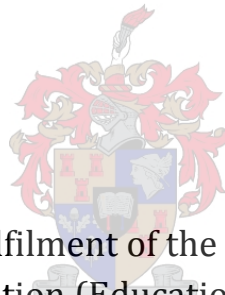


**An exploration of teachers' perceptions of democratic school
governance in Namibia and its contribution to school
discipline**

FRED SILINDA SINALUMBU



Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in Education (Education Policy Studies)

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION POLICY STUDIES AT
STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR NELLEKE BAK

March 2013

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Copyright © 201 Stellenbosch University

All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

The study explores the perceptions of Namibian teachers of democratic school governance and its contribution to school discipline. The research examines the education policy shifts towards democratic school governance from before to after 1990. The study further investigates the views of twelve teachers from four secondary schools in the Oshana education region on how democratic school governance can contribute to lack of discipline among learners.

The study exposes how learner representation on the school board and their participation in the discussions during meetings is experienced. The study also discusses how learners who are elected to serve on the school board are accountable to other learners who have elected them.

The study shows the link between democratic school governance and school discipline, internationally, nationally and locally. Finally, given the exploratory nature of the study, some issues that warrant further investigation to add to the existing knowledge are highlighted.

Key words: Democracy, democratic school governance, discipline, representation, school board, participation

OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsingsverslag ondersoek die persepsies van Namibiese onderwysers met betrekking tot demokratiese skool bestuur en die bestuur bydrae tot skool disipline. Verder word die opvoedkundige riglyne vir demokratiese skoolbestuur voor en na 1990 ondersoek en die indrukke van twaalf onderwysers van vier sekondêre skole in die Oshana Onderwysdistrik met betrekking tot die bydrae van 'n demokraties verkose skoolbestuur tot 'n gebrek aan dissipline onder leerlinge word bespreek

Hoe leerlingverteenvoordiging op die skoolraad en leerlinge se bydrae tot besprekings gedurende vergaderings ervaar word, sowel as hoe leerlinge wat gekies is om op die skoolraad te dien aan die leerlinge wat hulle verkies het, verslag doen, word ook oorweeg.

Die verband tussen 'n demokratiese skoolbestuur en skoordisipline op internasionale, nasionale en plaaslike vlak word getoon, Weens die ondersoekende aard van die studie word kwessies laastens uitgelig vir verdere ondersoek om sodat meer inligting by die reeds bestaande kennis gevoeg kan word

Sleutelwoorde: demokrasie, dissipline, skoolraad, demokratiese skoolbestuur, verteenwoordiging, deelname

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the entire Sinalumbu family for the support that they have shown throughout my period of study. It is dedicated no less to my last born, Fred Silinda Sinalumbu (junior), for keeping me happy whenever things were not going well.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to thank all the people who contributed to the successful completion of this project; without them it could not have become a reality. My sincere thanks go to Professor Nelleke Bak for her support and encouragement during my studies. She was instrumental in making sure that I complete my thesis in time. Without her supervision, I could not have done it.

Secondly, I thank all my lecturers and professors at the University of Stellenbosch, more especially in the Department of Education Policy Studies. The Stellenbosch University lecturers and professors shaped my thinking towards critically engaging in the current education discourse in my country. This is clearly demonstrated in the way in which I engage with my colleagues at my place of work and in any other spheres of my life. I attribute this to the knowledge and skills that I acquired from the Stellenbosch lecturers and professors.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Oshana Education, in particular, for giving permission to conduct my research at the four schools. I thank the principals and teachers for the cooperation that they have given me all the days that I spent at their schools. I do not really know how to thank them for what they have done for me.

Finally, I would like to thank my late father, and my mother, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and my children for their support during my research project. God bless them all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	Error! Bookmark not defined.
OPSOMMING.....	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Main research question	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.3 Research sub- questions	3
1.4 Research aims.....	3
1.5 Rationale for the study	Error! Bookmark not defined.
1.6 Democracy	5
(a) Representation	5
(b) Participation.....	6
(c) Rights.....	6
(d) Accountability	7
(e) Open discussion.....	7
(f) Common good	7
(g) Fairness / equity	7
1.7 Code of conduct for learners and discipline.....	8
1.8 Outline of chapters	10
CHAPTER 2: THE SHIFT TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN NAMIBIA.....	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 What is democratic school governance?	11
2.3 Democratic school governance internationally	13

2.4	Namibian policy with regard to school governance before 1990.....	16
2.5	Shifts towards democratic school governance after 1990 nationally and locally	17
2.6	Learners' representation in democratic school governance structures	19
2.7	Conclusion	Error! Bookmark not defined.
CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND CODE OF CONDUCT		22
3.1	Introduction	22
3.2	Conceptualising discipline.....	22
3.3	Discipline internationally	24
3.4	Discipline nationally	25
3.5	Discipline locally	26
3.6	Conclusion.....	28
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY		29
4.1	Introduction.....	29
4.2	The interpretive approach	29
4.3	Interviews.....	30
4.4	Rationale for my choice of schools and teachers	31
4.4.1	Choice of schools	31
4.4.2	Choice of interview subjects.....	32
4.5	History of the Oshana education region	32
4.6	Background to schools	33
a)	School A	33
b)	School B.....	33
c)	School C.....	33
d)	School D	34
4.7	Background of teachers	33
4.8	Issues of quality in research.....	37
4.8.1	Reliability	37

4.8.2	Limitations.....	37
4.8.3	Ethical issues	38
4.9	Conclusion	38
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNERS REPRESENTATION AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE.....		40
5.1	Introduction.....	39
5.2	Representation and participation	39
5.2	Formulation and review of code of conduct.....	47
5.3	The nature of disciplinary problems	54
5.4	The code of conduct as a tool in maintaining discipline.....	59
5.6	The perceived link between school governance and improved discipline in schools	64
5.6	Conclusion	69
CHAPTER 6: A POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD		71
6.1	Conclusion	71
6.2	Main issues that arose from the research	72
6.2.1	Involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process.....	72
6.2.2	The need for school board training.....	72
6.2.3	The need to review the Education Act, No. 16 of 2001.....	73
6.2.4	The need to regularly review the schools' code of conduct for learners	73
6.2.5	Learners' discipline needs to be a collective effort.....	73
6.2.6	Need for professional help	74
6.2.7	Beer outlets to be moved far from schools.....	74
6.2.8	Damaged school property to be replaced.....	75
6.3	Possible further research needed to help strenghten democratic school governance and school discipline	75
REFERENCES.....		76
APPENDIXES.....		81
APPENDIX A: Interview schedule for teachers		81

APPENDIX B: Permission to conduct research **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

The Namibian Education Act, No. 16 of 2001 (Republic of Namibia, 2001) (henceforth referred to as the Namibian Education Act) provides for democratic school governance as it stipulates that every state school should establish a school board to administer the affairs and promote the development of the school and the learners in the school. In other words, the school board is tasked to ensure that everything is in order at the school on a daily basis. According to the Namibian Education Act, the school board should consist of not less than five and not more than 13 voting members. These members must be parents who are not employed at the school, teachers at the school, the principal of the school and, in the case of secondary schools, not more than two learners at the school nominated by the Learners' Representative Council (LRC). Democracy is one of the four goals of 'education for all' in Namibia in ensuring that schools produce disciplined citizens (Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), 1993). It is therefore important that schools are democratically governed by democratically elected school board members.

I use the term 'school board' because it is the term commonly used in Namibia when referring to the board responsible for the governance of the school. According to the Namibian Education Act, the election of parents and teachers to the school board must be conducted by a staff member designated by the Permanent Secretary, who is not employed at the school concerned, and it must be by a secret ballot or done by a show of hands. However, the election of the members to the school board should be representative of all stakeholders in education and they should serve as the voice of others on school matters. The school board is there to promote the relationship between the schools, parents and the community. At the same time, it acts as a channel for the flow of information between all stakeholders. In addition, the school board adopts the code of conduct for learners to help with discipline.

The school board has the responsibility of directing the school in the way it should operate and be managed. In other words, the school board governs the school and takes

decisions. Mncube (2005, p. 1) states that, after independence, the society of Namibia was racially fragmented and it was the task of the new government to bring about mutual accommodation of established groups while at the same time doing away with the legacies of apartheid, which, to a large extent, established these groups in the first place. This was of course very difficult for the new government. The policy of national reconciliation formulated in 1990 was aimed at promoting respect, tolerance and understanding among Namibians of all 'races' and ethnicities. The Minister designate organised a gathering in 1990 which analysed the state of education in the country. He called for urgent reform in education, as the education was in a state of crisis. All stakeholders in education, namely parents, teachers, learners and employers were invited to react to suggestions of educational reform (Angula & Lewis, 1997). One of the suggestions was to change the governance of schools and to establish democratically elected school boards.

Since Namibia attained its independence, discipline has become a serious problem in schools. Many people have been asking questions as to why learners behave so badly nowadays, compared to the past. Was it the abolition of corporal punishment that resulted in the unruly behaviour among the learners? The situation had deteriorated to the extent that some of the politicians in the National Assembly called for the reintroduction of corporal punishment. However, the Namibian Education Act, in section 56, does not allow the use of corporal punishment as a way to instil discipline. Despite the abolition of corporal punishment, a teacher at the Olof Palme Primary School in Windhoek appeared in court in 2003 on an allegation that he had administered a series of beatings to two schoolboys who were accused of stealing a cell phone belonging to a girl (The Namibian, 2005). This is a clear indication of how serious disciplinary problems in school had become.

O'Sullivan stated that:

Upon independence the newly elected SWAPO government set about immediately overhauling the previous apartheid system of education. They initiated reforms to all aspects of the system. One of the first reforms was the unification of the fragmented system of education (O'Sullivan, 2002, p. 585).

The reform brought the much anticipated democratic school governance which is inclusive of all stakeholders. Since then, schools have become more democratic, with

learners being given the opportunity to be represented on the school boards, which are the highest decision-making bodies at the schools. At the school board meetings, learners have freedom to express their concerns. The fact that they have more say nowadays than in the past during the apartheid regime seems to influence them to engage in unruly behaviour. I therefore wanted to find out whether democratic school governance contributes to a decline in discipline among school learners or not. If democratic school governance contributes to a lack of discipline among the learners, what measures can be taken to remedy the current situation in schools?

1.2. Main research question

What are the perceptions of teachers of the effects of democratic school governance on discipline in Namibian schools?

1.3. Research sub-questions

In order to answer the main research question, I also need to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are the prevailing theories on democratic school governance in Namibia and internationally?
2. What theories underlie discipline and the Code of conduct?
3. What are the perceptions of a selected number of teachers of discipline against the background of democratic school governance in Namibian schools?
4. How will the findings contribute to a greater understanding of disciplinary issues currently found in selected Namibian schools?

1.4. Research aims

The aims of the research therefore were:

1. To investigate teacher's perceptions of democratic school governance in Namibia and its contribution to school discipline, and
2. To examine the shift in Namibia towards democratic school governance since 1990.

1.5. Rationale for the study

This study was undertaken to examine teachers' perceptions of the possible link between democratic school governance and discipline of learners in Namibian schools. According to the Namibian Education Act, schools have to be democratic by electing the school boards that govern the schools. These school boards have to consist of parents and teachers and, in the case of the secondary schools; two learners must be elected by the members of Learners' Representative Council (LRC) to also serve on the board. The current study is important because it sought to understand the possible relationship between democratic school governance and the perceived lack of discipline among school learners.

I felt able to complete this research because of my teaching experience, having taught for eight years and having served on the disciplinary committee at the schools where the research was undertaken. I had been democratically elected by colleagues to serve on that committee and had for the whole of my teaching career, been involved in solving many disciplinary problems. I was involved in solving some of the following disciplinary problems at school:

- (a) Learners being caught in situations where they were smoking in school buildings, especially during break time or when visiting toilets.
- (b) Learners not doing their homework at times and not giving reasons why they did not do so.
- (c) Learners behaving chaotically by running in corridors during lesson times, disrupting others who are busy.
- (d) Learners not wearing their school uniforms, but opting to wear unsuitable clothes to school.

(e) Learners showing lack of respect by swearing or insulting teachers and fellow learners.

(f) Learners using insulting names for teachers or other learners, instead of calling them by their real names.

(g) Absenteeism, which was very common, especially among the non-boarders.

(h) Fighting resulting from theft, for example when one learner might have stolen the property of another.

With corporal punishment not being allowed, schools had to set up their own rules which needed to be incorporated in a learners' code of conduct. Learners were therefore punished in accordance with conditions laid down in the school rules; the punishments were as follows:

(a) A learner could be suspended for not attending lessons or was not allowed to enter the school building until the school had heard his/her case.

(b) In minor cases, learners could be given some manual work, for instance cleaning the surroundings of the school.

It was due to the problems that I experienced on a daily basis during the time when I served as a member of the disciplinary committee at the schools, I was motivated to do research on whether there could possibly be a link between democratic school governance and lack of learner discipline.

1.6. Democracy

Collin (1998) defines democracy as a system of government or organisation in which people choose their leaders or make important decisions by voting. The following are the constitutive elements of democracy:

(a) Representation: People decide who are to represent them at a particular institution by electing individuals. In case of the school as an institution, parents, teachers and learners choose who are to represent them on the school board and are there to make decisions on their behalf. Democracy is a way of life in which matters of

policy are resolved wherever possible by discussion, but deciding things by discussion requires truth telling, respect for persons and impartial consideration of interests as underlying moral principles.

(b) Participation: A concern for the common good is required to encourage democratic participation in public life (Davies, Harber & Schweinfurt, 2002, p. 4). Democracy ideally is therefore the considered and informed decision taken by responsible members of a specific institution on behalf of the affected of that institution.

Mnchube (2007) defines democracy as a system which allows people to participate actively in social and political life. However, democracy should not only be limited to the participation of people in institutions, it should also focus on how that participation takes place, for example whether all stakeholders do fully participate in debates or not. In the case of the school board, do all members actively participate in the decision-making process or are some excluded during the deliberations? All members of the school cannot serve on the school board, it is therefore important to choose a few people to represent all of them on the board. However, those who are members should be responsible for giving feedback by informing their constituencies of the decisions they are taking of their behalf.

(c) Rights: Baron (1981, p. 7) contends that democracy implies that the right and power to make decisions in public matters does not reside in a single individual or a group or class of individuals, but in each and every citizen. This is people's right and power to have an indirect share in decision making by being able to choose whom they wish to represent them and by being able to change their representation at prescribed intervals. I define democratic school governance as empowering the participant at all levels of the educational process. It could be interpreted as giving power to the people who are involved in education processes. However, I argue that it is not only to give them power, but also to actively involve them, especially by allowing them to articulate their views irrespective of their literacy level. If all the members of the school board are allowed to express themselves, one may talk of democratic school governance because the decision is inclusive and not dominated by certain members. I see democracy as teachers providing an orderly, consistent and predictable approach to discipline that nurtures empowerment, self respect, and the skills of cooperation, assertion,

responsibility, empathy, and self-control. Democracy is therefore aimed at creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

(d) Accountability: I define democracy as a means of creating opportunities for learners to have their voice heard when setting up school rules, so that they become accountable when they break those rules. With such an approach, democracy can only prevail once the schools are governed by democratically elected school board members, who should ensure that democracy exists in the schools.

(e) Open discussion: It has become an international practice for schools to be democratic as opposed to autocratic. In order to ensure that democracy prevails at the schools, democratically elected school boards must be put in place. Carter, Harber and Serf (2003, p. 16) define democracy as the empowerment of the population to exercise democratic rights, the provision of skills to participate, to think critically and to act responsibly. The schools are given powers to make sure that all stakeholders in education are represented on the school board during the decision-making process. In other words, all the people involved with the school should be able to have their say in one way or another in everything that affects their lives.

(f) Common good: Citizens elect people to represent them in decision making, formulating laws and administering programmes for the public good. However, the people who are elected as representatives are accountable to the people whom they represent. At the school, representatives on the school board discuss issues of common concern and arrive at a collective decision by consensus.

The elements of democracy are elected representatives; free, fair and regular elections; and freedom of expression. The school needs to conduct a free and fair election during which school board members are democratically elected. The democratically elected school board should comprise members from among the parents, teachers and learners. It is the responsibility of those members as representatives to serve according to the expectations of the constituencies whom they represent.

(g) Fairness / equity: All school board members should be given time to participate during their discussion; and so doing, members will feel accommodated. The Namibian Education Act (2001) stipulates that “all members of the school board be given time to

express their views". If all members are given time to voice their concerns, the situation whereby some members of the school board rebel against others is avoided. School board members rebel against one another when they feel that they are not part of the decision making. In most cases, teachers tend to be the dominant group in decision making as they regard themselves as knowing better because they are professionals. The only way to avoid infighting is by making sure that all decisions taken are inclusive of the views of all the members on the board.

According to Davies *et al.* (2002: 5), a democratic vision of education thus is one that recognises that education has a vital role to play in creating an informed and educated public who can exercise their collective choice about the future direction the society should take. Apple and Bean (1999, p. 7) contend that a democratic school allows the flow of ideas, which enables people to be as fully informed as possible. The representatives of the school board are tasked with the responsibility of making sure that they report back to their members about whatever decisions they have taken. I support the idea of flow of information between the school board members and their constituencies because they might face resistance from their own people if they do not report back.

1.7. Code of conduct for learners and discipline

The Namibian Education Act, states that "the minister must make general rules of conduct which must be incorporated into the learners' code of conduct of all state schools". A school board of a state school, after consultation with the school's parents, and learners and teachers of the school, drafts and adopts a learners' code of conduct which should serve as guidelines ensuring that discipline prevails. To ensure good conduct and discipline of learners, school rules are set and must be followed. Learners in breach of the rules should be taken to task by instituting disciplinary measures. According to the Act, the disciplinary measures must not incorporate any form of corporal punishment.

I define a code of conduct for learners as a set of rules that the school drafts in order to control the behaviour of learners. This set of rules must be used as the guide that used to reflect on what is required of them as learners of a particular school. The code of

conduct for learners should be seen as something aimed at maintaining order and discipline within the school. In other words, the code of conduct for learners is there to make sure that the school can perform its main functions of teaching and learning and that learners behave responsibly. However, the principal may suspend a learner from school before a misbehaving learner is charged with misconduct or after the learner is charged with misconduct, pending the disciplinary hearing. The Namibian Education Act states that, “the learner may only be expelled from school on recommendation to the Permanent Secretary”. I therefore, believe that if more power is given to the school board, the level of disciplinary problems could be minimised in schools, because learners are more likely to behave better if they know that the school board has power to expel them.

According to Du Plessis and Look (2007), discipline means a code of conduct prescribed for the highest welfare of the individual and the society in which the individual lives and the personal system of organised behaviour designed to promote self-interest while contributing to the welfare of others. This simply means that, when learners are complying with a code of behaviour or the school rules they are creating the environment, which is conducive to teaching and learning.

Jordan (2000) defines discipline as teaching a child about the behaviours that are accepted and the behaviours that are not accepted. Adults use discipline to help children to learn how to make choices about their own future behaviour. The main aim of any disciplinary action should be to help young people to acquire life skills, build self-esteem, and have healthy relationships with other people. Mabalane, Fritz and Nduna (2006) define discipline as training that is expected to produce a specified character or pattern of behaviour or controlled behaviour resulting from such training. Teachers discipline learners so that they can become responsible human beings. Discipline is aimed at bringing changes and improvement to a particular situation.

Jordan (2000) defines discipline as the practice of making people obey the rules and punishing them when they do not. I would therefore define discipline as the means that individuals use to help other people to change their undesirable behaviour in order to become better people with good manners. In other words, people employ some mechanism aimed at helping other people to follow certain required norms, attitudes and values. However, the procedures that are followed should not be such that they

inflict pain on the individuals, but that which would help the person to transform his/her social behaviour. In the case of the school, discipline is aimed at maintaining order in the school so that it does not become chaotic.

1.8. Outline of chapters

Chapter 1 presents the background by introducing of the research project. It explains the functions of the school boards in Namibia. It outlines the code of conduct of learners in Namibian schools. It gives the history of the region where data was collected.

Chapter 2 explains the theoretical framework and literature review by conceptualising democracy and democratic school governance internationally and nationally.

Chapter 3 is focused on presenting the theoretical framework of the concept discipline in schools internationally, nationally and locally

Chapter 4 outlines the research methodology and methods used in data gathering. Some limitations and ethical issues that needed to be considered during the research are discussed.

Chapter 5 presents the findings and the discussion thereof, which is supported by existing literature, and an attempt to address research aims and questions.

Chapter 6 comprises a summary of the main findings and presents the conclusion, recommendations from the results and suggestions for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2: THE SHIFT TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN NAMIBIA

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss democracy, democratic school governance and discipline. I attempt to use existing literature to explain these terms by looking at how they are used internationally, nationally and locally at school level.

2.2 What is democratic school governance?

Mncube (2005:18) defines democratic school governance as a form of school-based management and can be regarded as the most radical form of educational decentralisation, which involves the transfer of power or decision making. It is a way of improving the management of schools whereby the state redistributes the decision making authority to school level. The redistribution of power can enable the school board to fully participate in the organisations and functions of schools. In Namibia, the school board is there to authorise, be it financial matters or any form of social or cultural activities the school wants to undertake.

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004, p. 56) state that democratic school governance is the ability to share the decision-making authority amongst the school's major stakeholder groups, namely teachers, parents and other community members. Apple and Bean (1999:10) state that, in a democratic school, all of those directly involved in the school, including young people, have the right to participate in the process of decision making. It is therefore important for all stakeholders to participate in the issues of school governance and policy making.

As mentioned, in Namibia, the Namibian Education Act stipulates that "all public schools must have the school board, which consists of representative from parents, teachers and learners". All public schools across the country have school boards that govern the schools. Davies *et al.* (2002, p. 16) contend that a democratic school should practice

representative democracy, by mandating an elected representative to take their views to his or her constituency and bring back decisions.

Democratic school governance refers to the institutional structure that is entrusted with the responsibility of authority to formulate and adopt policy on a range of issues, for example, school uniform, budgetary and developmental priorities, code of conduct for students and staff (Mncube, 2005, p. 19). In other words teachers, learners and parents who are represented on the school board are part of all decisions pertaining to the school development matters. They are represented on school boards in order to voice their concern on matters that affect them. A democratic school includes people of different diversity in order to more inclusive. Participants in the democratic school include a diversity of people who reflect differences in age, culture, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, aspiration and abilities (Apple & Bean, 1999). The learners' involvement in the school board might therefore assist in achieving better education and quality education because they will be able express their concerns and argue for what they believe is the right education.

The purpose of schooling is to prepare democratic citizens who will contribute meaningfully in the society. Waghid (2005, p. 323) argues that citizenship education needs to prepare students to participate in public dialogue about questions of justice and morality. Students are encouraged to present persuasive arguments, either in writing or orally and to be tolerant about others' views. Democratic education is that which advocates and educates learners to be democratic by allowing them to participate in the decision-making process. Wood (1988, p. 176) describes democratic empowerment as involving an individual's right to participate publicly. The contribution that every member of the school board is making is important as long as it has an impact on decision making.

Young (2000, p. 52) contends that democracy entails political equality, that all members of the polity are included equally in decision making process and have equal opportunity to influence the outcome. The school should have a school board that represents parents, teachers and learners, whereby decision making should be that of all the parties involved. However, autocratic forms of school organisation foster passive, and disallow participation by learners in affairs of the school.

Democratic school governance encourages teachers to provide space for learners to speak out and voice their concerns for the common good. Waghid (2005, p. 335) argues that deliberative argumentation prompts students and teachers to question meanings, to foster respect and to develop critical engagement. It is therefore important to create a platform for learners that allow them to deliberate in discussions that they engage with on a daily basis.

2.3 Democratic school governance internationally

John and Osborn (1992) compared two secondary schools in Britain, a traditional or authoritarian and a democratic one, in terms of development of civic attitudes, and they found that there were stronger democratic values among students from the democratic school than among those from the authoritarian school. In South Africa since 1994, there has been strong support for democratic school governance through more participation by all, including learners, in school governance (Wilson, 2003, p. 3).

Wilson (2003, p. 3) states that the introduction of the South African Schools Act of 1996 in South Africa paved the way for the transformation of schools into democratic institutions. The Act mandated for the establishment of school governing bodies (SGBs) which comprise parents, teachers and learners. This was a way of involving all stakeholders in the affairs and functions of the schools. Harber and Trafford (1999, p. 53) state that, under the new dispensation after apartheid in South Africa, an effective school is officially seen as one that upholds the practice of democracy in the wider society by actively promoting democracy through its structures and culture. The end of apartheid rule and the shift from authoritarian to democratic rule introduced a new South African constitution that included an unequivocal commitment to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement (RSA, 1996). This paved the way to democratic education in all public schools and the right of all stakeholders to influence decisions in school matters.

The South African Schools Act's legislative purpose is to create a new school governance landscape based on citizen participation, partnerships between the state, parents, learners, school staff and communities, as well as devolution of power towards the individual school and community. The South African Schools Act provides for the

election of the School Governing Bodies (SBGs) by learners, parents and staff (RSA, 1996). It allows and grants all stakeholders to be involved in the decision-making process through participation in democratic school governance.

The functions of the SBGs include the determination of school administration, policy, setting language policy, recommending teaching and non-teaching appointments, managing finances, determining school fees, and conducting fundraising (RSA, 1996). The South African government however is committed to the realisation of socio-economic rights as laid down in the Constitution, with its stated goals of equality in educational output among learners and the realisation of the right to free quality basic education (Wilson, 2003, p. 2). The government decided on democratic school governance in order to redress the imbalances created by the apartheid regime that excluded the participation of parents and learners in the decision-making process.

According to Harber (2002, p. 273), schools in many other regions of the world, especially in Africa, have traditionally tended to promote authoritarian values and practices. If many countries in Africa are still lagging behind by not encouraging the participation of parents and learners in educational debate, democratic school governance is still far from being realised. I therefore see the need for African countries to encourage their education systems to emphasise democratic school governance as it is the better way that can empower all stakeholders in education in terms of decision making and in maintaining discipline in schools.

Botswana is regarded as the only African country to have retained democratic structures continuously since independence in 1966; schools, however, seem to be playing little part in reinforcing and deepening a democracy which has been described as 'paternalistic' or 'semi-democratic' (Holm, 1988, p. 201). Schools in Botswana tend to be authoritarian, corporal punishment is widespread and human rights have not been taught in schools (Harber, 2002, p. 273). It indicates that, even though there is democracy in the country, it does not mean that schools are necessarily democratic. I therefore see Botswana as a country which is not a more democratic country because the educational institutions such as schools are not practicing principles of democracy.

Nagel (1992) states that schools and classrooms in Zimbabwe have been traditionally organised on an authoritarian basis. I therefore argue that, if schools are organised in an

authoritarian way, it means there is no democratic school governance practised, and that change is necessary for the school to be more inclusive in its governance.

In Rwanda, between 800 000 and a million people were murdered in the space of few weeks in 1994 and the schools were also responsible for the genocide, as teachers denounced their Tutsi pupils to the militia or even killed them themselves (Woodward, 2000). Schools in this country are not democratic because they do not include or involve learners in decision-making processes.

Nagel (1992, p. 3) argues that a school which is democratically governed can provide a peaceful context and environment in which learners and teachers function safely and freely. Education for democracy is therefore of fundamental importance in judging school effectiveness, as the values, skills and behaviour that form a political culture that is supportive of democracy are not inherited genetically, but are learned socially, and schools must play a role (Harber, 2002, p. 3). The democratic school is the one where learners have real power for influencing decisions during school board deliberations. If the school does not allow learners to participate in decision making, it would not be a democratic school, but could be classified as anti-democratic because the aim of the schooling, which is to produce democratic citizens, will not be realised.

John and Osborn (1992) point out that a researcher in Britain compared two secondary schools, a traditional or authoritarian and a democratic one, in terms of development of civic attitudes, and the research suggested that there were stronger democratic attitudes among the students from the democratic school than from the traditional one. The findings also suggested that a school that is democratically governed is more likely to encourage freedom of expression in the classroom as opposed to the authoritarian school. I would argue that learners who are given the opportunity to ask questions and express themselves will learn more from each other and from the teachers because of the respect of one another's viewpoint.

In Africa, there is further evidence that more democratically organised schools affect student attitudes and behaviour. Harber (1993, p. 4) states that participation of all stakeholders in schools in Tanzania has helped to develop responsibility, confidence, problem solving through discussion and a more co-operative environment. Once people have good co-operation, they tend to understand each other, even if they do not agree

on certain issues. The only good way to achieve co-operation among the school board members is by allowing each to participate in decision-making processes. However, participation should be aimed at helping the school to develop and at producing democratic citizens.

2.4 Namibian policy with regard to school governance before 1990

The National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967 clearly stipulated that the parent community should be given a place in the education system through parent-teacher associations, school committees, the board of control or school board, or in other matters. The school committees were responsible for the following duties and functions: Adopting the mission statement of the school and setting out values of the school; administering the school's properties and building; and adopting the code of conduct for maintaining discipline. However, unlike the current school board, they were not involved in the appointment of teachers. Teachers were just sent to schools without the school committees being involved in the recommendation of appointments. I therefore argue that school governance was not democratic because school committees were supposed to make the recommendation for any appointment in order to make sure that suitable teachers are appointed.

The National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967 made no provision for learners' representation on the school committees. I would therefore contend that school governance excluded the most important stakeholders in education. I argue that education is incomplete without the involvement of learners, because learners are the ones I regard as customers in education. I judge that, if learners are not part of the discussion, whose interests will the teachers and parents serve? I strongly believe that learners understand their situation better than anyone else, so it is unjust to exclude them from the decision making of the school. Even though the National Education Policy Act of 1967 provided for the establishment of the Student Representative Council, I believe that learners were not part of the school governance since their concerns could not be deliberated or discussed at the highest decision-making platform. My analysis is that the system was not inclusive enough, as it could not address the real concerns of the affected learners in a democratic manner because of their exclusion.

2.5 Shifts towards democratic school governance after 1990 nationally and locally

After independence in 1990, Namibia was founded on the principle of democracy. It was therefore important for the education system to change its practice from the autocratic to be democratic.

Bantu education that existed before independence was aimed at subservience and subjugation of Africans on the one hand and inculcation of racial bigotry on the other hand apartheid education has negated the concept of education, as it has been de-humanizing, manipulative and divisive. (Angula & Lewis, 1997, p. 234).

The education system was segregated on the basis of racial lines and it did not allow the full participation of parents and learners. In other words, it was a system that did not allow expression of opinions and teachers, parents and learners were forced to accept whatever was imposed on them without questioning, as it was aimed at dividing the people. The government decided to bring changes by introducing the new education system that could redress the social injustices that existed in the past in order to achieve quality education. According to Rowell (1995, p. 8), the new education would focus on efforts to promote democratic decision making at four levels, at national, at regional level, within communities and within schools. The government set democracy as one of the four goals of the principle 'Toward education for all' (Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), 1993).

Mungunda (2003), cited by Aipinge (2007, p. 20), states that participative management allows and encourages subordinates to participate in decisions that affect them, including those persons who are to execute those decisions. After the attainment of independence, the Namibian government, through the approach of 'toward education for all', emphasised that school must be managed and must lead in a democratic way that includes the broad participation of all stakeholders (MEC, 1993). In other words, the involvement of all stakeholders means that they are accountable for whatever problems are experienced at school level. The education that caters for every citizen and give them the right to participate in the decision making process. The new

government's goal is to promote democratic culture on the national level. Angula points out that:

The government recognised teachers union Namibia National Teachers' Union (NANTU) and the Namibia Students' Organization (NANSO) as unions that will represent teachers and learners in decision making at the national level and a written agreement between teacher's and student's unions was instituted. (Angula & Lewis, 1997, p. 239).

This means that before major policy initiatives are undertaken, the Unions need to be informed and they should be part of the team. The main idea is to avoid the situation whereby teachers will object to certain policies if they are not part of the team of participants. Teachers are the people who implement the policies that are aimed at implementing the changes that the government wants to introduce. If government does not allow teachers and learners to participate through their union in any decision making, it might result in chaos and could lead to demonstrations in protest against the policy implementation.

Through the process of decentralisation, the government decentralised power to schools by empowering school boards. According to Rowell (1995, p. 9) the authoritarian management structure installed in Namibian schools under apartheid also discouraged parental involvement. I therefore argue that there is a need to ensure democratic education in Namibia by increasing participation in school community relation, by creating a meaningful relationship among teachers, parents and learners. It became necessary for parents, as stakeholders, to be part of the decision making concerning the education of their children.

In 1990, the ministry requested communities to elect community representatives to School Boards (MED, 1990). Under apartheid, learners were not allowed to participate in student organisations, but after independence it was permissible to join any student organisation which they saw as better able to represent them. Since independence, the Learners Representative Council has been viewed by the government as giving students experience in leadership with democratic structures and practices, and therefore it has been promoted at secondary school level.

The Namibian Education Act stipulates that a school board should consist of teachers, parents and the principal and, in a secondary school, should include not more than two learners nominated by the Learners Representative Council at the school. This is a clear

indication of how the government had become committed and determined to change the education system from autocratic to democratic rule. The school board in one way of inclusive involvement and allows participation of parents, teachers and learners in education.

According to the Namibian Education Act, the election of parents and teachers to a school board has to be conducted by a staff member designated by the Permanent Secretary and who is not employed at the school concerned, through a secret ballot or, where appropriate, with the approval of the Minister, by a show of hands. In any democratic institution, representatives should be democratically elected if they are to be recognised as legitimate.

The fact that each individual school is required to establish guidelines regarding disciplined behaviour by learners is another measure aimed at dealing with discipline and maintaining a peaceful learning environment. It shows that the government promulgated the Act to give power to all stakeholders in education, because they are more involved in all school matters than in the past when decisions were taken at the regional head offices. It is important to ensure that all school board members are democratically elected.

2.6 Learners' representation in democratic school governance structures

The Namibian Education Act, No. 16 of 2001, section 16, stipulates clearly that every state school must establish a school board to administer the affairs and promote the development of the school and of the learners of the school. This literally acknowledges that the school cannot operate without the people who have to govern it by setting the mission and the goals of the school, but it is important that learners form part of the governance of the school so that they can feel that they own the school because they are part of the decision making. The Namibian Education Act makes provision for the school board to include not more than two learners nominated by Learners' Representative Council. The learners who are on the school board act on behalf of other learners whom they represent by voicing their concerns with regard to the issues affect them. It is the platform where they engage in debates for the development and progress of the school.

Section 19 of the Namibian Education Act stipulates that a learner of the school must not serve as a chairperson of the school board. This is so because learners cannot be expected to know all of the important issues pertaining to the school. In the possible case of a teacher who is not conducting himself/herself suitably, learners cannot be part of the discussion, since they are still young and it is not proper for them to know of such matters and be expected to keep things confidential. Learners are also excluded during the discussion of the appointment of teachers, as learners may not have adequate knowledge of the type of expertise and skills a person must have to be considered for the post to be. I therefore believe that there is no need for the learners to be part of such deliberations, as it is beyond their knowledge and understanding. I argue that learners should be part of the discussion only when the agenda does not require confidentiality, such as when discussing issues pertaining to the school's development. Namibian Education Act, in section 19, allows the learners as members of the school board to advise the school management on the extra-mural curriculum of the school. I agree with this directive, because learners know better than parents and teachers what they want to do as part of the extra-mural curriculum, especially when it comes to games that they want to engage.

The Namibian Education Act allows all representatives on the school board, including learners, to decide on the admissions policy for the school, the language policy of the school, what type of religious practices should be followed at the school and to adopt the code of conduct for learners, which clearly sets out disciplinary procedures. These decisions and policies should therefore be in line with the national policies of the Ministry of Education. From this I contend that learners in Namibian schools are democratically represented on school governance structures because they form part of the decision-making process as they are given a platform to participate in discussions at school board level and their views are respected.

However, I cannot rule out the possibility of learners being manipulated by other school board members due to the fact that they may feel inferior compared to their fellow members. I argue that learners, due to the fact that they have limited knowledge, may be influenced to agree on certain issues where they may be supposed to disagree with other school board members. I therefore judge that learners sometimes find themselves in a compromised position as they feel compelled to agree on most of the issues.

2.7 Conclusion

In Chapter 2, the concept democratic school governance was explored in detail. The chapter looked at the policy shift before and after 1990. It explored how democratic structures at schools can influence learner discipline. It looked at how democratic school governance is practised in other countries.

CHAPTER 3: SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the concepts school discipline and school code of conduct. It looks at discipline internationally, nationally and locally at the school level. It draws on some experiences on how discipline is handled in schools with the involvement of learners on the school board. It also looks at how schools use policies in maintaining discipline.

3.2 Conceptualising discipline

Oosthuizen (2003, p. 79) defines discipline as the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behaviour by punishing them when they do not adhere to the rules. Discipline, therefore, may be used to train learners to adhere to a code of conduct which respects human dignity and equality.

Disciplined behaviour or conduct can be construed as behaviour in accordance with the directives or guidance provided by a person who is being followed (Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2006, p. 12). In other words, disciplining a person is aimed at improving the behaviour of that person by training and setting conditions, rules and procedures that need to be followed. Sinclair (1999, p. 409) defines discipline as a punishment when certain conditions and rules are contravened. If a learner at school is not complying with the school rules, then it can be regarded as a disciplinary problem. However, when a learner breaks the school rules once, it does not constitute a problem; only constant and continuous breaking of school rules can be regarded as a problem.

Discipline is important for the effective functioning of the school. The learners who are undisciplined can disrupt teaching and learning and at the same time endanger other learners and teachers. The main aim of maintaining discipline in school is to create a safe and happy teaching and learning environment. On this basis I therefore argue that the academic performance of learners in a classroom where a teacher is unable to maintain order and discipline can be very poor compared to the classroom where discipline is properly maintained.

According to Mokhele (2006, p. 150), discipline is the practice of care and respect for others and self. Discipline should not be taken as means of doing away with unruly and behaviour disruptive behaviour, but should be seen as the means of fostering love and care among the learners. Discipline has to do with the measures that teachers use to ensure order and stability; methods used by teachers to bring about conduct orderly enough for productive learning (Mabalane *et al.* 2007, p. 1). In other words, discipline is about the management of learners' behaviour by correcting them when they are in breach of school rules. In managing school discipline, teachers have to remove forms of punishment harmful to the learners.

Oosthuizen (2003) contends that positive constructive discipline should be promoted as it enhances self-discipline. This means that physical or corporal punishment is not an answer to discipline as it inflicts pain on the learners. Mncube (2005, p. 21) contends that learners in a democratic school have the right to be protected from abusers of authority, the right to be protected from harassment, the right to be protected from unlawful attack or harassment. However, it should be noted that even though learners are provided such rights, they must adhere to the school rules and, if not reasonable, punishment can be instituted to correct undesirable behaviour. The better management of discipline is by making learners feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe in order for them to develop self-discipline and be accountable in whatever they do. Healthy relationships and minimum conflict act as positive discipline in practice in schools. I believe that good communication between teachers, learners and parents minimises conflict or disciplinary problems as opposed to when there is no good communication. The maintenance of good discipline in schools therefore depends on mutual understanding among stakeholders. It is up to all stakeholders to ensure that discipline prevails in schools, by working as a team. Schools are therefore to ensure that they produce better-disciplined citizens who will contribute meaningfully to the peace and security of the Namibian nation. According to Lynch (1992, p. 22), democratic and co-operative teaching methods have also been shown to reduce inter-ethnic conflict and to promote cross-cultural understanding. Teachers should always make sure that all learners, whether in the classroom or outside, are allowed to be actively involved in all activities; by so doing, democracy could prevail as they will feel that they are part of the school. In a democratic school, learners will learn to understand each other because

they are allowed to discuss issues and share ideas and that can lead them to be disciplined learners. If learners are able to discuss social issues that affect them, they will be more able to accept each other, which will help them to respect each other and which can lead them to be discipline learners.

3.3 Discipline internationally

In America, learners are being excluded from schools every year due to truancy, cheating during examinations and carrying dangerous weapons (Paul, 2002). This reflects the danger in keeping learners who pose a risk to the lives of others. Once democratic structures are in place at a school, all the risk factors that these ill-disciplined learners pose to others can be minimised. Democratic structures such as the school board are in the better position to solve such disciplinary problems once they arise at the school.

In South Africa, the most common form of maintaining discipline throughout the country's history of education was corporal punishment. While a child was at school, a teacher was expected to act as a substitute parent with all the normal forms of parental discipline open to him or her. In practice, this meant that children were commonly punished with birch or cane. However, corporal punishment was often problematic, since it was regarded as child abuse and there was a growing opposition to any use of physical force in disciplining learners, and it was abolished by the ANC government in 1994 (Du Plessis & Loock, 2007).

In South Africa, problems around school discipline such as bullying behaviour exist and the situation is getting out of hand (Du Plessis & Loock, 2007). A study was commissioned by the officials of the southern region of the Education Department of the of South Africa. Disciplinary problems revealed by the study included use of improper or foul language, neglect of duty, untidy or incorrect dress, absenteeism, lying, disruptive behaviour, dishonesty, tardiness, bullying, cheekiness, rudeness, moodiness and provocative behaviour (Oosthuizen & Van der Walt, 2006). It appears that more disciplinary problems are being experienced since the abolishment of corporal punishment than before. With corporal punishment having been abolished in 1994, there is a need to design a policy that can effectively address the disciplinary behaviour

manifested by learners in South African schools before the situation is altogether out of hand.

I believe that corporal punishment as it used to be administered during the apartheid regime is not an answer in disciplining a learner. However, some form of punishment can be used, provided that it is in accordance with the law of the country without infringing the rights of the learners. In public schools in Malawi, a range of frequent violent behaviours, such as physical violence, bullying, use of vulgar and rude language, rioting and vandalism occurs in public schools as opposed to private schools where only a few cases occur (Smith, Moritta, Junger-tas, Olweus, Catalano & Sleep, 1999).

If disciplinary problems are more frequent in a public school than in private school, it can be translated as lack of commitment from teachers to instil and inculcate values that are accepted by the learners. I can argue that there is a misunderstanding and a misconception among learners of the term democracy. However, democracy is taken for granted because they think that democracy allows one to do whatever suits one. It is therefore against this background that learners are behaving in such an undisciplined manner, but if they could have a clear understanding of the word democracy, they may know how to respect and not to violate the rights of others. In Uganda, for example, education for democracy is reported to be at the forefront of education policy because they practice the 'child for the child' project which has been applied in more than 100 primary schools and aims to promote tolerance, responsibility and respect for other children (Harber 2002, p. 274). In order to produce non-violent citizens and a peaceful society, the environment should be democratic. In such an environment it will be easy to solve disputes and conflicts when they arise as people may talk to each other in a more peaceful way.

3.4 *Discipline nationally*

In Namibia, discipline has been the theme of a big debate as learners are unruly to the extent that they undermine the authorities. The involvement of parents has proved to be successful in minimising disciplinary problems at schools in Namibia. Niitembu (2006, p. 48) states that the school board has a policing role to play in the school in terms of learner discipline. However, the involvement of parents in the school

governance can only yield better results if they are actively involved and participate in decision making as stipulated by the Namibian Education Act of 2001.

Before Namibia became independent in 1990, all schools were using corporal punishment, as in South Africa, as the effective means of instilling discipline among the learners. Schaller (2007, p. 1) states that, after Namibia attained its independence in 1990, corporal punishment was outlawed as an inhumane practice by the new constitution and schools were requested to develop individual disciplinary policies and procedures to be used in providing the framework for practice in classrooms. I agree to a certain extent that corporal punishment is not a good method to use when punishing learners, since pain is inflicted in the process, especially when using sticks, pipes and anything that can harm the learner.

The Ministry of Education has decentralised powers to the school boards so that schools themselves can handle cases of a disciplinary nature. However, even though powers were given to the school boards, their power is still minimal as they are not allowed to dismiss learners whom they see as a threat to the lives of others.

The Namibian Education Act was supposed to give more power that would allow the school board to expel learners, because by not doing so power is still centralised in head office. The head office does not know how difficult it is to deal with learners with disciplinary problems, but members of the school board know because they are with learners on a daily basis. I therefore support a recommendation that more power be given the school board members for them to exercise their function fully without fear and favour.

3.5 Discipline locally

The teachers in Namibian schools are guided by well-established school rules, and therefore implement school policies effectively, enabling them to teach with commitment, thus experiencing fewer disciplinary problems in their classrooms. However, Namibian schools have different policies and some are more successful than others in implementing their policies. This could be attributed to lack of commitment on the part of school management and teachers. I therefore argue that, if the teachers cannot follow or implement the policies and procedures that they developed at the school, learners are more likely to take advantage of that and will find the loophole of

breaching the rules at all times, since they know that no measures can be taken against them. I understand that schools that apply their policies and procedures will have minimal disciplinary cases, because learners know that they might face serious consequences if they are involved in any disciplinary case.

Aipinge (2007, p. 54) states that some learners in Namibian schools come to school unprepared; they do not do their homework, they do not concentrate well in the classroom and some damage school property. If learners are unable to concentrate on school work, it means that much needs to be done by both the state and the school boards to turn around the status quo by putting serious disciplinary measures in order to prevent the school from becoming dysfunctional.

It appears that many Namibian teachers sometimes still struggle to handle classroom problems and have resorted to corporal punishment as the way to instil discipline. This suggests that if teachers cannot solve problems manifested by learners in the classroom, there is a serious problem which needs to be addressed. The fact that teachers are punishing learners by beating them gives the impression that quality education cannot be achieved because, once a learner is beaten, a teacher cannot expect any form of respect from that particular learner. Aipinge cited one school principal as stating:

At school we need to be strict because we accommodate many learners who have no purpose for schooling. When we just relax a bit the learners go crazy damaging school properties and hurting one another. A terrible thing happened when a girl was in the toilet, while two boys forced the door open and touched her behind. In a separate incident four other boys burgled the school tuck shop. (Aipinge, 2003, p. 64)

This is a clear indication of how serious disciplinary problems in schools are. It is up to the school board together with teachers to work out a mechanism for addressing the problem. Schools cannot function and achieve their objectives if learners are not well behaved, so there is a need to strengthen school rules in order to root out those undesirable behaviours. The Namibian (23 June 2005) reported that a school teacher appeared in court after he had slapped two boys who were suspected of stealing a girl's cell phone. This incident is another indication of how behavioural problems are manifested in schools. Teachers are also unable to contain the pressure; therefore they resort to physical ways of disciplining. However, teachers are professionals and they

should not indulge themselves in using force because by so doing they are contravening the education policy that does not allow them to use corporal punishment.

In my view, democratic school governance should make it possible to expect good behaviour from the learners, but looking at how things are now, it is not the case. The large number of disciplinary cases reported in schools around the country is what decided me to investigate the causes. I hope that some possible solutions will emerge from the study.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter explored how democratic school governance and discipline of learners manifests itself internationally and in Namibia. I first discussed the situation in the first-world countries and, secondly, focused on Africa before reporting on Namibia in particular. I discussed how the concepts of democratic school governance and discipline are applied countrywide in Namibia and at school level.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

An interpretive approach was employed for this study, as it was designed to investigate how democratic school governance addresses issues around discipline in schools. The chapter presents a discussion of the literature on qualitative research methodologies that help to unpack the understanding of the investigation carried out in four schools. The issues of quality in research are also addressed.

4.2 The interpretive approach

Given the nature of the study, qualitative research design within the interpretive paradigm was used. Merriam (1998, p. 5) refers to qualitative research as research that seeks to explain and understand social phenomena within their natural setting. My study allowed me to gather empirical evidence in order to be able to gain better understanding of the problem that I was investigating in those four schools. Bertram (2004, p. 15) defines qualitative methods as methods which involve collecting textual or verbal data or data which cannot be counted. In other words, a qualitative method is used when a researcher wants to have an in-depth look at a particular situation. Merriam (1998, p. 6) identified the characteristics of qualitative research that follow (I attempt to link my research to these characteristics because of the nature of my research):

(a) Qualitative research is interested in understanding the meaning people construct about their own experience of their world. My research was aimed at developing a better understanding of the experience of teachers in democratic school governance and discipline in Namibian schools. In this regard, teachers from four selected schools were interviewed to discover their experience and views on the topic concerned.

(b) Qualitative research usually involves fieldwork and the researcher must physically go to the people. I went to the schools and interviewed teachers and observed the behaviour of learners. This physical contact with teachers made it easier for me to better understand some issues, because during the interviews I could probe issues which I felt were important and needed more clarity. It is difficult to get proper

information if you do not talk to the participants face to face. Merriam (1998, p. 6) contends that the information that a researcher gets from interviewing participants face to face may not be accurate. However, the fieldwork research helped me to understand the link between democratic school governance and discipline in these four Namibian schools.

4.3 Interviews

I interviewed teachers to get their views on the subject. Schumacher (2001, p. 262) defines an interview as a conversation between a researcher and the respondent. It is the conversation where the researcher wants to get particular information from the respondent and has designed particular questions to be answered. Punch (2009, p.144) describes the interview as the most prominent data collection tool in qualitative research. It provides a very good way for accessing people's perceptions and meanings, definitions of situations and construction of reality. The interview is also one of the most powerful ways we have of understanding others. Punch (2009, p. 144) further explains that, in order to understand other persons' constructions of reality, we would do well to ask them in such a way that they can tell us their terms and in a depth which addresses the rich context that is the substance of their meanings. Wellington (2000, p. 2) notes that an interview allows a researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe. My interview was conducted in a way that could probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, perceptions, views, feelings and perspectives. Punch (2009, p. 145) notes that interviewing has a wide variety of forms and a multiplicity of uses. Punch (2009) further explains that the most common type of interviewing is individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, but it can also take the form of face to face group interviewing, mailed and self-administered questionnaires, and telephone surveys. Therefore, interviews can be used for the purpose of measurement, or its scope can be the understanding of an individual or a group perspective. During my research, I used semi-structured interview with a variety of open-ended questions. Wellington (2000, p. 75) says that semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to take more control of the process, and are flexible and not completely pre-determined.

Slavin (2007, p. 131) notes that an open-ended interview is an attempt to let the person being interviewed tell his/her story, respond at length, and lead the interview in directions other than those anticipated by the researcher. Punch (2009, p. 146) explains that, in structured interviews, the respondent is asked a series of pre-established questions with pre-set response categories. Punch (2009) further notes that there is little room for variation in response though open-ended questions may sometimes be used and all respondents receive the same questions in the same order, delivered in a standardised manner. In this sort of interview, the interviewer attempts to play a neutral role. My interview questions were structured in the manner which allowed the respondent to give more information, as I could probe for more clarity. Slavin (2007, p. 132) further contends that a good open-ended interview sounds like a conversation, and the interviewer treats the subject as an expert, listens very carefully, remains flexible and asks for clarification. I interviewed 12 teachers from four different schools with one interview per teacher. Each interview lasted between 50 and 60 minutes. I was able to clarify some questions when interviewees did not understand the question. I could ask other questions to gain more data if the respondent did not provide sufficient detail. I recorded the responses of teachers on a prepared interview schedule that made it easier for the teachers, rather than letting them write lengthy responses on a questionnaire. Through the interviews I collected more data than I could when using a questionnaire. Bertram (2004, p. 88) describes interviewing as a good method to use for gaining in-depth data from a small number of people. The number of teachers that I interviewed from each school looks small, but the data that I collected is more than I anticipated. Schumacher (2001, p. 268) argues that using interviews is costly and time consuming. I agree with him because I took more time to complete one interview, but sometimes I could repeat one question to get clarity. However, I did not spend a lot of money when I was conducting interviews because the schools were not far from each other.

4.4 Rationale for my choice of schools and teachers

4.4.1 Choice of schools

I chose the particular schools because they were easily accessible, due to the fact that I have an established relationship with them. It was easy for me to get any document,

since the principals knew me. The schools are within an accessible distance from one another, which made it easier for me to travel between schools. Since the schools are in one area, made comparison easier. I chose four schools because it is a manageable sample. I chose A and B, because they are in the same local area and C and D also are in the same area, so it was easier to compare teachers' perceptions and to get a wider representation. I expected that choosing A/B and C/D may highlight contrasts between inner-city schools catering for learners of a lower socio-economic status and suburban schools with more learners from affluent backgrounds.

4.4.2 Choice of interview subjects

I chose three teachers from each school because it is a manageable sample, but I wanted more than that in order to get wider a representation. I purposefully chose those three teachers because they were more senior and were familiar with school governance and had more experience in school discipline. These teachers had extensive histories, dating back to before 1990.

4.5 *History of the Oshana education region*

The Oshana region is one of the 13 education regions in Namibia. According to census indicators from 2001, Oshana region has a population of approximately 161,916. About 31 percent of its population is urban while 69 percent is rural (Census, 2001). The Oshana region is guided by the broad ministerial goals of access, equity, quality, life-long learning and democracy in its efforts to maximise the overall performance of all schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). The Oshana region commits itself by providing quality education to its learners and emphasising that they produce democratic citizens who will be meaningful contributors to the entire nation. There are democratic structures such school boards at each school. These democratic structures are there to ensure that every stakeholder participates in the education of learners.

4.6 Background to schools

a) School A

The school is situated in the inner city of Oshakati Township. Most of the learners are from working class communities. It has a total number of 1135 learners, with 37 teachers. It is surrounded by a mixed-class community, rich and poor. Most of the learners that it serves are from the rural area, while a few are from town. It is a well-resourced school with good teaching and learning facilities.

b) School B

The school is situated in the inner city of Oshakati, neighbouring school A. As it is a school located in the inner city, most of the learners are from the surrounding areas and also from rural areas. The total number of the learner enrolment is 1124, with 34 teachers. It was the first secondary school in the area, which means that most of its buildings and infrastructure are dilapidated, but the buildings are continuously being renovated to maintain them.

c) School C

This school is in the centre of the town of Ongwediva. The town is mostly occupied by middle-class people. Due to the location of the school it mostly serves the same community, which means that the majority of learners are from the vicinity, with a few who come from rural areas. It has an enrolment of 936 learners, with 31 teachers. The school is equipped with modern facilities that make teaching and learning meaningful.

d) School D

The school is located in Ongwediva town, not far from school C. It serves learners from the local communities and some from rural areas. It has the enrolment of 846 learners, with 34 teachers. It has very good facilities that can be of good use to teachers and learners. Buildings are still in good shape, only a few renovations need to be done.

4.7 Background of teachers

Teacher 1 (School A)

Teacher 1 is a senior teacher who has served on the school board for more than 10 years. The teacher has more experience in the governance of the school because he is part of the school management team. He has been a member of the school management team since before Namibia attained its independence in 1990. The teacher has been involved in the formulation of the code of conduct for learners since before 1990.

Teacher 2 (School A)

Teacher 2 is one of the senior staff members of the school and started teaching at the school before Namibia attained its independence in 1990. The teacher is not a member of the school management team, but she has served as a member of the school board. The teacher is part of the committee that formulates the learners' code of conduct. She also is a member of the disciplinary committee at the school.

Teacher 3 (School A)

Like Teacher 1 and Teacher 2, Teacher 3 is a senior teacher at the school. He/She became a staff member at the school before 1990 when Namibia attained its independence. The teacher is also involved in the formulation of the school code of conduct for learners. He/She has been a member of the school disciplinary committee since joining the school and has handled many disciplinary cases involving learners.

Teacher 4 (School B)

Teacher 4 is a senior staff member of the school and also serves as a member of the school management team. The teacher joined the school before Namibia attained its independence in 1990. He has been involved in the formulation of the school code of conduct for learners. Due to his expertise and experience, he is one of the teachers who serves on the school disciplinary committee. He also serves as a member of the school board and understands issues pertaining to school governance.

Teacher 5 (School B)

Teacher 5 is a senior staff member and serves on various committees of the school, including the disciplinary community. The teacher also serves as a member of the school board. He joined the school shortly after Namibia attained its independence in 1990. The teacher demonstrates more knowledge on school discipline, due to the fact that he has been a member of the school disciplinary committee for many years.

Teacher 6 (School B)

Teacher 6 is a senior teacher who joined the school before Namibia attained its independence in 1990. He has been the member of the disciplinary committee since joining the school. Due to the fact that he has served on the school disciplinary committee for many years, I have no doubt in describing this teacher as one of the most experienced teachers when it comes to issues of school discipline.

Teacher 7 (School C)

Teacher 7 is a senior member of the school management team. He joined the school before independence in 1990. The teacher was promoted to be one of the school managers shortly after independence. He has also served on the school board for many years and has been involved in the formulation of school codes of conduct for learners over the years. He serves on the disciplinary committee of the school.

Teacher 8 (School C)

Teacher 8 is one of the longest serving members of staff, dating back to before Namibia attained its independence in 1990. The teacher is one of the teachers who formulate and review the school code of conduct for learners. He is also involved in learner disciplinary issues, since he serves on the disciplinary committee of the school.

Teacher 9 (School C)

Teacher 9 is a senior teacher at the school who joined the school shortly after independence. He has been serving on the school board for a long time and is a member of the school disciplinary committee. The teacher is one of the teachers tasked with the review of the code of conduct for learners.

Teacher 10 (School D)

Teacher 10 is a management member of the school, dating back to before 1990. The teacher has been instrumental in the governance of the school since joining the management team. He has served for many years as a member of the school board and has also been involved in the formulation and review of the code of conduct for learners for many years.

Teacher 11 (School D)

Teacher 11 is a senior staff member who joined the school before Namibia's independence. He serves as member of the school board and has been involved in the planning and organisation of the school developmental project. The teacher has been involved in the formulation and review of the school's code of conduct for learners for many years.

Teacher 12 (School D)

Teacher 12 is a senior staff member who joined the school before Namibia's independence. The teacher has the history of being the longest-serving member of staff on the school board. The teacher is a member of the team that formulates and reviews the code of conduct for learners. He is also a member of the school disciplinary committee.

4.8 Issues of quality in research

4.8.1 Reliability

McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p. 244) define reliability as the consistency of measurement, the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instruments or occasions of data collection. Reliability can mean dependability and trustworthiness. Reliability is determined by the extent to which measures are free from error. In order for my instruments to be reliable, I made sure that they were free from errors. Punch (2009, p. 244) describes reliability as consistency over time or stability of measurements over time. This is usually expressed in the question of whether, the same instrument, if applied to the same people, under the same circumstances, but also at a different time, would achieve the same results. If this would occur, the measuring instrument would be regarded as reliable, but if not, it would be unreliable. Cohen *et al.* (2000, p. 117) point out that, for the research to be reliable, it must be shown that, if it were carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, similar results would be found. In other words, if I decide to carry out the same research again I would be able to achieve the same results as from first research. If a test is unreliable, a score for a given sample would be expected to be different every time the test is administered.

4.8.2 Limitations

Slavin (2007, p. 153) contends that determining which data is most represented, deciding whom to interview, when to observe and what documents to collect can influence the findings of the study. Slavin (2007) further argues that the documents that are easiest to obtain may not reveal the most important information. During my studies, I did not have much fear about getting access to schools because the research was conducted in an area that I know. The principals of the schools had no problem in providing me with documents that I needed, simply because all of them knew me. In order to get more information from each participating teacher, more time was needed. Teachers could not be interviewed during lesson time, but arrangements were made and I interviewed them after school hours. Some other teachers were not willing to be interviewed, but the principals encouraged them and they accepted at last.

4.8.3 Ethical issues

I applied for ethics clearance to the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch and I was successful. I asked for permission from the Namibian Ministry of Education to carry out research in four schools and it was granted. I visited the schools with a written letter of permission that I presented to the school principals of each individual school. According to Bertram (2004, p. 72) a researcher must respect the autonomy of all the people participating in the research. I asked consent from all participants and explained to them what the research expected from them, and they were able to make an informed choice that encouraged them to participate in the research. I assured all participants of the confidentiality of the information they provided me; that their identities would be protected and their names would not be made known when the research results are published.

4.9 Conclusion

The chapter has presented an explanation of the interpretive approach and I attempted to use the existing literature in order to understand the nature of the research methodology used in my investigation. I gave the background of each of the four schools where the research was conducted. The chapter also examined the issues of reliability, limitations and ethical issues when carrying out research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNERS REPRESENTATION AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings, data analysis and interpretation of the interviews with twelve teachers from four schools in the Oshana education region in Namibia. The schools where the research was conducted were two inner-city and two urban schools. Inner-city schools are those found in the old locations that were established when the town was first founded, while urban schools refer to the schools that are found in new and modern developments in the city or town. The names of the schools are represented by the letters A, B, C and D during the presentation and discussion of findings. The names of teachers are replaced by numbers from 1 to 12. I have grouped the findings from each school in terms of representation and participation, the formulation and review of the code of conduct, the nature of discipline problems, the code of conduct as a tool for maintaining discipline, and the perceived contribution of democratic school governance to discipline in schools. At the end of each section, I will analyse these findings in terms of the five main concepts of democracy as discussed in Chapter 1, namely representation and participation, fairness/ equity, open and informed discussion, accountability and responsibility, and focus on the common good.

5.2 Representation and participation

School A (inner-city school)

Representation and participation is important. However, because schools operate in different contexts, their operations and set-ups may vary. The Namibian Education Act stipulates that democratically elected school boards consisting of parents, teachers and learners should be established throughout the country. In other words, the school board should consist of representatives of all stakeholders, who must be democratically elected. When the teachers were asked whether all stakeholders were represented on

the school board, the three teachers in School A indicated that all stakeholders were well represented on their school board. Teacher 1 contended:

All stakeholders are well represented on the school board. The school board comprises of six parents, four teachers and two learners, a head boy and head girl who are both currently in Grade 12 (Teacher 1).

This shows that the school is committed to making sure that democratic school governance prevails. The way in which all stakeholders are represented on the school board is an indication of the willingness of people to accept democracy. If all members are represented, we can talk of inclusiveness, which simply means that parents, teachers and learners take part in the school's deliberations. Apple and Bean (1999, p. 10) contend that, in a democratic school, all of those who are directly involved in the school, including young people, have the right to participate in the process of decision making. Democratic school governance is about inclusivity by making sure that all stakeholders have a say on matters that affect the progress of the school. The fact that there is comprehensive representation of stakeholders on the school board means that dialogue can take place in which board members can engage with each other to reach agreement while respecting each others' views. It seems that the school board of this particular school was democratically elected because an official from the Ministry of Education presided over the election of parents and teachers, which was done by means of a ballot. I therefore consider that the election process was free and fair, given the fact that it was done through monitored voting.

However, it was noted that learners sometimes are not part of decision-making processes because they do not always attend meetings of the school board. Furthermore, when they do attend, they are often not given the space to present their input. Teacher 2 commented:

I don't think learners on the school board are given time to express themselves. It seems it is only teachers and parents who take all the decisions. I have experienced that a lot of meetings are called, but learners are not invited to the meetings. (Teacher 2)

The school is not adhering to the Namibian Education Act which stipulates that learners should be part of all deliberations that take place during school board meetings. Waghid (2005, p. 95) contends that no individual or group can legitimately exclude other

members from their own disadvantaged schools in order to deliberate on school matters with the aim of supporting and improving education. The school seems to deviate from the policy, by excluding the learners during debate and the discussion of issues that concern them. In my view, this school is not fully democratic because it does not foster inclusivity of all stakeholders and considers learners not ready to contribute to determining their own future.

Even if learners are represented there, they are not free to talk as they fear their parents and teachers. Our learners cannot question an adult as it is regarded in our culture that it is lack of respect to question an adult (Teacher 3).

Based on the above quote, representation can be meaningless if learners are not accorded an opportunity to be part of debates and to speak freely. Since the learners on the school boards feel constrained in expressing themselves, the democratic processes in this school are weak. Gutmann (2003, p. 3) argues that, although deliberative democracy makes room for many other forms of decision making, democratic school governance is that which encourages fair participation of all stakeholders, regardless of their status. I therefore argue that representation without learners being meaningfully involved in debates or discussions is unlikely to help solve problems as the dominant group is likely to dominate the discussion and take the decision that it favours. In the case of school A, if teachers are the dominant group, the decision will usually tend to favour them and will exclude the rest who cannot articulate themselves.

Learners' insights into school organisation should not be underestimated because they are capable of influencing and giving fruitful input if given a platform to express their concerns. Namibia is a democratic state; it is therefore appropriate for schools to invite learners to participate in deliberations pertaining to their education. Failure to do so may have the consequence that learners are unable to contest certain decisions taken on their behalf. Their inclusion and participation not only avoids such likely resistance, but also educates learners about democracy and strengthens democracy in Namibian schools.

School B (inner-city school)

Teachers were asked the question, “What is the representation of stakeholders on the school board and how were they elected?” All three teachers indicated that parents, teachers and learners are well represented on the school board and that they were democratically elected.

Yes, all stakeholders are well represented on the school board and they were democratically elected. Parents were elected by other parents during the parents’ meeting through ballots, while teachers were elected by other teachers using ballots. The head girl and boy elected by learners represent learners on the school board as provided by the Namibian Education Act. (Teacher 4)

Parents on the board were elected by other parents during the parents’ meeting through a ballot vote, while teachers were nominated and voted by other teachers at the same meeting. Learners are represented by Learner Representative Council members (LRC), the head boy and head girl who were also elected by learners. (Teacher 5)

It seems that the school conducted the election of the school board in the most democratic manner by using secret ballots, and I can therefore conclude that all the members who were voted are legitimate representatives. All three teachers stated that all stakeholders on the board are given time to express their concerns, but that learners could not express themselves even if given such time due to their fear of their parents and teachers. Teacher 6 contended that:

Our learners fear teachers and parents because they regard them as adults who cannot be questioned. Learners think that to question a teacher or parent is disrespectful. (Teacher 6)

This can be attributed to a conservative or a traditional African way of life, whereby children are not allowed to question an adult, because it is regarded as a sign of disrespect to elders. In this case, learners on the school board find it difficult to question their parents and teachers, even if they are unhappy with their decisions. The fact that they cannot speak their minds leads to the situation of them being quiet during debates and discussions. However, since education is a matter of preparing young people to become informed citizens in a democracy, it is necessary for teachers and parents to encourage learners on the school board to speak and opportunity should be given to them to deliberate on issues that affect them. It appears that the school board of this

particular school is more democratic because time is given to every member to voice his or her concern, although the learners are too fearful to speak against their elders. Young (2000) contends that inclusion can be legitimate only if all those affected are included in the process of discussion and decision making. Therefore, it is important to make sure that all members of the school board are given a platform to deliberate on issues, so that they can feel that they are part of the decision taken.

School C (urban school)

Teachers were asked about stakeholder representation and election on the school board. All three teachers indicated that parents and teachers on the school board were democratically elected. Teachers 7, 8 and 9 stated the following:

Parents, teachers and learners are well represented on the board. Parents and teachers were democratically elected at the meeting and the circuit inspector presided over the election. Nominations were done and then the election was carried out by using ballot papers. Learners are represented by the head boy and head girl who were elected by learners during the Learners Representative Council general election. (Teacher 7)

Yes, there are five parents, three teachers and two learners on the school board. The Namibian Education Act stipulates that parents and teachers should nominate their candidates and vote using ballot papers or by raising hands. A ballot paper election was conducted. Learners are represented by the head girl and head boy who were elected by the learners through ballot papers during their general election. (Teacher 8).

Yes, they are represented because we have all the groups on the school board. Parents were elected democratically because an election was held and ballot papers were used. Teachers on the school board were elected by other teachers. Learners are represented by the head boy and head girl as provided by the Namibian Education Act, which stipulates that they automatically become members of the school board. (Teacher 9)

Based on the above information provided by all three teachers I can conclude that the election was democratic because ballot papers were used and an outsider, the school circuit inspector, presided over the election. The school adhered to what is stipulated in the Namibian Education Act, and all the election procedures were followed. However, when asked whether all stakeholders on the school board are given time to express

themselves during the school board meetings, all teachers stated that, even though students are given the opportunity, only parents and teachers participate in the discussions while learners generally do not. Teachers 7 and 8 noted:

Learners have a say but to a limited extent as they cannot voice their concerns. Their input is very minimal because what they can say cannot influence decisions. Learners do not know what to do during meetings. They do not have fear to express themselves, but simply they do not know their roles. (Teacher 7)

Our learners are given enough time to express themselves as the meeting is open for every member of the school board. They do not participate at all, as they feel something discussed is beyond their knowledge. They feel that asking questions or speaking out could be misinterpreted as not having respect for teachers and parents. Parents are the most active members on the board. Teachers do participate, but to a certain extent and sometimes they are passive compared to parents. (Teacher 8)

The fact that learners do not really participate in discussion makes it possible for teachers and parents to impose rules or policies which learners might not like. According to Young (2000), democracy is about open discussion and exchange of views leading to agreed-upon policies. This means parents, teachers and learners on the school board should encourage meaningful and open exchange of ideas in order to reach informed decisions. The fact that parents of this school are well educated enables them to understand and fully participate because they know their roles and are confident in voicing their ideas. It is therefore important that school governance should be democratic enough to encourage those learners who are on the school board to voice their concerns, so that they can be part of the dialogue and feel part of a collective decision. Even though Teacher 7 agreed that learners were given the opportunity to express themselves, he maintained that the main problem was that learners did not know what their role on the school board was. Since they “do not know what to do during meetings,” they did not really participate and, as a result, most likely did not really support decisions.

According to the information given by teachers 7 and 8, both being members of the school board, it seems that despite the weak participation by learners, democracy prevails because all members on the school board are given a fair chance to give their views. For democracy to be strengthened in the school board, learners should be

informed about the Namibian Education Act, so that they may know what it is expected of them, and be encouraged by members of the board to state their views.

School D (urban school)

Responding to the question about stakeholder representation on the school board and the election process, Teachers 10 and 12 agreed that all stakeholders were well represented because the elections for teachers, parents and learners to the school board were democratically conducted. Teachers 10 and 12 contended:

Yes, all stakeholders are well represented on the school board. A parents' meeting was called where parents and teachers nominated their candidates. Voting took place by using ballot papers and those who won became members of the school board. The same applied to the learners, whereby they had an election where the Learner Representative Council was elected and the head boy and head girl represent them on the school board. (Teacher 10)

All stakeholders are represented on the school board and the election for parents and teachers was more democratic, because the circuit inspector as a neutral person facilitated the whole election process to ensure that it is free and fair. Learners who are on the school board were elected by other learners during the Learner Representative Council election (Teacher 12).

The fact that the neutral person facilitated the election indicates that the election was free and fair, as opposed to when it is conducted by somebody who is a member of the school community and may therefore not be impartial. Teacher 11 voiced a different view as he stated:

I don't believe that teachers were democratically elected, because parents could nominate teachers, which is contradictory to the Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001. According to the Act the teachers are the ones to nominate teachers and vice versa. (Teacher 11)

It seems that there were contradictions on who nominated whom. It points to a lack of understanding of the Act and this situation could result in the process being regarded as non-democratic.

It seems that stakeholders are well represented in school D. However, the presence of the members does not mean that they are participants, because they sometimes may be

present in the meetings but may not feel free to participate. Representation without participation tends to be meaningless. Representatives can be productive only if they participate in discussions and debates. When teachers were asked whether all stakeholders were given the opportunity to participate during the school board meetings all three indicated that all school board members, including learners, had an opportunity to participate in discussions.

I believe that learners do participate because after the meetings they communicate what was discussed with other fellow learners. Parents and teachers do participate in the school board meetings. (Teacher 10)

All members on the school board are given time to express their opinion in all meetings. (Teacher 11)

Yes, all school board members are given opportunity to participate in meetings and they all participate. (Teacher 12)

The school shows that it is more democratic because all the stakeholders are actively involved by participating in decision making. Wood (1988) states that participation increases one's ownership over decisions, thus making public decisions more acceptable to individuals. The fact that learners can engage in discussion during meetings and after meetings with other learners shows that they are committed to their responsibilities as representatives and it is likely that they feel part of the decision. I attribute learner participation at this school to the fact that they are not intimidated by the culture of not questioning adults because the majority of the learners were born and grew up in urban areas where they are allowed to question and debate issues. Learner participation in this school is not negatively affected by adult authority, as is the case with schools A and B.

Thematic summary

In Chapter 2, I proposed that the constitutive elements of democracy are representation and participation. It was found that parents, teachers and learners are well represented in all four schools in accordance with the Namibian Education Act. Despite the good representation of all stakeholders, however, results showed that learners in schools A and B did not speak when they were given a platform, due to the fear of adult authority. In school C learners were not afraid to speak out, but they simply did not know their

rights and roles on the school board, which restricted meaningful participation. In school D learners participated by speaking out in school board meetings.

Therefore, the lack of participation may be attributed to the fact that learners in schools A and B were more influenced by traditional ways, because the majority of them came from the rural areas where the fear of adult authority prevails; they are not allowed to question adults. On the other hand, the majority of learners in school C and D were from urban areas and were used to debate and discussion with adults. Learners in school C were capable of expressing themselves, but in this case failed to do so simply because they did not know what their roles on the school board signified. In school D, learners could speak out because they were knowledgeable about their roles on the school board. All four schools indicated that their school boards were democratically elected and that neutral persons, in this instance a circuit school inspector, presided over the election process of parents and teachers and the Learner Representative Councils (LRC) elected the learner representatives on the school board. According to Karlsson (2010, p. 329), the LRC offers an opportunity at secondary schools for learners to experience democracy in student affairs and, through their representatives on the school board, to engage in democratic structures and practices involving all relevant constituencies of the school community. However, despite all the opportunities given to the learners to be represented on the school boards, learners tend to remain quiet. I therefore argue that, if the majority of the learners do not participate in decision making, the democratic practices of the school are weakened despite the fact that the elections of the school boards were free and fair.

5.2 Formulation and review of codes of conduct

School A

According to the Namibian Education Act, No. 16 of 2001, section 55, the school boards of all state schools must draft and adopt the code of conduct for learners. The code of conduct regulates and guides the learners in how to behave. When asked whether their school had a code of conduct for learners, all three teachers in school A indicated that

the code of conduct did exist at their school and it had already been in existence when they joined the school. Records show that the code of conduct was there before independence but it was not in use as it is used today. Teacher 1 stated:

When I joined the school in 1993, I found it already formulated. It was formulated on the establishment of the school that was before independence. I think during that time in the 1980's the code of conduct for learners was not a legal document as it is today. It became a legal document after independence in 1990. (Teacher 1)

However, the code of conduct for the school does not guarantee that learners will behave in an appropriate manner; what matters is how it is applied. Mabalane *et al.* (2006: 4) argue that it is not the responsibility of teachers only to ensure that learners are disciplined, but learners also must have self-discipline and should be involved in ensuring that discipline prevails in the school. While the school may have a code of conduct, it will have little effect on the discipline of learners if it is not well implemented.

Codes of conduct existed in schools before independence, but were not used as a tool to maintain discipline, because corporal punishment was used as the tool to maintain discipline. The Namibian Education Act in section 56 stipulates that a teacher or any other person employed at a state or private school commits misconduct if he or she imposes or administers corporal punishment upon a learner. Moreover, corporal punishment cannot be encouraged because it is an inhumane way of enforcing discipline. In a democracy, it is appropriate to replace corporal punishment with a shared code of conduct. Learners are human beings who can follow rules or instructions if they are properly communicated. I therefore argue that it is not so much a matter of legalising the code of conduct but rather a matter of how teachers implement it. In other words, if the teachers do not implement the code of conduct correctly, it is more than likely that learners will not adhere to it.

All three teachers pointed out that the code of conduct for learners was reviewed in 2007. Teacher 1 stated:

We decided to review it because some of the rules included in the code of conduct are not applicable to the present moment and situation. It was therefore deemed necessary to change some rules to suit the current situation. It is of no

use to continue using rules which are out-dated which cannot help us to change the situation at the school to the better. (Teacher 1)

Parents and learners were involved in the review, but I think the school management was dictating on the rules. The school management did not discuss with us as teachers about the changes that should be made. Even most of the parents were not informed about the changes regarding the school rules. (Teacher 2)

The school board and the school management spearheaded the changes and they involved the Learners Representative Council and class captains. Learners were allowed to deliberate on the issues through the Learners Representative Council and the changes were accepted without rejection and parents were informed about the changes and there was no problem to them at all, because the changes benefit their children. (Teacher 3)

It is important to adapt the school rules to suit a particular situation, as long as those changed rules do not bring the school into disrepute or chaos, but are to the benefit of the school. I argue that unambiguous policies and codes of behaviour discussed and agreed upon by management, teachers, parents and learners are essential. Schools could change rules, provided all the stakeholders were consulted during the time of such review. Teachers 1 and 3 agreed that all stakeholders were part of the review, while teacher 2 also agreed but held a different view of how the review was handled.

However, it is evident that parents, teachers and learners were involved, because the school management, which includes parents, teachers and learners, was part of the decision to change certain rules. However, teachers gave conflicting information: teachers 1 and 3 agreed that all stakeholders were part of the review while teacher 2 disagreed. Teachers 1 and 3 were members of the school board and were directly involved in the review of the code of conduct for learners and they therefore knew what had transpired during the whole process, as opposed to teacher 2 who was not part of the school board. I found that a problem that exists at the school concerning the flow of information as it seems changes in certain rules were not communicated to teachers. It would appear that a review of school rules was aimed at including all stakeholders, but the school management did not inform the teachers in advance of who would be involved in the review. Since accountability is one of the constitutive elements of democracy, as I discussed in Chapter 2, it would seem that democratic processes were somewhat weakened.

It is therefore important that everyone in the school must be regularly informed of policy changes before they are implemented. If one talks of democratic school governance, all the teachers should be informed of all the envisaged changes so that they are able to give their input to their representatives in order to avoid the situation whereby views held by the school's management contradict or override those of the stakeholders. Where there is contestation between teachers and school management because teachers feel that they are left out during the review process of the code of conduct for learners, the school management must create spaces where these differences can be debated. I therefore think that no stakeholders should feel alienated in a school where democratic school governance prevails, but that the process should aim at fostering inclusion of all by inviting them to participate in a decision making process, albeit via their representatives on the school board.

School B

When teachers in school B were asked about a code of conduct for learners, all three indicated that there was a code of conduct for learners at their school. Teachers 4 and 6 agreed that the code of conduct for learners is reviewed after two to three years to suit a particular situation, but this contradicts teacher 5, who said it had been done only once, in 2004, and that it was purely an exercise in translation, not a review.

A code of conduct for learners was implemented before independence, but it seems that it was not followed the way we follow it now, because at that time teachers could just do whatever they thought without following rules. I believe after independence the code of conduct for learners became a guiding document of what teachers and learners must follow. (Teacher 4)

Parents, teachers and learners were part of the review. During the parents' meeting parents suggested new rules which they thought were necessary to be added to the existing rules. The Learner Representative Council members were invited to give their views on the proposed changes. (Teacher 6)

Teacher 5 disagreed with the statement that rules were reviewed regularly by pointing out that:

I only remember in 2004 when the school rules were translated from the vernacular language into English, but it was not a review. It was due to the

complaint of other teachers from other regions as they could not understand what was written; they relied on other teachers to translate and explain the rules to them. (Teacher 5)

All the teachers acknowledged the existence of the rules. However, some teachers could not understand the rules and could therefore not apply them. I argue that, if the changes that were made just involved translation, one cannot claim that the rules were reviewed. I believe rules should be changed to address the problems facing the learners and should be aimed at improving teaching and learning. All teachers indicated that the code of conduct for learners was formulated before independence, when the school was established, and it was implemented at that time but it was not fully used as it is now, after independence. The teachers indicated that all stakeholders, including learners, were involved in the formulation of the code of conduct for learners after independence, but they had different interpretations of what the review actually entailed.

School C

All three teachers at school C indicated that their school has a code of conduct which was formulated when the school opened its doors in 1989.

Teacher 7 stated:

It was implemented immediately when the school was established, because the school cannot function without a code of conduct which guides teachers on how to deal with disciplinary issues. The code of conduct is there as a document that regulates the learners' behaviour. (Teacher 7)

When they were asked when last it was reviewed and how often, all the teachers agreed that it was reviewed in 2007, during the second term, and it is always reviewed after two years when they see that there is a need to do so. Teacher 8 commented:

We review the code of conduct for learners after two years when we see that there is a need for some major changes which are best to improve learner discipline. (Teacher 8)

The most important thing that I see at this school is that the code of conduct for learners is reviewed regularly, but that it is changed only if those changes are likely to bring better success to the school. It is not just undertaken for the sake of reviewing, as some

schools might do to get rid of old rules. I therefore argue in support of this school because there is no need to change the rules which are working, just for the sake of change and the introduction of new rules. In other words, changes should be done to suit a particular situation and aimed at bringing better achievements to the school. However, a review of the code of conduct for learners does not necessarily mean that learners will behave well; but it is how those changes are applied that will determine the change in learners' behaviour.

All three teachers stated that all stakeholders were involved in the review of the code of conduct for learners. Teacher 9 stated:

Parents, teachers and learners were part of the reviewing process. Teachers came up with suggestions of the rules that should be changed. Learners were informed through the Learner's Representative Council of the proposed changes and they were also given opportunity to give their suggestions. Suggestions were taken to the school board and were approved. (Teacher 9)

Teachers agreed that there was coordination between parents, teachers and learners during the reviewing process of the code of conduct for learners. I argue that good democratic school governance involves establishing routine practice of questioning and deliberating on school policies. Results from this school show that there was mutual understanding between the stakeholders, because all of them participated in the reviewing process.

School D

All three teachers at school D indicated that their school has a code of conduct for learners and that it was in use. They all stated that the code of conduct was formulated and implemented when the school was established in 1988. Teacher 10 indicated:

The moment you formulate the code of conduct for learners you must use it after [sic]. I believe it was implemented immediately after its formulation back in the 1980s. (Teacher 10)

It appears that the code of conduct at this school has been in use for long to instil discipline among the learners. However, the existence of the rules does not guarantee that learners will behave in the manner which the school expects them to. All the

teachers indicated that parents and teachers participated fully in the reviewing process, while learners did not participate but they were only informed after the review. Teacher 12 stated:

Parents and teachers were involved in the reviewing process, while learners were excluded. Parents and teachers deliberated on the rules which they thought were necessary to be changed and added. They adopted all the changes and forwarded the final rules to the learners who could not even say something. (Teacher 12)

There is a clear indication that this school undermined its democratic processes because it excluded the learners from participating in the decision-making process. It is important both from a legal position with regard to the Namibian Education Act of 2001, as well as from a democratic standpoint for the school to fail to invite learners to give their views on internal matters that directly concern them. It gives the impression that parents and teachers believe that learners are not mature enough to decide on school matters. Given the legal requirements of learner representation and the educational need to train learners in democratic processes, it is important that schools acknowledge that learners can and should contribute to discussions about internal school matters like the code of conduct.

However, School D as discussed in the previous section has learner representatives who participate actively in joint deliberations. It would seem that the review of the code of conduct was undertaken at a time when learner participation was not yet strong.

Thematic summary

A code of conduct serves as a tool to guide learners on how to behave, and contains suggested proceedings which should be instituted against learners if a specific rule is breached. The research found that each of the four schools has a code of conduct for learners. All twelve teachers from the four schools indicated that the codes of conduct at their schools were formulated at the establishment of their schools, before Namibia attained independence in 1990. However, all the teachers were of the opinion that the code of conduct had not been used as much before independence as it is today and that, with democratisation, the code of conduct is under regular review. It was found that

schools A, B, and C had reviewed their codes of conduct for learners in 2007, while school D reviewed theirs in 2006. All stakeholders in schools A, B and C were involved in the most recent review of the codes of conduct for learners, while school D, with active learner participation in the school board, paradoxically, did not.

5.3 *The nature of disciplinary problems*

School A

All three teachers indicated that the most serious disciplinary problem is fighting resulting from stealing and the use of bad language with regard to other learners. This is more common between boys, while minimal between girls. Teacher 1 contended:

Fighting is more common in boys and is mainly caused by theft, when other learners are implicated in stealing an item e.g. [a] cell phone. Sometimes a boy sells something to a friend and failure to receive the money as agreed upon always results in a big fight. (Teacher 1)

It likely that, since learners at this school are of low socio-economic status, they live in communities where theft is more common due to poverty. Teachers maintained that learners do not respect teachers, especially those who are not senior. This was a somewhat surprising statement because it was at this same school that teachers maintained that the reason for lack of active learner participation on the school board was fear and respect of elders. Perhaps it was more of a matter of respect and fear of seniors with power.

Teacher 2 stated:

They use cell phones when the teacher is busy teaching and when reprimanded, they often swear at teachers. They do not respect teachers especially those who are not part of the school management. (Teacher 2)

Among the problems experienced on a daily basis are learners not wearing school uniform, arriving late at school in the morning, absconding from classes, cutting the fence and drinking alcohol. I observed learners who were late arriving at around 8 a.m. while school started at 7 a.m. I also observed many learners who were not wearing their uniform properly and saw the part of the fence which had been cut. It seemed as if

teachers did not care to take action anymore against those learners who were found in breach of the rules. Learners who came late were allowed to enter and those who were not wearing school uniform properly were also allowed to enter and attend class as if nothing was wrong.

Mokhele (2006, p. 151) states that the management of discipline calls on teachers to make children feel emotionally comfortable and physically safe so that they can develop self-discipline and accountability for their actions. However, behaviour at this school showed that learners lack discipline because they do not respect their teachers. It is therefore important for teachers to teach learners good manners through creating an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect. According to the teachers who were interviewed, it appears that learners have taken democracy for granted and do not fear teachers because they know that no serious action can be taken against them, even if they openly disrespect their teachers. Oosthuizen and Van der Walt (2006, p. 5) contend that learners have to be informed of the purpose and nature of disciplinary action to be taken once they misbehave. It seems that the school does not really implement their code of conduct as a measure to control the undesirable behaviour displayed by the learners. However, teachers could try to overcome disciplinary problems by engaging learners and telling them about the consequences of breaking school rules and, by so doing, encourage learners to change their behaviour. It therefore is important for the school to ensure that the school code of conduct is followed; by so doing, learners are more likely to behave in an acceptable manner.

Teachers at this school seem to condone or disregard unacceptable behaviour and learners have taken advantage of the situation.

School B

All three teachers indicated that stealing is a very big problem, both at school and in the hostel. Theft usually results in fighting. Teacher 4 contended:

Theft is very common especially among boys. For example, they steal books, cell phones and even clothes. (Teacher 4)

This seems to indicate that poverty may be a significant cause because, if a learner goes to the extent of stealing clothes, it is likely that the learner is really poor. Democracy does not encourage stealing, however; instead it encourages learners to be responsible and respect other people's property. Among other disciplinary problems, all three teachers noted that learners do not do their home work as required, do not wear their school uniform properly, come late and are disrespectful of teachers. Teacher 5 stated:

They do not wear full uniform; you will find them wearing either shirts but putting different trousers or wearing different shoes and if you talk to them they will answer you so badly. (Teacher 5)

Mokhele (2006, p. 151) argues that teachers should recognise learners as partners in education, but that learners should not take control of the teaching and learning situation. It seems that teachers at this school have given up on disciplining those learners who are misbehaving. However, it will be difficult for them to achieve their objectives and goals if they do not take action to remedy the situation. Vandalism of school property is a serious concern at the school. Teacher 4 contended:

They destroy school properties by breaking windows, damaging classroom doors, breaking furniture, like chairs and desks, and scratching on the building. (Teacher 4)

It appears that no serious action is taken to deal with the culprits who vandalise school property. I observed that windows were broken and not repaired and the fence was cut in several places. It seems that the teachers or the school board was failing to punish those learners who vandalise property. It is therefore interesting to ask why there is a lack of discipline despite the school having an agreed code of conduct and democratic learner participation in decision making. I shall address this issue in Chapter 6.

School C

All three teachers pointed out that stealing of individual property like calculators, books and shoes is a major problem. All three teachers indicated that assault and abuse of other fellow learners are common. The use of cell phones during lessons, late coming and ignoring the dress code appear to be among the most prevalent problems encountered on a daily basis. Teacher 7 commented:

Learners come late every day without wearing school uniform and we have to force them every time to go back and dress properly. (Teacher 7)

During my observation I noticed a number of learners who were wearing their ordinary clothes and it seemed that many of the other teachers accepted that type of behaviour because they were talking and laughing with them. If teachers do not seem to abide by the code of conduct by not enforcing it consistently and fairly, the learners will not do so either.

All teachers indicated that learners like to use vulgar words to other learners. Teacher 9 lamented:

They do not respect us as young teachers, due to age difference. They think you are young and as a newly trained teacher you cannot discipline them. In other words, they undermine us at all times. The best example is, even when you are teaching, they do not listen and take serious whatever you are teaching them, as they assume that you know nothing because you are young. They think only long serving teachers are the ones who know how to teach, so they respect them more than us. (Teacher 9)

The age difference among teachers does not play a role in educating a child to become a responsible citizen. What is therefore important is the way in which the school rules support all teachers and learners. This is where an agreed code of conduct can be used as a powerful tool to encourage discipline. But it needs to be applied consistently and fairly by all teachers, giving all teachers equal authority in maintaining discipline. Learners and teachers are all stakeholders in education, so they need to respect each other and their joint decisions at all times; by so doing, discipline problems can be minimised.

Disciplinary measures of the school play a crucial and central role in ensuring order and attainment of the purpose of the school (Mabalane *et al.*, 2006, p. 5). It is therefore, important for teachers to help modify the unacceptable behaviour of learners so that they can become responsible citizens. This is part of the democratic function of a school. Teachers should make sure that they use the code of conduct as a tool to maintain discipline and, by so doing, learners will be more likely to adhere to it because they will know that the document is important and its requirements need to be followed.

School D

All three teachers indicated that theft is a major problem among boys because they steal each other's property, for example clothes and books. All teachers noted that learners do not do their homework and give no proper reasons why they fail to do so. Smoking and drinking of alcohol is also common. Teacher 10 commented:

They normally jump over the fence to go for drinking and smoking at the nearby shebeens. When they are back from the shebeens they start fighting each other in the hostel. (Teacher 10)

This is a clear indication of how bad it is to have the beer outlets located near the school because they encourage some learners to engage in drinking, which, in turn, can ruin their academic life. Apart from maintaining discipline by enforcing the code of conduct, it is also important for the school to make sure that they erect a fence that is good enough to prevent learners from jumping over it.

Thematic summary

A proper solution for behaviour problems must prevent recurrence. The research found the most prevalent disciplinary problem in all four schools to be the theft of the property of other learners, which usually resulted in fights. In addition, all four schools faced a major problem regarding dress code, because learners did not wear their school uniforms properly. Absenteeism and absconding from classes was more common in schools A, B and C, while minimal in school D. It was found that learners in all four schools normally arrive at school late in the morning; sometimes they arrive around 10 a.m. when they are supposed to start at 7 a.m. Vandalism of school property is prevalent in all four schools; learners break chairs and desks, cut the school fence and scratch on buildings. In all four schools, learners use cell phones during lesson times. Since school D is located close to the shebeens, learners climb the fence to go drinking. It was interesting to note the nature and scale of the disciplinary problems. Despite having a code of conduct with learner input and acceptance, disciplinary problems still abounded. If I were to propose a possible reason for this in terms of democratic considerations, I could identify the emphasis on rights and equality that are promoted in a democratic culture. Perhaps ill-disciplined learners regard themselves as bearers

of rights to “behave as they wish and as being equal to teachers”. However, I think such an explanation would be facile. It seems rather that one of the reasons for these disciplinary problems at the four schools is that, despite their having a democratically accepted code of conduct, the code is not consistently enforced.

5.4 *The code of conduct as a tool in maintaining discipline*

School A

All three teachers indicated that they have established a disciplinary committee at their school which is responsible for dealing with disciplinary cases according to the school rules and accepted code of conduct. Teacher 1 commented:

Once a case is reported, the chairman convenes a meeting where the committee will look into the case. The committee will then recommend what measures are to be taken, either to call the parents or to resolve the case without the involvement of parents. (Teacher 1)

The disciplinary committee therefore decides on suitable punishment to be administered. Oosthuizen *et al.*, (2006) states that the learners in question have to be informed in clear and understandable language what they are being held liable for and what disciplinary measures are imposed. In other words, learners need to know why their conduct is regarded as misbehaviour and why they are disciplined for that. However, it is important that punishment is given according to the code but without infringing the learner’s rights or inflicting pain. Corporal punishment may not be used at all because it was abolished when the country achieved its independence in 1990. All three teachers stated that verbal and written warnings are given, depending on the merit of the case. Cutting grass and cleaning the school ground is the form of punishment given in minor offences.

It was found that the school had measures in place for controlling discipline; each subject teacher kept a record book in which the behaviour of learners displayed during the lesson was recorded. However, teachers were reluctant to use the code of conduct to control learner discipline, despite all the measures in place. Teacher 1 contended:

Each subject teacher at our school has a record book where the behaviour of learners is recorded each period. Once a learner commits an offence, the case is then reported to the class teacher of that specific learner who will then call that learner and give advice. If the learner does not change the behaviour, the teacher refers the learner to the disciplinary committee for orders. (Teacher 1)

It appears that using a record book during each period was a measure that was used to identify culprits because it could be used for future reference, especially when the parents were called in. However, teachers usually did not follow up on the learner's misconduct after recording it in their register. This measure therefore had minimal effect in the maintenance of discipline. To maintain effective discipline, it is important to make sure that all those learners whose behaviour is recorded each period are dealt with as stipulated by the code of conduct. But, as Teacher 1 pointed out, such follow-through entails a drawn-out process, and many teachers do not have the time to implement it consistently.

It was found that learners who are found cutting the fence are held liable and need to buy and replace it themselves. Teacher 3 stated:

If the fence is cut, the parents of that particular learner are called in and it is a must that they purchase the fence and repair it themselves. If the learner continues to do the same offence, we suspend him or her for [a] period of not more than three weeks. (Teacher 3)

Suspension may be a good tool for maintaining discipline in a school because the majority of the learners do not want to be sent home or have their parents called in. However, the backlog that a learner faces after a three-week suspension may make teachers hesitant to implement this rather drastic measure.

School B

According to all three teachers interviewed, the school had a very active disciplinary committee that was responsible for maintaining order and discipline at all times. Teacher 5 commented:

We have a disciplinary committee that is responsible for dealing with disciplinary problems of learners. The committee looks into the case and decides whether to punish or not. (Teacher 5)

The disciplinary committee used the code of conduct and school rules as guides whenever they were to punish a learner in order to avoid the situation of being challenged with being in breach of the law. Mabalane *et al.* (2006, p. 3) contend that every form of discipline aims to bring about the improvement of a particular situation. Learners are therefore punished in order that they will change their behaviour for the better. It was found that light punishment was given, such as cleaning the classroom and cutting the grass that grows around the school, as punishment for minor offences, while suspension for two to three weeks was given for major offences. The school sometimes invited professionals, such as school counsellors and police officers, to come and talk to the learners as a way of mitigating bad behaviour. Teacher 4 noted:

In order to maintain discipline we sometimes call in the police officers to come and educate learners about the badness and dangers of misbehaviour and its consequences to a person's life. According to my experience, I believe that the dialogue between the police and learners does help a lot, especially to stop them from smoking and using drugs. Currently we do not experience drugs usage as before, which I think is a good thing and it is as the result of the education which the police officers provide. (Teacher 4)

The use of professionals at the school can help much because they are capable of changing the learners' behaviours by spelling out the broader consequences of legally unacceptable behaviour in the society. It may perhaps be easier for a learner to break the rules if he or she only has to deal with the school's disciplinary committee, but a lot more serious if the learner has to deal with the official police and the legal system. Teachers also invited parents to come and speak to the learners and, at the same time, also encouraged the Learners Representative Council to speak to their fellow learners. Teacher 5 noted:

We involve the Learner Representative Council to talk to their fellow colleagues in order to remind them about how they should behave. Sometimes we also invite parents to come and speak to their children by advising them on how they expect them to behave at school. (Teacher 5)

It is very important for parents to talk to learners because they can remind them about their culture and the values they must follow if they are to be accepted members of their society. The future of the country lies in their hands because today's learners will be leaders of tomorrow, but they can only be good and respected leaders if they are self-disciplined.

School C

All three teachers indicated that they have a disciplinary committee which deals with disciplinary matters, using the code of conduct and school rules. Teacher 7 commented:

At the beginning of each year, each learner is given a copy of the school rules, where the consequences of breaching such rules are laid down, so that they know what is expected of them from the ... beginning. (Teacher 7)

The teachers should help by explaining to the learners why certain behaviours are bad and can land them in trouble. The disciplinary committee uses the school rules as a measure to instil discipline among learners, because if the learners were given rules, there would be an objective measure of acceptable and unacceptable conduct. All three teachers indicated that they used punishment as determined by the committee as a way of minimising unacceptable behaviour. Teacher 9 stated:

The disciplinary committee decides on the type of punishment to institute depending on the nature of the case. In minor offences, learners are punished to clean the windows and cutting grass while in major offences parents are called and the suspension is given. (Teacher 9)

Punishment should not be seen to violate the learners' rights, but it should be seen as something that helps in combating bad behaviour and is aimed at reinforcing discipline in schools. Teachers 8 and 9 indicated that teachers always talked to learners who committed minor offences and gave them a bit of counselling. Teacher 8 commented:

We identify problematic learners and talk to them in a group, so that they can change their behaviours. More interesting, the ones who are called in a group respond more positively than those we send home to call their parents. (Teacher 8)

However, in cases that are regarded as major breaches of the rules it is important to call in parents so that they can come and give parental advice to the learners. It would seem that having a private talk with groups of learners exhibiting problem conduct may help, since they may talk to each other after the meeting and try and come up with solutions to their problem. But more importantly, I see it as a way of involving learners in solving their own problems. Learners need to be taught about choosing behaviours and

attached consequences. By doing so, learners hopefully become more aware of the rules, the consequences of breaking them, of their own responsibilities and of others' rights. Such insights help to strengthen the democratic culture, not only of the school but also of the society.

School D

All three teachers pointed out that the code of conduct was the main instrument used to foster discipline. They established a disciplinary committee which was tasked to look into issues related to discipline in the school. Teacher 2 contended:

We have a strong and committed disciplinary committee which handles disciplinary cases. They look into the merit of the case and decide whether to punish or not. [For a] case that is minor, a punishment of cleaning the classrooms is given. Sometimes a verbal warning is given and a learner is told not to repeat the same mistake again. If the case is a major one, parents are called in and a learner is suspended depending on its merit. (Teacher 11)

The disciplinary committee is there to help the school to become an institution that fosters law and order. Du Plessis and Looek (2007: 2) contend that the aim of discipline is to create a safe and happy learning environment. The disciplinary committee is there to monitor the situation all the time so that the school cannot be in disrepute because of unruly learners. However, the disciplinary committee should not be used as a committee that is there to punish only, but should also have as its aim to educate learners by showing and telling them how to conduct themselves. It is therefore, important for the committee to explain to a learner why he or she is being punished, so that the learner will be able to reflect and know not to repeat the same mistake in future. Teachers 11 and 12 indicated that they had a teacher counselling committee that talked to learners identified as displaying bad behaviour. Teacher 10 stated:

We have a teacher counselling committee that gives counselling because some learners are orphans, so they are traumatised and that leads them to misbehave a lot. The counselling is done by teachers or someone from outside such as a local pastor who is invited to come and address the learners. (Teacher 10)

It is important to seek as much community support as possible so that there is not a perceived contradiction between the school's code of conduct and responsible citizen

behaviour in general. School B also called in outside professionals to help with school discipline, but school D recognised learners who at risk of disciplinary problems and tried to prevent such situations from arising.

Thematic summary

It was found that each of the four schools had set up a disciplinary committee which was tasked to deal with disciplinary matters in order to foster discipline. School A kept record books in which subject teachers recorded the behaviour of those learners who misbehaved during lessons. All four schools use punishment as a tool for controlling behaviour. In the case of minor offences, learners were punished by being given work such as cleaning the classrooms and cutting grass around the school, while suspension for a period of not more than three weeks followed major offences. It was found that school B invited professionals, like local school counsellors and police officers, to come and give advice to the learners. School B also invited parents so that they, together with the Learner Representative Council, could talk to the learners and advise them about appropriate behaviour. In schools C and D, teacher counselling committees responsible for talking to those learners identified as problematic had been established. In school D they invited a local pastor to offer spiritual help to learners in order for them to behave properly. In Chapter 2, I noted that one of the key aspects of fostering democracy is open and informed discussion. By involving disciplinary committees that explain the rules and the reason for punishment, police that outline the consequences of illegal behaviour, counsellors, parents and pastors that engage with at-risk learners, the school has promoted open discussion and, by implication, has strengthened its democratic culture.

5.6 The perceived link between school governance and improved discipline in schools

School A

All three teachers in school A agreed that democratic school governance can contribute to better discipline in schools. Teacher 1 said:

Yes, democratic school governance can contribute to improved discipline especially if all stakeholders are involved in the reviewing of school rules. If learners are part of the review they feel very happy and they are more likely to respond positively by following the rules. (Teacher 1)

Implementing democratic practices in schools teaches young learners the values of respect and responsibility. It is therefore, important to involve learners in school matters as doing this can help to maintain a good working relationship with teachers. I observed a situation in which a teacher was screaming at learners who arrived late from break. It would seem that such abusive behaviour by teachers could act as an incentive for learners to respond in the same way and to talk back using bad language. In a democratic school where parents, teachers and learners are working together according to agreed rules and share ideas in a respectful manner, discipline and order is likely to prevail.

It was noted that separate meetings for discussing issues related to discipline with learners were called by the school management. Teacher 2 commented:

At the beginning of each year the school management calls separate meetings with learners, whereby male teachers speak to the boys while female teachers speak to the girls. The purpose of these separate meetings is [a] way of making sure that learners are given a platform to voice their problems. The separate meetings have brought many changes in the behaviour of the learners at our school. (Teacher 2)

The separate meetings provided opportunities for learners to engage in dialogue with their teachers and allowed learners to speak openly. Teachers listened to the learner groups separately. By doing so, specific problems could be identified and addressed, in order to minimise disciplinary problems. I noted earlier that the problems of violence and theft were more prevalent among boys. School A had established productive discussion spaces where gender-related disciplinary issues could be addressed in an open and safe way. Such a move is likely to strengthen the school's democratic culture.

School B

In contrast to school A, all three teachers indicated that democratic school governance does not improve discipline in their school because learners were abusing their democratic rights.

Teacher 4 indicated:

I don't think a democratic school can have good discipline. If the school is governed in a democratic way that means the management has limited powers to discipline learners. For example, if they think that a learner should be expelled, the Education Act 16 of 2001 does not allow them. I believe that democracy does not help to improve discipline because learners have more say nowadays than before we became democratic in 1990. They know that even if they do something wrong, nothing can happen to them as a result they continue to misbehave. If democracy was not there, disciplinary problems would be minimal, because learners know that they can face expulsion once they are in breach of school rules. (Teacher 4)

Democratic education is about inculcating discipline and lawful behaviour in learners to be better citizens (Davies *et al.*, 2002). In democratic schools, learners should be taught values, self-respect, how to respect others, as well as the consequences of breaking agreed rules. However, the teachers maintained that democracy may be contributing to disciplinary problems in schools because learners did not understand what the word democracy means, as they thought it meant they were free to do anything they felt like doing. Teacher 6 noted:

Learners are abusing their democratic rights because they have too much freedom. Nowadays as teachers we must be careful of whatever we are saying or doing to the learners, because they are capable of opening court cases against us. It is very easy to find yourself in the court of law with your own learner, something that could not happen in the past before we become democratic in 1990. (Teacher 6)

It is against this background that school teachers have perhaps become reluctant to control unruly behaviour among learners. However, democracy should be seen as a way to help to instil discipline in school because it is aimed at bringing mutual understanding between teachers, parents and learners through collective participation and a shared code of conduct.

School C

School C in general held the same view as School A. Teachers 7 and 9 indicated that democratic school governance contributed to better discipline in schools. Teacher 7 commented:

Yes, it does improve discipline, because if we have all stakeholders involved in the school governance, things become easier at the school due to co-operation. (Teacher7)

Teacher 8 was of a different view from that of the other two teachers:

Democratic school governance means all stakeholders are represented and that creates loopholes. Parents on the school board tend to favour protecting learners, especially if you want to suspend them. Learners also protect other learners whom we regard as culprits. Teachers on the school board usually block some changes that can bring development, especially if they think they will negatively affect them. (Teacher 8)

In other words, for this teacher, school governance should have been left in hands of the school management and discipline could have been better. However, it should be noted that, in order to achieve better discipline at school, parents, teachers and learners should join forces to root out bad behaviour. Parents, teachers and learners are partners in education and they should all be included in decision making if quality education is to be achieved. In a democratic institution, deliberations should be conducted in such a way that all participants have the same chances to initiate speech, to question, to interrogate and to open debate about the rule of discourse procedures (Enslin, Pendlebury & Tjiattas, 2001, p. 53). However, participants' involvement in school matters should be according to an agreed procedure and should be to the benefit of the school through making meaningful contributions during discussions.

School D

In agreement with School B, all three teachers indicated that they thought that democratic school governance did not contribute to better discipline in school but contributed to worsening the situation. They all noted that the behaviour of learners

was very good before democracy was introduced in schools, compared to now. Teacher 12 lamented:

No, democratic school governance does not improve discipline at all, but it worsens the behaviour of learners. I personally believe that if there was no democracy, learners could behave in a good way. If you look at those people who were educated during that time of apartheid when there was no democracy, they have good manners unlike these learners of today. I therefore believe that democracy will never bring discipline in schools, unless learners start to understand the word democracy itself. (Teachers 12)

According to all three teachers, democratic school governance seems to be the main contributor to lack of discipline in the schools. It was interesting to note that the learners on the school board in school D were not afraid to speak out. Given the school's urban context, it would seem that learners at this school were perhaps less subservient and less traditional and that teachers interpreted this 'modernisation' process as young people having too much democratic say. Friction between teachers and learners may perhaps be due more to generational cultural differences rather than to democratisation. Mokhele (2006: 151) has stated that the environment has to be created in which each learner is guided towards an attitude of caring and respect for other learners. It is up to the school to make sure that an environment conducive to helping the learners change their behaviour is created so that they can accept each other as human beings. It appeared that teachers were divided on the question of whether strengthening democracy in school influenced learner discipline. Some teachers thought that the democratic system in schools did not prepare and produce better learners who were ready to take up challenges in society. Other teachers thought that the democratic structures in schools promoted social awareness and mutual respect.

Thematic summary

It was found that seven out of twelve teachers interviewed in all four schools held the view that democratic school governance contributed to lack of discipline in learners in Namibian schools. They maintained that discipline has worsened since democracy was established. The main reasons they gave is that learners were becoming uncontrollable because they misunderstood the meaning of the democracy; and because, to them,

having democratic rights meant equality and freedom, which, in turn, meant that they could do anything they wanted to do. However, five of the teachers indicated that democratic school governance contributed to better discipline in schools because, once all stakeholders were involved in decision making, there was shared understanding and better co-operation. In other words, if there would be co-operation in schools, learners would tend to decrease misbehaviour as opposed to when there is no co-operation. It was found that teachers were reluctant to deal with disciplinary issues, because they were afraid of taking serious action against the learners because of the possibility of being sued in courts of law.

Despite the majority of teachers indicating that democracy contributed to lack of discipline in schools, I disagree because most learners within the same school behave very well. All schools practice democratic principles and all schools have learners who behave well and others who do not. I therefore argue that democracy may influence the behaviour of learners to a certain extent, both in the extent to which they participate in open discussion and joint decision making, as well as to the extent that some learners may exploit their rights while minimising their responsibilities. So, for teachers to claim that democracy is a direct contributor to increased misconduct, it needs to be shown statistically from a large representative sample that learners in democratic schools behave worse than learners in non-democratic schools.

5.6 Conclusion

I know of no such reliable study and therefore cannot agree with teachers who blame democracy directly for lack of learner discipline. I have discussed how democratic structures in schools, such as representation, participation, open and informed discussion, accountability and a focus on the social good can contribute indirectly to a positive school culture and responsible learner behaviour. In this chapter, I have shown that some teachers contend that democratic structures have had a positive influence, whereas others contend that it has had a negative influence. In the next chapter, I shall attempt to draw the various strands of my argument together. I have examined the premise that part of entrenching democracy in schools is to have proper learner representation on the school board. I have then defended the premise that school

boards have the responsibility to decide on shared codes of conduct and, by implication, agreed forms of punishment. Now I shall examine, in greater detail, the possible inference that, since learners have been part of the democratic decision-making process around an accepted code of conduct, this ought to have an influence on the kinds and number of disciplinary problems in schools.

CHAPTER 6: A POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD

6.1 *Conclusion*

The research was undertaken to explore teachers' perceptions of learner representation on democratic school boards and its contribution to discipline among learners in Namibian schools. The study has examined how the Namibian Education Act has empowered the school board to govern the school democratically. Mncube contends:

democratic school governance emphasises [that] whatever decisions are made in a school, should be formulated on the basis of consultation, collaboration, cooperation, partnership, mutual trust and participation of all affected parties in the school community. (Mncube, 2005, p. 19)

The Namibian Education Act gives power to school board members to develop a mission statement and code of conduct for learners. This in itself is one way of encouraging all the members of the school board to become involved in the decision-making processes of the school. It is therefore, important that schools should make sure that power and responsibilities are equally distributed among all stakeholders. The study suggests that power and responsibilities are given to all members of the school boards, namely parents, teachers and learners. However, learners tend to have limited say due to the fact that they do not know what their roles and responsibilities are; this tend to result in situations in which most of the decisions are taken by parents and teachers.

The study suggests that, if a school is governed well and democratically, disciplinary problems involving learners can be minimised. The main purpose of the study was to get a clear understanding on how teachers perceived learner representation on democratic school board to contribute to ill discipline among learners in Namibian schools. Even though only four senior secondary schools were involved in the study, the hope is that findings from the study will contribute to a richer understanding of disciplinary problems that are experienced in schools country wide. The issue of democratic school governance and its link to school discipline is still under-researched in Namibia and this study may therefore serve as an initial exploration of this topic and

may hopefully serve as a reference to future inspiring researchers and the Ministry of Education in particular.

6.2 Main issues that arose from the research

Given the exploratory nature of this study, it highlights some issues that warrant further investigation.

6.2.1 Involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process

The research has found that learners do not know and understand their roles and responsibilities as members of the school board. It transpired that they do not participate as fully as required during school board meetings. Mncube (2005, p. 20) suggests that, in a democratic school, power and responsibility are distributed fairly and equally between all stakeholders of the school, namely parents, staff and community members. However, it appears that teachers and parents tend to dominate the decision making process in Namibian schools, without encouraging learners to present their views. I suggest that more research needs to be undertaken on how to encourage learners to speak out during school board meetings, because if they do not, the decisions taken by teachers and parents might affect them adversely. For democracy to prevail, all stakeholders should be given an equal opportunity to articulate their concerns.

6.2.2 The need for school board training

It was found that learners and some parents on the school board do not understand the Namibian Education Act. Successful training of school boards, based on the needs of their members, is believed to be a prerequisite for effective, decentralised and co-operative school governance (Tsoetsi, Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2008, p. 388). I therefore, suggest that proper training in the form of workshops should be conducted immediately after school board members are elected. Tsoetsi *et al.* (2008:387) argue that the ability of the parents on the school board to govern the school depends on their skills, knowledge and experience of governance, including financial skills. If school board

members receive adequate training, they will be better able to accomplish their tasks as stipulated by the Act.

6.2.3 The need to review the Education Act, No. 16 of 2001

The Namibian Education Act gives limited power to the school board members when dealing with high-profile disciplinary cases. For example, the school board does not have the power to expel learners, regardless of the type of offence committed. The school board can only make a recommendation to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education for the expulsion of a learner from the school. Such a situation demands a lot of time because of the bureaucratic procedures that need to be followed to resolve the issue. I suggest that this particular section of the Act may need to be reviewed to see whether it would be feasible to empower the school board to expel a learner whom they think is a threat to the peace and stability of the school. School board members know the learners better than anybody else, so it may be appropriate for them to take action at the time the problem arises, rather than to wait for the higher authority to take a decision on whether to expel or not.

6.2.4 The need to review the schools' code of conduct for learners regularly

Given that I found that some school rules have become inappropriate for the changing context, I suggest that schools should review their school rules every two to three years. Once the school rules have been reviewed, it will be easier for schools to identify rules that need to be changed to suit their particular situation. It is important to include all the stakeholders during the reviewing process, so that all of them can feel that they are part of the decision and that they own the rules.

6.2.5 Learners' discipline needs to be a collective effort

The issue of discipline is immensely complex. It therefore is not feasible to expect one organisation or a single person to be responsible for instilling discipline. Parents should teach their children how to behave before they commence schooling so that discipline is

not left in the hands of the teacher only. Parents should also be invited to come and advise learners at school on how to behave by emphasising their own values and culture. Parents should emphasise that teachers need to be respected regardless of their age and that they should not be undermined on account of age differences and teaching experience. Teachers should also be encouraged to make sure that they always advise learners in their classrooms on how to behave and of what is expected of them while they are at school. The Learner Representative Council should be encouraged to talk to their fellow learners on an on-going basis about how the school expects them to behave. If discipline is viewed as a collective responsibility, it would be appropriate to investigate ways in which the school board can play a more productive and shared role in promoting discipline.

6.2.6 Need for professional help

My study seems to indicate that some of the disciplinary problems experienced with learners may be due to home or personal circumstances. To minimise the related disciplinary problems among learners, it will therefore be important to involve well-trained professionals who can counsel learners identified as problematic. Local school counsellors or psychologists could be invited to address some of the problems of those learners with emotional behavioural problems in order to restore good discipline in schools. Teachers in schools can also be trained in how to deal with learners with behavioural problems, so that they will be better able to handle disciplinary problems when they arise.

6.2.7 Beer outlets to be moved far from schools

My study identified that one of the claimed causes of learners' lack of discipline is the nearby presence of shebeens. Teachers claim that the location of the beer outlets have contributed to learners' indiscipline as they cut or jump fences to go and drink beer there. Such beer outlets should therefore be removed from the vicinity of schools, so that learners will not engage in drinking activities during school time. I suggest that the government should implement policy requiring that beer outlets not to be located near the schools.

6.2.8 Damaged school property to be replaced

Given that part of the task of schools is to instil responsibility, it might be a good idea to hold learners responsible for damage. If a learner damages school property e.g. chairs, windows, desks and fences, he/she should be held responsible for replacing it. Schools should institute a rule that makes it clear that, once a learner destroys the property, he/she is liable to pay for it. This may serve as a good deterrent to others with similar behaviour, as they may refrain from following the example because they will be afraid of having to pay for the damage. In case of damage which the learner cannot afford to pay, e.g. replacing a fence, the learner should make repairs where the damage was done. Such 'punishment' for causing damage may be seen as a form of community service.

6.3 Possible further research needed to help strengthen democratic school governance and school discipline

I suggest that future studies be conducted in order to build on what this study has found, as this is a small-scale study that only focused on the views of teachers. Similar studies could be conducted to deepen our understanding of the issue by focusing on the views of other school board members, particularly parents and learners. I therefore hope that, if such studies were to be conducted, a clearer understanding will be established on how learners' representation on democratic school boards can contribute to discipline in Namibian. The problem of discipline in schools does exist and it is not disputed. However, appropriate studies are needed to offer feasible solutions.

REFERENCES

- Aipinge, L.P. (2007). *Cluster centre principals' perceptions of the implementation of the school cluster system in Namibia*. Unpublished master's thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.
- Anderson, G. (1990). *Fundamentals of educational research*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Angula, N., & Lewis, S. (1997). Promoting democratic processes in educational decision making: reflections from Namibia, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 17 (3), 233-249.
- Apple, M., & Bean, J. (1999). *Democratic schools*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Baron, G. (1981). *Then politics of school government*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Bean, J., & Apple, M. (1999). The case for democratic schools. *Democratic schools: Lessons from the chalk face*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bertram, C. (2004). *Understanding research*. (2nd edn.). University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Blandford, S. (2003). *Managing discipline in schools*. Oxford University Press.
- Carter, C., Harber, C., & Serf, J. (2003). *Towards ubuntu: critical teacher education for democratic citizenship*. Birmingham: Development Education Centre.
- Cohen, L., & Minion, L., & Morrison (2000). *Research methods in education (5th ed.)*. London: Routledge Falmer..
- Collin, R. (1998). "Democratization in world- history perspective". In Ralph Schroeder (ed), *Weberian political sociology: democracy, nationalism and modernisation*. London: Macmillan.
- Davies, L., Harber, C., & Schweisfurth, M. (2002). *Democracy through teacher education*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham.

- Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (1997). *Educational psychology in social context. Challenges of development, social issues, and special need in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Du Plessis, P., & Loock, C. (2007). Learner discipline in crisis – can school overcome the problem? Unpublished paper. University of Johannesburg, Pretoria.
- Enslin, P., Pendlebury, S., & Tjiattas, M. (2001). Deliberative democracy, diversity and challenges of citizenship education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 33 (1), 115-1.
- Gutmann, A. (2003). *Identity in democracy*. Princeton & Oxford, Princeton University Press.
- Harber, C. (1993). Democratic management and school effectiveness in Africa: learning from Tanzania. *A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 23 (3), 289-300.
- Harber, C. (1997). School effectiveness and education for democracy and non-violence. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 1-14.
- Harber, C. (2002). Education, democracy and poverty reduction in Africa. *Comparative Education*, 38(3), 267-276.
- Harber, C. & Trafford, B. (1999). Democratic management and school effectiveness in two countries: A case of pupil participation? University of Natal. Durban.
- Holm, J. (1988). Botswana: a paternalistic democracy. In L. Diamond, J.J. Linz, & S.M. Lipset (Eds.), *Democracy in developing countries*. (pp. 179-216). London.
- John, P., & Osborn, A. (1992). The influence of school ethos on pupils' citizenship attitudes. *Educational Review*, 44 (2).
- Jordan, D. (2000). *Focus on discipline*. Minnesota: Pacer Centre.
- Karlsson, J. (2010). The role of democratic governing bodies in South African schools. *Comparative Education*, 38 (3), 327-336.

- Lessing, A., & Dreyer, J. (2007). *Every teacher's dream: Discipline is no longer a problem in South African schools*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Lunenburg, F.C., & Ornstein, A.C. (2004). *Education administration: Concepts and practice*. (4th edn.). Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Lynch, J. (1992). *Education for citizenship in a multi-cultural society*. London: Cassell.
- Mabalane, V., Fritz, E., & Nduna, B. (2007). Girl learners' conceptualisation in a secondary school in Soweto. University of Johannesburg.
- McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in education. A conceptual Introduction*, (5th ed.) New York: Longman.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Case study in education research: a qualitative approach*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education and Culture (1993). *Towards education for all*. Windhoek. Gamsberg Macmilan.
- Ministry of Education (2008). *Regional directorates of education*. Windhoek.
- Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. (2001). *The Namibian Education Act, No. 16 of 2001*. Windhoek: Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia, No. 2673.
- Mncube, V. (2005). School Governance in the democractisation of education in South Africa: The interplay between policy and practice, PhD thesis, University of Birmingham.
- Mokhele, P. (2006). Teacher-learner relationship in the management of discipline in public high schools. *Africa Education Review*, 3(1-2), 148-159.
- Mungunda, C. (2003). An investigation into school principal's experience and perceptions of participative management. Unpublished master thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown
- Nagel, T. (1992). Quality between tradition and modernity: patterns of communication and cognition in teacher education in Zimbabwe, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Oslo.

- Namibia population and housing census (2001). Windhoek.
- Niitembu, M. (2006). Stakeholders' perception of parental involvement in the governance of a Namibian rural school. Unpublished master's thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa.
- O'Sullivan, M.C.(2002). *Reflective approaches in training of unqualified and under qualified primary teachers in Namibia*, Windhoek, 18(5)523-539.
- Oosthuizen, I. (2003). Aspects of education law. (3rd edn.). Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Oosthuizen, I., & Van der Walt, J. (2006). The nature and frequency of discipline problems with which educators have to cope in a region of North- West province of South Africa. Unpublished paper
- Patricia, M. (1995). Perspectives on pedagogy in teacher education: the case of Namibia. *International Journal of Education* 15(1), 3-13.
- Punch, K. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. SAGE, London
- Reeves, C. (1954) *School Boards: their status, functions and activities*. New York. Prentice-Hall.
- Republic of Namibia, Office of the Prime Minister. *Education Act, No. 16, 2001*. Windhoek.
- Republic of South Africa, President's Office (1996b). *South African School's Act No. 84 of 1996*. Cape Town. Government printer.
- Republic of South Africa, President's Office (1996c). *Constitution of Republic of South Africa*. Act 108 of 1996. Pretoria. Government printer.
- Rowell, L. (1995) Action research and school counselling: Closing the gap between research and practice. *Journal for Professional School Counselling*, Vol. 9, No 5.
- Schaller, A. M. (2007) Discipline at secondary schools in Tsumeb, Namibia. Unpublished master's thesis. Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria, South Africa.
- Sinclair, J . M. (1999). Collin concise dictionary. Glasgow. Harper Collins.

- Slavin, R.E. (2007) *Educational research in an age of accountability*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- The Namibian*. (2005, 26 June). School beating lands in court. Windhoek.
- Smith, P.K., Morita, Y., Junger-Tas, J., Olweus, D., Catalano, R., & Slee, P. (Eds.) (1999). *The nature of school bullying: A cross-national perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Tsotetsi, S., Van Wyk, N., & Lemmer, E. (2008). The experience of and need for training of school governors in rural Schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 28,385-400.
- Waghid, Y. (2005). Action as an educational virtue: toward a different understanding of democratic citizenship education. *Educational Theory*, 55(3), 323-342.
- Wellington, J. (2000). *Educational research: contemporary issues and practical approaches*. British Library.
- Wilson, S. (2003). *Submission to the ministerial committee on school management and governance*. University of Witwatersrand.
- Wood, G. (1988). Democracy and the curriculum. In B. Landon, & M. Apple (Eds.), *The curriculum: problems, politics and possibilities*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Woodward, W. (2002). Learning united. *Education Guardian*, 19 December.
- Young, I. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: Interview schedule for teachers

1. Are parents, teachers and learners represented on the school board?
2. Does a code of conduct for learners exist in your school?
 - i) If so, when was it formulated?
 - ii) When was implemented for the first time?
 - iii) When last was it reviewed?
 - iv) Who were the stakeholders involved when it was reviewed?
3. What is the nature of disciplinary problems experienced the most in your school?
4. Which instruments or tools do you use to foster discipline in school?
5. How can democratic school governance contribute to improve discipline in schools?

APPENDIX B: Permission letter to conduct a research in schools in Oshana Education Region

FROM : PQA - SPECIAL EDUCATION FAX NO. : 061 2933924 Jun. 27 2008 12:02PM P2


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PROGRAMMES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Tel: 264 61 2933200	Private Bag 13186
Fax: 264 61 2933922	Windhoek
E-mail: mshimho@mec.gov.na	NAMIBIA
Enquiries: MN Shimhopileni	20 June 2008

File: 11/2/1

Mr Fred Sinalumbu
P. O. Box 6058
Ausspannplatz
WINDHOEK

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH
 IN SCHOOLS IN OSHANA EDUCATION REGION**

Kindly be informed that the Ministry welcomes and appreciates your intention to embark upon a research to investigate how democracy in school governance is perceived and to determine whether and how it influences discipline among the learners.

This letter grants you permission to conduct your research at those three schools in Oshana region. You are advised to liaise with the Regional Education Office, and also to contact the principals of the selected schools in ample time for the necessary arrangements you may require to make.

The Ministry would appreciate it highly if you would present it with your research report. Also ensure that your research activities do not interfere with the normal programmes and activities at the schools.

We wish you success in your quest for academic excellence.

Yours faithfully,

I V Ankanam
PERMANENT SECRETARY
cc: Regional Director, Oshana

