THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN SELECTED NORTHERN AREAS SCHOOLS IN PORT ELIZABETH IN CREATING A CULTURE OF DISCIPLINE AND ORDER

BY

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by

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‘Great is Thy faithfulness’

To my Creator, without whose help I would never have been able to complete this journey, I bring endless praise and thanks.

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DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/ dissertation/ thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: _______________________________________________________

DATE: _____________________________________________________________
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<td>Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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SUMMARY

Good discipline is one of the key characteristics of an effective school and is a vital prerequisite for a culture of learning and teaching at any school. Despite the requirement that every public school should have a code of conduct and other disciplinary policies to ensure a disciplined environment of teaching and learning, there is a perception that learner discipline at certain schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth is busy eroding the fabric of effective school management.

As an educator and more specifically a member of the school management team (SMT) at a Northern areas high school, I elected to investigate the role of SMTs in managing discipline at selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth.

The research question, which formed the basis of my research, was: What is the role played by SMTs of specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order? By investigating how these SMTs cope with the challenge of managing learners’ ill-discipline, I was hoping to provide SMTs with possible solutions and/or guidelines for future use by SMTs facing similar challenges.

This study chose the interpretive paradigm in which to conduct its investigation, as the aim was to understand how SMTs experience the phenomenon of school discipline at selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. This was done by means of qualitative research methods, which allowed me to listen to and share the experiences of SMT members in the participating schools.

The sample of this investigation comprised of the SMTs of four schools in the Northern areas – three high schools and one primary school. Data were collected by getting the viewpoints of the participants by means of questionnaires as well as individual and group interviews. This data were then analyzed by highlighting significant themes resulting in the formulation of emerging themes, namely: a decline in discipline, socio-economic factors, classroom planning and school management and discipline practices. These four themes were then sub-divided into two
categories each and thereafter the experiences of the participants were described in rich, thick detail.

The main findings of this research focused on school discipline being the responsibility of all the relevant stakeholders of a school; finding solutions to the discipline problems should be a collective effort of SMT, educators and parents; the Department of Education (DoE) should increase its efforts to assist schools to manage discipline problems more effectively in order to create a culture of discipline and order.

The findings of this study resulted in specific recommendations being formulated, e.g. the development of learners’ self-discipline should be high on the priority list of any school, educators need to be trained in effective alternatives to corporal punishment, and parents need to set standards of acceptable behaviour for their children at home, which will automatically spill over to the school.

The conclusions from this research are that SMTs need to work as a team and in collaboration with other educators and parents to effectively manage discipline at their respective schools.

**KEY WORDS:**

Discipline  
School management teams  
Corporal punishment  
Prevention strategies  
Parental involvement  
Port Elizabeth

*A teacher  
Takes a hand  
Opens a mind  
Touches a heart  
Shapes the future.*
CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION

1.1 RATIONALE

My position as an educator, as well as a member of the school management team (SMT) of a school in the Northern areas of the Port Elizabeth Metropole, motivated me to investigate the problems encountered by SMTs in specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in managing discipline.

The objective of this study was not only to look at the roles played by SMTs in managing discipline, but also to provide viable guidelines to address the disciplinary problems characterizing certain schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth.

1.1.1 Introduction

Good school discipline is one of the most important characteristics of an effective school and a vital aspect of school and classroom management. Discipline is important for maintaining harmony in a school, and for securing a climate in which learners can learn free from disruption and chaos. Effective discipline creates a climate conducive to high academic and non-academic achievements. It is commonly accepted that learners perform better when they know what is expected of them.

Nowadays, principals, educators and SMTs have to deal with a wide variety of disciplinary problems, which are compounded by various social factors such as violence, dysfunctional families, drug- and other substance abuse, poverty and unemployment, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), etc. All these factors play an important role in determining and influencing the behaviour and attitudes of learners. Good discipline depends, to a large extent, on good management within the school as well as inside the classroom. A principal with a participative leadership style will involve all the relevant stakeholders in his/her school to help create and sustain an orderly environment.
1.1.2 Background to the problem

Currently one of the most prominent factors that have a bearing on education in South Africa is the conduct of learners. Many educators, parents and communities in especially the disadvantaged areas of Port Elizabeth, are gravely concerned about the disorderliness in some of their schools.

The most challenging task facing SMTs is the handling of disciplinary problems caused by ill-disciplined learners. Good discipline is reliant on effective management, both within the school as a whole, as well as within the classroom. The principal, together with the SMT, is ultimately responsible to have policies and measurements in place to regulate discipline at school.

Before the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, corporal punishment was the order of the day at schools and rigid, authoritarian discipline policies were followed. However, since 1994, the focus has shifted to the human rights of all South African citizens and this had led to some legislation having a direct bearing on school discipline and strategies for dealing with misbehaviour. According to Section 12(1) of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996a), no person shall be subjected to torture of any kind, nor shall any person be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. Furthermore, the South African Schools Act (SASA), paragraph 10, stipulates that no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner (RSA, 1996b).

The question arose: If we are bound by the founding values of the Constitution of South Africa (namely human dignity, equality and freedom), why are our schools still plagued by a breakdown in discipline and order?

The SASA (Act No 84 of 1996, Section 8) (RSA, 1996b) stipulates that the school governing body (SGB) is responsible for adopting a code of conduct for learners by involving all the stakeholders of the school. This code of conduct should be aimed at establishing a disciplined environment which enhances teaching and learning. Gray, Miller and Noakes (1994:185) further endorse this idea by stating that effective school policies promote good behaviour. Charlton and David (1993:233) regard a
discipline policy document as providing clear and defensible guidelines for behaviour. Porter (2000:295) sees a discipline policy as expressing the aim of fostering a well-disciplined environment in which learners can learn. Charlton and David (1993:233) contend that sound leadership from management teams encourages good behaviour and provides positive support for staff and learners, while Chaplain (2003:117) is of the opinion that managing schools requires exceptional qualities and skills. Listed below are some of the factors which could contribute to positive discipline, namely:

- The use of ‘punishment by removal’ e.g. detention after school;
- Shared decision-making involving educators, parents and learners;
- Educators to be good role models of discipline;
- Educators should read more literature on discipline theories and management (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:38).

In view of the factors mentioned above, the questions remain: Why are there still so many SMTs struggling to manage discipline at their schools? Have these SMTs investigated possible alternatives to corporal punishment? Why are the SMTs incapable of dealing with the disciplinary problems of their schools?

In dealing with these questions and seeking possible answers to them, the study relied on specific research questions which will be covered in the next sub-section.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With the rationale in mind, the main research question and the sub-questions emanating from it will now be formulated.

1.2.1 The main research question

The disciplinary problems prevalent at some of the disadvantaged schools in the Port Elizabeth Metropole are commonly attributed to a perceived lack of leadership and management skills.
The key research question of this study was: What are the roles played by SMTs in specific schools in the Northern areas of the Port Elizabeth Metropole in managing discipline and order?

1.2.2 Sub-questions

The following sub-questions were also addressed:

• What are the views of the SMTs regarding current discipline practices?
• Which aspects are viewed as barriers to effective discipline practices?
• What are the roles of SMTs in managing discipline?
• In which way could other role players contribute to effective discipline practices?

1.2.3 Objective of the study

The objective of this study was to focus on the challenges faced and the roles played by SMTs of specific schools in managing discipline at their schools. This research was aimed at leading SMTs to a better understanding of their roles in managing discipline and to find viable means of creating a safe, disciplined environment where effective teaching and learning can take place.

1.2.3.1 Primary objective

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role played by SMTs at specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in addressing disciplinary problems at their schools.

1.2.3.2 Secondary objectives

The following secondary objectives were identified:

• To identify the views of SMTs regarding current discipline practices;
• To explore those aspects seen as barriers to effective discipline practices;
• To establish the roles of SMTs in managing discipline;
• To determine the contributions of other role players to effective discipline practices;
• To formulate viable guidelines for addressing disciplinary problems.

This study investigated and highlighted the factors which contribute to the misbehaviour of learners at specific schools, with special emphasis on the future role SMTs can play in addressing and minimizing disciplinary problems.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Mouton (2001:55) refers to a research design as a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:91) state that the research design provides the overall structure for the procedure that the researcher follows, the data collected and the data analysis conducted by the researcher. The design can be discussed under the following headings, namely the paradigm, approach and strategy.

1.3.1 Paradigm: Interpretivism

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:107), a paradigm may be seen as a set of basic beliefs which represents a worldview.

The paradigm in which this research was done can be described as interpretivistic. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:123) contend that the interpretive paradigm is characterized by a particular ontology, epistemology and methodology. Researchers working in this paradigm assume that people’s subjective experiences are real and should be taken seriously (ontology); that we understand other’s experiences by interacting with them and listening to what they tell us (epistemology); and that qualitative research techniques are best suited to this task (methodology). Esterberg (2002:16) states that the interpretive tradition requires of the researcher to immerse herself or himself in the world inhabited by those they wish to study.
This study attempted to understand the social world of the participants, and therefore falls under the interpretivistic paradigm. As a researcher, I interacted with the SMTs of the school which formed part of my study, and in doing so, I endeavoured to interpret how the participants give meaning to their experiences.

1.3.2 Approach: Qualitative research

In order to understand the perceptions educators have about how the management team of a school should manage discipline, I have decided to use the qualitative research for my study.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:25) describe qualitative research as being at one with the persons under investigation, walking a mile in another person’s shoes or understanding the person’s point of view from an empathetic rather than a sympathetic position. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:10), the qualitative researcher studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Qualitative research can be seen as subjective, value-laden, biased, a process that accepts multiple realities by studying a small sample (O'Leary, 2004:99). In addition, Silverman (2000:89) states that the methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a ‘deeper understanding’ of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data.

As an educator and SMT member in a school in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth, the qualitative research approach was best suited to my study. It enabled me to gain an insider’s view of the issue under investigation, namely the role played by SMTs at specific schools in managing discipline at their respective schools.

1.3.3 Strategy: Phenomenology

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:149), phenomenology is one of the research strategies falling under qualitative research.
Phenomenology is premised on a world that is firstly, constructed, meaning that people are creative agents in building a social world; and secondly, intersubjective, where we experience the world with and through others (O’Leary, 2004:122). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:139) state that in a phenomenological study ‘subjectivity’ is paramount as the researcher deals with how social objects are made meaningful.

Based on the definitions given above, I have opted to use phenomenology as the research strategy for this study, as it allowed me as the researcher to play a subjective role, in that I experienced the natural setting of the participants with them, as well as through them.

1.4 SAMPLING

Sampling involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours and/or social processes to observe. The aim is to select a sample that is representative of the population about which the researcher aims to draw conclusions (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:44).

1.4.1 Population

Struwig and Stead (2001:118) argue that a population has certain characteristics that can be completely homogeneous (the same). The population in this investigation consisted of all the schools in the Northern areas of the Port Elizabeth Metropole which seemed to experience disciplinary problems.

1.4.2 The sample

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2002:199), we study the sample in an effort to understand the population from which it was drawn. De Vos et al. (2002) cite Arkava and Lane as saying that a sample comprises the elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study. This study used four schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth which in one way or another experience difficulty in managing discipline. These schools comprised of three high schools and one primary school.
This study used convenience sampling. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:218),
convenience sampling takes people that are readily available. Making use of
convenience sampling, this study collected data from the four schools which are all
geographically in close proximity, and are all experiencing disciplinary problems.
Factors such as time saving and cost cutting also contributed in selecting the sample.

Leedy and Ormrod (1997:219) state that in purposive sampling participants are
selected because they are typical of a group who represent diverse perspectives on
an issue. In choosing SMTs as my sample group, I set out to collect data from the
very people who deal directly with the issue of managing discipline at their respective
schools. I therefore engaged with information-rich informants who were likely to be
knowledgeable about the research topic.

1.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In this research study, the data instruments used were questionnaires, individual and
group interviews and observation. These data collection instruments will be
addressed in the sub-sections that follow.

1.5.1 Questionnaires

Struwig and Stead (2001:89) state that two types of questionnaires can be
developed: interviewer-administered questionnaires and self-administered
questionnaires. This investigation made use of self-administered questionnaires.
SMT members of the participating schools completed the questionnaire. McMillan
and Schumacher (2001:40) argue that the questionnaire encompasses a variety of
instruments in which the participant responds to written questions to elicit reactions,
beliefs and attitudes. I therefore saw the questionnaire as an appropriate data
collection instrument to gain an understanding of how SMTs experience discipline at
their schools.
1.5.2 Interviews

I decided on the interview as a data collection instrument, as it allowed me to forge a relationship of trust with my participants whilst it also ensured the authenticity of the data collected.

1.5.2.1 Individual interviews

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:128) argue that conducting an interview gives the researcher an opportunity to get to know the people quite intimately, so that he/she can really understand how they think and feel. In view of this, interviewing the participants of my study, namely principals and members of SMTs, helped me to gain an understanding of the issue under investigation, namely the role played by SMTs in managing discipline at their respective schools.

1.5.2.2 Focus group interviews

The focus group is a group type of interview in which either the researcher or a moderator leads the discussion in order to examine the group’s feelings and thoughts on a topic. Esterberg (2002:109) is of the opinion that group interviews are useful when you want to know about people’s opinions or attitudes rather than their actual behaviour. Group interviews helped inform my study about what the participants think and feel about the role played by SMTs in handling discipline at their own school. According to De Vos et al. (2002:306), focus groups are useful when multiple viewpoints or responses are needed on a specific topic. The focus group interviews informed me of what SMT members feel and think regarding their role in managing discipline in order to create a culture of discipline and order. De Vos et al. (2002:307) further state that in a focus group interview, people feel relatively empowered and supported because they are surrounded by others.

1.5.3 Observation

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:158) are of the opinion that the researcher may make observations either as a relative outsider or as a participant observer. Terre Blanche
and Durrheim (1999:134) see participant observation as where the researcher becomes fully involved in the setting being studied. Participant observation was most appropriate for my study, as it allowed me as an educator and member of the SMT to become part of the natural setting of the participants of the study.

1.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In the literature there are many references to the meaning of data analysis, for example, Patton (2002:432,453) states that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. The challenges of qualitative analysis lie in making sense of massive amounts of data. This involves reducing the volume of raw information, sifting trivia from significance, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes and categories in one’s data. Findings emerge out of the data through the analyst’s interactions with the data.

Similarly, Esterberg (2002:152,157) describes qualitative data analysis as a process of making meaning. The goal of qualitative analysis is to focus on the potential meaning of your data. This can be done by coding which entails three basic procedures, namely noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of said phenomena; and analyzing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:161) refer to a data analysis spiral with the following steps: organize the data i.e. breaking larger bodies into smaller units; peruse the entire data set several times while writing down some ‘memos to self’; identify general themes and classify each piece of data accordingly; integrate and summarize the data for the readers.

With reference to my study, the central task during data analysis was to identify common themes in my participants’ descriptions of their experiences of how the SMTs are managing discipline. I took the following steps:
• I sifted through the data collected in order to group the relevant and/or similar responses of the participants to the questions posed to them.

• Next I gave each data segment a code according to the codes used for each participating school. Data were then arranged according to each school.

• I then tried to determine the main themes which emerged from the data collected.

• I subsequently gave an overall description of how the participants experienced the phenomenon.

• Thereafter I divided the themes into relevant categories which originated from the emerging themes.

• I then supported the themes by referring to relevant literature sources.

The end result was a general description of the phenomenon, as experienced by the participants of the study. The focus was on commonalities, despite the differences in the participants and their natural settings.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:145) state that the question of trustworthiness essentially asks: ‘To what extent can we place confidence in the outcomes of the study? Do we believe what the researcher has reported?’

De Vos et al. (2002:351) cite Lincoln and Guba as stating that there are four strategies for trustworthiness, namely:

• Credibility: A qualitative study is credible when it represents accurate descriptions or interpretations of the experiences of the participants.

• Applicability: The researcher does not have to transfer the findings to other settings, but must present sufficiently descriptive data to enable another researcher to make a comparison to his/her situation.

• Dependability: Dependability refers to whether the findings of the research would be consistent if the study was repeated with similar subjects in a similar context.
• Confirmability: Confirmability is the degree to which the research findings can be confirmed by another researcher.

These criteria are explained in detail in Chapter Three (section 3.8).

1.8 ETHICAL ASPECTS

The ethical aspects which were adhered to, include the following: the right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity; the right to equality, justice, human dignity and protection against harm; the participants’ right to withdraw or terminate participation at any time.

All the above-named aspects are addressed in Chapter Three (section 3.2).

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Since the concepts ‘discipline’, ‘SMTs’ and ‘Northern areas of Port Elizabeth’ feature pertinently in the title of this study, these terms will now be explained briefly. However, a more comprehensive discussion of the first two concepts appears in Chapter Two.

1.9.1 Discipline

Discipline in a positive sense refers to learning, regulated scholarship, guidance and orderliness. Discipline problems refer to disruptive behaviour that significantly affects the fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect and to learn (Mabeba & Prinsloo, 2000:340).

1.9.2 School management teams

The definition used by provincial and national Departments of Education (DoE) of South Africa is that the SMT consists of the following members:

• Principal
• Deputy principal
• Heads of Department

The SMT may also bring in additional members of staff or someone from outside the school whom the management team feels has specific skills or knowledge, which will aid the management of the school (DoE, 2001:B-35).

1.9.3 Northern areas of Port Elizabeth

The Northern areas of Port Elizabeth are a direct result of the Group Areas Act, which was passed by the South African National Government in the early 1950s. This brought about the formation of suburbs such as Gelvandale, Helenvale, Windvogel, Salt Lake, Arcadia, West End, Salsoneville, Sanctor, Chatty and Booysen Park. These suburbs were initially mostly populated by the ‘so-called’ Coloured population. However, with the explosion of the population and the increasing shortage of houses, the emergence of squatter camps also brought about a mixed population of ‘Coloureds’, Blacks and even a few Whites living in abject poverty.

In the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth you will find people from different income levels, therefore the socio-economic conditions of people living in the Northern areas are varied. However, unemployment and other related social evils such as domestic violence, drug abuse and gangsterism are all social evils which have a negative impact on the behaviour of learners at school.

Landsberg, Krüger and Nel (2005:28) refer to unfavourable circumstances that characterize a school as ‘disadvantaged’ as those which include one or more of the following: poverty, a deprivation of privileges, dysfunctional families, low wages, unemployment, violence, crime, low standards of hygiene and cleanliness.

The section of the Northern areas in which I did my investigation, comprises of eight high schools and twenty primary schools. Learners at these schools come from varied family backgrounds; therefore, circumstances differ from school to school.
I concentrated on three high schools and one primary school, as these schools were geographically located in close proximity to one another and also easily accessible from either my place of work or my home. The idea was to use the findings from the data collected at these specific schools, to formulate guidelines and/or recommendations that could help SMTs to manage discipline at their schools.

In doing this study, I was looking for solutions to the problem of the perceived lack of discipline in schools in this specific area. In this way, I contributed constructively to the upliftment of the community in which I have lived and worked for the better part of my existence.

1.10 TIME FRAMES

According to Mouton (2001:66), various tools are available to assist one in the management of research time, most of them in project management packages.

In determining time to be allocated to my research, it was imperative that I made allowances for possible hindrances that I might encounter. This could, amongst others, include my personal circumstances as well as problems with either my participants or the locations used in my study.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:302) advise that a researcher sets reasonable target dates. Time allocated for the various stages of the research process, is presented in broad terms as follows:

- Literature Study : August 2007 – March 2008
- Research Methodology : March – April 2008
- Data collection: - Questionnaires
  - Interviews May – September 2008
  - Observation
- Data Analysis : October – November 2008
- Interpretation and Recommendations: November 2008
- Complete draft of dissertation : December 2008/January 2009
1.11 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This study covers five chapters, to be demarcated as follows:

Chapter 1: The problem and its settings
This chapter entails the rationale and background of the study, research question and research objectives, a brief description of the research methodology, concept clarification, as well as the chapter overview.

Chapter 2: Review of literature
This chapter is a review of related literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology
This chapter will present the methodology of the empirical study. The research design, instrumentation, strategies for data collection as well as procedures for data analysis, will form the core of this chapter.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and discussion
This chapter will consist of the findings of the study as well as a discussion of the results. The discussion will focus on the qualitative data collected by means of questionnaires, individual and focus group interviews, as well as observation.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations
This chapter summarizes the study and draws conclusions pertaining to the research question, based on data collected. It also makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

It is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to good academic performance. According to Masitsa (2007:1), numerous schools, however, experience increasing incidents of poor discipline that impact negatively on academic performance, while some of these incidents even have a life-threatening character.

Discipline is always rooted in a learning situation. Du Preez, Campher, Grobler, Loock and Shaba (2002:88) state that teaching becomes problematic in the absence of discipline.

According to Van der Walt and Oosthuizen (2007:316), interviews with educators reveal that they are experiencing difficulty in coping with disobedience, aggression, rejection of authority and the lack of respect and responsibility manifested by some learners at their schools.

In a newspaper article entitled ‘Teachers under too much stress’, it is outlined that thousands of South African educators are being treated for stress and depression because they can no longer cope in classrooms (Sunday Times, 2007). Another newspaper article entitled ‘Just another day at high schools as rapes and robberies skyrocket’ highlighted the fact that the number of learners committing crimes at schools in Nelson Mandela Bay is escalating (The Herald, 2007). Media coverages such as these leave many people with the impression that schools are in a state of crisis and that educators are losing the battle against ill-discipline.

The study investigated the question of discipline at specific schools in the Northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole, with particular emphasis on the role of SMTs in managing discipline at their respective schools. In view of this, this chapter will comprise of two parts, focusing on (1) discipline and (2) SMTs with their relevant
sub-headings and highlighting the link between the two sections. The review of
literature studied will serve to highlight the importance of the research question which
forms the basis of this study, namely: What are the roles played by SMTs in specific
schools in the Northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole in managing
discipline at their schools?

The question arose: What is the situation like in these schools identified for the
study? Are their SMTs coping, and if not, why and what can be done? This study
investigated their situations with the aim of providing viable guidelines to help
alleviate existing problems associated with a lack of discipline.

2.2 CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT DISCIPLINE

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of the SMT in managing
school discipline and to seek possible alternatives, which may assist the SMTs in
ensuring effective teaching and learning processes.

It is for this reason that this section deals with, amongst others, what discipline is,
what is meant by a code of conduct, the different forms of discipline, as well as the
aspect of corporal punishment.

This study aims to use information gathered in this section to investigate how the lack
of learner discipline may seriously hamper the teaching and learning processes.

2.2.1 Discipline

As discipline forms the core of this investigation, various definitions of the word
discipline, as found in the literature studied, are as follows:

The word discipline is derived from the Latin ‘disciplina’ (teaching), which in turn is
derived from ‘disciples’ (follower). Disciplined behaviour or conduct can therefore be
construed as behaviour or conduct in accordance with the directives or guidance
provided by the person who is being followed. To discipline a learner is to improve or
attempt to improve the behaviour of the learner by setting conditions or rules.
Discipline can also refer to punishment when these rules or conditions are contravened (Van der Walt & Oosthuizen, 2007).

Du Plessis and Loock (2007) are of the opinion that the term discipline refers to learners complying with a code of behaviour often known as school rules. The term may also be applied to the punishment that is the consequence of transgression of the code of behaviour. Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:34) state that discipline in a positive sense refers to learning, regulated scholarship, guidance and orderliness. In the same vein, Joubert, De Waal and Rossouw (2004:78) argue that discipline is about positive behaviour management aimed at promoting appropriate behaviour and developing self-discipline and self-control in learners.

The phenomenon of discipline refers to an appropriate behaviour and as such to a commitment to uphold certain convictions and norms of decency (Masitsa, 2007:1). In addition, Mugabe and Maposa (2007:2) refer to discipline as an educative order with the aim of trying to reach appropriate standards and following rules for engaging in a valued activity like education.

Discipline, in the sense as being referred to in the above-named definitions, can thus be seen as an integral part of an effective educational endeavour in which both educator and parent give assistance to a child seeking help.

### 2.2.2 Disciplinary problems

In the literature many descriptions of what disciplinary problems entail may be found. Here are three examples thereof:

- Undisciplined behaviour is often a learner’s attempt towards attention seeking from the educator and mostly with the purpose of receiving more sympathetic attention (Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Du Toit, 2003).
- Joubert et al. (2004:78) see disciplinary problems as ‘disruptive behaviour’ that significantly affects fundamental rights to feel safe, to be treated with respect and to learn.
Discipline problems refer to conduct that does not comply with the leadership, guidance, directives, conditions and rules offered by the leader, namely the educator. A single contravention of a rule would not constitute a problem, persistent devious or obstructive behaviour can however be regarded as a problem (Van der Walt & Oosthuizen, 2007).

2.3 CODE OF CONDUCT

According to the SASA (Act 84 of 1996), Article 8(1) (RSA, 1996b), the governing body of a school must adopt a code of conduct after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. This code of conduct makes provision for due process safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings.

The SASA (Act 84 of 1996) (RSA, 1996b) stipulates that a code of conduct should contain the following:

- Preamble – a statement of values and the general contributions the school wants to make.
- General aims – what the school wants to achieve by developing and adopting a code of conduct.
- Statement of rights and responsibilities – clear guidelines as to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- General school rules – regulations.
- Incentives – how the school encourages and rewards good behaviour.
- Infringements – a description of unacceptable behaviour and what steps the school would take in case of misconduct. The disciplinary action stated in the code of conduct would be according to the seriousness of the offence.
- The proceedings – of a disciplinary hearing, for example. The main focus of the code of conduct, however, should not be punitive but should instead facilitate constructive learning.
This code of conduct must be displayed at the school and given to each learner when he/she enrolls at the school. Learners must understand that action may be taken against them if they contravene the code of conduct (Du Preez et al., 2002:91).

2.4 DIFFERENT FORMS OF DISCIPLINE

Apartheid education was based on an authoritarian system of punishment in which corporal punishment was the norm. The result thereof is that many schools are still unsure which discipline approach to use to guide them through disruptive behaviour. This study aims to highlight both punitive (negative) as well as preventive or corrective (positive) disciplinary measures used in schools on a daily basis.

2.4.1 Punitive disciplinary measures

According to Oosthuizen et al. (2003:469-470), punitive disciplinary measures can be described as those measures adopted by a school and/or educator to punish or curb the misconduct of the learner. Punitive measures call for a combined effort from all the stakeholders. The following are examples of punitive disciplinary measures frequently applied by schools or educators:

- Code of conduct

The code of conduct, although essentially a preventive measure, also has a punitive aspect. It describes acceptable conduct, but also the punitive steps to be taken by the school or authorities in cases of misconduct (Oosthuizen et al., 2003:470-471). According to Coetzee (2005:2), the provisions in the code of conduct will set out the procedure or steps to be followed in the event of a learner being suspected of having broken the school rules.

- Referrals to the SGB

Du Plessis and Loock (2007:26) are of the opinion that referrals to the SGB should be addressed promptly and that feedback must be provided regarding the outcome. Oosthuizen et al. (2003:471-472) state that misconduct can be referred to the
disciplinary committee of the SGB for disciplinary action. Examples of punitive measures imposed by governing bodies include being banned from attending the matric farewell or participating in an important sports match.

- **Suspension**

According to Coetzee (2005:12), the SGB may on reasonable grounds as a precautionary measure, suspend a learner who is suspected of serious misconduct from attending school.

- **Expulsion**

Expulsion, according to Oosthuizen et al. (2003:472), can be defined as the permanent refusal of admission of a learner to a particular school. Coetzee (2005:14) further argues that a governing body may suspend a learner or extend the suspension of a learner for a period of not longer than 14 days pending the decision by the Head of Department whether or not to expel such a learner from the school.

- **Detention**

Detention can primarily be seen as the system where a learner has to sacrifice his or her free time due to misconduct or unruly behaviour. The basic idea behind detention should be to discomfort the learner concerned in an attempt to modify the behaviour to a more disciplined approach (Oosthuizen et al., 2003:469-473).

In addition to this, Lessing and Dreyer (2007:120) are of the opinion that negative disciplinary measures may lead to rebelliousness and negativism and contribute to a negative atmosphere. It also leads to negative interaction because these measures are negative in nature, disrupt the learning process and inhibit the development of responsibility in learners. Educators need to move away from punitive methods towards a more positive way of dealing with disciplinary problems.
2.4.2 Preventive disciplinary measures

According to Oosthuizen et al. (2003:468), positive discipline is depicted as methods of discipline that do not damage, but rather build the learner’s self-esteem. Positive discipline gradually enables learners to learn the various skills involved in assuming responsibility for what happens to them and helps them to take the initiative, relate successfully to others and solve problems. In essence, thus, positive discipline helps learners to develop into responsible persons who display the necessary degree of self-control and self-discipline.

Lessing and Dreyer (2007:123) allude to alternative interaction methods, which may contribute to better discipline. These methods include, amongst others, a positive attitude towards learning barriers and social challenges; democratic discipline to which learners can contribute by participating in making rules; building of a classroom community which enhances a positive class atmosphere. Alternative interaction techniques do not imply that the misbehaviour of learners is ignored, but learners take responsibility for their behaviour.

Mugabe and Maposa (2007:10-15) refer to the following preventive methods, namely parental involvement as an effective method of curbing learner misconduct because charity begins at home; the prefect system is one way of involving learners in the administration of school discipline; disciplinary committees comprising senior staff members (SMTs) can play a key pastoral role in the school and enhance school effectiveness.

The question facing schools on a daily basis is: Which approach should be favoured, the preventive or the punitive?

Oosthuizen et al. (2003:457) point out that recent research findings show a major paradigm shift towards preventive and positive rather than punitive disciplinary measures. Since the essence of learner discipline is correctional and educational rather than punitive, the preventive approach seems more appropriate. One of the guiding factors for proper decision-making is vested in maintaining a safe, harmonious and orderly environment – conducive to education and learning. The
decision regarding the most effective form of discipline in a particular instance should therefore be determined by the context of the situation.

In addition to this, Du Plessis and Loock (2007:10) argue that research has proven that positive discipline strategies benefit all learners because:

- Opportunities to forge relationships with caring adults prevent discipline problems.
- Discipline that is fair, corrective and includes relationship-building activities reduces the likelihood of further problems.
- Strategies that effectively maintain appropriate social behaviour make schools safer.
- Positive solutions address learner needs, environmental conditions, educator interactions and matching learners with the curriculum.

2.5 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

In order to gain better insight into the phenomenon learner discipline, this study engaged with literature referring to school discipline in other countries.

Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:522-525) surveyed subject-related literature on school discipline in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Results confirmed that learner discipline in schools in these three countries constitutes a problem, although it seems to be only relatively minor forms of misbehaviour that dominate. Serious forms of misbehaviour, such as criminal offences, are rare.

Australian schools by and large are safe schools. Nonetheless discipline problems do exist – including bullying behaviour. As traditional behaviour-management practices, including corporal punishment, are largely prohibited in Australian schools, contemporary practices centre on management through supportive school programmes including appropriate curricula and school-support structures (Stewart, 2004:317).
In an article on the behaviour of Latino children, Bernhard, Freire, Bascunan, Arenas, Verga and Yana (2004:59) state the following: ‘Latino parents were concerned that schools are not teaching children to be respectful and this has great consequences for what they feel is acceptable. Parents saw discipline as having certain prerequisites, amongst others teaching children to show respect to adults and authorities. Where schools seemingly ignore this issue in favour of simple rule following, parents viewed the system as inadequate.’

Corporal punishment is used as a method of discipline within the family and mainly on boys at schools in Sri Lanka (Sridhar, 2008). Sridhar further elaborates by commenting that research studies have shown that corporal punishment was an ineffective discipline strategy. Punishment of such kind leads to anger, resentment and a low self-esteem. It teaches learners to see violence and revenge as solutions to problems and perpetuates itself, as children imitate what adults are doing.

Mugabe and Maposa (2007:2-5) state that common acts of misconduct in Zimbabwean secondary schools include fighting, truancy, bullying, taking drugs and insubordination to teaching staff. The Zimbabwean education policy on school discipline forbids the use of corporal punishment by educators without the approval of the school head. Human rights organizations regard corporal punishment as a dehumanizing method of curbing misconduct.

From the examples given, it is evident that there are a wide range of disciplinary practices being used, some advantageous for an effective teaching and learning environment, and others detrimental.

2.6 CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Throughout the history of education, the most common form of maintaining school discipline was corporal punishment. Whilst a child was in school, an educator was expected to act as a substitute parent, with all the normal forms of parental discipline open to them. In practice, this meant that children were commonly punished with the cane (Du Plessis & Loock, 2007:2).
Wolhuter and Middleton (2007:1) state that corporal punishment is currently a very controversial issue in South Africa. Traditionally, it has been a central element in maintaining discipline within South African schools, only being outlawed as part of the post-1994 education dispensation. In the wake of this new socio-political dispensation in South Africa, corporal punishment was abolished shortly after 1994, guided by the Constitution of South Africa, as well as the Bill of Rights, which both supported the abolition of corporal punishment.

Bray (2005:133) argues that the constitutional changes in South Africa necessitated transformation of the education system and culminated in the development of a new democratic education system – one that would embrace and give effect to the norms, values and principles enshrined in the Constitution of the RSA 1996.

Mokhele (2006:148) states that before 1994, educators were encouraged to use the cane as a method of keeping control in the classrooms. The educators were also empowered to be in charge in the classroom, but in a hostile or authoritarian manner. In this way, educators were made to believe that power and authority were the bases for control and discipline. After the abolition of corporal punishment, educators were expected to relate to learners in a friendly way and to establish a more relaxed atmosphere.

Educators attribute the lack of discipline in schools to the fact that they can no longer rely on a visible deterrent such as corporal punishment. Educators claim that from the time learners realized that corporal punishment was abolished, their misbehaviour increased. The abolishment of corporal punishment has led to scores of educators feeling that their authority over the learners has been usurped, while to the learners it signified the educator’s powerlessness (Masitsa, 2007:2).

While the banning of corporal punishment has been criticized by many educators, many of whom persist in its illegal use in the belief that it is necessary for education to take place, the government has attempted to fill the vacuum created in two ways: It has introduced school-level codes of conduct, and parents have been given an unprecedented involvement in school affairs via representation on the SGB (Morrell, 2001:292).
In the next section, argument in favour of and against the use of corporal punishment, as well as possible alternatives to corporal punishment, will be addressed.

2.6.1 Argument in favour of corporal punishment

Masitsa (2007:7-9) raises the following arguments in favour of corporal punishment: The proponents of corporal punishment argue that the ever-growing disregard for authority by young people is the result of the discontinuation of corporal punishment. To abolish corporal punishment in schools is tantamount to losing the educator’s grip on the learners. Corporal punishment is undoubtedly an appropriate method of punishment for serious misdemeanours. However, this method of punishment needs consistent monitoring to ensure that it is not abused which not even the smallest school will be able to provide.

A fundamentalist Christian school organization went to court to demand the right to smack the children who attend its schools if they are naughty, saying the Bible justifies this form of punishment which has been outlawed in South Africa (Rickard, 1999).

The reintroduction of corporal punishment at schools is viewed as a possibility to restore order to schools. Punishment could take the form of regulated caning to be conducted only by a school principal, or by assigning punitive manual labour at schools (‘Will the reintroduction of corporal punishment restore a sense of pride and achievement among students?’: 1999:3).

2.6.2 Argument against corporal punishment

The opponents of corporal punishment argue that if corporal punishment works as a deterrent, over time it should stop bad behaviour. Experience, however, shows that corporal punishment does not result in long-term behavioural change, instead it teaches the learners to avoid the punishable behaviour when the person who metes out punishment is nearby. Some learners leave school due to a fear of corporal
punishment. This suggests that beatings are associated with fear and power rather than with a respect for authority or change of behaviour (Masitsa, 2007).

Rickard (1999) refers to WITS university lecturer and education policy unit researcher Salim Vally as stating that physical punishment of learners was a sad reflection of the country’s violent society. Vally further added that fear and discipline are not compatible, and that punishment need not be synonymous with discipline.

According to Wolhuter and Middleton (2007:15), corporal punishment could hardly be declared as being conducive to the creation of a safe space for education to flourish in. Similarly, Molefe (2004:2) is of the opinion that the abolition of corporal punishment in South Africa hinges on the fact that it is, in essence, inhuman and entrenches the idea that violence can provide a solution to school problems.

Van Wyk (2001:201) argues that educators need to realize that a classroom climate based on mutual respect within which learners feel safe and affirmed will decrease the need for disciplinary action and develop learners’ abilities to practice self-discipline. Naong (2007:298) states that the Constitution of the RSA protects people from torture and cruel, inhuman treatment. The SASA forbids the infliction of corporal punishment on learners, no matter how tempting this might be. Therefore, educators need to consider other alternatives.

Corporal punishment causes harmful effects such as aggression, delinquency in childhood, crime, anti-social behaviour and mental health problems (Gerschoff, 2002).

2.6.3 Alternatives to corporal punishment

Porteous, Vally and Ruth (2001:83-89) are of the opinion that schools should consider what could be done at school level to help support a shift away from corporal punishment and to create a more safe and secure environment for learning. They further refer to a range of ideas on how to change schools to become a better environment for alternatives to corporal punishment. The following are some of
these ideas that can contribute towards developing a better system for discipline and conflict resolution:

• Educator support group: Schools should establish a support group of educators and administrators (SMTs) to discuss issues of behaviour, discipline and conflict resolution.

• Support service network: Organize a task team of educators, learners and parents to ‘investigate’ the resources in the community that could be helpful in various ways. The task team is in essence responsible for ‘organizing’ the community around the school.

• Forum for resolution: Establish clear procedures for the resolution of conflicts that cannot be resolved at classroom level. There should be a safe space for learners to explain how they perceived what happened and why.

• Pastoral educators: In every school, there are educators whom learners have come to trust over time. These educators are important resources for school peace. These educators should be allocated pastoral or counselling duties.

• Community mentors: Schools should approach people in the community who are respected and trusted by learners and educators alike. In times of conflict, these people can be called on to help find solutions. They may be partnered with learners who are troublesome or having other problems in order to provide special mentoring and advice.

• Involving parent figures: Perhaps the most important challenge for schools in establishing an effective disciplinary process at school is the meaningful involvement of parent figures in the process. Educators must use their own judgement as how to involve parents in a meaningful and helpful way.

• Building a community-orientated school: Schools should facilitate discussions among learners, parents, community leaders, members of the SGB, educators, clinic nurses, social workers, business people, religious leaders and societies on creative ways to make the school a more central place for positive community life (Porteus et al., 2001:83-89).
Du Plessis and Loock (2007) maintain that learners whose families are involved in their growth in and outside of school are more likely to experience success at school. These authors further explain that effective schools support families in expressing concerns about their children and in getting the help to address behaviours that cause concern. Furthermore, each school should develop a behaviour code in partnership with its community and should manage learner behaviour in a partnership between learners, their families and staff. Schools are part of the communities in which they operate, and have a responsibility to work collaboratively at a local level. In order to develop collaborative partnerships:

- Schools will have to develop decision-making policies, which encourage inclusive participation of the school community.
- Schools will have to consult their communities and give them the opportunity to be involved in developing the behaviour code and to be involved in implementing and reviewing it.
- Learners, families and school staff will have to work together to negotiate learner development plans to support learner learning and behaviour change and manage serious or persistently irresponsible behaviour (Du Plessis & Loock, 2007).

Joubert et al. (2004:85) assert that the direct involvement of different role players in managing school discipline has proved to be one measure that is effective. They further state that one example of this is the buddy system in which learners are paired off in order to take responsibility for each other.

From the literature studied, it would seem that it is commonly accepted that ensuring school discipline is everyone’s job. Educators, parents, community members and learners should all commit to meet the challenges of assisting learners who are ill-disciplined.

As an educator and member of the SMT, I am of the opinion that corporal punishment has no place in a democratic society, which adheres to the doctrine of human rights. The use of punitive forms of discipline needs to be substituted with
positive forms of discipline that will teach the learner how to behave better and to refrain from repeating undisciplined behaviour.

Against this background, the question can be posed: What are the roles and responsibilities of SMTs in ensuring effective teaching and learning processes? The next session will outline the roles and/or responsibilities of SMTs against the legal framework, which provides them with guidance in managing school discipline.

2.7 THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

The signing into law of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996b) and the Schools Act (RSA, 1996a) has impacted radically on learner discipline (Van Staden & Alston, 2000:298). School management now has 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 SASA and Constitution (Mestry, Moloi & Mahomed, 2007).

In the following sub-sections, the composition of the SMTs will be addressed, as well as their roles and responsibilities, the legal framework for discipline at schools and educator-related factors.

2.7.1 Composition

As explained in section 1.9.2, the working definition of the SMT being used by the provinces and the National DoE is that the SMT consists of the principal, deputy principal(s) and Heads of Departments.

An SMT may also bring in additional members of staff or someone from outside the school whom the management feels has specific skills or knowledge which will aid the management of the school (DoE, 2001:B-35).
2.7.2 Roles and responsibilities of the school management team

According to the DoE (2000d:1-32), the SMT has to see that the management of the school is effective. They must build relationships with all stakeholders. They are responsible for a basic and operational effective infrastructure for the school. New staff members should be inducted and orientated by members of the SMT. The SMT may assist with planning of the school timetable, the budget, financial control, fundraising, code of conduct, assessment policies, managing diversity in the school, decision making, policy-making, planning of staff development, planning of change, keeping of records, consulting with the SGB, and storing and managing the school’s learning resources. According to Du Preez et al. (2002:115), members of the SMT should take a leading role in committees, such as the discipline, financial or academic committees.

Wallace and Hall (1994:57) see the core of the SMT’s responsibilities as making, implementing and evaluating policies. In addition, Olsen and Cooper (2004:89) state that members of the SMT will take responsibility for discipline issues referred by other staff members in the event of, for example, fighting and/or assault, possession of weapons, learners skipping class or learner leaving school without permission, vandalism, smoking, using and/or selling alcohol or illegal drugs, and using abusive language.

According to Jones and Jones (1992:34), one of educators’ most basic expectations is that SMTs should give them support. These researchers also find that one of the most fundamental aspects of SMT support concerns their responses when educators complain of disciplinary problems, especially where parents are involved. Educators also expect the SMT to be in touch with events in the school. SMT members seen walking the corridors, visiting lessons and acting against misbehaviour, are considered to be supportive of classroom educators.

Du Plessis and Loock (2007:22-23) outline the responsibilities of the SMT and are of the opinion that SMTs must:

- develop, implement and regularly review a school behaviour code;
• ensure that learner behaviour is managed through procedures supported by a strong theoretical understanding of learner behaviour;
• ensure that new staff, learners and their families are aware of the decision-making procedures;
• promote structures at class and school levels to enable learners to be involved in the management of their behaviour;
• promote opportunities for staff training and development;
• increase learners’ opportunities to experience intellectual, social and physical success;
• teach and model decision-making in groups.

From the literature studied, it is evident that the SMT play an important role in managing discipline at school in order to create a safe environment, conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Subsequently, the study will look at the legal framework against which the SMT must manage disciplinary problems at school.

2.7.3 The legal framework for discipline at schools

South African laws such as the SASA (1996a) and the Constitution of the RSA (1996b), have created a new legal context and it is therefore important for SMT members to know the law relating to school discipline and punishment, and to be familiar with legal concepts, principles and procedures to continue building and maintaining effective schools. School discipline policies, rules and punishment must comply with certain legal requirements. In this way, the law ensures that discipline and punishment are reasonable and that principals and educators do not exceed their disciplinary powers.

Knott-Craig (2007:12) argues that schools with effective discipline systems have the following:

• strong leadership;
• an emphasis on the pastoral care of the learners and building of relationships;
• educators and leadership modelling respectful behaviour;
• healthy relationships and minimum conflict.

In addition, Du Plessis and Loock (2007:13) claim that well functioning schools foster learning, safety and socially appropriate behaviours. They have a strong academic focus, foster positive relationships in educators and learners and promote meaningful parental and community involvement.

Joubert et al. (2004:79-81) refer to the following aspects as forming the legal framework for school discipline:

• The Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996

According to Joubert et al. (2004:79-80), schools operate under the supreme Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996 and a number of statutes of which the Schools Act has the biggest impact on school discipline and affords equal access to education. The Bill of Rights (Chapter 2 of the Constitution), as well as the SASA 84 of 1996, has introduced a new human rights culture in schools. Both these documents reflect the culmination in the field of education, of the political transformation the country has undergone since 1994. It is clear that the supreme law of this country contains specific protection against behaviour that could threaten a person’s dignity, safety and fundamental rights.

Joubert and others explain further that one of the goals of discipline is to provide a safe environment for all learners and educators. Sections 12 and 24 of the Bill of Rights are very clear about everyone’s right to be free of all forms of violence in a safe environment and Section 28(d) stipulates that every child has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. The founding values of the Constitution, namely human dignity, equality and freedom, are even more important when exercising learner discipline in schools.
Joubert and others emphasize that in their efforts to protect the rights of a learner who misbehaves, educators and educational officials often ignore the rights of the learner who does not misbehave. The individual’s right to quality education places an obligation on schools to provide all learners the opportunity to learn in an environment characterized by order.

Oosthuizen et al. (2003:475) argue that it is not only the delinquent learner who has a fundamental right to education, but also the learner who is well-disciplined. Once the ill-discipline or misconduct of one learner becomes a threat to the harmony of learning, the question arises: Should the collective right of the learners to an environment conducive to learning not be protected against the ill-discipline and misconduct of the individual? According to Oosthuizen et al. (2003:475), the High Court of South Africa has repeatedly found in favour of the collective rights of learners to an orderly environment, which enhances teaching and learning. It is the duty of the educator to ensure that the collective interests of the group outweigh those of the individual misbehaving learner.

• The SASA Act No 84 of 1996

Joubert et al. (2004:80) contend that the SASA No 84 of 1996 stipulates in Section 8(1) and (2) that the SGB is responsible for adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process. The code of conduct should be aimed at establishing a disciplined environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Thus the focus is on positive discipline, self-discipline and inculcating a standard of behaviour that is recognized and accepted by civil society.

Joubert and others explain that in terms of Section 8(4) of the SASA, learners are obliged to comply with the code of conduct. Section 8(5) makes provision for due process, including a fair hearing, before a learner may be suspended by the SGB or expelled by the provincial Head of Department. Section 9 prescribes two kinds of suspension: either as a correctional measure for a period up to a week, or pending a decision from the DoE, as to whether the learner is to be expelled from the school.
Section 19 of the SASA determines that provincial education departments must provide introductory and continuous training to all newly elected SGBs, in order to promote their effectiveness. Joubert et al. (2004) cite Bush as stating that introductory training for SGBs was done on a one-size-fits-all basis with the main purpose of explaining the basic functions of SGBs. Bearing in mind the diversity of South African societies and the vast differences between rural, township and urban schools, one of the most serious challenges South African schools have to deal with, is thus to capacitate SGBs to fulfill their functions as stipulated in the Schools Act.

- The United Convention on the Rights of the Child

Joubert et al. (2004:80) state that in terms of Section 39 of the Constitution of the RSA, Act 108 of 1996, international law must be considered when interpreting the South African Bill of Rights. It is therefore appropriate to have a brief look at the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) with regard to rights concerning equal access to education. The above-mentioned Convention provides all children with the right to education. Article 29 of the Convention specifies goals of education, including: The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, etcetera (Joubert et al., 2004:79-81).

According to the DoE (2001), SMTs have a responsibility to ensure that the correct structures and procedures are in place so that any disciplinary action taken against ill-disciplined learners are administered fairly and reasonably in accordance with the SASA. It is also vitally important that SMTs, when disciplining learners, keep the following points in mind: The SMT should ensure that learners and their parents know the school rules; SMTs should ensure that parents sign for copies of the code of conduct of the school on applying for admission to the school. On registering their child, parents should sign an acknowledgement that they agree to adhere to the code of conduct of the school; punishment should be appropriate to the offences learners are punished for and SMTs should follow their own procedural due process guidelines when dealing with disciplinary problems and/or punishment.
The management of discipline calls on the members of the SMT to create an environment where learners feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe in order for the learners to develop self-discipline and accountability in their actions. In order to achieve this, it is of paramount importance for the SMT to take cognizance of educator-related factors which might contribute to disciplinary problems at school.

2.7.4 Educator-related factors

Masitsa (2007:19) contends that effective teaching minimizes disciplinary problems in schools and recommends that educators should promote good learner behaviour by teaching effectively and consistently, since this will create schools where academic performance is the norm and disciplinary problems are the exception and that educators should also take punishment seriously because it is an essential part of their work. Lastly, educators should not rely too much on punishment, but rather use it judiciously as a corrective measure.

Mestry et al. (2007:188) argue that educators should work as a team and apply disciplinary measures consistently so that learners will understand and stick to them, while Stewart (2006:331) states that it is necessary for educators to ensure that they do not discriminate unfairly against any learner.

According to Van Wyk (2001:198), cases of educator misconduct such as being unprepared or ill-prepared for lessons, neglecting teaching learners while furthering their own studies, being absent without reason, alcohol abuse and engaging in sexual intimacy with learners, are all factors which contribute to disciplinary problems at school.

Knott-Craig (2007:9) states that it is the educator’s role to build a relationship with each learner, so that communication channels are open to enable the learner to acknowledge the disruptive behaviour. Rossouw (2006:436) concurs that educators need to adopt a more positive approach to learner discipline, i.e. stronger relationships with learners, better preparation for classes and the enhancement of values rather than creating more rules.
Educators need to realize that a classroom climate based on mutual respect within which learners feel safe and affirmed will develop the learners’ abilities to practice self-discipline (Van Wyk, 2001:195). De Klerk and Rens (2003:362) state that discipline includes an inner or personal discipline in both educators and learners. Educators are faced with the very important task of instilling values in learners.

Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:38) state that educators are inculcators of self-discipline in the learners under their charge and should therefore be consistent role models of socially acceptable behaviour. Educators who behave in uncaring ways, impact negatively on discipline management in schools.

Oosthuizen et al. (2003:460) maintain that it is generally accepted that educators are always prepared to lead their learners through the process of modeling. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:528) agree that educators should be aware of and control their own behaviour and should model the standards and courtesy they expect from their learners.

From the literature cited above, it would seem that it is imperative for all educators to lead exemplary lives that can be emulated by their learners. If educators misbehave, they can hardly expect their learners to behave differently. Learners should see the values they are being taught demonstrated in the lives and attitudes of their educators.

### 2.8 CONCLUSION

Based on the views expressed in the body of literature studied, it can be deducted that the educator has a vital role to play in minimizing disciplinary problems at school. The involvement of the SMT in effectively managing discipline remains a crucial factor.

The next chapter will deal with the procedures that were implemented to collect data from the participants in the study with regards to how SMTs in specific schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole deal with disciplinary problems at their respective schools.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Having lived and worked in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth for the better part of my life, prompted me to investigate the underlying factors which brought about a breakdown in discipline in schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in the years following the onset of democracy in South Africa.

The research question which formed the basis of my study was: What is the role played by SMT members of specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order? I elected to explore this topic through interaction with SMTs of selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. My aim was to listen to and observe the challenges these SMT members faced and the manner in which they managed to deal with such challenges.

Whilst I was going to give voice to the everyday experiences of these SMT members, this obviously was done against my own background, as an educator and member of the SMT of my own school. I therefore had a vested interest in trying to uncover the factors which led to SMTs struggling to cope with disciplinary problems at their respective schools. By investigating how these SMTs cope with the challenges of managing learners’ ill-discipline, I was hoping to come up with possible solutions and/or guidelines for future use by SMTs facing similar challenges.

The focus of this investigation was thus on the role played by SMTs in managing discipline in order to create a culture of discipline and order. The aim of the study was to give an insight into the challenges faced by SMTs at specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth, whilst at the same time looking for ways and means of restoring discipline at these schools to its former status.

In the first section, I will be giving a brief explanation of the paradigm in which the research was based, as well as the approach followed in the investigation.
3.1.1 Paradigm

As mentioned in section 1.3.1, this research selected the interpretive paradigm in which to conduct its investigation.

De Vos et al. (2002:266) cite Babbie as describing a paradigm as the fundamental model or frame of reference used to organize the researcher's observations and reasoning.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that interpretivists state that it is possible to understand the subjective meaning of action, yet do so in an objective manner. In order to understand the intersubjective meanings of human action, the researcher may have to participate in the life-world of others. It is thus evident that interpretivist researchers want to develop an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

This study chose the interpretive paradigm in which to conduct it's investigation, as the aim was to understand how SMTs experience the phenomenon of school discipline at selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. This allowed me as the researcher to build a relationship of trust with the participants, namely the SMTs of the four participating schools. This relationship of trust led to participants freely expressing themselves and generously sharing their perceptions and experiences of managing discipline in their respective schools.

3.1.2 Qualitative research

In order to investigate the role of SMTs in creating a culture of discipline and order, I decided to use qualitative research for my study, since I, as an educator, but more specifically as a member of my school's SMT, attempted to understand how SMT members experience their task of managing discipline at their respective schools.

Struwig and Stead (2001:56) maintain that qualitative research allows the researcher to understand the participants’ thoughts, feelings and viewpoints on certain issues, whilst Mouton (2001:161) sees the qualitative method of research as a ‘naturalistic’
research method as it describes and evaluates the performance of programmes in their natural settings.

Likewise, Leedy and Ormrod (2001:147) argue that qualitative researchers believe that the researcher’s ability to interpret and make sense of what he/she sees is critical for an understanding of any social phenomenon.

The fact that qualitative research places much emphasis on the created or intentional reality and focuses on discovering the multiple perspectives of all participants in a natural setting, made it well suited for giving voice to the SMTs as professional role players within the school. Furthermore, qualitative research would be best suited to allow me, as the researcher, to gain an understanding of the perceptions, values, actions and concerns of the participants of my study, namely the SMTs of the participating schools.

Next, the study will give a brief description of the strategy of enquiry used in the investigation, namely phenomenology, one of the various strategies of enquiry used by qualitative researchers.

### 3.1.3 Phenomenology

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:153) describe a phenomenological study as a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular situation. By looking at multiple perspectives on the same situation, the researcher can then make some generalizations of what something is like from an outsider’s perspective.

Similarly, De Vos et al. (2002:273) are of the opinion that the product of a phenomenological study is a description of the essence of the experience being studied.

For me, as the researcher, it meant that a phenomenological study would enable me to describe the meaning for the different SMTs at the participating schools, of their lived experiences of discipline at their respective schools. This strategy of enquiry
further afforded the opportunity to enter the life-world of the participants by means of the interaction which the data collection methods namely observation and interviews, provided.

In the following section, the ethical measures which were taken into consideration before and during the investigation, will be briefly outlined.

3.2 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:196), ethics are generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. Naturally, there is some degree of disagreement about how to define what is ethically correct in research. Many professional and governmental groups have studied ethical issues in depth and have published guidelines for planning and conducting research in such a way as to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects. In addition, Leedy and Ormrod (2001:107) argue that researchers should not expose research participants to undue physical or psychological harm. In cases where the nature of a study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort, participants should know about this beforehand.

For this study, the first steps in the process of ethical measures involved applying for approval and/or permission from the following persons/institutions.

• Firstly, I applied to the Research Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, for approval to do the research (see Annexure 1 for (a) application form and (b) letter of permission).
• Secondly, I applied to the District Director of the Port Elizabeth DoE for permission to do research at specific schools in the district (see Annexure 2 for (a) letter of application and (b) approval granted).
• Thirdly, whilst waiting on responses from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and the District Director, I made appointments with the principals of five different schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. During these meetings, I produced a letter from myself seeking permission to use the SMT of the school as participants in my study. I also gave each
principal a brief overview of what my study would entail (see Annexure 3 for letter to school principals).

- Fourthly, on receiving letters of approval from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University as well as the District Director of the DoE, I contacted the principals concerned to get their response to my request for permission to use their schools in my study. Only four of the five principals approached, indicated that they and their SMTs would be willing to be participants in my study. The fifth principal seemed very reluctant and indicated that their school was going through a transformation phase, having lost most of its SMT members to either retirement, relocation or resignation. On discussing this with my supervisor, we agreed that I would make use of the four schools willing to participate.

Within the space of two weeks, I managed to meet with the SMTs of the four different schools on the dates supplied by the principals. Before each meeting I phoned the secretary to confirm the date and time agreed on. At each school, I received a warm welcome, with the principal introducing me to the SMT and requesting me to explain what was expected of them.

I started off by thanking the principal and SMT for the privilege of addressing them. Subsequently, I gave a brief background of myself, my career and a short motivation for selecting this particular topic. I then proceeded to read the consent form (Annexure 4) to them, emphasizing and/or clarifying certain areas. This was followed by a detailed explanation of the code of ethics. Thereafter I went through the questionnaire (Annexure 5) and gave clarity where needed. Time was allowed for SMT members to pose questions.

Next I requested the participants to read through the documents to familiarize themselves with the contents and to give the necessary consent, as well as complete the questionnaire. We then decided on a date on which I would collect the questionnaires from their school.
During this session, I highlighted the ethical principles, as set out by the Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. These principles included the following:

- The right to privacy, confidentiality and anonymity.
- The right to freedom of expression and access to information.
- The need to obtain informed consent from participants in writing.
- The participants’ right to withdraw or terminate participation in the study at any time they wished to do so.
- The need to obtain permission from the participants to audio-record any interviews.

Participants were ensured that should they so wish, field notes on observation, summaries of interviews and/or audiotape recordings of data collected at their school would be made available to them.

3.3 POPULATION

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:169) are of the opinion that a population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research. On the other hand, Ritchie and Lewis (2003:86) maintain that defining the population of a study involves two stages, namely: firstly specifying the characteristics of the ‘collective’ units required and then specifying those individuals required within them.

For the purpose of this investigation, the population consisted of the SMTs of all the schools in the Northern areas in Port Elizabeth which in one way or another, are experiencing disciplinary problems. The Northern areas of Port Elizabeth was discussed in section 1.9.3.

3.4 SAMPLING

Terreblanche and Durrheim (1999:274) define sampling as the process used to select cases for inclusion in a research study. Terreblanche and Durrheim argue that
sampling is a very important aspect of research because the types of conclusions that can be drawn from the research depend directly upon whom the research was conducted. In addition, Mason (1998:84) is of the opinion that sampling is usually considered necessary, because a complete census of the wider population in which you are interested is either impossible, impractical to achieve or simply not necessary.

The sample of this study can be viewed as an example of convenience sampling. Ritchie and Lewis (2003:81) state that in convenience sampling the researcher chooses the sample according to ease of access, which is exactly what I did. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:404) concur that a convenience sample is a group of subjects selected on the basis of being accessible or because it is convenient to use.

In this research, the sample consisted of four schools: three high schools and one primary school in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. These schools each have a SMT. Of the three high schools, two each have seven members on their SMT, the third high school has eight members. The primary school has five SMT members. This brings the total to twenty-seven. A summary of the sample is illustrated in Table 3.4. These schools were chosen because of their geographical location. Not only are they in close proximity to one another, thus saving cost and time, but they are all also comfortably close to my place of employment.

**TABLE 3.4: THE SAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next section will deal with the methods employed in the investigation to generate data on which to base the findings of the study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The use of qualitative research implied that the study had to make use of data collection methods, which are in line with qualitative research methods. These included questionnaires, interviews – both individual and group interviewing – and observation. Subsequently, this section will briefly outline how the study went about collecting data on which to base its findings. The data collection methods used were as follows:

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to De Vos et al. (2002:172), the basic objective of a questionnaire is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people who are informed on the particular issue. This is a very important technique for collecting data in educational research. In addition, Marshall and Rossman (2006:125) maintain that in using questionnaires, researchers rely totally on the honesty and accuracy of participant’s responses. Sheyvens and Storey (2003:39) argue that questionnaires should begin with the basic and least intrusive questions and progress to the more complex and sensitive questions. Therefore, I saw the questionnaire as an appropriate data collection method to gain insight into SMT’s reactions and beliefs. The researcher constructs a questionnaire based on the guidance from the literature review as to the issues pertaining to discipline (see Annexure 5). The questions were also aimed at eliciting the necessary information from the participants in order to find an answer to the research question, namely: What are the roles played by SMTs in selected schools in the Northern areas of the Port Elizabeth Metropole in managing discipline? In constructing the questionnaire, I opted for ten open-ended questions, rather than close-ended ones. The reason therefore being that I wanted to have varied responses of the participants rather than just a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. De Vos et al. (2002:273) claim that the phenomenological approach aims to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives. It was with this in mind, that I carefully formulated the questions in a language easy to understand and
unambiguous. My aim was to ensure that the questions were pertinent to the whole issue of SMTs and their role in managing discipline at their schools, as formulated in the objective of this study.

At the initial meeting with the SMTs, I carefully reviewed each question in the questionnaire, in order to eliminate any uncertainties regarding the questions. I also allowed for questions and/or comments regarding the nature of the questions. We then agreed on a date on which I would collect the questionnaires from the school.

Collecting the questionnaires proved more difficult and time-consuming than I initially thought it would. The participants from each school had their own unique set of excuses for not completing the questionnaire timeously. The participants from the primary school were the only school that returned their questionnaires on time. Eventually I received the questionnaires back four to five weeks after issuing them to schools. This delayed my research considerably. Another challenge was that not all schools handed back the full complement of questionnaires given to them. This entailed me going to these schools to pick up the questionnaires, only to find them not ready. Some of the reasons for this delay included the following excuses offered:

- Educators too busy with examination papers, marking scripts and completing mark sheets.
- Some educators claimed to have forgotten about the questionnaire.
- In some instances, the principal claimed that he/she could not persuade the SMT to complete these questionnaires. This after nobody had any objection during my first meeting with them.

However, my persistence paid off as I managed to get back all the questionnaires from the participating schools.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interviewing the participants of my study by using both individual and focus group interviews enabled me to gain insight into the role played by SMTs in managing discipline with the purpose of creating a culture of discipline and order. These
interviews also served to inform the investigation of what the participants’ thoughts and feelings were on how SMTs could effectively manage discipline at their respective schools.

Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006:480) state that the interview can be regarded as one of the most widely used methods for gathering qualitative data. Interviews are used to gather data on subjects’ opinions, beliefs and feelings about the situation in their own words. Similarly, Yates (2004:156) argues that ‘interview’ literally means to develop a shared perspective and understanding (a view) between (inter) two or more people. In other words, the researcher and the participant develop a shared understanding of the topic under discussion.

De Vos et al. (2002:291) refer to two types of interviews as data collection methods, namely: (1) one-on-one interviews and (2) focus groups which were already mentioned in section 1.5.2.2. Ary et al. (2006:480) are of the opinion that in all qualitative interviews the questions are open-ended and designed to reveal what is important to understand about the phenomenon of the study.

### 3.5.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

This study decided to make use of the semi-structured one-on-one interview. The aim was to gain insight into how individual members of the SMTs feel about or perceive their own role in managing discipline. The individual interviews were conducted with either the principal or the SMT member heading the disciplinary committee of the school. A total of four individual interviews and four focus group interviews were conducted.

These interviews took place at a time specified by the school. The interviews allowed the interviewee to speak from his/her own experiences whilst the use of an interview guide (see Annexure 6) ensured that the information shared during the interview remained focused on relevant issues pertaining to the study. I tried as far as possible to create an atmosphere which would allow participants to feel at ease and for me, the researcher, to be attentive to their views and to listen with empathy. Before starting the interview, I gained the interviewee’s permission to audiotape the
interview, as was agreed upon during our very first meeting described in section 3.2. This is also contained in the consent form (see Annexure 4). I also reminded the interviewee of the ethical issues namely confidentiality, his/her right to stop the interview and my responsibility to ensure that he/she was not compromised in any way.

3.5.2.2 Focus group interviews

According to De Vos et al. (2002:305), focus groups are a means of better understanding how people feel or think about an issue. De Vos et al. (2002:306) cite Morgan as describing a focus group as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. Similarly, Rossouw (2003:421) states that the interaction of the focus group leads to in-depth information that is seldom obtained during individual interviews.

After the individual sessions were completed, a focus group session with the SMT was arranged at each school. The aim of the group interviews was two folded: on the one hand, I was gathering data to be able to answer the research question, on the other hand the participants were given the opportunity to listen to each other’s views, to reflect on these views and to allow for a shared analysis of their viewpoints and experiences.

Using a focus group session as part of my data gathering process appealed to me as it created an opportunity for SMTs to come together and share their experiences of and viewpoints on the managing of discipline at school. This highlighted both the similarities as well as the differences in either their experiences or the meaning they make of their own situation.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003:171) make mention of the following key features of focus groups: Data are generated by interaction between the group participants. Participants present their own views and experiences, but they also hear from other participants. The group interaction is explicitly used to generate data and insights. In responding to each other, participants reveal more of their own frame of reference on the subject. In addition, De Vos et al. (2002:306) argue that participants are selected
for focus group interviews because they have certain characteristics in common that 
relate to the topic of the focus group. In this case, the SMT members are all in one 
way or another involved in managing discipline at their schools.

A few days before each interview, I would phone the school to confirm the date and 
time of the scheduled interview. I would also arrive well ahead of time, in order to 
prepare the room allocated for the interview, as well as setup my recorder. The 
focus group sessions took place at the various participating schools, either in a staff 
room or any other suitable room allocated by the school. These interviews lasted for 
approximately one hour.

At the onset of the interview, I would reassure the participants, reminding them of the 
ethical measures guiding my research. I would also make use of an ice-breaker to 
set them at ease about the interview (see Annexure 6 for example of interview guide 
used).

3.5.3 Observation

In selecting observation as a method of data collection, I anticipated to record and 
analyze the behaviour and interactions of the participants as they occur. In other 
words, to allow events, actions and experiences to be ‘seen’ through the eyes of the 
recorder, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2003:35).

De Vos et al. (2002) concur that observation can be described as a qualitative 
research procedure that studies the natural and everyday setup in a particular 
community or situation, which is in line with the discussion on observation in section 
1.5.3.

For the purpose of this research, observation as a data collection method served to 
inform the study of the interactions and behaviour of SMTs in their quest to manage 
discipline with the aim of creating a culture of discipline and order.

During the initial meetings with principals and SMTs, I explained the purpose of my 
study, as well as how I proposed to go about it at participating schools. Whilst
addressing the SMTs, I was given the opportunity to observe both verbal and non-verbal responses to my words. I recorded these observations by making detailed notes of each visit, as well as summarizing what transpired during these meetings. I also added to this, the participants’ unique ways of responding to certain questions.

Initially, I envisaged attending either an SMT meeting or observing a disciplinary meeting at each of the participating schools. However, time constraints, as well as other logistical problems at the schools prevented this from happening. Therefore, observation was limited to my meetings with principals and SMTs, as well as during individual interviews with participants.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

De Vos et al. (2002) are of the opinion that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (1999:111) see qualitative data analysis as a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data.

In deciding on the steps in analyzing the data, I opted to follow the steps as set out by Cresswell (2007:61) namely:

• Firstly, I had to read and reread through the database in order to get a sense of how the participants viewed discipline at their respective schools. This entailed going through the responses of SMT members to the questions posed in the questionnaires as well as both individual and focus group interviews.

• Next, I assigned codes to the data segments. Each school had a particular code and the data were organized according to the responses to each question and arranged according to each school.

• From these responses, I identified the main themes that emerged from the data collected. I settled for four main themes, namely: A decline in discipline; socio-economic factors; classroom planning and school management; and discipline practices.
• These themes were then used to write a description of what the participants experienced. In other words, I had to explain and discuss the emerging themes.

• Next, the themes were sub-divided into relevant categories emanating from participants' views. The categories as per theme are: Theme 1: Learners’ lack of self-discipline and abolishment of corporal punishment. Theme 2: Lack of parental involvement and home and family circumstances. Theme 3: Conduct of the educator and the SMT. Theme 4: Detention and prevention strategies.

• Subsequently, I had to interpret the meaning of these themes and categories. This was done by explaining how the themes emerged and by giving an interpretation of what the categories mean to the participants.

• Cresswell (2007:61) states that you should look for dialogue that supports the themes. This was done by citing direct quotations of the participants.

• I then validated the themes by supporting it with literature that was relevant to the specific theme.

• Lastly, I gave a personal reflection about the meaning of the data.

3.7 LITERATURE CONTROL

As mentioned in the previous section, I attempted to validate the emerging themes and their categories, by using a literature control.

According to De Vos et al. (2001:64), a literature control is aimed at confirming the dependability of the results and findings of the study.

Cresswell (1994:30) states that the explicit purpose of a literature control is to ascertain whether similar studies have been done and what the results and findings are that emanated from such studies. The literature control also provides the necessary background to compare the findings of this investigation with similar studies.
3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Cresswell (2005:252) states that throughout the process of data collection and analysis, the researcher needs to ensure that his/her findings and interpretations are accurate. Similarly, Marshall and Rossman (1999:191-192) agree that all research should respond to a degree of quality, posed as criteria, against which it may be evaluated.

De Vos et al. (2002:351) cite Lincoln and Guba as proposing four criteria that should be followed if a researcher wishes to ensure trustworthiness. As mentioned in section 1.7, these criteria are:

• Credibility
• Transferability
• Dependability
• Conformability

The use of the above mentioned criteria during this study will be discussed below.

3.8.1 Credibility

This criterion refers to the measure of the researcher’s confidence in the findings. Triangulation is regarded as an approved way of ensuring credibility in qualitative research. Cresswell (2005:252) refers to triangulation as a primary form used by qualitative researchers to validate findings. De Vos et al. (2002:341) cite Erlandson et al. as describing triangulation as a method whereby the researcher seeks out several different types of sources that can provide insights about the same events or relationships. Leedy and Ormrod (1997:143) describe triangulation as applying more than one method of sampling data. In this study, triangulation was employed by means of the different methods of collecting data, namely questionnaires, individual interviews, focus-group interviews and observation during meetings and/or interviews.
3.8.2 Transferability/Applicability

Transferability/applicability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other settings or groups. In this investigation, applicability was achieved by a rich description of findings and research methods, in order to help other researchers determine whether data could be transferred. A detailed and comprehensive description of the research methodology was given. Interviews were audiotaped and the summaries thereof will serve as a database.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Bisschoff and Koebe (2005:157), dependability refers to whether the findings of the research would be consistent if the study was repeated with similar subjects in a similar context. This research ensured consistency by using rich, detailed descriptions of the research methodology, as well as the availability of field notes and audio-recordings, and triangulation of different methods of data gathering.

3.8.4 Conformability

De Vos et al. (2002:352) cite Lincoln and Guba as stressing the need to ask whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another. This study made allowances for conformability by keeping records of the raw data collected through questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interviews and observation, as well as records of data analysis. Every effort was made to have planning and debriefing sessions with my supervisor who, with her vast experience in conducting research, could assist in validating my findings.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have discussed the research design and methodology that was used for this study in detail. This included the rationale for using qualitative research. The data collection methods used were (a) questionnaires (b) individual and group interviews and (c) observation.
From the data collected, four main themes emerged namely:

• Theme 1: A decline in discipline
• Theme 2: Socio-economic factors
• Theme 3: Classroom planning and school management
• Theme 4: Discipline practices

The next chapter will provide a detailed discussion of the findings of this investigation.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the findings of the investigation will be given and discussed.

De Vos et al. (2002:339) are of the opinion that qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data, so that the researcher can lead the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon being studied.

As explained in Chapter Three, data were collected by means of questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interviews as well as observation.

From the questionnaires, interviews and observation, four major themes emerged, namely: A decline in discipline, socio-economic factors, classroom planning and school management, and discipline practices.

From these themes, eight categories came forward, namely: learners' lack of self-discipline, abolition of corporal punishment, lack of parental involvement, home and family circumstances, conduct of the educator, the SMT, detention and prevention strategies.

These results were obtained from data collected by means of questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interviews as well as observation. This data were then analyzed as explained in detail in Chapter Three. The data were analyzed using the steps as outlined by Cresswell (2007:61):

• Highlighting significant statements;
• Developing clusters of meaning from these statements and forming themes;
• Writing descriptions of the participants’ experiences.
The findings of the role of SMTs in selected Northern areas in Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order are illustrated in Table 4.1.

**TABLE 4.1: FINDINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THEME 1: A decline in discipline</td>
<td>• Learners’ lack of self-discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Abolishment of corporal punishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THEME 2: Socio-economic factors</td>
<td>• Lack of parental involvement.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Home and family circumstances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEME 3: Classroom planning and school</td>
<td>• Conduct of the educator.</td>
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<td>management</td>
<td>• The SMT.</td>
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<tr>
<td>THEME 4: Discipline practices</td>
<td>• Detention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prevention strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The themes and categories will now be discussed in line with Table 4.1. Quotations of the participants are from the questionnaires and interviews and appear in italics. Each theme, with its categories, is explained as relating to the specific questions put to the participants. A literature control is also integrated with this discussion, in order to confirm or rebuke the findings, i.e. to recontextualize it.

### 4.2 EMERGING THEMES

These particular themes address the research question as formulated in Chapter One, namely: What are the roles played by SMTs in specific schools in the Northern areas of the Port Elizabeth Metropole in managing discipline?

#### 4.2.1 Theme 1: A decline in discipline

This theme emerged from the analysis of the following questions directed at the participants during the research.
Questions:

• Name any two factors you would regard as contributing to discipline problems at your school?
• How important, do you think, is the example of the educator in displaying self-discipline?
• What are the least/most effective discipline practices you have used in the past?
• What would you recommend as an alternative to corporal punishment?

A decline in discipline can be regarded as all those factors that lead to a general breakdown in the culture of discipline and order in any school.

From this theme, two categories emerged, and these categories will be addressed in detail next.

4.2.1.1 Learners’ lack of self-discipline

Mokhele (2006:155) states that a lack of self-discipline seems to result in learners who are very rude and disrespectful.

Some of the responses of the participants, which relate to the matter of a lack of self-discipline, are the following:

Learners are not taught at home how to display self-discipline.

Learners misbehave because of the problems at home – their misbehaviour is a sign of lack of self-discipline.

Learners are not disciplined at home – therefore they do not know how to behave at school.

Most parents are very young – this leads to children taking advantage of their parents.
From the literature, Joubert et al. (2004:85) concur that the lack of self-discipline manifests itself in poor class attendance.

4.2.1.2 Abolishment of corporal punishment

This category implies that educators feel that the ending of corporal punishment without providing alternatives, contributed towards the decline in school discipline. This idea is supported by Naong (2007:238) when stating that educators argue that without corporal punishment discipline could not be maintained. Corporal punishment was seen as the only way to deal with disruptive learners.

Below are selected quotations from the participants on the issue of corporal punishment:

Corporal punishment is no longer effective, because learners know we are not supposed to use it as a form of punishment.

The Department has failed to give us guidelines as to alternatives to corporal punishment.

I find that detention or having the learners do cleaning duties work as alternative to corporal punishment.

For those serious about sports, you can always keep them from participating in their favourite sport as a means of punishment.

From these quotations and the interaction with the participants, it can be deduced that although not all educators are pleased with the abolishment of corporal punishment, many of them do have certain alternatives to corporal punishment which can be implemented. Educators should apply their minds to the problem of replacing corporal punishment with preventative measures, since Oosthuizen et al. (2003:465) argue that corporal punishment is usually associated with hostility and rejection, an aspect which will have an enormous negative impact on the learner’s relationship of trust.
The views of the participants in this study is echoed by the opinions of Hough, O'Neill, Matross, Killian and Van der Riet (2007:95) in so far that schools can support educators in their endeavour to adhere to the constitutional prohibition on corporal punishment, through proactive and preventative strategies such as a school mission statement that commits the school to maintaining a respectful climate.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Socio-economic factors

This theme evolved from the information given by the participants with regards to the following questions in the questionnaires and interviews.

Questions:
• What part do an involved community and parents play in school discipline practices?
• To what extent, do you think, do learners and parents need to give input in school discipline practices?
• Why, do you think, do learners misbehave?

The theme ‘socio-economic factors’ refers to all those factors from within the learner’s home environment, as well as the community in general, which impact negatively on the learners’ behaviour at school. Rossouw (2003:426) states that principals in lower socio-economic areas feel that unstable or dysfunctional homes caused by amongst others, poverty, disinterested or illiterate parents, have a negative influence on school discipline. Likewise, Van der Walt and Oosthuizen (2007:334) argue that the socio-economic conditions in which learners find themselves can lead to discipline problems. Landsberg et al. (2005:28) argue that education in poverty-stricken communities of South Africa is hampered by a lack of order in the communal structures, a non-stimulating milieu, poor orientation towards school, and clashes between the value orientation of the family and the school.

This theme can be sub-divided into two categories which will subsequently be discussed in the following two sub-sections.
4.2.2.1  Lack of parental involvement

This category focuses on the failure of the parents of troublesome learners to get involved in the affairs of the school, as a factor which contributes to the problem of learner discipline, highlighted by the participants of this study.

The quotations in italics, listed below, attest to how the participants viewed parental involvement in school matters:

*Parents seem to be at a loose end.*

*Parents sometimes just sign for things like school rules, etcetera, without actually engaging with it.*

*The majority of parents are not interested in school matters. Very few respond when we call on them to assist with disciplinary problems.*

*You see it at parent meetings. The parents you really want to see do not turn up. That shows a lack of interest in their child.*

From the interaction with the participants, it was obvious that the participants all felt that a lack of parental involvement added to the disciplinary problems at school. This was further substantiated by the literature control which was integrated into this study, as stated below.

Mugabe and Maposa (2007:10) maintain that a suitable environment for managing learner discipline required parental involvement. Parents could visit schools during parent consultations and sports days as well as meetings to create forums for shared-vision on school discipline with educators. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:530) show that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents. In these schools, parents are well-informed about school matters, open and active communication channels between school and parents exist, and school policy on discipline is fully and clearly communicated to parents.
The lack of parental involvement in school matters was voiced as a matter of grave concern by the participants. This seems to be a worrying factor for the participants, as parental involvement is crucial for the smooth, effective management of any school. It was quite evident that the lack of parental involvement impacts negatively on the management of discipline at the participating schools.

4.2.2.2 Home and family circumstances

The perception among participants that the home environment of learners with disciplinary problems are in most cases characterized by poverty, deprivation, negligence, abuse and/or domestic violence, gave rise to this category emerging.

The quotations listed below indicate the viewpoints of the participants on how the home and family circumstances have a bearing on the discipline of the school:

*Children would rather be at school than at home, because when they go home, there often is nothing to eat. A hungry child cannot concentrate and this adds to your disciplinary problems.*

*Children emulate the behaviour they see at home, often leading to fighting in class.*

*Poverty also adds to your disciplinary problems.*

*The vicinity in which our school is situated means learners are often exposed to the evils of drugs, drunkenness, etcetera.*

*A lack of control at home means children often watch TV programmes which send out wrong messages to them.*

From the above mentioned, it is evident that SMTs and educators are all confronted by the socio-economic conditions in which their learners live. These conditions of poverty, deprivation and often lack of parental control and guidance, often mirrored themselves in learners misbehaving in class or at school in general. Mestry et al. (2007:8) cite Grey as having found that in many cases, the parents have substantially
less education than their children do and this gives rise to a situation where the parent is intimidated by the child and feels incapable of disciplining him/her. In these cases, the child brings an undisciplined attitude to school. In the same vein, Van Wyk (2001:198) argues that parents can contribute to the development of problem behaviour by failing to provide prerequisite social skills and support and by modeling inappropriate behaviour at home.

According to Van der Walt and Oosthuizen (2007:334), the socio-economic conditions in which learners find themselves can lead to discipline problems such as untidy or incorrect dress and absenteeism. These problems can only be eradicated by improving the living socio-economic conditions of the learners in question. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:530) cite Bear as stating that the incidence of misbehaviour among children from families in the lower socio-economic strata tend to be higher than the occurrence of misbehaviour among children from middle-class or upper-class families.

Msutwana (2004:113) is of the opinion that the home lays the foundation for most of the child’s eventual learning and development. It forms the basis of his/her motivation and determines his/her achievement. Therefore, the learner’s socialization and encouragement (or lack of it) in the home and neighbourhood form significant motivational influences.

The findings relating to this category highlighted the fact that many parents are negligent when it comes to the general supervision of their children and the administration of discipline, and are failing as role models for their children.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Classroom planning and school management

This theme emerged from the participants’ viewpoints that proper classroom planning by the educator and sound management practices by the SMT could go a long way towards eliminating disciplinary problems at school. These viewpoints were raised in reaction to the questions put to the participants, as listed below.
Questions:

- How do you think, can educators help to manage discipline?
- To what extent, do you think, is time for teaching the curriculum hindered by discipline problems?
- What, according to you, should the SMT do about ill-discipline?
- Would you say your school has sufficient measures in place to manage discipline?
- How do you perceive teamwork in a SMT?
- What, in your opinion, are the challenges the SMT face when managing discipline?
- To what extent, do you, as SMT members, have a say in determining discipline practices?

This theme was then sub-divided into two categories, which will be discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

4.2.3.1 Conduct of the educator

The importance of the educator as a classroom manager is the central point of this category and is emphasized by Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:528) who argue that educators should plan and organize both the classroom and the lesson to keep the learners interested and minimize opportunities for disruption.

Following below are examples of direct quotations by the participants, in which they gave their views on the importance of classroom management and planning by the educator:

An educator should plan properly in order to manage his/her class well.

Effective planning keeps learners busy.

All educators should be involved in managing discipline, even outside their own classrooms.
These quotations serve to highlight the importance of educators coming to class well-prepared and managing their classrooms effectively. Knott-Craig (2007:11) concurs with this viewpoint by stating that educators need to make the lessons relevant to the experience of the learner and to include the experience of the learners in the lesson, channel their excess energy with stimulating and challenging learning exercises and deal with disruptive learners individually either immediately or when the lesson is over. Similarly, Oosthuizen et al. (2003:476) mention that it is the duty of the educator to create an environment where every learner is guided towards an attitude of caring for other learners.

This category accentuates the fact that in order for learning to take place and a culture of discipline and order to be created, the educator has to be creative, innovative and in charge of managing his/her classroom. Effective teaching minimizes the disciplinary problems in a school. In other words, good learner behaviour could be promoted by effective teaching brought about by proper classroom planning.

4.2.3.2 The school management team

This category evolved from the research question: What are the roles played by SMTs in specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in managing discipline?

The responses of the participants to the questions relating to the SMT’s roles in managing discipline are listed below in italics:

*We work as a team when it comes to policy making and implementation.*

*The grade-head system works well at our school.*

*The workload sometimes hampers effective management of discipline.*

*Educators tend to defer all their problems to the office instead of trying to solve it on their own.*
SMT members do not always engage in innovative thinking.

According to Du Plessis and Loock (2007:1), contemporary management policies should centre on management through supportive school programmes, including appropriate curricula and school support structures. Wolhuter and Steyn (2003:529) concur that school management is a crucial factor in encouraging a sense of collective responsibility among staff, and a sense of commitment to the school among learners and their parents. Similarly, Stewart (2004:331) is of the opinion that any behaviour management plan should meet the following objectives: promoting an atmosphere conducive to effective teaching and learning, developing in all learners the necessity to accept the responsibility for and the consequences of their own behaviour. Van der Walt and Oosthuizen (2007:335) argue that school management should concentrate on what lies at the root of the learners’ attitude of disrespect and insubordination towards their educators and disrespect towards their fellow learners. Only when the root cause of these problems has been discovered, can eradication thereof be attempted.

The responses to the interviews and questionnaires all point to the often difficult tasks SMTs face in managing discipline. All the participants were unanimous in their views that SMTs should operate as a collective, making joint decisions and operating as a team in their quest to manage discipline at their schools.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Discipline practices

This theme emerged from the participants’ responses to the questions about the different methods employed to curb or prevent ill-discipline at their schools.

Questions:
• What are the current discipline practices in your school?
• Which disciplinary measures work best at your school?
• How, do you think, should inappropriate behaviour be handled?
• To what extent, if any, does the climate of the school affect discipline practices?
This theme was then subdivided into two themes relating to discipline practices, each of which will subsequently be discussed briefly.

4.2.4.1 Detention

The Oxford Dictionary (2002:280) describes detention as the detaining of a person (i.e. the learner) in order to punish. Oosthuizen et al. (2003) state that the basic idea behind detention is to discomfort the learner concerned by taking away his/her free time, thereby attempting to modify his/her behaviour to a more positive or disciplined approach.

Quotations from participants in relation to the issue of detention as a disciplinary practice are as follows:

We have detention after school.

Detention seems to be one of the few alternatives for corporal punishment.

Detention cannot be used every day, then it becomes ineffective.

Detention doesn’t always help, as some learners repeatedly land in the detention class.

Educators have a big workload and do not have time to supervise detention classes.

We cannot keep learners for detention, as they might be unsafe going home later than usual.

The responses to the issue of detention varied. Some participants indicated that detention worked, whilst others felt that detention was not really working, as you would have repeat offenders landing in the detention class on a regular basis. A few participants listed detention as one of the most effective disciplinary practice at their schools.
Stewart (2004:328) argues that some schools even have learners carry out detention at weekends, in order to emphasize to parents that their child has not been behaving appropriately and the detention serves to involve the parents in their reformatory process.

Oosthuizen et al. (2003:473) cite Andrews and Taylor as stating that in American schools, the lunch break detention appears to be a potential alternative programme favoured by both learners and educators, and which, if tailored to fit a particular school, might be more effective than other programmes more punitive in nature. In addition, Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000:35) regard detention after school as a much more effective strategy than corporal punishment.

It is quite evident that, until they find something more suitable, detention is used at all participating schools in order to try and minimize disciplinary problems.

4.2.4.2 Prevention strategies

As the name implies, this category focuses on those measures/strategies which aim to prevent misbehaviour or ill-discipline. Du Plessis and Loock (2007:19) maintain that schools need to explore the possible causes and implement strategies for behaviour change in order to increase the level of successful learning. In the same vein, Knott-Craig (2007:14) argues that schools must teach educators, learners and parents about positive discipline systems.

Some of the viewpoints of the participants regarding strategies to curb misbehaviour are listed below as direct quotations:

*Educators should first find out what the problem is before acting.*

*If speaking to learners and parents do not help, arrange counselling for the learner.*

*Every action taken against a learner should be guided by the code of conduct.*

*It is important to be kind to a learner and to treat him/her fairly.*

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We should be positive role models to the learners in our care.

From the responses of the participants, it was clear that they all felt that the direct involvement of all the different role players would lead to an effective school. Participants also stressed the importance of positive reinforcement, rather than behaving in a negative manner towards the learner. The importance of having proper disciplinary structures, utilizing the code of conduct and involving the parents, was prominent in the participants’ responses. However, as indicated in section 4.2.3.2, the participants also felt that time constraints and a heavy workload often hampered effective managing of discipline.

According to Oosthuizen et al. (2003:469), positive discipline gradually enables a learner to learn the various skills involved in assuming responsibility for what happens to him/her and helps him/her to take the initiative to relate successfully to others and to solve problems. In addition, Mugabe and Maposa (2007:11) state that codes of conduct, school rules, prefect systems and disciplinary committees are preventive and systemic methods which should form part of every school. Du Plessis and Loock (2007:10) claim that positive discipline strategies emphasize the importance of making positive changes in the child’s environment in order to improve the child’s behaviour. Such changes may entail the use of positive reinforcement, modeling, supportive educator-learner relations, family support and assistance from a variety of educational and mental health specialists.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role played by SMTs at specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in addressing disciplinary problems at their schools. The secondary objectives emanating from this primary objective, included: identifying the views of SMTs with regards to current disciplinary practices, exploring barriers to effective discipline practices, establishing the roles of SMTs in managing discipline and determining the contributions of role players to effective discipline practices.
Through the emerging themes, this investigation achieved the above-named objectives using qualitative data collection methods such as questionnaires, individual and group interviews as well as observation; discussing the findings based on the data collected and recontextualizing the findings by incorporating relevant and recent literature to confirm or rebuke the results.

From the findings, it is evident that contemporary discipline practices should focus on management which involves supportive school programmes, including relevant school curricula and school support structures. One of the main findings of this study emphasizes the necessity of any SMT cooperating as a collective in order to manage discipline effectively at their respective schools.

The next chapter, Chapter Five, will focus on drawing inferences and recommending some constructive and functional/practical guidelines based on the findings of the study. The chapter will be concluded with a chapter-by-chapter summary.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PROBLEMS, SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explained the role of SMTs at selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in managing discipline at their respective schools.

In the previous chapter, the findings were presented according to the themes that emerged from the data. These themes where then subdivided into related categories. The reactions of the SMT members to the questionnaires and interviews, constituted key points of the analysis of the data collected. The research results were then presented in the form of a synopsis, followed by a detailed discussion, which would pave the way for conclusions and recommendations.

This chapter will concentrate on drawing conclusions, making recommendations, highlighting the problems encountered during the study and making suggestions for further research, as well as outlining the significance of the study.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions drawn from the study of the role of SMTs in managing discipline are placed within the context of the themes and related categories pertaining to the findings of this investigation.

5.2.1 Theme 1: A decline in discipline

5.2.1.1 Learners’ lack of self-discipline

With regard to this category, the following conclusions were drawn:
• The lack of self-discipline displayed by learners, has its origin in the home situation where parents fail to be suitable role models.
• A lack of self-discipline and a low self-esteem are often the causes of ill-discipline.

5.2.1.2 Abolishment of corporal punishment

Conclusions relating to this category are the following:

• Educators are still divided on the advantages and disadvantages of the abolishment of corporal punishment, and this influences the way they address disciplinary problems in their schools and classrooms.
• Educators often find it difficult to manage discipline, because they do not have alternatives to corporal punishment.

5.2.2 Theme 2: Socio-economic factors

5.2.2.1 Lack of parental involvement

The following conclusions were drawn regarding this category:

• In the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth, the level of parental involvement in the school is too low and this influences the vital and much needed communication between school and parent negatively.
• Misbehaviour often stems from the fact that parents do not set clear guidelines at home with regard to appropriate behaviour.

5.2.2.2 Home and family circumstances

Conclusions regarding this category are the following:

• Home conditions, dysfunctional families and poor role models by family and community members all contribute to discipline problems at school.
• Poverty, abuse, domestic violence and other socio-economic factors hamper the effective management of discipline at the participating schools.
• However, the educators are aware of the nature of the community they represent and the socio-economic circumstances of most of the learners.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Classroom planning and school management

5.2.3.1 Conduct of the educator

In respect of this category, the following conclusion have been drawn:

The participating educators are aware of the importance for every educator to ensure effective classroom management by being well-prepared for lessons and maintaining good discipline in his/her classroom. The educators also realize that they need to be role models to their learners by leading exemplary lives.

5.2.3.2 The school management team

Conclusions regarding this category are the following:

• SMTs at the participating schools realize that they need to involve all staff members in managing discipline at school.
• In most cases, except for one school, it was evident that the SMT operates as a team. At this particular school, I was not entirely convinced of the SMT working as a collective.
• SMTs are sometimes frustrated with other staff members ‘passing the buck’ by not attending to discipline matters themselves, instead passing them on to the SMT.
• SMTs regard detention as adding to their already heavy workload.
• SMTs feel that they are not receiving enough support from other educators, parents and the DoE to effectively manage discipline.
5.2.4 Theme 4: Discipline practices

5.2.4.1 Detention

The conclusions drawn with regard to this category are the following:

- SMT members are divided on the use of detention as a discipline practice.
- Some SMT members see detention more as punishment for the educators, as it involves taking up their time after school.
- Some of the SMT members felt that detention does not really help, as learners prefer staying after school rather than going home.

5.2.4.2 Prevention strategies:

The following conclusions were formed with regard to this category:

- The participating schools do not have alternatives to punishment. The concept of positive reinforcement is not readily used at these schools.
- There is not enough interactive engagement between SMTs and other educators on ways of preventing misbehaviour at school.
- The participating schools seem to lack effective strategies aimed at minimizing discipline problems at school.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are presented, with specific reference to the themes identified in Chapter Four.

5.3.1 A decline in discipline

Recommendations for this theme are done within the context of the following two categories, namely:
5.3.1.1 Learners’ lack of self-discipline

- Schools must arrange workshops and/or motivational talks for learners in which the issues of self-discipline and self-image are addressed.
- Schools, parents and communities should all encourage learners to act responsibly in their relationships with others and in school activities.
- Learners should experience that morals and values are being demonstrated in the lives and attitudes of their educators and in the approach of the school as a whole towards discipline.
- Schools should encourage and acknowledge good behaviour by, for example, giving awards for positive, disciplined behaviour.

5.3.1.2 Abolishment of corporal punishment

- Every school must discuss and agree on methods of punishment that are appropriate for their circumstances which are not in conflict with the law.
- Schools need to invest in the empowerment of educators by providing them with training in the use of alternatives to corporal punishment.
- Schools need to organize workshops, etcetera, in order to come up with guidelines to address the issue of the humane use of punishment as part of their ongoing staff development programme.
- Schools must create links between the school, parents and community structures in their quest to replace corporal punishment with other preventative strategies.
- The DoE needs to intensify its processes to deal with ill-discipline and by doing so, empower schools to deal with misbehaviour effectively and as soon as possible.

5.3.2 Socio-economic factors

Recommendations for this theme are located within the framework of the following two categories, namely:
5.3.2.1 **Lack of parental involvement**

From the findings, it is evident that educators feel that parents must play a crucial role in the establishment and entrenchment of discipline at a school. It is therefore recommended that:

- Parents need to set clear guidelines for their child’s behaviour, both at home and at school.
- Active parental involvement in the lives of their children is crucial for the management of discipline at school.
- The parents should become involved in their children’s homework and extra-mural activities by supervising homework, signing the learner’s books and as far as possible, be present at school functions, meetings and extra-curricular activities such as sport matches, etcetera.
- It is important for parents to build networks with other adults and/or structures to refer to in cases of discipline problems.
- It is the duty of each and every parent to monitor the TV programmes and/or video or computer games that their child uses, in order to minimize the detrimental effect some of these programmes and games have on learners’ behaviour.
- Schools could arrange workshops/talks to assist young, immature or illiterate parents in honing their parental skills.
- Parents must be constantly made aware of their roles and responsibilities as prime caregivers of their children.

5.3.2.2 **Home and family circumstances**

- SMTs should be pro-active in looking for ways and means to accommodate parents who cannot pay school fees, to contribute in other ways in order to restore the dignity of both parent and child.
- Educators should not humiliate learners by referring in class to those whose school fees have not been paid. Instead, they should call in these parents and together seek solutions.
• Each learner's unique family/home circumstances should be taken into account when dealing with this particular learner. Staff and management need to interact with learners in a sensitive, caring and humane manner.
• Non-governmental organizations can be contacted to equip parents with specific skills, which will help to decrease the problems schools encounter as a result of the socio-economic situation of their learners.
• Management must network with other schools in combined efforts to find solutions to improve the morale of parents and learners of schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

5.3.3 Classroom planning and school management

Recommendations for this theme are directly related to the following categories, namely:

5.3.3.1 Conduct of the educator

• Educators should promote good learner behaviour and learning by teaching consistently and effectively.
• Educators should be well-prepared, keeping learners actively busy in the classroom in order to eliminate misbehaviour.
• Never punish a class as a whole. Find the culprit and mete out punishment to him/her.
• Be consistent – do not punish one learner and not another.
• When commenting on a learner's work, an educator should praise as freely as when giving criticism.
• An educator should move around class frequently, and by doing so, keep an eye on every learner in class.
• Classroom rules should be visible in class and learners need to be sensitized to adhering to these rules.
• When punishing learners, educators should ensure that they are following the school's code of conduct for learners.
5.3.3.2 The school management team

- SMTs need to work as a collective, taking joint decisions and supporting one another in order to effectively manage discipline at their schools. This means they need to display a spirit of unity and teamwork.
- It is essential that the SMT forms a collaboration with other staff members, parents and the community in order to form a united front and to strengthen their efforts to eliminate discipline problems at their school.
- The SMT should act as a link between staff members, parents and learners in dealing with discipline problems and procedures. In other words, the SMT is central in dealing with discipline at school.
- SMTs must be well-informed of the relevant legislation and current trends relating to school discipline in order to ensure that discipline practices at their school fall within the parameters of educational laws.
- It is incumbent upon SMTs to constantly review the discipline policies and procedures of their school and where necessary, to consult with other professionals to update the knowledge and skills of the SMTs in order to effectively manage discipline at their school.
- SMTs need to have proper control measures in place. This entails ensuring that staff members keep accurate records of the learner’s misbehaviour and the subsequent action taken.

5.3.4 Discipline practices

Recommendations for this theme are within the context of the following two categories, namely:

5.3.4.1 Detention

- Detention should only be used if it proves to serve as a deterrent for misbehaviour.
- One method of detention is to call in the assistance of parents who have to come to school and supervise their own or other children who misbehave.
Another form of detention is to take away certain privileges from the learners in question. Some of these privileges are for example the privilege to participate in an extra-mural activity.

Having detention during break or even on a Saturday might help to curb misbehaviour.

Detention can also comprise of a series of workshops on behaviour related topics such as self-discipline and self-image, in order to make the offender aware of how his/her behaviour impacts on other people’s lives.

5.3.4.2 Prevention strategies

The DoE or school management must organize courses in positive disciplining for educators as well as for parents.

Each school should have a code of conduct, as well as other behaviour policies, which indicate clearly to educators, parents and learners how things are done at the school.

School discipline policies must be unambiguous and applied consistently.

Schools need to cultivate habits of self-discipline.

SMTs must investigate the possibility of guidance and counselling committees to assist learners with school-related problems.

Punishment must be guided by principles of justice and fairness. It must be appropriate to the offence.

The climate of the school should embrace orderliness, fairness and cooperation. This should form part of school policies and every school practice.

5.4 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE STUDY

The problems referred to in this section, pertain to the challenges and/or obstacles I was faced with during the data collection and empirical part of the study.

One of the challenges I encountered whilst busy with the study was the availability of SMT members for either individual or focus group interviews. Often, on phoning the school to confirm the arranged date and time for the interview, I would be asked to
postpone the session for one reason or another. This happened numerous times and caused delays in collecting the data.

Another problem I was faced with was time constraints. Due to the fact that SMT members often had other commitments after school, I would find myself having to interview only a portion of the SMT. Synchronizing our hectic work programmes often led to feelings of frustration and despair on my part.

At some schools, I experienced reluctance on the part of certain SMT members to sacrifice their free time or time after school to assist me in collecting data. However, the willingness and friendliness of other SMT members more than compensated for the attitude of their uncooperative colleagues.

However, with perseverance, sufficient data were collected and the investigation could be concluded.

The problems I encountered as described above, prompted me to make the following suggestions:

- Educators should be vigorously sensitized to the importance of educational research at their schools and the impact it could have on the effective management of their schools, as well as the benefits for their own effective teaching and learning.
- The DoE should allocate study leave for educators who do research studies part-time, during which these educators could concentrate on data collection and data analysis in particular.
- Universities and institutions for higher education should strive to improve their communication links and outreach programmes to the schools in their feeder communities, in order to facilitate the process of educators doing research at those schools.
- The DoE and/or schools should organize both in-service as well as pre-service workshops on the positive effects of ongoing educational research.
5.5 TOPICS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

With regards to further research around the issue of creating a culture of discipline and order at schools, I would like to make the following suggestions:

• Subsequent studies could investigate the views of parents on the management of learner discipline.

• Another research topic could also be the importance of parental involvement in not only discipline problems, but also the child’s whole school career.

• More in-depth studies could be done on detention as a disciplinary measure.

• The implementation of effective preventative strategies in dealing with discipline is another viable research topic.

5.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The value of this study could be described as follows:

• On a personal level, it has helped me to get a deeper understanding of the challenges SMTs and staff members face when dealing with learner discipline.

• It has also helped me to experience growth in areas such as having patience and endurance and the ability to experience setbacks as challenges rather than problems.

• I have also gained new respect for SMTs who, despite the unfavourable conditions in and around their schools, managed to create a culture of order and discipline.

• My objective is that schools should gain from the guidelines and recommendations that emanated from this study.

5.7 SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION

This study comprised of five chapters, which are briefly summarized below:
5.7.1 Chapter One

This chapter concentrates on outlining the research problem and its setting. In this chapter, I outline the fact that as an educator, but more specifically as a member of the SMT at one of the schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth, I was concerned about the perceived lack of discipline at certain schools in the area. This prompted me to embark on a study based on the following research question: What are the roles played by SMTs in selected Northern areas schools in Port Elizabeth in managing discipline?

The focus of this investigation was to concentrate on the challenges faced and the roles played by SMTs of specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order.

The chapter further outlines the research design to be followed. This included giving a detailed description of the interpretive paradigm, the qualitative approach and phenomenology as the research strategy. The data collection instruments, namely questionnaires, individual and group interviews, as well as observation were also introduced. The chapter further alludes to the steps to be followed during data analysis and outlines how the study was going about ensuring the research trustworthiness of the research done. The chapter is concluded by giving a brief outline of the five chapters envisaged.

5.7.2 Chapter Two

In this chapter, I interact with different sources of literature, in order to strengthen my viewpoints and/or perceptions of school discipline and the various aspects thereof. The main focus was on the role of the SMT in managing discipline, as this was the primary objective of the research.

The literature review started off by giving definitions for discipline as well as disciplinary problems. It then gave a detailed discussion of the importance of a code of conduct as the focal point of the discipline procedures of any school.
This chapter highlighted the various forms of discipline, discerning between punitive and preventive disciplinary measures. It also expounded on the issue of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure, giving substantiated arguments both against and in favour of the use of corporal punishment, as well as alternatives to corporal punishment. Chapter Two further detailed the roles and responsibilities of SMTs, the legal framework against which discipline should be managed, as well as the educator-related factors which contribute to disciplinary problems at school.

5.7.3 Chapter Three

This chapter gives an overview of the research methodology and a report of the data collection methods.

The research question which formed the basis of this investigation was: What is the role played by SMT members of specific schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order? I endeavoured to investigate this topic through interaction with SMTs of selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. The aim was to listen to and observe the challenges these SMT members faced and the manner in which they managed to deal with such challenges.

The chapter gives a detailed description of the interpretive paradigm in which the study was located. It also expanded on the advisability of using qualitative research as well as explaining the reasons for making use of phenomenology as a research strategy.

In Chapter Three, the ethical measures adhered to whilst doing the study are discussed in depth. This included the various letters of application, meeting with the participants and assuring them of issues of confidentiality, informed consent and transparency, amongst others. The data collection instruments of questionnaires, individual and group interviews and observation are each dealt with individually and in a detailed manner. The chapter also elaborates on the procedure of analyzing the data collected. Chapter Three is concluded by describing how trustworthiness was ensured in this research.
5.7.4 Chapter Four

In this chapter, the findings of the study are discussed in depth.

Data were collected by means of questionnaires, individual interviews, focus group interviews as well as observation. The steps taken to analyze the data included the following: highlighting significant statements, developing clusters of meaning from these statements and forming themes, writing descriptions of the participants’ experiences.

From these steps, four major themes emerged, namely: A decline in discipline, socio-economic factors, classroom planning and school management and discipline practices. These themes were then sub-divided into categories, which seemed most logically related to the specific themes. The specific categories were formulated based on the responses from the participants in answer to the questions posed to them in the questionnaires and during interviews.

The chapter then broadly expands on each theme with its categories. This includes writing a description of the theme, giving the specific questions relating to the theme. This is augmented by including the responses of the participants as direct quotations.

5.7.5 Chapter Five

Chapter Five details the conclusions drawn based on the findings of the investigation, makes recommendations, lists the problems encountered during the study and highlights the significance of the study.

The aim of the conclusions drawn in this chapter was to sketch a picture of the role of SMTs at selected schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order at their schools, according to the themes that emerged from the investigation.

The most important conclusions drawn on the basis of the findings of the study, can be summarized as follows:
• Learners’ lack of self-discipline has its origins in the home where parents often fail to discipline their children or to give proper guidance.
• Schools need to earnestly engage in seeking alternatives to corporal punishment.
• The active involvement of parents in discipline problems as well as their children’s school life is crucial to the effective management of the school.
• Poverty, abuse and domestic violence impact negatively on the management of school discipline.
• SMTs must form a collaboration with staff members and parents to manage discipline effectively.
• SMTs must ensure that the school has proper discipline structures in place.
• Schools should investigate the use of various forms of detention and make use of other forms of preventive strategies.
• Educators need to come to class well-prepared and to be good role models for their learners in their care.

The study then provides the following recommendations to educators, and especially to SMTs:

• Learners should be encouraged to act responsibly.
• Educators should encourage and acknowledge good behaviour.
• Schools need to organize workshops to assist parents in handling children with disciplinary problems.
• Educators should manage their classrooms effectively by teaching consistently and keeping learners busy.
• The SMT must ensure the effective use of the code of conduct to curb the ill-discipline of the learners.
• It is the duty of the SMTs to organize workshops/courses to provide educators with alternatives to corporal punishment.

The problems encountered during the study included, amongst others, the following:
• Unwillingness on the part of SMTs to sacrifice their free time or time after school to participate in interviews.
• Time constraints. Hectic schedules often meant an interview had to be postponed.

The significance of the study was that it gave me a fresh perspective on the roles played by SMTs and the challenges these SMTs face in managing discipline at their schools. In this regard, I am confident that the research succeeded in achieving the objectives stipulated in Chapter One.

5.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of SMTs at selected Northern areas schools in Port Elizabeth in managing discipline at their respective schools. From the findings of the study, it became evident that the role of the SMTs include the following:

• SMTs should, in collaboration with the rest of the staff and parents, ensure that the school has a properly constituted code of conduct, as well as proper discipline structures to facilitate the managing of discipline.
• It is the duty of SMTs to organize workshops/courses for both educators and parents to equip them with skills in handling the discipline of learners.
• SMTs need to be proactive in their thinking and constantly come up with new ways of managing discipline at their schools.

This research has been a great learning curve for both me and the participants of the study. It allowed us to gain new insights into and perspectives on the issue of school discipline. From the data collected, it is obvious that through the teamwork of the whole staff, schools can effectively create a culture of discipline and order for their learners. The role of the parent cannot be overemphasized, as charity begins at home.


(The) Herald. 2007. Just another day at high schools as rapes and robberies skyrocket. 24, October 11.


Van der Walt, J.L. & Oosthuizen, I.J. 2007. The nature and frequency of discipline problems with which educators have to cope in a region of the North-West Province of South Africa. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Learner Discipline at the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus. 02 – 04 April 2007: 316 – 337.


ANNEXURE 1(a)
APPLICATION FORM

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL: NMMU RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HUMAN)

1. Any project in which humans are the subjects of research, hereafter called a study, requires completion of this form and submission for approval to the RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HUMAN) (REC-H).

2. The faculty through the Faculty RTI Committee and Head of Department (or other intra-faculty academic unit) should approve research proposals before submission to the Ethics Committee.

3. Each faculty has the primary responsibility for ensuring that human subjects used in research in their faculties are protected adequately by the application of the appropriate code applicable to the relevant profession.

4. How to proceed: i) Read the Code of Conduct for Researchers at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, available on the Intranet (Official Stuff|Policies|Official NMMU Policies|RTI|Research Ethics). ii) Open a copy of the application form (this file “REC-H Human Ethics Application Form.doc”) from the Intranet, and "Save as" the file with a filename containing your name (e.g. “J Smith REC-H Human Ethics Application Form.doc”). iii) Complete Sections 1 to 8 in typescript (Tab between fields, select from pull-downs, information may be pasted from existing Word® documents), and save (ensuring the filename contains your name). iv) Append the necessary information, e.g. an Informed Consent form (use Document D/497/05 "REC-H Informed Consent Pro-forma" as a basis, and modify to suit your requirements). v) Email the files to kirsten.longe@nmmu.ac.za.

5. Print the document, get each page initialled on the lower right hand corner and get Sections 9 and 10 signed by the relevant parties.

6. Hand the signed hardcopy and attachments in at the Department of Research Capacity Development.

### 1. GENERAL PARTICULARS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a) Concise descriptive title of study (must contain key words that best describe the study):</th>
<th>The role of SMTs in selected Northern Areas schools in Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b) Name of primary responsible person (PRP) (must be member of permanent staff. Usually the supervisor in the case of students):</td>
<td>Professor J.L. Geldenhuys NMMU South Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Contact number/s of PRP:</td>
<td>041 504 1188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Affiliation of PRP: Faculty: Education; Department (or equivalent): Advance Studies in Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Name and affiliation of principal investigator (PI) / researcher (may be same as PRP):</td>
<td>Lizette C. Oosthuizen Gender: Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Name(s) and affiliation(s) of all co workers (e.g. co-investigator / assistant researchers / supervisor / co-supervisor / promoter / co-promoter). If names are not yet known, state the affiliations of the groups they will be drawn from, e.g. Interns / M-students, etc. and the number of persons involved:</td>
<td>Professor J.L. Geldenhuys - Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**g) Scope of study:** Local

**h) If for degree purposes:** Masters

**i) Funding:** Other (Specifics follow)
Additional information (e.g. source of funds or how combined funding is split) **Department of Education Bursary**

**j) Are there any restrictions or conditions attached to publication and/or presentation of the study results?** NO
If YES, elaborate: (Any restrictions or conditions contained in contracts must be made available to the Committee) -

**k) Date of commencement of study:** 2007  **Anticipated duration of study:** Two years

**l) Objectives of the study (the major objective(s) / Grand Tour questions are to be stated briefly and clearly):**
To focus on challenges faced and the roles played by SMTs of specific schools in managing discipline at their schools.

**m) Rationale for this study: briefly (300 words or less) describe the background to this study i.e. why are you doing this particular piece of work. A few (no more than 5) key scientific references may be included:**
Good discipline is one of the most important characteristics of an effective school and a vital aspect of school and classroom management. Discipline is important for maintaining harmony in a school, and for securing a climate in which learners can learn free from disruption and chaos. Effective discipline creates a climate conducive to high academic and non-academic achievements. It is commonly accepted that learners perform better when they know what is expected of them.

**n) Briefly state the methodology (specifically the procedure in which human subjects will be participating) (the full protocol is to be included as Appendix 1):**
Investigation: Qualitative study. Investigation will include interviews with the SMT, observing SMT meetings, as well as having SMT members complete a questionnaire.

**o) State the minimum and maximum number of participants involved (Minimum number should reflect the number of participants necessary to make the study viable) Min: 8  Max: 10**

---

**2. RISKS AND BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY**

**a) Is there any risk of harm, embarrassment or offence, however slight or temporary, to the participant, third parties or to the community at large?** NO
If YES, state each risk, and for each risk state i) whether the risk is reversible, ii) whether there are alternative procedures available and iii) whether there are remedial measures available.

**b) Has the person administering the project previous experience with the particular risk factors involved?** NO
If YES, please specify: -

**c) Are any benefits expected to accrue to the participant (e.g. improved health, mental state, financial etc.)?** NO
If YES, please specify the benefits: -

**d) Will you be using equipment of any sort?** YES  If YES, please specify: **Tape Recorder**

**e) Will any article of property, personal or cultural be collected in the course of the project?** NO
If YES, please specify: -

---

**3. TARGET PARTICIPANT GROUP**

**a) If particular characteristics of any kind are required in the target group (e.g. age, cultural derivation, background, physical characteristics, disease status etc.) please specify:** **SMT members of school**

**b) Are participants drawn from NMMU students?** NO

**c) If participants are drawn from specific groups of NMMU students, please specify:** -
### 4. Consent of Participants

**a)** Is consent to be given in writing? **YES**  
If YES, include the consent form with this application. (A pro-forma file “REC-H Informed Consent Pro-forma” is available for your convenience. Modify it to suit your requirements, and attach as “Appendix 2”).  
If NO, state reasons why written consent is not appropriate in this study. -

**b)** Are any participant(s) subject to legal restrictions preventing them from giving effective informed consent? **NO**  
If YES, please justify: -

**c)** Do any participant(s) operate in an institutional environment, which may cast doubt on the voluntary aspect of consent? **NO**  
If YES, state what special precautions will be taken to obtain a legally effective informed consent:

**d)** Will participants receive remuneration for their participation? **NO**  
If YES, justify and state on what basis the remuneration is calculated, and how the veracity of the information can be guaranteed.

**e)** Do you require consent of an institutional authority for this study? **YES**  
If YES, specify: **Department of Education District Office**

### 5. Information to Participants

**a)** What information will be offered to the participant before he / she consents to participate? (A pro-forma file “REC-H Preamble Letter Pro-forma.doc” is available for your convenience. Modify it to suit your requirements, and attach as [Appendix 2]. Attach any oral [Appendix 3] information given)

**b)** Who will provide this information to the participant? (Give name and role)  
Ms Lizette C. Oosthuizen PI  
If “Other”, please specify: -

**c)** Will the information provided be complete and accurate? **YES**  
If NO, describe the nature and extent of the deception involved and explain the rationale for the necessity of this deception below:

### 6. Privacy, Anonymity and Confidentiality of Data

**a)** Will the participant be identified by name in your research? **NO**  
If YES, justify: -

**b)** Are provisions made to protect participant’s rights to privacy and anonymity and to preserve confidentiality with respect to data? **YES**  
If NO, justify. If YES, specify: **Pseudonyms to be used for school and individuals**

**c)** If mechanical methods of observation be are to be used (e.g. one-way mirrors, recordings, videos etc.), will participant’s consent to such methods be obtained? **YES**  
If NO, justify: -

**d)** Will data collected be stored in any way? **YES**  
If YES, please specify: (i) By whom? (ii) How many copies? (iii) For how long? (iv) For what reasons? (v) How will participant’s anonymity be protected? (i) Ms L.C. Oosthuizen (ii) 1 (iii) 2 years (iv) Transcription (v) Use of pseudonyms

**e)** Will stored data be made available for re-use? **NO**  
If YES, how will participant’s consent be obtained for such re-usage? -

**f)** Will any part of the project be conducted on private property (including shopping centres)? **NO**  
If YES, specify and state how
7. Feedback

- Are there contractual secrecy or confidentiality constraints on this data? **NO**
- If YES, specify: 

7. FEEDBACK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>Will feedback be given to participants? <strong>YES</strong></th>
<th>Specify if feedback will be written, oral or by other means and describe how this is to be given (e.g. to each individual immediately after participation, to each participant after the entire project is completed, to all participants in a group setting, etc.): <strong>Summary to principal and SMT on request</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>If you are working in a school or other institutional setting, will you be providing teachers, school authorities or equivalent a copy of your results? <strong>YES</strong></td>
<td>Specify, if <strong>NO</strong>, motivate: <strong>Copy of thesis</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Ethical and Legal Aspects

- The Declaration of Helsinki (2000) will be included in the references: **YES**
- If NO, motivate: 

8. ETHICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>The Declaration of Helsinki (2000) will be included in the references: <strong>YES</strong></th>
<th>If NO, motivate:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td>I would like the REC-H to take note of the following additional information:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Declaration

| If any changes are made to the above arrangements or procedures, I will bring these to the attention of the Research Ethics Committee (Human). |
|---|---|
| I have read, understood and will comply with the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research and Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and have taken cognisance of the availability (on-line) of the Medical Research Council Guidelines on Ethics for Research. |
| All participants are aware of any potential health hazards or risks associated with this study. |
| **I AM NOT** aware of potential conflict(s) of interest which should be considered by the Committee. |
| If affirmative, specify: |

9. DECLARATION

| If any changes are made to the above arrangements or procedures, I will bring these to the attention of the Research Ethics Committee (Human). |
|---|---|
| I have read, understood and will comply with the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Research and Education at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and have taken cognisance of the availability (on-line) of the Medical Research Council Guidelines on Ethics for Research. |
| All participants are aware of any potential health hazards or risks associated with this study. |
| **I AM NOT** aware of potential conflict(s) of interest which should be considered by the Committee. |
| If affirmative, specify: |

9. DECLARATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNATURE: <strong>Professor J. L. Geldenhuys</strong> (Primary Responsible Person)</th>
<th>06 April 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIGNATURE: <strong>Lizette C. Oosthuizen</strong> (Principal Investigator/Researcher)</td>
<td>06 April 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Scrutiny by Faculty and Intra-Faculty Academic unit

| This study has been discussed, and is supported, at Faculty and Departmental (or equivalent) level. This is attested to by the signature below of a Faculty (e.g. RTI) and Departmental (e.g. HoD) representative, neither of whom may be a previous signator. |

10. SCRUTINY BY FACULTY AND INTRA-FACULTY ACADEMIC UNIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME and CAPACITY (e.g. HoD)</th>
<th>SIGNATURE</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME and CAPACITY (e.g. Chair:FacRTI)</td>
<td>SIGNATURE</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Appendices

| In order to expedite the processing of this application, please ensure that all the required information, as specified below, is attached to your application. |

11. APPENDICES

| In order to expedite the processing of this application, please ensure that all the required information, as specified below, is attached to your application. |
**APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Attach the full protocol and methodology to this application, as "Appendix 1".

**APPENDIX 2: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

A pro-forma file "REC-H Informed Consent Pro-forma" is available for your convenience. Modify it to suit your requirements, and attach as "Appendix 2". If no written consent is required, motivate at 4a). You are not compelled to use this pro-forma. It is provided as a convenience to those applicants who do not already have an informed consent form. Please delete any information not applicable to your project and complete/expand as deemed appropriate. The intention is that you make sure you have covered all the aspects of informed consent, as applicable to your work.

**APPENDIX 3: WRITTEN INFORMATION GIVEN TO PARTICIPANT PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION**

A pro-forma file "REC-H Preamble Letter Pro-forma.doc" is available for your convenience. Modify it to suit your requirements, and attach as "Appendix 3". You are not compelled to use this pro-forma. It is provided as a convenience to those applicants who do not already have a letter available. Please delete any information not applicable to your project and complete/expand as deemed appropriate. The intention is that you make sure you have covered all the aspects of written information to be supplied to participants, as applicable to your work.

**APPENDIX 4: ORAL INFORMATION GIVEN TO PARTICIPANT PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION**

If applicable, attach the required information to your application, as “Appendix 4”.

In order to facilitate improvements in efficacy/ease of use, feedback via a REC-H committee member will be appreciated.
Ref: [H08-EDU-ASE-011/Approval]

Contact person: Carol Poisat

29 April 2008

Ms L C Oosthuizen
Education Faculty
NMMU

Dear Ms Oosthuizen

THE ROLE OF SMTs IN SELECTED NORTHERN AREAS SCHOOLS IN PORT ELIZABETH IN CREATING A CULTURE OF DISCIPLINE AND ORDER

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the April 2008 meeting of the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee (Education).

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is H08-EDU-ASE-011.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Prof M M Botha
Chairperson: ERTIC
THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR
Department of Education
PORT ELIZABETH

Dear Madam / Sir

I am presently a permanently employed educator, as well as a part-time second year M.ED student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, doing full research under the supervision of Professor J.L. Geldenhuys.

My study centers on effective school discipline practices, with specific reference to the role played by the School Management Team (SMT) in managing discipline.

I hereby seek permission from the Department of Education to conduct my investigation at the following schools:

1. __________________________
2.  __________________________
3.  __________________________
4.  __________________________

The investigation will include interviews with the SMT, observing SMT meetings, as well as having SMT members complete questionnaires.

The aim of the study is to solicit ideas for the enhancement of effective discipline practices.

Please feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor J.L Geldenhuys at 041 5041188.

I trust that my request will meet with your favourable consideration.

Sincerely,

Ms L.C. Oosthuizen

Persal Number:  50281551

Date:  …………………………
Annexure 2(b)
Letter of Approval Granted

Province of the
Eastern Cape
Department of Education

Ethel Valentine Building * Sutton Road * Sidwell * Private Bag X3631 * North End * Port Elizabeth * 6050 *
Republic of South Africa * Tel: 0414034160 * Fax: 0414510193 *
Website: ecprov.gov.za * e-mail: tmdeka.mbopa@edum.ecprov.gov.za

Ms L.C. Oosthuizen
Arcadia Secondary School
Port Elizabeth
(Fax: 041 481 4324)

Dear Mr Oosthuizen

Request for Permission to Conduct Research at Port Elizabeth Schools

I refer to your letter dated 14 April 2008 and received on 19 June 2008.

Permission is hereby granted for you to conduct your research on the following conditions:

1. Your research must be conducted on a voluntary basis;
2. All ethical issues relating to research must be honoured;
3. Your research is subject to the internal rules of the school, including its curricular programme and its code of conduct and must not interfere in the day-to-day routine of the school.

Kindly present a copy of this letter to the principal as proof of permission.

I wish you good luck in your research.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

L.M.T. Mbopa
Acting District Director: Port Elizabeth

19 June 2008
ANNEXURE 3
LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

The Principal
________________________
________________________
________________________

Date: ___________________

Dear Sir / Madam

I am presently a permanently employed educator, as well as a part-time second year M.Ed student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), doing full research under the supervision of Professor J.L. Geldenhuys.

My research study centers on effective school discipline practices, with specific reference to the role played by the School Management Team (SMT) in managing discipline.

The investigation will include interviews with the SMT, observing SMT meetings, as well as having SMT members complete a questionnaire. The aim of the study is to solicit ideas that might enhance effective discipline practices.

I hereby seek permission from you and your SMT to engage the SMT members of your school as participants in my study. The investigation will be guided by a strict code of ethics, as prescribed by the Ethics Committee of the NMMU. All data collected during the investigation will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Your participation in my study will be invaluable and highly appreciated.

I declare myself available to answer any queries you or your SMT members might have regarding the nature of the investigation.

Thanking you in anticipation of a favourable response.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lizette C. Oosthuizen
ANNEXURE 4
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator:
Lizette C. Oosthuizen

Title of Study:
The role of school management teams (SMTs) in selected Northern areas in Port Elizabeth in creating a culture of discipline and order.

Introduction:
You are being invited to participate in this study to examine common threads of effective discipline management as perceived by SMTs in selected Northern areas schools in Port Elizabeth. Please read, review and ask any questions that you might have concerning this study. You are free to stop the interview at any time or to choose not to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to examine common threads of effective discipline management as perceived by SMT members in selected Northern areas schools in Port Elizabeth. The study will also look at barriers to effective management of school discipline. The participants will be selected by contacting principals of selected schools after permission has been granted by the District Director of the Port Elizabeth District Office of the Department of Education to visit said schools.

Duration:
The interviews conducted with SMT members will consist of (1) focus-group interviews and (2) individual interviews. These interviews will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Procedures:
Data will be collected using general guides to: (a) interviews, (b) observation and (c) questionnaires. All participants will be given as much time as they feel necessary to respond to questions. With the expressed permission of each participant, the interviews will be tape-recorded. A professional transcriptionist will transcribe audiotapes. Copies of transcribed data will be available on request. No participant’s name will be used, but each interview will be coded with a number in order to define categories. In no way will the identification be used to determine participant identity.

Possible Risks / Discomforts:
Some of the questions asked during the interview may make the participant feel uncomfortable or may be difficult to answer. Participants are free to stop the interview at any time, and may choose not to answer any question that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Possible Benefits and/or Compensation:
No participant benefits or form of compensation are included in this study.
Contact for questions:
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Lizette Oosthuizen at 084 628 2283 or Professor J.L. Geldenhuys at 041 504 1188.

Confidentiality:
Every attempt will be made to see that participants and interview information is kept confidential. Audiocassette tapes used for this study will be disposed of immediately following transcription and verification of transcription. The results of this study will be published and/or presented without naming the participants. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements.

Voluntary Participation:
The nature, demands, risks, and the benefits of the study have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the investigation at any time, without penalty. I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy will be given to me upon request.

Signature of participant : _______________________ Date: ______________

Signature of investigator : _______________________ Date: ______________

Witness : _______________________ Date: ______________

STATEMENT BY INVESTIGATOR:

I, _________________________________________, declare that I have explained the information given in this document to _____________________________ (name of participant). He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in Afrikaans English and no translator was used.

Signed at ______________________ on this ____ day of ________________ 2008.

Signature of investigator : ____________________________

Signature of witness : ____________________________

Full name of witness : ____________________________
ANNEXURE 5
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SMTs

1. Name any 2 factors you would regard as contributing to discipline problems at your school:
   (1) ________________________________
   (2) ________________________________

2. Would you say your school has sufficient measures in place to manage discipline? Motivate your answer.

3. How do you perceive teamwork in a SMT?

4. What, according to you, should the SMT do about ill-discipline?

5. What do you think are the challenges the SMT face when managing discipline? Name at least two.

6. How do you think could educators (other than the SMT) help to manage discipline?

7. What would you recommend as an alternative to corporal punishment?

8. Which disciplinary measures work best at your school (are most effective)?

9. Why, do you think, do learners misbehave? Give one or two reasons.

10. How important do you think the example of the educator is in displaying self-discipline? Motivate.
1. What is your opinion about discipline practices in school?

2. How do you think, do these discipline practices affect educators’ attitudes about school?

3. To what extent do you think is time for teaching curriculum hindered by discipline problems? How?

4. What are current discipline practices in your school?

5. What are the most effective discipline practices you have used in the past?

6. What are the least effective discipline practices you have used in the past?

7. To what extent do you, as SMT members, have a say in determining discipline practices?

8. What part do an involved community and parents play in school discipline practices?

9. To what extent, do you think, do learners and parents need to give input in school discipline practices?

10. What types of communication regarding rules and discipline practices do you think would be beneficial?

11. To what extent, if any, do you think does the climate of the school affect discipline practices?

12. How do you think should inappropriate behaviour be handled?

13. To what extent, if any, do you think does class size make a difference regarding discipline practices? If so, how?

14. What do you believe about bullying in schools and the impact it has on students?
   (a) How can bullying be avoided?
   (b) What can educators, learners and parents do to change bullying behaviour?

15. How relevant is record keeping for managing discipline problems?

16. Do you think there are any additional barriers to effective discipline practices that we have not discussed yet? If so, what are they?