?

F. General Issues

10. What, in your opinion, do gender in school leadership and management impact on the effective management of learner discipline in your school?

ANNEXURE C

Permission letter from the university



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
MAFIKENG CAMPUS

Private Bag X2046
Mmabatho, 2735
Tel: +27(18) 3892441/2500
Fax: +27(18) 3892012

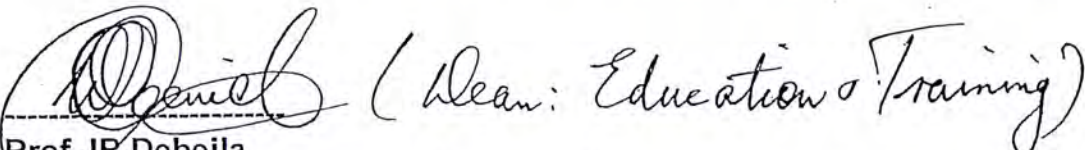
26 March 2013

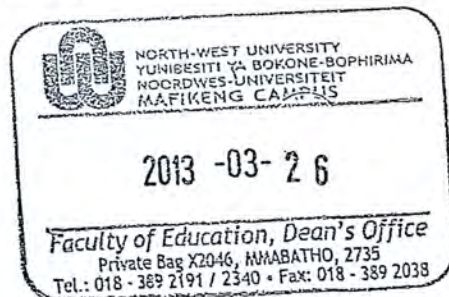
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that **Ms L.M Monare (Student No: 21115109)** is a MEd (Masters) student studying Educational Management at the North West University, Mafikeng Campus.

She is collecting data for her research. We request that she be allowed to collect data from female principals, deputies and senior teachers in Bojanala Region North-West Province.

I therefore, request that she be given the necessary assistance in this regard.

PP  (Dean: Education & Training)
Prof JR Debeila
Director: School of Postgraduate Studies



ANNEXURE D

Permission letter from Bojanala Region



education

Lefapha la Thuto la Bokone Bophirima
Noordwes Departement van Onderwys
North West Department of Education
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

cnr Kock and Heystek St
Rustenburg C
Private Bag X82
Rustenburg C
Tel.: (014) 590-4
Fax.: (014) 592-3
e-mail: pmokhutle@nwpg.gov.za

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: BOJANALA DISTRICT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

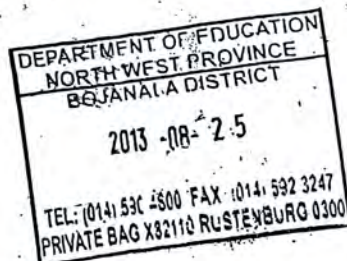
This is to confirm that Ms L.M. Monare (Student No. 21115109) was granted permission by our office to conduct her research in some of our schools from April to July 2013.

Schools that participated in this regard were:

- Tshirologang Primary School
- Platinum Primary School
- Tlhotlheletsang Primary School
- Mfidikwe Primary School.

Hoping that you will find this in order.

Ms M.P. Mokhutle
Executive District Manager



ANNEXURE E

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

TITLE: The management of learner discipline by female primary school principals in the Bojanala Region of North-West Province.

Introduction

I, Lesego Maria Monare a Master's Degree student at the University of North-West (Mafikeng) will conduct interviews and administer an open-ended questionnaire on the above topic. This is part of Master's Degree mini dissertation on Education Management.

Purpose of the study

To investigate how effectively female primary schools principals maintain and handle learner discipline at their schools. If you agree to participate in this study, you will either participate in an interview (female principals) or complete a questionnaire (Deputies and senior teachers) designed to gather information about the topic. Both the interview and the questionnaire will not take longer than 30 minutes each.

Voluntary participation and confidentiality

You will not incur any cost in the participation of this study as it is purely voluntary. You are also guaranteed of anonymity in the research report. However, the information supplied will be treated as confidential and if you request to be withdrawn from the study at any point you can do so without any prejudice.

AUTHORISATION

I have read the above and understand the nature of the study. I agree to participate in the study and authorise the researcher to use the information gathered in her research report provided that I remain anonymous and a pseudonym is used to refer to me. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw in the study at any point.

Participant signature

: G. Tumele

Date: 17/07/13

Researcher's signature

: L. Monare

Date: 17/07/13

ANNEXURE F

All the questions for the interview schedule were posed to the participants and their individual responses were as follows:

Table 4.1: Questions and responses of participants

Questions	Principals	Responses	Codes
How many years of experience do you have in school management and leadership?	A	<i>"I have been in school management and leadership from 2007, now it's my 8th year".</i>	
	B	<i>"I started as an HOD in 2006 and 2011 as principal therefore it means I am in school management and leadership".</i>	
	C	<i>"I have got 19 in teaching but seven years' experience in school management and leadership."</i>	
	D	<i>"I have 14 years of experience, ten years as a deputy principal, I was then appointed as a principal as a primary school principal."</i>	
What are the causes of discipline problems in primary schools?	A	<i>"There are various causes of discipline in primary school: (1) It can be that learners are unable to connect with their educators sometimes they feel that educators don't engage them in their lessons plans so they feel a bit challenged (2) These learners have certain social and physical needs that have where not met i.e. A learner comes to school hungry or he/ she is neglected or abused, those are the reasons that sometimes causes discipline in schools (3) Another thing is that we've got teenagers in primary school also and they tend to test the boundaries and If they found that the boundaries are not well developed they will obviously cause troubles (4) Another thing that causes disciplinary</i>	

		<p><i>problems is that they feel disconnected as if educators don't care about them so they turn to rebel others need power so the always try to show their mates that they can be in control so those are some of the disciplinary challenges in schools".</i></p>	
	<p>B</p>	<p><i>"Causes of discipline problems in primary schools are many also dealing with young learners, I can also mention a few, since we are dealing with young learners they need to be pushed most of the time, taking the matter in the classroom learners now lately do not do their work efficiently therefore educators must always be behind them to do their work effectively. Sometimes when given home works they don't do it at home as given they do it in classrooms therefore the work will not be well up to date then discipline will be stress, but now we know that corporal punishment is not implemented then the educators need to use other means of discipline, then learners do not take discipline as such because they know that they are not to be discipline corporally, even if they are given some sort of discipline like cleaning or doing some easy work they also need to be pushed now they cause problems to the school. Again the issue of uniform, school that is not well with uniform it gives educators problem you may not know whether this is a learner for the school or what, some parents do not manage to buy uniform for their leaners therefore this gives educators problems at school if learners are not on their proper school uniform. And in learners do not have uniform it causes problems. Again the</i></p>	

		<i>issue of text books, learners at times leave textbooks at home this will give educators problems and they have to discipline learners”.</i>	
	C	<i>“(1) It might be violence at home, by violence at home I mean that violent home breeds violent children (2) another one is lack of parental involvement 3. Teachers who do not prepare for their lesson presentation (4) Policies not formulated and if they are there they are tⁱimplemented, then the other one is the emotional needs of children being ignored, children who have being hurt by adults in a way that harms development, bullying at school, disruptive behaviour, aggressive teachers who feel that their authority Is undermined, learners with learning disability, language of teaching and learning and the curriculum itself can be a problem that causes discipline at school”.</i>	
	D	<i>“(1) The school situation and inconsistencies in disciplining learners by some of the teachers because they do not handle learners the same and are hard on some and lenient on others. (2)If the curriculum is not managed well at school, learners become bored and end up disrespecting teachers”</i>	
What is your role in discipline management in the school?	A	<i>“As a principal, I’ve got two primary rules the other one is that of being the preventative role where I need to have policies, regulations and structures that needs to take care of disciplinary issues in the school. 2. The other one is the collective one that is to ensure that whenever there are disciplinary problems in school there are programmes set aside to correct those problems 3. My other</i>	

		<p><i>role is that one of the moral roles to sort of teach my children or encourage them in a moral way and that is normally to emphasise morality, 4. The other one is to ensure there is a collaborative system for discipline whereby all the stakeholders that are constantly in contact with learners like parents and teachers they work together with me in terms of ensuring discipline in the school".</i></p>	
	B	<p><i>"As a principal I have to guide educators to guide learner, to guide parents, to guide all stakeholders in the school concerning discipline, therefore we must have policies in school that will guide all these stakeholders, the policies must be drawn together with all the members so that we all strive to the same goal, so that is my role there".</i></p>	
	C	<p><i>"My role is to observe the ways in which children behave so that I can understand their learning programmes better (2) Drawing of classroom rules for learning and children in the class should contribute ideas and comments in a rule is broken the child who broke it has to copy it out and apologise to the class (3) I have to support and affirm parents as primary educators by talking to them in family ways in which their children are developing and what they are interested in, I must be clear of what I expect from parents, I have to encourage parents to come to school and enjoy their children's success, I have to use professional assistance, I have to allow learners to take responsibility for the day to day events in the school".</i></p>	
	D	<p><i>"As a principal, I established an in school disciplinary committee comprising of HOD's,</i></p>	

		<p><i>SGB members, myself and senior teacher so as to address all issues pertaining to the management of discipline in or school. I ensure that policies such as South Africa Schools Act and code of conduct for both learners and teachers are in place and are implemented. I also involve the school Governing Body also in disciplinary matters such as addressing learners who committed misconduct. I also advice SGB to charge the learners according to the transgressions they have committed and according to their merits and that suspension is a last resort. After exhausting all the alternatives stipulated by the Department.”</i></p>	
<p>Which discipline challenges do you encounter in maintaining learner discipline in your school?</p>	<p>A</p>	<p><i>“1. The issue of classroom discipline, sometimes I find that teachers who are unable to manage learner discipline in schools even if there are all this disciplinary rules and all this procedures they are unable to manage discipline. Another thing is the lack of classroom management sometimes they find it hard to find the best ways of dealing with the disciplinary issues, we’ve got also the problem in my school the problem of bullying where other learners would bully other children, we don’t have much of drug abuse and pornographies and much, we’ve got little ones I’m saying bullying because one would always report that the other one took his/ her food, those are minor issues we don’t have serious ones like drugs and hectic stuff.”</i></p>	
	<p>B</p>	<p><i>“ Ok, as I said to discipline learners you must work as a team, people differ according to the way we are, some educators are nice some are harsh, now we must deal with such</i></p>	

		<p><i>characters because at times you will find that learners are ill-discipline maybe in a certain classroom then the educator doesn't become harsh on learners, now you will find that such a classroom s always ill-discipline now it gives a challenge because the other educators must come and help the educator to discipline learners in the classroom whereas the educator is there, one other thing can emanate from home, some learners are not disciplined for home as we know that charity begins at home, now dealing with such learners become a problem and again if we have to call the parents to school, they drag their legs, they do not come to come and assist the school in order to maintain discipline in the school because of their children, one other thing is that learners are given too much rights concerning their lives, no this also gives the school problems because leaners know their rights forgetting their responsibilities".</i></p>	
	C	<p><i>"The whole school approach where everybody take part in assisting discipline in the school (2) being inclusive is a problem, coping with learning difficulties and learning material and methodology"</i></p>	
	D	<p><i>"We experience bullying vandalism, theft, dodging and bunking classes, high rate of teacher absenteeism due to stress and low morale in teaching."</i></p>	
Which discipline strategies do you personally use in addition to those employed in your	A	<p><i>"The 1st one is Role modelling, myself and my educators we need to model good behaviour that is an addition to the one that we are having that is given by the department and another things is that I have developed a</i></p>	

school?		<p><i>guide that teachers will follow which will outline the type of offenses that they need to deal with as educators so that they don't have to bring anything to the HOD or to me or to refer anything, I have got that kind of a guideline which will help them or assist them in finding those issues that need to be referred to for discipline, the other things is the use of merit system where learners who did well are being given a merit, is a way of encouraging them yes and making refrained from doing thing that are not wanted. (4) Another thing is that I constantly motivate my learners in assemblies i do tell them about this good they need to do and why they should behave in a particular way so that's what I do in addition to the one we are being given by the department."</i></p>	
	B	<p><i>"My strategies concerning discipline together with other members employed in the school is that I always encourage them to refer especially to the school policies that are given to school by the government because they will always assist us on discipline measures and we always sit down to strategize on how the school can be helped to make sure that discipline is well maintained in the school."</i></p>	
	C	<p><i>"I use a daily report sheet and the purpose of this daily report sheet is to help children reflect on their bad behaviour patterns, e.g. I will have to tick on the following: the whole word not done, book left at home, talks or play during class activities, bad behaviour in the class, destructs or talk during teaching, swears, steals and fight. At the end of the day</i></p>	

		<i>I sit down with the learner and discuss the bad behaviour that have been encountered during the day so that he must change.</i>	
	D	<i>"I regularly invite parents for a meeting for us to talk about ways in which we can maintain discipline in our school. I also establish Quality Learning and Teaching Committee to develop the programme of action where parents are going to take active part in the development of the school."</i>	
In what ways are other stakeholders involved in learner discipline?	A	<i>" I think here we are talking of this stakeholders that are constantly in contact with learners the first one will be the educators of course they are the key stakeholders in terms of discipline because they spend more time with the learners, as classroom managers they have got their rules and ways of dealing with learners. Another thing we have got the SGB which ensures that there are policies, the learner code of conduct and other policies that are related to learner discipline. The SGB is engaged in assisting us with the development of such policies and the other stakeholders will be the parents, their interaction or their intervention in this regard is very minimal because they feel that they are not at school but there are those parents who always be there when you call in terms of disciplinary issues so that's how far they engaged."</i>	
	B	<i>"In our meetings, especially at the beginning of the year, we call parents meetings whereby the code of conduct for learners will be given or will be read to parents so that they must know exactly what the school is in need of concerning discipline, and also learners are</i>	

		<p><i>also given the chance to discuss matters concerning the discipline within the school and again we sometimes invite other people from outside like the police who are part of the discipline at our school to come and discuss matters concerning our learners in the school."</i></p>	
	C	<p><i>"Educational psychologist will have to offer or to do formal assessment to identify serious learning problems, then the medical doctors who have specialized in the case of children also help and the non-governmental organization will have to provide support service for teachers in areas such as in service training, curriculum development, material and production."</i></p>	
	D	<p><i>"As a school we have made joint partnership with community policing forum, they are invited once every term to come and address learners on issues such as substance abuse, gangsterism, theft and burglary. Ever since we invited them to our school, learner behaviour has improved. Health workers and social workers are also invited to come and address girls on teenage pregnancies and sexual harassment by elderly males in the community and how to take good care of themselves".</i></p>	

ANNEXURE G

The following are the individual responses from the open-ended qualitative questionnaire

Table 4.2: Questions and responses of participants

QUESTIONS	PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES
What is your general perception of discipline in school?	A	<i>"I see discipline as inner control. A responsible behaviour, respect for teachers, learners and other school property, discipline refers to behaving responsibly".</i>
	B	<i>"I believe that there is no discipline due to a lack of readiness of the school community".</i>
	C	<i>"I understand discipline as punishment. When learners are given a hiding, they change their behaviour and become controllable".</i>
	D	<i>"I perceive discipline as those who are always punctual. We do the work given and eager to learn".</i>
	E	<i>"Since the banning of corporal punishment, we don't know what to do to the children. They do what they want. They don't do their homework and assignments</i>

		<i>and there's nothing that you can do. You try to involve the parents but they will tell you that they also have a problem with disciplining learners at home".</i>	
	F	<i>"Discipline is a proactive approach used by the school to safe guard the culture of learning and teaching with an aim of moulding them to be responsible learners".</i>	
	G	<i>"There is discipline in school. All that is needed to keep it working is the daily monitoring of any ill-discipline".</i>	
	H	<i>"Discipline means teaching or training that develops self-control, character and orderliness".</i>	
What, in your opinion, are the main causes of discipline problems at your school?	A	<i>"Violent homes are the cause of learner discipline problems".</i>	
	B	<i>"Home and school environment that is not conducive to learning".</i>	
	C	<i>"Learners are given the rights and they hear about it over the radio that they must not be punished".</i>	
	D	<i>"Learners who befriend gangsters in the community</i>	

		<i>have a very bad influence on others at school because they force them to join them in breaking school rules otherwise, they fight with them".</i>	
	E	<i>"Late arrival and early departure by teachers as well as ineffective teaching by teachers leads to discipline problems".</i>	
	F	<i>"Lack of parental care and peer pressure causes discipline problems at schools".</i>	
	G	<i>"No, I don't think discipline in primary schools differ with the ones in high school. The only difference is the intense that makes it differ".</i>	
	H	<i>"Teachers who do not prepare for their lessons".</i>	
Which discipline challenges are you faced with in your school and how does it affect quality teaching and learning in the school?	A	<i>"Learners who are noisy and do not obey teachers instructions frustrate them".</i>	
	B	<i>"I find that teachers who are unable to manage learner discipline in schools even if there are all this disciplinary rules and all this procedures they are unable to manage discipline".</i>	

	C	<i>“Destructive behaviour by learners of higher grades i.e. dodging periods and bunking classes”.</i>	
	D	<i>“If learners do not do their work properly it becomes difficult for teachers to discipline them and this affects learning”.</i>	
	E	<i>“If you chase a learner who disrupts lessons, it is a violation of law because you are infringing his right to receive education”.</i>	
	F	<i>“The new curriculum, late coming, bunking of classes and swearing at teachers pose a challenge to teachers.”</i>	
	G	<i>“Teachers are unable to complete the required learning outcomes due to learners who disturb those who want to learn. Our learners really do not want to behave properly”.</i>	
	H	<i>“Indiscipline affects the level of work that teachers can offer and impacts badly on learner performance.”</i>	
Which discipline strategies are used in your school to manage learner discipline?	A	<i>“ Learners can be detained after school and be made to loose privileges they had before if they misbehave in school”.</i>	

	B	<i>"We always involve parents and they tell us it is difficult for them to discipline their learners."</i>	
	C	<i>"The school use disciplinary record books and involve parents in decision making."</i>	
	D	<i>"The school management team ensures that the code of conduct is communicated with parents and have adopted it in the meeting."</i>	
	E	<i>"Parents are encouraged to become members of quality learning and teaching committee."</i>	
	F	<i>"The community policing forum is made aware and invited in parents meetings to address them on crime related issues."</i>	
	G	<i>"Clear leadership roles and managing by walking around are used by the principal in running the school."</i>	
	H	<i>"Inviting parents to school through letters informing them about their children's conduct."</i>	
Which of the alternative measures to corporal punishment recommended by the Department of	A	<i>"Detention and demerit system are the measures that</i>	

Education (2001) do you use?		<i>we use at school."</i>	
	B	<i>"Cleaning up classrooms during breaks and doing community work as punishment."</i>	
	C	<i>"Suspension, demerit and detention are used and are seen as relevant measures."</i>	
	D	<i>"Denying a learner an opportunity to undertake school trips and losing other privileges they had before."</i>	
	E	<i>"Retaining learners after school with teacher supervision."</i>	
	F	<i>"Learners are given extra work i.e. reading activity at the library for the whole day."</i>	
	G	<i>"Teachers write daily reports to parents after assessing their improvement in their children's behaviour."</i>	
	H	<i>"In our school we adhere to alternative measures, document, by keeping records of transgressors and finally refer them to the school management team for counselling."</i>	
Which role is played by parents in learner discipline?	A	<i>"Parents attend to meetings called by the school twice a term where they are given</i>	

		<i>information on their children's progress and school rules."</i>	
	B	<i>"They ensure that their children obey rules and regulations of the school."</i>	
	C	<i>"Parent involvement is very important because it changes the behaviour and attitude of learners."</i>	
	D	<i>"They attend intervention sessions where they are encouraged by teachers to assist their children with school work."</i>	
	E	<i>"Parents must support the school principal and participate actively in the education of their children by assisting them with homework, ensuring that they attend school on time and obey the laws".</i>	
	F	<i>"Parents must have regular discussions with children about school matters and create an environment conducive to study at their homes."</i>	
	G	<i>"If children come to school with problems, the school will struggle to solve these problems because we must start at home. Parents have an</i>	

		<i>important role to play but they neglect it."</i>	
	H	<i>"Parents must always cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationship with teachers of their children."</i>	
In what ways are the support structures involved in learner discipline?	A	<i>"Support the principal, teachers in disciplining learners."</i>	
	B	<i>"The SGB ensure that the school is a safe crime-free environment for learning and teaching."</i>	
	C	<i>"They assist the school in drafting a code of conduct for learners in line with legislation."</i>	
	D	<i>"As the juridistic body, the SGB they are consulted when there are serious disciplinary actions that must be taken e.g. suspensions."</i>	
	E	<i>"They take an active part in the maintenance of discipline of all learners in the school by becoming members of quality learning and teaching committee of the school."</i>	
	F	<i>"The SGB is working in collaboration with the disciplinary committee by developing policies and code of conduct as they are</i>	

		<i>juridistic body in the school”.</i>	
	G	<i>“The main role of SGB is to develop policies and ensure they are implemented.”</i>	
	H	<i>“Through the SGB ill-disciplined learners are usually called for disciplinary hearing.”</i>	
In your opinion, do you think the gender of the principal matters in school management of learner discipline in your school?	A	<i>“No, it all depends on the character of the principal because, there are many effective schools being managed by females.”</i>	
	B	<i>“Our principal is a female who is knowledgeable in handling learner discipline.”</i>	
	C	<i>“No, female principals are very good in disciplining learners because, they promote the values of loyalty and respect in the schools.”</i>	
	D	<i>“Gender does not matter – what is important is the effective and efficient leadership that creates and enhances quality learning in a conducive school environment.”</i>	
	E	<i>“Female principals fulfil their management and leadership roles to the best of their ability</i>	

		<i>hence they promote good behaviour in learners.”</i>	
	F	<i>“If the principal is a male in a primary school, he becomes bored with the way small children behave and this increases the rate of ill-discipline in learners because they feel neglected.”</i>	
	G	<i>“It does not matter, the only thing is how the disciplinary measures are applied at school.”</i>	
	H	<i>“Learner discipline at schools require transformational leaders but not the gender of the principal.”</i>	

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING

The mini-dissertation titled:

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