Educators’ perspectives on a code of conduct for learners at selected high schools

Haley Denise Hanslo

Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the Faculty of Education at Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Prof B van Wyk

December 2020
DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: December 2020
ABSTRACT

This philosophical study draws on Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which is predominantly concerned with the understanding and interpretation of texts. From this methodological perspective, I conducted a conceptual and documentary analysis of the Code of Conduct of a public high school in Elsies River, Cape Town. Through this analysis, I focused on the teachers’ perspectives of the school’s Code of Conduct with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of how the discipline policy is perceived, understood, and implemented by the teachers of the school.

The Code of Conduct helps with the discipline, environment, culture, and values of the school. The importance and purpose of the Code of Conduct is to promote positive discipline and constructive learning at the school. I discuss various understandings of the concept of a Code of Conduct, the history, and the translation of a Code of Conduct into high schools, specifically into my research site: a high school in Elsies River, Cape Town. This is followed by an analysis of the concept of discipline within the Code of Conduct to gain a deeper understanding of the different perspectives of discipline. The main reason for conducting this research was to construct the meaning of teachers’ perspectives of the Code of Conduct. Furthermore, should the interpretation of the Code of Conduct not be understood by all the role players in an institution, the rules, ideals, and consequences as set out in the school improvement plan may not be realised.

**Key concepts:** Code of Conduct, discipline, hermeneutics, educators, public high school
OPSOMMING

Hierdie filosofiese studie maak gebruik van Gadamer se hermeneutiek, wat primêr te make het met die begrip en interpretagie van tekste. Uit hierdie perspektief doen ek ’n konseptuele en dokumentêre analise van die gedragskode van ’n spesifieke hoërskool in Elsiesrivier, Kaapstad. Na aanleiding van die analise, fokus ek gevolglik op die onderwysers se perspektief van die gedragskode vir leerders van bogenoemde skool.

Ek het die beleidsdokument vir gedragskodes bestudeer en spesifiek gekeek na die geskiedenis daarvan en hoe dit by skole geïmplementeer moet word.

Ek het vier betekenisse vir gedragskodes gekonstrueer (dissipline, omgewingsfaktore, kultuur en waardes) om as ’n teoretiese raamwerk vir die analise van die hoërskool in Elsiesrivier se gedragskode te dien. Hierdie studie het bevind dat hoe onderwysers die gedragskode verstaan en implementeer ’n groot impak op die skool se dissipline en orde kan hê.

By implikasie word daar aangeneem of afgelei dat as daar nie samewerking of ’n eenvormige begrip oor die implementering van die dokument is nie, skoolverbetering nie sal plaasvind nie.

**Hoofkonsepte:** gedragskode, dissipline, hermeneutiek, opvoeders, openbare hoërskool
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to place on record my gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

- I want to thank the Almighty God for all the blessings, mercies, health and above all love that He has blessed me with.

- Prof Berte van Wyk, my supervisor, for this research study. His guidance, scholarly advice, and great experience as an academic helped me considerably in completing my study. Thank you for believing in me. I truly appreciate it.

- The Western Cape Education Department, for granting me permission to access schools and conduct this research.

- My mentors: Madeleine Issah, Karen Hanslo and Vanessa Jacobs, my study buddy.

- My family members: My husband Patrick, my child Tristan, my single parent Maureen, my siblings, Dilshaad, Lindy and Tracy-lee, nieces and nephews Zeah, Greer, Robyn, Ross and Daniel, mother-in-law Loraine, and Aunty Monica.

- Thank you all for allowing me to use family time to conduct my studies.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................... II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................... IV

TABLE OF FIGURES ..................................................................................................... IX

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS ...................................................................................... X

CHAPTER 1 ....................................................................................................................... 1

ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH ............................................................................. 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................... 1

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY ............................................................................. 1

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY ............................................................................ 5

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM ......................................................................... 8

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY .............................................................................................. 13

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS .................................................................. 14

1.6.1 Code of conduct ............................................................................................... 14

1.6.2 Discipline ......................................................................................................... 14

1.6.3 Hermeneutics ................................................................................................... 14

1.6.4 Educators ......................................................................................................... 15

1.6.5 High schools .................................................................................................... 15

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE ............................................................................................. 16

1.8 SUMMARY ............................................................................................................. 16

CHAPTER 2 ....................................................................................................................... 18

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS .......................................................... 18

2.1 INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................................... 18

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS ....................................................................................... 18

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .............................................................................. 18

2.3.1 Qualitative research ....................................................................................... 20

2.3.2 Interpretive theory .......................................................................................... 21
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF POLICIES, SCHOOL DOCUMENTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 WHAT IS EDUCATION POLICY?

4.3 PAM DOCUMENT

4.4 THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

4.5 ANALYSIS OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOLS A AND B

4.6 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

4.7 SUMMARY

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.3.1 Discipline

5.3.2 Environment

5.3.3 Culture

5.3.4 Values

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SCHOOL

5.4.1 Vision of the school

5.4.2 Mission of the school

5.4.3 The Code of Conduct

5.4.4 Discipline

5.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

5.8 CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES.......................................................... 105
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MRS H. HANSLO ........................................ 107
TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 4.1: PROMINENT MISBEHAVIORS: SCHOOL A AND B .................................................. 68

FIGURE 4.2: VISIBLE CODE OF CONDUCT AT SCHOOL .................................................. 68

FIGURE 4.3: VISIBILITY OF CODE OF CONDUCT: SCHOOL B .......................................... 69
## ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABET</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMIS</td>
<td>Centralized Education Management Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Development Appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Disciplinary Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IQMS</td>
<td>Integrated Quality Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEC</td>
<td>Member of the Executive Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAM</td>
<td>Personnel Administration Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Performance Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCL</td>
<td>Representative Council of Learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASA</td>
<td>South African Schools Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASSA</td>
<td>South African Social Security Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMT</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
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<td>WSE</td>
<td>Whole-school Evaluation</td>
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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is a conceptual analysis of the educators’ perspectives of discipline in the Code of Conduct for learners at two selected high schools (I merely use the second high school to enhance my content, to strengthen my grounds to form a more in-depth understanding of teachers concepts). The study seeks to understand how the educators’ perspectives and implementation of the Code of Conduct help to create a disciplined and purposeful school environment dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of a quality governance structure at the school. The sites of the analyses are two high schools in the Metropole North area of Cape Town, South Africa.

This is an interpretive study and it draws on a hermeneutical inquiry and study of Gadamer’s (Grondin, 2002) theory to invest in a deeper understanding of the topic. I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of the educators’ perspectives of the Code of Conduct for learners at a high school and how it is created and articulated in the associated documents.

This chapter presents an orientation to my study. On this basis, I firstly present the introduction, background, motivation, and Philosophy of Education as my approach to the study and, lastly, the statement of the problem with the introduction of related concepts. To round it off I provide the chapter outline of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In this section I discuss the background to the context of this high school. I will provide a detailed discussion of this in a dedicated chapter (Chapter 4). For the reader to understand the context, I need to provide a historical background to the school. Gadamer (1975) states that one way to understand a phenomenon or a text is to understand it from a historical consciousness perspective. To the end, I will try to discuss the discipline in the high school and how the educators perceive
the Code of Conduct for the learners. I started my teaching journey in 1995, as a relief teacher at a high school in Elsies River that I attended as a learner myself, so I knew the culture, the history and even the staff at the school. It therefore was like coming home after four years of teacher’s training at Bellville Teacher’s College. To be back in Elsies River was different, realising now because of my education. Elsies River, Connaught Estate and Uitsig are among the areas that together are called the Cape Flats. Elsies River is situated approximately 15 kilometres west of Cape Town and six kilometres east of Bellville. According to history, Elsies River operated as a halt in the early days, which is where the Elsies River station is situated today. In 1942, Elsies River was included in a list of 25 areas labelled as “black spots” in the Cape Peninsula. The areas were named black spots because they were areas in which black/non-white people lived in what was regarded as white areas, not specifically because of hygienic conditions.

The hygienic conditions of Elsies River were very bad due to the density of the population living in shacks, bad sanitation and poor drinking water. These circumstances were worsened by the Group Areas Act no. 41 of 1950 (Parliament of South Africa, 1950). The most prevalent social problems were the high incidence of unemployment, vagrancy, crime, shebeens and prostitution – all symptoms of a high level of poverty (Jansen, Du Plooy & Esau, 1984).

Exactly 32 years later it is still a financially poor community that struggles with social challenges such as poverty, drugs, single parenting, low incomes and sometimes no income. Many of our learners come from these poor, single-parent families or live with their grandparents because their parents have either abandoned them or are deceased. Unemployment is a reality and the root of the community’s ongoing challenges. The school has a feeding scheme through which learners receive a nutritional plate of food during break time. The area is caught in the grip of rival gangs, such as the “Bad Rush” and “Terrible,” (learners gang up in teams and give themselves these names) who are constantly fighting for territory. Learners are often caught in the crossfire of this violence and sometimes do not attend school.

My study focuses on a high school situated in an historically disadvantaged community. The Department of Basic Education categorises the school as a quintile four school. Thus, the school is a fee-paying school, even though finance is a challenge in the community. Parents may apply
for exemption from fees if they can prove they are unemployed or receive a grant from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA). However, the subsidy provided by the government only covers the day-to-day running expenses of the school. This includes the purchase of cleaning products, stationery, and utility bills. Due to safety reasons, the school aborted fundraising efforts, hence the school’s poor financial status. The school currently has a total of 998 learners, of whom 471 are male and 527 are female, with 39 educators, one Centralized Education Management Information System (CEMIS) administrator, one bursar, one kitchen staff member, seven security staff and three cleaning staff. For the record, the Western Cape Province has a web-enabled system called CEMIS. CEMIS is not a school management and administration system in the true sense of the word and is mainly used as a learner registration and tracking system.


My concern is the discipline at the school. The school is rapidly mirroring the social ills of the community. The school has a disciplinary structure, but somehow it seems that there it does not work as planned. Public schools are governed by the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) and the Act aims to offer uniformity in school organisation, governance, funding and to amend certain laws. This spurred my curiosity to gain a deeper understanding. The governing body is a legal structure that governs the school with a Code of Conduct that was set up by the parents, teachers, and learners.

At our school, we have a disciplinary structure that makes perfect sense, but only on paper. In the case of misconduct, the pattern of reporting looks as follows:

- Class teacher,
- Grade head,
• Deputy,
• Discipline Committee (DC), and the
• School Governing Body.

The representative council of learners (RCL) at our school has a component called RCL discipline, which performs playground duty daily, but I am not clear whom they report to or are supposed to report to. Pretorius and Lemmer (2004) argue that the current policy changes in the administration and management of education require that school managers should have more than a basic knowledge and understanding of the functions of management. School managements should move away from a hierarchical approach and more towards one that promotes cooperation by the members of the senior management team (SMT) and the school governing body (SGB), as well as cooperation and goodwill from the educators. The sole purpose of school management and governance is to ensure that educators can carry out their instructional and classroom management activities so that effective learning can take place. Effective school management in the current South African educational context requires competence in structuring and managing the school as an organisation; however, our school lacks some of these elements.

I used two schools from the same demographical area, the purpose is not to compare the schools but to use the content to find more balanced and informed outcomes. The educators at these two high schools completed a questionnaire about their understanding and implementation of the Code of Conduct for their learners. Therefore, the study aimed to investigate the educators’ perspectives on the Code of Conduct for learners at the two selected schools, as well as how the educators’ perspectives and implementation of the Code of Conduct help to create a disciplined and purposeful school environment dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of a quality governance structure at the school.

Let me briefly clarify what I mean by perspectives. According to research, a perspective can be understood as assisting the way you see something. For example, if you think that toys corrupt children’s minds, then from your perspective a toy shop is an evil place. The word ‘perspectives’ has a Latin root, meaning “look through” or “perceive” (Kariger & Fierro, 1995) and all the meanings of perspective have something to do with looking. On the other hand, according to The
Cambridge Dictionary of American Biography (Bowman, 1995), there are three ways of understanding the meaning of the word:

- Perspective is a particular way of considering something. Here, attitude lends a fresh perspective to the subject; or, he writes from a Marxist perspective.
- To think about a situation or problem wisely and reasonably. You must keep things in perspective – the overall situation isn’t that bad.
- Put in(to) perspective to compare something to other things, it can be accurately and fairly judged: Total investments for this year reached 53 million, and, to put this into perspective, investments this year were double those made in 2013.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

I grew up in Elsies River, attended Elsies River Primary School and progressed to Elsies River High School from Grade 8 to 12, then called Standard 6 to Standard 10. This school was the top school in Elsies River. Even though this was a crime-ridden area, this school was well known for its good discipline. The school had a very good reputation in the area. The pass rate and sports performance of the school was of a very high standard in those years. My mother was a single parent; hence we had severe financial constraints. Because of poverty in the area, most of my peers dropped out of school to go to work in the nearby factories. My mother was very strict and was determined not to let her children take that route, resulting in her working night and day to provide for us. I had great teachers as role models during my school years, and that is when I decided that I wanted to gain more knowledge, find a deeper understanding of the philosophy of education, and follow my dreams. My aim was always to come back and teach in the community and help them to move out of the cycle of poverty, crime, and lawlessness.

After obtaining my matric in 1989, I started my four-year teacher’s training at Bellville Teacher’s College, in Kuils River. I developed an interest in leadership and management and, from 2007 to 2011, I enrolled for an honours course in leadership and management. I firmly believe that discipline leads to good management and, as a lifelong learner, I always try to attend all workshops that the Department of Education offers. My core modules included Education Management and Leadership and Education Change Management, which reaffirmed to me that I want to, that I need
to, delve deeper into education and leadership. This made me aware of the relationship between the leadership and the discipline of a school. I started taking a closer look at several high schools in the Elsies River area, and for the purpose of the study I decided on School A. The enrolment of School A was normally more or less 1 300 learners, but figures recently started to dwindle because of deteriorating discipline. The school is a dual-medium school, offering English Home Language and Afrikaans Home Language, ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

In 2010, the school became a school with a technical focus, with trade subjects such as Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Civil Engineering, as well as an academic stream focusing primarily on business and computer subjects. The school’s motto is Educate to Liberate. In the school’s early years, chess, athletics, and the choir were top class. The school had a school newspaper (Emergo) and a hiking club (Dapper Stappers). The top management of the school has changed in the past few years, with four principals and five deputy principals each bringing their version of discipline and school culture.

The above resulted in a radical change to how discipline in the Code of Conduct was dealt with. The South African Schools Act (SASA), No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996b) was implemented on 1 January 1997 and incorporated a Code of Conduct for learners that serves as the basis for the development and promotion of positive learner behaviour.

At School A, discipline and order deteriorated, and these were attributed to the constant change in school management. How do learners, staff and other role players perceive the Code of Conduct if the management and the policies themselves keep changing? Did the teachers’ perspective on these policies perhaps change, or did they even understand them in the first place? Is there a correlation between bad discipline and how teachers perceive the Code of Conduct?

I have been teaching for more than 21 years in a disadvantaged area (Elsies River, Eureka Estate), and it boggles my mind how there is such a difference between the behaviour of children coming from the same area. I have observed my neighbouring schools and I must confess that I feel green with envy when I see how well disciplined their learners are. What are the challenges at our school? This question motivated me to read about and do research on how our school can make that change.
I also wanted to improve my practice concerning discipline at schools. As a teacher, I want to develop and grow professionally. I want to deepen my knowledge and understand my school community. The question arises: Why do we have this poor discipline and behaviour and poor results at our school? Multiple questions pop up, like: Is there a school culture? What is the discipline structure? Does the Code of Conduct work? What kind of teacher does the school have or what are their perspectives on discipline in the Code of Conduct? Why do some children excel in our neighbouring schools and not at our school? What is the parents’ contribution? What constitutes a good school? Whose responsibility is it to create a good school? The learners, teachers, or the parents? I come from this area, from a single-parent and low-income household, and I have furthered my studies. Does the discipline at home have an impact on learner behaviour at school, or does it depend on the school to inspire the learner to want to make the change?

Eureka Estate in Elsies River is known for its low-income, high-crime-rate statistics and lots of social challenges. In this area, we have different age groups and generations staying in the same house. In some extreme cases, the only income is the SASSA grant and old-age pension that are used to make ends meet. In our area, we also have the challenge of single parenting, which seems to cripple conduct at school. The absence of a father figure at home shows its strains at school. Before 1994, we could make use of corporal punishment – one of the practices that helped us cope with our daily challenges. At our school, some parents fully agreed with using corporal punishment; however, every day we struggled to cope with implementing the proper punishment. Within this community, we experience social problems such as extreme poverty, drug abuse, gangsterism and much more daily. According to the Children’s Rights, it is now illegal to use corporal punishment. The school disciplinary culture affects the way people at a school think, perform and learn. In laymen’s terms, one might describe a school’s disciplinary culture as “the way we do things here”. This definition made me realise that, at the school where I am teaching, “the way we do things here” changes every two weeks. How do we then become consistent? How do we achieve good results to ultimately be able to lure learners to enrol at our school instead of the other school?

My research, therefore, was of an interpretive (to understand) nature and attempted to find out why other schools perform better. The learners from those schools come from almost the same area,
they share more or less the same social and economic background, and they face the same challenges daily. I am concerned that if this ill-discipline continues, our learners will remain stuck in this vicious circle of poverty, lose hope and not be able to use education as the key to success.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Popper’s words (1972a:260): “We start, I say, with a problem, a difficulty. It may be practical or theoretical. Whatever it may be when we first encounter the problem we cannot know much about it. At best, we have only a vague idea of what our problem consists of. How then can we produce an adequate solution? We cannot. We must first get better acquainted with the problem. Drawing on Popper I intend to get acquainted with my problem at the school through this project. At this basic level of my project, I have some key characteristics that I want to touch on:

- It is a practice-based approach,
- It incorporates and builds on critical reflection on practice is driven by a desire to improve practice, and
- It may contribute to the development of professional knowledge.

This project has several aims, but specifically, I want to analyse the concept of discipline in the Code of Conduct of different schools. The aim is to see how educators interpret and understand it. The research wants to understand what the educators’ perspectives are on the Code of Conduct at their schools, and how they implement their rules. These aims will be reached systematically. Firstly, I aim to investigate the conceptualisation of the question, “What is a Code of Conduct?” and what it means within the different schools. Secondly, I want to analyse the different implementation strategies of the Code of Conduct at different schools. Thirdly, I want to reach a conclusion on the perspectives of teachers from the different schools. Thereafter, I want to understand and develop a deeper understanding of the concept of discipline. The investigation may result in different and innovative ways in dealing with discipline, make teachers more aware of how to deal with discipline, and in the process impact the quality of learning of learners.

From the results of the study, the challenges that are faced at each school could be identified and investigated to ascertain the impact they may or may not have on the overall success of the school.
Reflecting on the past 30 years in terms of school management, government policies and initiatives, there have been substantial changes in the ways schools are managed. In seeking to understand what constitutes a Code of Conduct, the educators’ perspectives and the implementation of the Code of Conduct at school, I will explore both national and international literature. Thomas (2009:30) describes literature as “anything that represents the results of research or scholarship on a subject”, while Johnson and Johnson (2009:75) refer to the literature review as “an examination of journal articles … books and other sources related to your action research”.

I have noticed that there is a disconnection between the educator and the learner. Some of our educators will only see to the classes that they are teaching. Some teachers do not bother to tell learners to keep left in the corridors, to switch off their phones, to stop making a noise, not to play with a soccer ball while they are on their way to another class. During intervals, we have the gangsters of the neighbourhood who come and talk to our learners at the fence. We always call the police but receive little or no response. The educators have a playground duty timetable, but with the frequent absenteeism of the teachers, we are hardly ever on the grounds. Sometimes it feels like no man’s land. More than 100 learners come late for school on a daily basis, or they stay away from classes, walk to classes in a disorderly fashion and with lots of noise, they swear loudly and just do not care about educators. The learners do as they please. They wear scarfs, other colour socks, shoes, hoodies, bags, nail polish, long hair, boys have funky haircuts, they vandalise school property, participate in gang fights – it just seems as if we have no rules at our school, although on paper, we have a Code of Conduct. Matric results of 2015 of the school were the lowest in the district. Even though we have all the disciplinary structures, the school discipline is still struggling.

What is a Code of Conduct all about? According to the Western Cape Education Department, the Code of Conduct outlines the rules concerning learner behaviour at a school and describes the disciplinary system to be implemented by the school concerning misbehaviour by learners.

The Code of Conduct applies to all learners while they are on the school premises or when they are representing the school. Section 8(4) of the SA Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) states that all learners attending a school are bound by the Code of Conduct of that specific school. The administration of the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the disciplinary committee of that specific school. It is expected of all learners attending a school to sign a statement of commitment to the Code of
Conduct of the school. Furthermore, the *South African Schools Act* (RSA,1996b), defines an Act as a uniform system for organisation, governance and to provide for matters connected thereto.

The learner performance of the school in question seems to indicate a lack of effective discipline. Can one blame the leadership and management at the school or the educators? Through my observations as a teacher at the school for 21 years, it is obvious that there is little evidence of a sound disciplinary culture and climate of teaching and learning, and this can be closely linked to the school being labelled as dysfunctional. The school needs to learn more about the tradition of a good school culture, ethos and climate, and the effect these will have on teacher and learner performance. Leadership needs to grow, they need to set and achieve realistic goals, they need to put what they learn into action and apply their new knowledge.

According to Northmore and Potterton (2014), discipline is a way to ensure behaviour that helps to create a school and classroom environment in which teaching and learning can take place. It includes a formal Code of Conduct for learners and teachers that is written down, and rules made by each teacher within his or her classroom. These rules ensure that learners and teachers behave appropriately. Similarly, according to Lapperts (2012:15), discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies that are appropriate to the regulations of children and maintenance of order in schools. The school aims to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom. The term ‘discipline' is also applied to the punishment that is the consequence of breaking the rules. Lapperts (2012) echoes that school discipline is a system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies that are appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools. The aim of the school is ostensibly to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom.

Given the above, a few questions arise:

1. What is a Code of Conduct?
2. How do educators express and understand the Code of Conduct for learners?
3. How is discipline articulated in the Code of Conduct policy documents for schools?
4. How is the Code of Conduct implemented at selected schools?
In the early 1990s, a research project based at the University of Oregon, Project PREPARE, developed and implemented a new model for managing problem behaviour (Colvin, 1993; Sugai et al., 1990). This model combines the proactive features for developing a supportive school climate with positive procedures for reinforcing desirable behaviour and negative consequences for discouraging problem behaviour. This approach has been expanded and implemented on a national and international scale (Sugai et al., 2002; Todd et al., 1999; Turnbull, Edmonson & Griggs., 2002). The primary purpose of this school of thought is to provide school-wide discipline.

According to the Western Cape Education Department, the Code of Conduct spells out the rules regarding learner behaviour at the school and describes the disciplinary system to be implemented by the school concerning transgressions by learners. The Code of Conduct applies to all learners while they are on the school premises or when they are away from the school representing the school. Section 84 of the *South African Schools Act* (1996b) provides that all learners attending a school are bound by the Code of Conduct of that particular school. All the learners attending the school are expected to sign a statement of commitment to the Code of Conduct. The administration of the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the disciplinary committee of that particular school. The Western Cape Department of Education discusses the Code of Conduct in the *SA Schools Act*, the *National Education Policy Act* (SA, 1996a), the *Employment of Educators Act* (RSA, 1998) and Regulations and Related material under Section 84 of the *South African Schools Act* (1996b) under two main headings – Part 1: School Rules, and Part 2: Disciplinary System.

The *South African Schools Act* (RSA,1996b) defines an Act as a uniform system for the organisation and governance of schools’ Code of Conduct, and to provide for matters connected therewith. Before the abolishment of apartheid in 1994, South Africa had an education system based on racial inequality and segregation; hence this country required a new national system for schools that would redress the past injustices in education. South Africa is supposed to provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and, in so doing, lay a strong foundation for the development of the talents and capabilities of all the country’s people; advance the democratic transformation of society; combat racism and sexism; uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators; and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. This has to be done in partnership with the State. It is also
necessary to set uniform norms and standards for the education of learners at schools, and for the organisation, governance, and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa.

This Act applies to school education in the Republic of South Africa. A member of the executive council and head of department must exercise any power bestowed upon them by or under this Act, after taking full account of the applicable policy determined in terms of the *National Education Policy Act No. 27* (RSA, 1996a). Nothing in this Act prohibits a provincial legislature from enacting legislation for school education in a province per the Constitution and this Act. The Code of Conduct is subjected to any applicable provincial laws. A public-school governing body must adopt a Code of Conduct for the learners after consulting with the learners, parents, and educators of the school. A Code of Conduct must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process. The Minister may, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine guidelines for the consideration of governing bodies in adopting a Code of Conduct for learners. Nothing contained in this Act exempts a learner from the obligation to comply with the Code of Conduct of the school attended by such learner. A Code of Conduct must contain provisions of due process safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings.

The Code of Conduct must also provide support measures or structures for counselling a learner involved in disciplinary proceedings and the governing body members must at all times be reminded that this is not a court of law. A learner must always be accompanied by his or her parent, caregiver or a person designated by the parent to disciplinary proceedings, unless good cause is shown by the governing body for the continuation of the proceedings in the absence of the parent or the person designated by the parent. Whenever disciplinary proceedings are pending before any governing body and it appears to such governing body that it would expose a witness under the age of 18 years to undue mental stress or suffering if he or she testifies at such proceedings, the governing body may, if practicable, appoint a competent person as an intermediary to enable such witness to give his or her evidence through that intermediary. An examination, cross-examination, or re-examination of a witness in respect of whom a governing body has appointed an intermediary under Subsection (7) *(National Education Policy Act No. 27, RSA, 1996a)*, except examination
by the governing body, must not take place in any manner other than through that intermediary. Such intermediary may, unless the governing body directs otherwise, convey the general purport of any question to the relevant witness.

If a governing body decides to appoint an intermediary under Subsection (7) (RSA, 1996a), the governing body may direct that the relevant witness must give his or her evidence at any place (by doing so they are protecting the learner) that is informally arranged to put that witness at ease; is arranged in a manner in which any person whose presence may upset that witness is outside the sight and hearing of the witness; and enables the governing body and any person whose presence is necessary at the relevant proceedings to hear, through the medium of any electronic or other devices, that intermediary as well as that witness during his or her testimony.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

This project had several aims, but generally, it wanted to analyse the discipline in the Code of Conduct of different schools and how educators interpret and understand it. The research wants to understand what the educators’ perspectives are of the Code of Conduct at their schools, and how they implement their rules. These aims were reached systematically. Firstly, I aimed to investigate the conceptualisation of the question, “What is a Code of Conduct?” and what it means within the different schools. Secondly, I wanted to analyse the different implementation strategies of the Code of Conduct at different schools. Thirdly, I wanted to analyse the perspectives of teachers from different schools, followed by gaining an understanding and making sense of the word discipline. Ultimately, the aim is to develop a deeper understanding of school discipline through understanding the Code of Conduct. The investigation could give rise to better results, responsible teachers, and quality students for my school. With the results of the study, the challenges that each school face can be identified and investigated to ascertain the impact it may or may not have on the overall success of the school. Reflecting on the past 30 years in terms of school management, government policies and initiatives, there have been substantial changes in the way how schools are managed.
1.6 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following are the key concepts used in this study:

1.6.1 Code of conduct

According to the *SA Schools Act* (RSA, 1996b), subject to provincial laws, a governing body of a school must adopt a Code of Conduct for learners after consulting with the learners, parents, and educators of the particular school (Pretorius & Lemmer, 2004:11). This Code of Conduct may include classroom and school rules with a view to maintaining a disciplined and purposeful school environment. According to this Act, the governing body may suspend a learner from attending school. In accordance with the prevailing provincial law, a learner at a public school may be expelled only by the head of the provincial department, and only if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing. No person may administer corporal punishment to a learner at any school (*SA Schools Act No. 84 of 1996*). A representative council of learners must be established at every public-school enrolling Grade 8 to Grade 12 learners.

1.6.2 Discipline

For the current study, when referring to discipline, I refer to school discipline. School discipline is the system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies that are appropriate to the regulation of children and the maintenance of order in schools. The aim of the school is to create a safe and conducive learning environment in the classroom.

1.6.3 Hermeneutics

The term ‘hermeneutics’ (Danner, 1995:223) stems from the Greek verb, *hermeneuein* which has three meanings:

- To make something explicit or to express something,
- To unfold something, to explain something,
- To translate, interpret something.
Hermeneutics is the theory and methodology of text interpretation. Hermeneutics was initially applied to the interpretation or exegesis of scripture. It emerged as a theory of understanding through the work of people such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur (Kabende, 2015). This discipline includes written, verbal, and non-verbal communication (Zalta, 2016). Connole (1993:59-60) claims that the primary concern of an interpretive framework is the understanding of human actions in the context within which they live. Therefore, human behaviour is seen as the outcome of external influences. From this perspective, human actions have reasons. Kabende (2015) claims that meanings are generated and shared through language and other forms of symbolism and are negotiated. Reflecting on the above discussion, I asked myself: how can I use interpretivism in my study?

Similarly, as with Connole (1993:59-60), my project becomes one of understanding. Both of us investigate the educator’s perspectives on discipline in the Code of Conduct at their schools – for example, an interpretive understanding of the concept of discipline and what it means in the Code of Conduct.

1.6.4 Educators

According to the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 (RSA, 1998), an educator refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional education services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at any public school, departmental office or adult basic education centre and who is appointed in a post on any educator establishment under this Act. The definition of ‘educator’ was amended by the SA Schools Act No. 84 (RSA, 1996).

1.6.5 High schools

A school in the South African Schools Act No 84 (RSA, 1996b) refers to a place that is dedicated to the conduct of learned intercourse and the instruction of children and people under college age. In the context of the current study, I refer to public schools, and to the two high schools at which
I conducted my study. Public school means a public school as defined in section 1 of the South African Schools Act No. 84 (RSA, 1996b).

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 2 deals with the research methodology and research methods of my study. I will make use of proper research procedures when obtaining data, evidence or information as part of the study. In this chapter I present a detailed discussion of hermeneutics and the reason why I chose this methodology. For my research methods, I discuss conceptual analysis and documentary analysis by using a systematic approach to the conduct of the study.

In Chapter 3 I explore the concept of the Code of Conduct in the literature. I do this by analysing the concepts of the perceptions of teachers and how the Code of Conduct as part of discipline plays a meaningful part in school discipline.

Chapter 4 provides the analyses of policies, acts and documents of the Western Cape Education Department and the public schools in this study. The analyses of these documents were based on the research questions of this study.

In Chapter 5 I discuss the findings and recommendations of the study, and briefly refer to the limitations of the study. To conclude, I provide the study with my hermeneutical reflection on the study.

1.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter I briefly introduced the background to my study. To underpin and strengthen my hypothesis, I am going to use two schools in the same area to research my study. I stated the problem I intend to research, which relates to discipline, and teachers’ perceptions of the Code of Conduct for learners and the implementation thereof. To conduct the study, I choose conceptual analysis to analyse data on the teachers’ perceptions and on the implementation of the Code of Conduct for learners at the schools by analysing the questionnaires of the participants. The
methodology for this study is hermeneutics, as I want to gain a deeper understanding of how this research can help my school to become a better place of learning. I will explore the Code of Conduct for learners in the literature in order to learn, understand and get a broader perspective on the theme. Legal documents and Acts pertaining to the Code of Conduct for learners will be analysed and discussed. Kabende (2015) suggests that hermeneutics is described as having to do with textual interpretation and to understand the hidden meaning of the word, hence a hermeneutical reflection will follow.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the research methodology and research methods of my study. In this chapter, I provide a detailed discussion of hermeneutics and the reason why I chose this methodology. For my research methods, I discuss conceptual analysis and documentary analysis. I was reminded by Krauss (2005:760) that the researcher is a unique individual and all research is essentially biased. There is thus no point in trying to establish validity in any external or objective sense. I had to be very careful not to be biased.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions for this study are:

Main research question

How do educators at the selected schools interpret discipline in the Code of Conduct?

Sub-questions

- How is the Code of Conduct aligned with the vision and mission of the schools?
- How is the Code of Conduct expressed and understood by the educators of the schools?
- How is discipline articulated in the documents relating to the Code of Conduct of the schools?
- What are the teachers’ perspectives on the Code of Conduct of their schools?
- How is the Code of Conduct implemented in the selected schools?

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic (Weimer, 1979). The reader critically evaluates a study’s overall validity and reliability. This research methodology answers two main questions: (1) How are data collected? and (2) How are data analysed? Further, methodology refers to the theory that construct knowledge, as well as the method that the researcher decides to employ for the content of his study. Cohen and Manion (1994:39) state that “the aim of methodology is to help us understand, the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific but the process itself”. As for Van Wyk (2004:25), he sees methodology as an extended framework that can also been seen as a paradigm shift. A paradigm is also known or referred to as a ‘grammar of thinking’, ‘a form of discourse’, a ‘shape of consciousness’, or a ‘form of rationality (Morrow, 1995). On the other hand, paradigms are those ‘theories’ of knowledge that provide a rationale for educational research (Gough, 2001:4).

The latest revised theories have showed a tendency to view methodology through the lens of the critical hermeneutic. The customary critical hermeneutic way states that “interpretation involves in its most element articulation making sense of what has been observed in a way that communicates understanding” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000:285).

Interpretation originates from hermeneutics, which is a systematic and scientific approach of a concept. According to Van Wyk (2004:26), the term ‘hermeneutic’ has its roots in the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which has three distinct meanings, namely to make things explicit (to give expression), to make something public (to explain), and to explain (to interpret). The interpreter’s role can be defined according to the model of the exegete. This is a person who is committed to the critical analysis, or explanation, of a text or to humane action that uses the method draw on in the hermeneutical domain. Gadamer (1970) states that insight is not an isolated activity of human beings, but a basic structure of our experience of life. With regarding to the interpretive approach, the ‘why ‘question must be replaced with one that asks ‘how’ (Van Wyk, 2004:28).

Research methodology became the focus of educational research. Fay (1975:72) defines this principle as an attempt to describe, explain and change human behaviour in educational research.
2.3.1 Qualitative research

According to ERIC online thesaurus, Quantitative Research is used to quantify the problem by way of quantifying numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables, and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys-online surveys, paper surveys, mobile surveys and kiosk surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls, and systematic observations.

Not only is this research concerned with objective measurable facts and occurrences but also with the manner in which people construct interpret and give meaning to their experience. The adoption of a qualitative approach pays specific attention to dynamic processes and strives to discover and develop new concepts (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002:199).

Qualitative research is primarily an exploratory research and try to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. Moreover, it presents insights to the problem, helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential qualitative research. Notably, qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, this research dives deeper into the problem. Furthermore, qualitative data collection methods vary by using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, and participation/observations. The sample size is typically small, and participants are selected to fulfil a given quota. Therefore, qualitative research seems the best to use when seeking to find a deeper understanding of a problem.

Using qualitative methodology, the population of this study includes all the educators at School A and School B, two public high schools in the Western Cape area. The representative sample consists of seven teachers, four from School A and three from School B, based on the population size of each school. The sample size is therefore sufficient to address the research question at hand.
2.3.2 Interpretive theory

The interpretive approach seemed to be the most appropriate for my study, as I sought to understand how educators interpret discipline in the Code of Conduct of their schools. Within this approach, I focused specifically on hermeneutics. Kabende (2015) suggests that hermeneutics is described as having to do with textual interpretation or finding the hidden meaning in the word which includes written, verbal, and nonverbal communication. Connole (1993:59-60) claims that the primary concern of an interpretive framework is the understanding of actions in the context within which they live. Gadamer (1977:xii) argues that hermeneutics embrace all of those situations in which we encounter meanings that are not immediately understandable but require interpretive effort. Interpretive translation studies were established in the 1970s by Danica Seleskovitch and she described translation as a triangular process: from one language to sense and from sense to the other language. According to ITT (Interpretive Translation Theory), the process of translation is divided into three stages: comprehension, verbalisation, and reformulation. The way the teachers understand and comprehend discipline in the Code of Conduct differs from educator to educator and from school to school.

The main objective of ITT is to study translation and, by doing so, it sheds light on the workings of language and communication, which are the heart of the day-to-day running of a school.

2.3.3 Hermeneutics

What is hermeneutics and how is it going to help me in this study? Gadamer (1977:xii) argues that hermeneutics comprises all those situations in which we encounter meanings that are not immediately understandable but require interpretive effort. In layman's terms, Grondin (2002:1) refers to hermeneutics as the science or art of interpretation. On the other hand, according to Danner (1995:223), the term has three meanings: to make something explicit (to express), to unfold something (to explain), and to translate (to interpret). Moreover, it involves the art of reading texts or experiences in such a way that the intentions and meaning behind the appearance of such a text or expression are understood.
Philosophical hermeneutics refers primarily to the hypothesis of knowledge, which was initiated by Martin Heidegger and developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer in his book, *Truth and Method* (1974). A common use of the word hermeneutics refers to a process of scriptural interpretation. Philip Higgs and Jane Smith (2006:123) explain: “The method of enquiry in philosophy that focuses on symbols and how we interpret them is called hermeneutics.” The word ‘hermeneutics’ comes from a Greek word meaning ‘interpretation’. Hermeneutics is very similar to existentialism because existentialism asks, “What is the meaning of life?” Hermeneutics, on the other hand, asks: “How do we discover or create meaning? How do we understand and interpret the different kinds of symbols we encounter in our world?”

The “world” in this case refers to School A, a public high school in the Western Cape. How do the educators understand symbols, structures, discipline and the Code of Conduct at School A? Hermeneutics propagates the following:

- The importance of listening,
- The importance of observing,
- It claims that the individual’s life experience influences the way he or she understands the world,
- It affirms the importance of dialogue in arriving at an understanding of any issue, and
- It promotes anti-authoritarianism and encourages the individual to create his or her meaning and understanding.

Again, the question can be asked: How do we make sense or how do we understand and interpret our Code of Conduct at our school? The method of enquiry to examine this philosophy was hermeneutics. What hermeneutics can help this study with is:

- To create meaning,
- To discover our hidden artistic abilities,
- To understand each other, and
- To be more tolerant of one another.

Higgs and Smith (2006:129) summarise hermeneutics as follows: This philosophy takes imagery and symbolism seriously. Hermeneutics claims that arts and crafts, even more than science, are
important in human life. Hermeneutics believes that happiness is linked to our creativity. Hermeneutics encourages us to be creative and to be poets, writers, authors, actors, painters, and designers.

Neumann (2011:101) writes that hermeneutics places an emphasis on conducting a very close, detailed reading of a text to acquire a profound, deep understanding. For Jacobs (2012:298), hermeneutics simply means textual interpretation or the finding of the hidden meaning in a word. Hermeneutics thus has led to the belief that you have to read to write or interpret a text. When we apply hermeneutics, we must read intensively to understand and interpret the text. In my study, a text can be any literature that has meaning, for example, a Code of Conduct, policies, or articles. I lean towards Ricoeur’s (1998:165) understanding of hermeneutics. He regards a text as any type of study fixed by writing. In addition to this notion, Neumann (2011:101) explains that a text is a conversation, written words, or a picture. This leads to the assumption that, in general, a text can be anything that is put in writing. For example, it can be policies, journals, diaries, newspapers, or advertisements. This implies that, in this study, policy documents and newspaper articles can be used as sources of information. For my study, therefore, a text is seen as any written material that has meaning.

An example of such a text is the Code of Conduct for learners. Teachers at School B received a Code of Conduct and were instructed to read and interpret the policy document to apply and implement it. The staff of School B, therefore, needed to understand the rules and the accompanying transgressions as set out in the policy document. A deeper understanding of the policy document therefore could lead to the easier implementation thereof. Teachers that endeavour to understand the Code of Conduct can work towards the common goal of implementing the Code of Conduct. It is imperative that, as a collective, the staff collaborate and have a mutual understanding of the Code of Conduct. If those who must implement the policy agree and share a common understanding thereof, it becomes easier to convey the policy to the learners. Proper understanding and implementation of the school’s Code of Conduct leads to improved discipline and collegiality because of the shared goals of said policy. Consequently, this study employed hermeneutics to conduct a careful reading of texts such as the Code of Conduct to better understand the policy document.
2.3.4 Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics

The hermeneutics of Gadamer and Taylor rejects the interpretivist view “that hermeneutics is an art or technique of understanding, the purpose of which is to construct a methodological foundation for human sciences” (Grondin, 1994:109). Philosophical hermeneutics argues that understanding is not a procedure- or rule-governed understanding; rather, it is a very condition of being human. Understanding is interpretation. As Gadamer (1970) explains, understanding is not an isolated activity of human beings, but a basic structure of our experience of life. In the act of interpreting (taking something for something), inherited bias or prejudice is not regarded as a characteristic or attribute that an interpreter must strive to get rid of to come to a “clear” understanding. To believe this is at all possible is to assume that traditions shape our efforts to understand, is under our control and can be set aside at our drive. However, philosophical hermeneutics argues that tradition is not external, objective, and past – something from which we can free and distance ourselves (Gadamer, 1975).

Rather, as Gallager and Subedi (1992:87) explain, “tradition is a living force that enters into all understanding” and, even though tradition operates for the most part “behind our backs”, it is already there, ahead of us, acclimatising our interpretations. Furthermore, because traditions shape what we are and how we understand the world, the attempt to move outside the process of tradition would be like stepping outside our bodies. Thus, reaching an understanding is not to set aside our prejudices; on the contrary, understanding requires the engagement of prejudices.

2.3.5 Paul Ricoeur’s conception of hermeneutics

Paul Ricoeur agrees with Gadamer that hermeneutics can be explained as the understanding arising from the interpretation of a text. Ricoeur (1998:165) assumes that the main problem of hermeneutics is that of interpretation. He differentiates between two ways of interpreting a text. One is the application and two the epistemological specificity. Epistemological specification relates to the problem of interpretation because there is a written text with autonomy. According to Jacobs (2012:26), the reader can treat a text as a text on its own without taking the author and reference into account. The interpreter is vital in interpreting a text.
After engaging with the hermeneutics literature, it became apparent that hermeneutics fundamentally refers to the interpretation of a text. Gadamer (1975) mentions that understanding is always to interpret; hence, interpretation is a form of understanding. As an educator, it is imperative to know the importance of interpretation and understanding of document, text, or body languages, as understanding is not just what you read, but also what you experience.

Teachers and learners need a clear understanding of the Code of Conduct, which may lead to a culture of learning and growth. A school is a community of school activities and curriculum that shapes the culture of the school (Van Wyk, 2009). Analysis of the Code of Conduct of various schools by implication shows that the implementation of the rules as set out in the policy document is not necessarily how it is implemented and perceived in schools.

### 2.4 RESEARCH METHODS

The purpose of qualitative studies is to describe a phenomenon from the participants’ point of view through interviews and observations. The intention is to listen to the voice of the educator or to observe them in their natural environment, in this case the school. Kvale (1996) considers an interview to be a more effective way of collecting data.

Methods that are more applicable to education research include observation, interviews, literature reviews or questionnaires. According to Kandumbu (2005:26), method refers to the empirical data that are collected and range from reading documents and asking questions to the observation of both uncontrolled to controlled situations. For my study, I used the following research methods: conceptual analysis, documentary analysis, and questionnaires.

#### 2.4.1 Conceptual analysis

I next discuss key tenets of conceptual analysis.

##### 2.4.1.1 What is a concept?
Locke (1998), in *Philosophy of Education*, says that an idea is “the object of understanding when a man thinks”, and this is probably as near as we can get to what a concept is. He highlights the fact that to have a concept is to cover both the experience of grasping a principle and the ability to discriminate and use words correctly. Conceptual analysis is one of the main traditional methods of philosophy, arguably dating back to Plato’s early dialogues, with questions that can be answered based on one’s grasp of a concept.

**2.4.1.2 What is analysis?**

An analysis is when one can use and examine words appropriately, and to see what principle governs them and to see their use. Historically, philosophers such as Socrates (Wallgren, 2013) attempted to do this by trying to apply definitions. Wittgenstein (Wallgren, 2013) however, made this general point by taking the example of ‘games’. He claimed that there is absolutely no characteristic in terms of which roulette, golf, patience, etc. are all called games that form a family united by a complicated network of similarities. Two points Wittgenstein himself made are that:

- We must not look for defining characteristics in any stereotyped away, and
- Concepts can only be understood in relation to other concepts.

Thus, we are attempting an analysis of concepts by examining the meaning of words and their characteristics. This is how Socrates (1987) applied analysis in the early part of *The Republic* to get a clearer idea of how to deal with ‘justice’.

When analysing, we make explicit links between words that reflect their conceptual structure, hence we must pay attention to what we mean when using a word in a sentence. Words are more than marks and noises in a sentence; they are tools and they do a specific job in social life. One of the main jobs of words is to convey information. That is why understanding a Code of Conduct or any other rules is so important to any organisation. Misunderstanding of any kind can make or break an organisation.

We use words to express what we wish; words are a form of purposeful behaviour, but they have to be understood in terms of the other non-linguistic purpose that people have in their social life.
The Ancient Greek word ‘analysis’ refers to the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts to gain a better understanding of the concept.

2.4.1.3 The point of conceptual analysis

Hirst and Peters (1998:33-34) state that the point of conceptual analysis is to see through the words, to get a better grasp of the similarities and differences that one can pick out. They argue these are important in the context of other questions, which we cannot answer without such preliminary analysis. Such an analysis helps us to pinpoint more precisely what is implicit in our moral consciousness. They further assert that it also enables us to stand back a bit and reflect on the status of the demand to which the word bears witness. As such it frees us to ask fundamental questions in ethics, which is whether the demand is justified. This is a necessary preliminary to answering some other philosophical questions.

For this study, it is useful to understand and comprehend the Code of Conduct by breaking up the concepts into smaller parts for the parents, staff and learners to understand the process of discipline at the school.

2.5 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Documentary analysis is a qualitative type of research in which documents are reviewed to assess an appraisal theme. For years organisational and institutional documents have been a staple in qualitative researching. Creswell (2013) refers to document analysis as various procedures involved in analysing and interpreting data generated from the examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study. In this study, I review WCED documents on the Code of Conduct for learners at a high school.

2.5.1 What is a document?

A document is a written, drawn, or presented, or it is a memorial representation of thought. Documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without the researcher’s
intervention (Bowen, 2009). Furthermore, Atkinson and Coffey (1997:47) refer to documents as ‘social facts’ that are produced, shared, and used in socially organised ways. In addition, five more specific functions of documentary material can enlighten one’s research study. Firstly, it can provide data, background, and historical insight to the context of the study. Secondly, information contained in the documents can help with formulating the questions needed to be asked in the research. Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) conducted a document analysis research to generate new interview information. Thirdly, documents provide supplementary research information to the study. Fourthly, documents provide the means of tracking change and development and last, but not least, documents can be analysed as a way to verify findings or corroborate evidence from more sources. In sum, documents provide background, context, additional questions, and data.

Documents are a reliable way of tracking data change and verify data of other sources; moreover, for me documents are maybe the most effective means of gathering data and preserve the details. In this study, it refers to the policy documents of a school or the education department. The word ‘document’ originates from the Latin word *documentum*, which means to teach or a lesson. The word ‘lesson’ was used to denote written proof that can be used as evidence of the fact. The concept of ‘document’ can be described as any concrete or symbolic indication, preserved or recorded, for reconstructing or proving a phenomenon, whether physical or mental. A document can be defined as a fundamental, abstract idea. The words of the document denote everything that may be represented or memorialised to serve as evidence. Hence, the study of discipline in the policy documents of a school.

### 2.5.2 Advantages of documentary analysis

Bowen (2009) spells out that documentary analyses are an efficient method to gather data; it is less consuming than other research methods. It requires data selection, instead of data collection. This method is cost effective and it is safe to work with, as it is a stable resource. In my study, there are limitations to the documents on discipline. All the documents are available online. The schools have their documents and requirements online for the public to see. I needed access to the internet to go online to do some research. In my view, the only limitation is limited time to do research because of a full working day.
2.5.3 Disadvantages of documentary analysis

Disadvantages of documentary analysis, according to Yin (1994:80), is that an incomplete collection of documents can lead to ‘biased selectivity. Lack of obtrusiveness and reactivity means that documents are unaffected by the research process. This method has little disadvantages. However, there are a few flaws. Studies that draw upon documentation are constrained by what is available and its quality.

In conclusion, document analysis is a cost-effective way to obtain empirical data as part of a process and, above all, it was an efficient method for this study to be conducted.

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter I provided and described the methodology that governed the research project and the approach to it. I argued that these processes could not have been conducted without consideration of the school’s context and the concept of hermeneutics. This chapter highlights that one of the most important roles of theory lies in empowering us to ask new and different sorts of questions to those that were previously asked. Moreover, theories empower us to ask questions that did not occur to the originators of such theories themselves (Calhoun,1995:7). This research will highlight teachers’ perspectives on the Code of Conduct for learners at two different high schools. In my research I wanted to interpret and understand my data therefore I drew on Gadamer’s hermeneutic methodology. Gadamer argues that in understanding and interpreting a context the history of a context is of utmost importance.

Moreover, to understand and interpret a text, there should be a conversation or an involvement between the text and the interpreter. Turning to the research methodology for this study I then discussed conceptual analysis and documentary analyses. Conceptual analysis is concerned with the analysis of the different uses and meanings of concepts Documentary analysis, on the other hand, has to do with a measured examination of documents. In this study I analysed applicable policy documents for the Code of Conduct for learners at high schools. Therefore, hermeneutics,
conceptual analysis, and document analysis assist in the analysis of the Code of Conduct for learner’s policy documents of high schools in the Elsies River area.
CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on a review of the concept of discipline in the Code of Conduct of high schools. This topic was challenging in terms of the concepts of discipline and the perspectives from the context of a school. This chapter offers a conceptual analysis of the research through which I seek to investigate the educators’ perspectives on discipline in the Code of Conduct for learners at two selected high schools. In seeking to understand what constitutes a Code of Conduct, I studied both national and international literature to examine the educators’ perspectives and the implementation of the Code of Conduct at two selected high schools.

3.2 WHAT IS A LITERATURE REVIEW?

“A literature review is an analysis of the knowledge of a given subject.” (Wikipedia, 2016). In seeking to understand what constitutes a Code of Conduct, the educators’ perspectives and the implementation of the Code of Conduct at schools, I studied both national and international literature. Thomas (2009:30) describes literature as “anything that represents the results of research or scholarship on a subject”, while Johnson (2009:75) refers to the literature review as “an examination of journal articles … books and other sources related to your action research project”. Burton and Bartlett (2009) identifies four key functions of a literature review:

- Background information on the general area of the study,
- Describe and evaluate the context of the research,
- Consider and comment on what has already been written within the area of investigation, looking particularly in the (relationships, differences, and similarities) between studies, and
- Discuss the relevance of existing research to the research focus and methodology including the impact on the research outcomes).
Not only will a literature review be of great importance, but it will also enhance my understanding of discipline in the Code of Conduct at high schools. In unpacking the title, ‘The educator’s perspectives of the Code of Conduct for learners at selected high schools’, I am going to discuss the meanings and understandings of the following terms in my research: Firstly, formal schooling systems include many different types of institutions for education and training which strive to meet the different needs of learners. Secondly, the system of education and training also depends on an effective and efficient system of governance and management. To provide education in a planned and organised manner, structures for the governance and management of education that promote the effective functioning of the system are created. To understand and make sense of my research site I will give information on the background to the site.

The research site is registered as a technical focus school with academic subjects, Afrikaans Home Language, Afrikaans First Additional Language, English Home Language, English First Additional Language, Mathematics, Mathematical Literacy and Technical Mathematics, Business, Accounting, Information Technology and Business Studies, and Economics and Life Orientation. In this section, I shall discuss the background to the context of the selected high schools. I will provide a detailed discussion of this in a dedicated chapter (Chapter 4). For the reader to understand the context, I need to provide the historical background of the school. According to Kabende (2015), Gadamer states that one way to understand a phenomenon or a text is to understand it from a historically conscious perspective. In the end, I will discuss how the educators perceive the Code of Conduct for the learners.

According to Alan Clarke (2012:17), even though parent-governors will have attended school and therefore, have experienced it from the perspective of a pupil, these perspectives do not necessarily provide the kind of knowledge and insights that governors need to exercise management functions effectively. Therefore, one of the common errors that governors make is to think that they are responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. Governors are the most effective when they use their knowledge of the community to provide advice and guidance to the principal and professional staff on the best possible ways to handle the social and moral issues relating to the children’s education.
The *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996b) states that each MEC for education (provincial minister of education) must publish, by notice in the *Provincial Gazette*, a Code of Conduct for members of the governing body of a public school after consulting with governing bodies in that province. The Code of Conduct must be aimed “at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of quality governance structure at a public school” (RSA, 1996b). Even though, at the time of writing, not one of the provinces had yet published a Code of Conduct for school governing bodies, a few had produced drafts for discussion.

### 3.3 SCHOOLING SYSTEMS

A public school is a school as defined in section 1 of the *South African Schools Act*, No 84 (RSA, 1996b).

According to the *Employment of Educators Act*, No. 76 (RSA, 1998), an educator refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional education services, including professional therapy and education psychological services, at any public school, departmental office or adult basic education centre and who is appointed in a post in any educator establishment under this act [Definition of “educator” amended by Act No. 84 of 1996b].

According to the *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996b), a learner means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of the Act.

### 3.4 TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The question arises: What is teaching? Teaching is when an educator transmits certain information, skills and attitudes to the learner. Mellander (1993:5) defines teaching as “the creation of suitable (external) conditions for learning, using different forms of information, exercises, assignments, etc.”, while Gagne and Briggs (1979:3) describe teaching as “a human understanding whose purpose is to help learn” and “a set of events which affects learners in such a way that learning is facilitated”. Teaching therefore can be seen as the process of helping learners to learn. The object...
of teaching is always that the learner must acquire certain knowledge, skills and/or attitudes (Niemand, 2004:5).

Having briefly expounded on the concept of teaching, I want to discuss learning. The question arises: What is learning? Learning is a lifelong process of experience that changes the individual. It entails change in a person as regards the individual’s insight, behaviour, perception or motivation, and this change leads to added knowledge or the ability to do something that the person could not do before (Jerling, 1996:106). According to Donaldson and Scannell (1986:104), experiential learning is the result of experience and practice. You learn how to do something by repeating it until you have mastered the activity. Forming associations is also a learning activity. Association means that every new fact, idea, or concept is learned better if it is related to information that is already known. Another kind of learning follows from thinking and reflecting. This involves using cognitive power such as reasoning and analysing to make sense of the things we do and the world around us (Niemand, 2004:10).

According to Mellander (1993:11-12), we learn things all the time – spontaneously and without trying. He explains that the first condition for all learning is attention. This can take the form of curiosity, excitement, expectation, challenges and so on.

The culture of the school is the whole way of life of the school and includes the way adults and learners behave towards each other (Coelho, 1998). Culture is the ‘glue’ that holds everyone together and can be seen as a positive development force. School culture is also influenced by a school’s external context. School culture manifests itself in customs, rituals, symbols, stories, and language (Deal & Kennedy, 1983).

According to Brian Isaacs’s (2017) article in a daily newspaper, there are a few principals with principles who have left their mark on the Cape schools. These include Mr Andre Kraak, Mr Lionel Adriaan, Mr Nadeem Hendricks, Mr Riyaadh Njaar, Mr Richard Owen Dudley and Mrs Polly Slingers. Mr Isaacs, a former principal of South Peninsula High, highlights some of the characteristics and values these school leaders brought to the schools on the Cape Flats. These are honesty, commitment, academic and sports opportunities, legal battles regarding labour relations
with the Western Cape Education Department, and strong leaders. The former principal stated that he had gained invaluable experience from Mr Christiaan Liebenberg, as he led Heathfield academically and politically in the difficult 1980s. Consequently, as a result of their hard work, Isaacs says it is mainly through the efforts of the above-mentioned principals and will that the schools that the poor are still able to produce quality pupils.

3.5 CODE OF CONDUCT

Here I deal with conceptualisations of the concept.

3.5.1 What is a Code of Conduct?

As stated earlier, the Code of Conduct spells out the rules regarding learner behaviour at the school and describes the disciplinary system to be implemented by the school concerning transgressions by learners (RSA, 1996b). The Code of Conduct applies to all learners while they are on school premises or when they are away from school representing it or attending a school function. Section 8(4) of the SA Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) provides that all learners attending a school are bound by the Code of Conduct of that school. All learners attending the school are expected to sign a statement of commitment to the Code of Conduct. The administration of the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the Disciplinary Committee of the school.

It is within the Code of Conduct that the issue of school discipline is addressed. According to Colvin (1993), school discipline has always been perceived as essential for the proper functioning of a public school. There is a universal expectation that discipline is necessary for students to learn and that educators are expected to establish and maintain well-disciplined schools. Recently, educators have found that positive incentives, in conjunction with traditional procedures, enhance student behaviour and contribute significantly to establishing positive school climates.

In the early 1990s, a research project based at the University of Oregon, Project PREPARE, developed, and implemented a new model for managing problem behaviour (Colvin, 1993). This model combines the proactive features for developing a supportive school climate with positive
procedures for reinforcing desirable behaviour and negative consequences for encouraging problem behaviour. This approach has been expanded and implemented on a national and international scale (Todd et al. 1999; Turnbull et al., 2002). The primary purpose of this school of thought is to provide school-wide discipline.

Similarly, Colvin (1993) says that the purpose of the Code of Conduct is to promote positive discipline, and it should also promote constructive learning in the school. Each school should develop its own Code of Conduct and whole-school discipline policy. Elements for a whole-school discipline policy includes:

- A statement of the school’s approach to discipline,
- A clear description of why the school has a system of dealing with issues,
- A declaration of the right of individuals in the school community,
- A statement of the responsibility of members of the school community to work towards making the schoolwork well,
- A general description of how the school will respond to good and poor behaviour, and
- An understanding to review the policy regularly.

3.5.2 What is the history of codes of conduct?

A Code of Conduct is a set of rules outlining the social norms and religious rules and responsibilities of, or proper practices for, an individual, party or organization. In 2007, “International Good Guidance, Defining Developing an Effective Code of Conduct for Organizations”, the International Federation of Accounts provides the following working definition of a Code of Conduct:

Principles, values, standards, or rules of behaviour that guide the decisions, procedures and systems of an organization in a way that (a) contributes to the welfare of its key stakeholders, and (b) respects the rights of all constituents affected by its operations.

Many educationists (as cited in Kapuela, 2014:19) emphasise the importance of searching the past to expose the roots of educational problems. In a similar study, Venter supports this argument and
states that “… only through the historical can essential structures of reality becomes visible” (Venter, 1979:44). He points out that history allows us a free view of the reality of education.

Taking Gadamer’s hermeneutics into consideration, it is evident that the history of the Code of Conduct is imperative when trying to understand what a Code of Conduct really is (Gadamer, 1974). Within the South African context, the education systems employed by the ruling parties have had significant impact on the enforcement of their pedagogies and idealisms. The different education systems that catered for specific ethnic groups only, for example, the Bantu Education System, were each governed by a different set of rules and regulations. Education was thus utilized as a tool to enforce the propaganda of the ruling party and it was also used as a way to segregate and discriminate.

Within this young democracy, the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), governs the education system that is currently employed in the country. The Act states that the Code of Conduct can be seen as a document that is primarily employed to ensure discipline and to aid in the development of self-discipline within the school context.

According to the Western Cape Education Department, the Code of Conduct is a document that spells out the rules regarding learner behaviour at the school and describes the disciplinary system to be implemented by the school concerning transgressions by learners. The Code of Conduct applies to all learners while they are on the school premises, or when they are away from the school representing the school. Section 84 of the SA Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) provides that all learners attending a school are bound by the Code of Conduct of that particular school. All the learners attending a school are expected to sign a statement of commitment to the Code of Conduct. The administration of the Code of Conduct is the responsibility of the disciplinary committee of that particular school.

3.5.3 Codes of Conduct of the schools in the study

This is a short analysis of the aims of the Code of Conduct as provided by School A (Code of Conduct, 2017). The purpose of the Code of Conduct of School A is to provide a shared value
system. Through this, the school seeks to guide the learners in terms of what their expectations are. The school’s aim is to promote self-discipline and to set high ethical standards. The school strives to attain core values like morals, principles, and norms of behaviour. Examples are integrity and courtesy; however, this high standard is not achieved by School A (Code of Conduct, School A, 2017).

The question that automatically comes to mind is, why are these core values unachievable? Who is driving these values, bearing in mind that this school experiences a continuous change in staff management. A school’s discipline depends on the entire school community and, with staff coming and going, the human factor of politics and professional jealousy is bound to hinder the achievement of school discipline. If teachers are held accountable and responsible for their core duty, school discipline should not be a challenge; however, this is not the case at this school. Educators are complaining about mismanagement regarding discipline using the extremely high noise levels outside the classroom while they try to teach. These extreme noise levels indicate a deep-rooted issue of learners roaming around outside whilst no measure of control from educators or management seems apparent. In point 4.2 of the Code of Conduct, it stipulates that all movement in the corridors shall be carried out quickly and quietly, and that learners must keep left. Who gives the instruction and who monitors it? As a result, there is disruption during class periods.

With education being lifelong, the holistic development of a person (mind, body, and soul) and a culture of teaching-learning and service should be nurtured amongst learners, and educators should be the driver of this vehicle. An ethic of hard work, regular attendance, cooperation, positive participation and helping others should be instilled in the learners. The learners should be goal directed, have a vision, and the words and actions of the student should have a positive influence on others. The school environment should be nonviolent, peaceful, and conducive to learning. According to the questionnaire, learners are disruptive, violent and belong to gangs. This is a level 4 offence Code of Conduct (School A, 2017), but learners get away with it because there are no proper structures in place, or due to a lack of seriousness or follow-up by the teachers. It is clear from my interviews with the participants that this school environment is not conducive to learning and teaching, nor is there a desire to stick to some core values.
The school is aware of the drug dealing in the community and therefore it has a drug policy; however, it is not fool proof, as it does not address the school’s unique situation and tends to be generic. Drugs are readily available in the community from which the learners are drawn. Drug deals happen a lot, and especially dagga is sold daily. The discipline policy, contained in the Code of Conduct of School A (2017), states that any learner who is found dealing, using, or attempting to deal will be dealt with harshly. This is only on paper, as dealing continues at an alarming rate. Where a learner’s behaviour at school shows some of the typical signs of drug use, the school will contact the parent(s) to arrange for the learner to be tested at the parents’ expense so that appropriate remedial measures can be taken in the interests of the learner and others. The school faces challenges such as learners supplying false contact details and, in some cases, the class teacher have no contact details for the parents or the address list is outdated. The policy clearly states that teachers are instructed to help any learner who has become involved in drugs to stop the abuse; however, there is no real commitment from the educators. The truth is that, if learners sell or use drugs, they become the authority at the school. In the past, teachers were abused, assaulted, and threatened by intoxicated learners.

3.6 SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Next, I deal with several factors pertaining to school discipline.

3.6.1 The history of discipline in schools

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Lapperts (2012:15) points out that discipline in schooling is a system of rules, punishments and behavioural strategies that are appropriate to the regulation of children and to maintain order in schools. Similarly, Kapuela (2014:20) defines discipline as an act of fostering behaviour utilising guidance, encouragement, injunctions and a set of expectations or behavioural prescriptions. Discipline also refers to methods of modelling character and teaching self-control and acceptable behaviour. From a Biblical perspective, discipline is a positive word originating from the concept, to guide. A disciple or learner must be led to follow the right way (Van Dyk, 2000:64). In my schooling career, I have learned that if there is no order and no discipline at a school, there will be no success. Good teaching and learning are the core business
of school and cannot be replaced by a policy or an act. This is supported by Nxumalo (2001:77), who states that discipline is vitally important for teaching and learning to be effective in class. He highlights the fact that both learner and teacher need to be disciplined for the effective functioning of the school. He further indicates that discipline is an operational process that forms part of the daily business of a school and is everyone’s responsibility.

According to Kelly and Nelsen (2017), consistency, fairness and follow-through reduce classroom disruptions. Schools should provide students with the educational foundation to build successful, independent lives. Bad discipline in classrooms interferes with student achievement. Teachers and administrators must maintain the discipline to create an effective learning environment. A combination of methods used consistently and fairly typically offers the best approach to classroom discipline. These include:

- Increase parental involvement,
- Create and enforce a school wide discipline plan,
- Establish leadership,
- Practise effective follow-through,
- Provide alternative education opportunities,
- Build a reputation for fairness,
- Implement additional effective school wide policies, and
- Maintain high expectations.

Rutter, M. (2007) researched the effect of high expectations at school and reported his findings in “Fifteen hundred hours: Schools that foster high self-esteem and that promote social and scholastic success reduce the likelihood of emotional and behavioural disturbance."

- Reward positive discipline consistently and maintain authority in the classroom; get to the root of problems be fair. Discipline is a process.

An organisational perspective on student discipline by Short and Short (1994), found that the students’ own expectations, beliefs, and previous experiences, greatly influence the choices that students make in the school environment. Personal and organisational characteristics, therefore, may be at least as important to school discipline as specific disciplinary techniques.
In addition, Gottfredson (1985) concurs that the schools’ organisational features have a more substantial effect on delinquency rates. Gottfredson proposes strategies that can be employed by schools in their organisational structure. For example, involving staff, students and the community in planning and implementing change, using the information to identify weaknesses, and focusing resources on those weaknesses in making changes to the curriculum and disciplinary procedures. Such strategies have proved to be more effective in reducing delinquency than large-scale intervention projects, including intensive tutoring and quality counselling services.

Gottfredson (1985) further suggests that there is a need to institute a climate for effective school discipline. To establish such a climate, discipline must be perceived from a whole-school perspective. The critical key to an effective, whole-school discipline programme is shared values among students, teachers, parents, and administrators, who agree on what is acceptable, appropriate behaviour in the particular school setting. There are organisational characteristics that relate to climates that are conducive to good student behaviour. These characteristics include committing to a plan of action, paying attention to the teacher and principal roles, and ensuring strong student involvement. The plan of action, which should include a school-wide emphasis on the improvement of student behaviour, is necessary for rallying the commitment of both students and staff.

Burton (2008) agrees that to effectively address the violence in schools, it is imperative that a “whole school approach” to school safety be adopted. All role-players, including school management, educators, learners, and the broader community, should be involved in addressing and dealing with issues related to safety at school. Learners and educators in the South African context are bombarded with reports of rape, mugging, stabbings, and shootings on a daily basis. Seeking possible strategies or solutions to curb the continuous increase of violence within the broader community and especially amongst the youth, is therefore a topical issue for those involved in the education sector.

3.6.2 Teachers’ perspectives on school discipline
Although SMTs and principals greatly contribute to the functionality of schools, learners and teachers, their attitudes and behaviours can also profoundly impact a schools’ prolonged existence. Attendance, attitudes, values, and morals of all role-players can either hinder or help a school. Schools with high learner attendance and low teacher absenteeism will still be able to do well (Jansen & Blank, 2014).

Issues of teacher attendance and learner behaviour are often sensitive issues to address at a lot of schools. Principals need to instil a group spirit among all role-players, irrespective absenteeism, behavioural problems and the corresponding problems that generally arises with these kinds of issues. A well-functioning school requires a team effort and group consultation. School leaders often try to foresee what others think and feel, taking their feelings and thoughts into consideration when decisions regarding the institution are made. Teachers and other role-players need to know that their views are considered, and their opinions are valued. To be able to be part of the decision-making process is essential for the morale of role-players. Once you feel that you are important, you are keener to be participate in decision-making processes and if you are very significant in the success of a school, it makes every teacher feel very proud (Sindhu Mathews, Physical Sciences teacher, Sol Plaatje Secondary School, North West Province).

As an educator, as the principal, you listen to the community. What is it they expect from you as a school? As the first high school in the area … we want to make sure that we produce better learners to become better citizens so that the whole mirror about this community is changing (Bonginkosi Maphanga, Principal of Mpumelelo Secondary School, Loskop).

3.6.3 School discipline at schools in the study

School discipline policies are often embedded in schools’ Code of Conduct. Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners can be found in section B-35 of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b). This document served as a guideline and underpinned the ethics and morals for School A when they created their own Code of Conduct and hence discipline policies and school rules Code of Conduct (School A, 2017). School Rules: Code of Conduct (School A, 2017) reads as follows:
• For an individual to enjoy the privileges of a community, club, or institution, he or she must abide by the rules and norms of that body. When a child enters School A, he or she automatically becomes a member of our community.
• Rules and regulations exist to encourage the highest possible standards of behaviour and enable the School A community to run as smooth as possible.
• Underpinning any system of rules must be common sense, decency, and concern for the well-being of others. School A pupils are expected to recognise the need to behave in a way which graces the school, wherever they are.

It is evident through document analysis that School A has great expectations and goals for learner behaviour as set out in the Code of Conduct of the school (School A, 2017). However, many educationists, as cited in Moyo (2014), argue that intrinsic discipline or self-discipline is a key factor in assisting schools with disciplinary practices and procedures. It is further stated that after the banishment of corporal punishment, teachers are feeling more and more unhappy and unsafe, even fearing retaliation from learners if and when applying the Code of Conduct for learners. Learners that come from single-parent families or families with underlying issues of abuse and violence often lack self-discipline and tend to show behavioural tendencies that directly contravene the school’s Code of Conduct (Moyo, 2014). Poor self-discipline is directly related to a reluctance adhering to the rules and regulations as set out by a school’s Code of Conduct (Moyo, 2014).

**Code of Conduct of School B**

This school is in close proximity to School A and its aim is to provide quality, forward-looking education on the Gospel values to their learners. Moreover, the aim is also to promote a sensitivity amongst the learners and the greater community. According to its Code of Conduct, this school (School B, 2017) strives to develop young people with self-discipline, independent thinking and a sound set of values so that they will be able to realize their own potential. The school commits itself to do so by living according to a set of socially and morally acceptable values. The school promises to stay up to date with teaching aids, resources, and new methods. The vision of the school is to have learners who are inspired with hope and confidence for the future. This school wants to see that there is a partnership between the school, parents, and the community. According
to the Code of Conduct of the school, there is a responsibility on the learners, educators, and parents.

Learners should always be punctual, attend school regularly and be ready to learn. They must be critical thinkers and be involved in the classroom. They should apply their strengths and be aware of their weaknesses in order to improve upon their weaknesses. The school is very stricter with its school uniform; no learner may enter the school if he or she is not properly dressed.

The educators are expected to be professional at all times. They must collaborate and work together. They need to provide high-quality education and maintain ongoing communication with parents.

Parents are expected to understand that educators have their children’s best interests at heart. Parents should support the educators and reinforce discipline.

The school rules in Section C of the School Code of Conduct (School B, 2017) resort under the headings: General principles, School and class attendance, School uniform and general appearance, Valuable and personal belongings, General rules, Rules governing places, Transport, School enrichment programmes, and Accommodation.

Section D of the Code of Conduct spells out the disciplinary system of the Code of Conduct: Grading of offences. Offences are graded according to the nature and degree of seriousness of the offences, of which Grade 4 offences are the most serious.

Section E: Disciplinary structures and measures at School B. Working with these documents was a pleasure, because they were user friendly and confirmed the responses of the teachers’ perspectives towards the Code of Conduct of School B.

3.6.4 International school discipline
I want to look here at a Code of Conduct in a developed country. In the United States of America, school disciplinary policies and practices are crucial structures of students’ school life. Conventional approaches to school discipline – including Codes of Conduct and security methods, suspension, corporal punishment, and teachers' methods of managing student behaviours – rely primarily on deterrence, control, and punishment to maintain order. At Virginia Beach City Public Schools, a common Code of Conduct is written for all the role-players of high schools, which protects the school, and informs the students and employees of the schools’ expectations.

I have read that at Vbshools.com (Virginia Beach City Public Schools), the Code of Conduct outlines major categories of behaviour and states that disciplinary actions may occur as a result of student misconduct. Depending on the infraction, appropriate legal charges can be pressed against a student. Section 16.1-269.1 of the Code of Virginia permits juveniles aged 14 years or older at the time of the alleged offence to be prosecuted as adults for specific crimes under certain circumstances.

According to the superintendent of schools in the United States, Dr Joseph Meloche, a school’s framework is constructed by whom they are as individuals. They make up what they are together, whether family, school, community, or nation. They have established the following character traits as an overall framework for their district and schools. "We know we learn best and most fully in an atmosphere where the opinions and rights of all are honored and respected." Therefore, their core values are:

- **RESPECT:** The student demonstrates an understanding of respectful behaviour, and respectfully conducts himself/herself.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** The student demonstrates an understanding of responsible behaviour, and conducts himself accordingly.
- **CITIZENSHIP:** The student demonstrates an understanding of the importance of knowing and practising the values, beliefs, and principles fundamental to participation in the United States' constitutional democracy.

**Disciplinary Categories**
Disciplinary guidelines are classified as two separate categories, Infractions and Unlawful Acts.

**INFRACTIONS**
- Refer to those circumstances whereby students fail to comply with school rules or policies that do not fall within the scope of an unlawful act.
- First Offence, Second Offence, Third and Subsequent offences.

**UNLAWFUL ACTS**
- Unlawful acts refer to offences cited in the New Jersey Justice Code or the General Provision that may require Police intervention, relating to education under Provisions of Title 18A.

**Administrative procedures suspensions and expulsions**

A. Suspensions  
B. Short-term suspension  
C. Long-term suspension  
D. Board-Level Hearing  
E. Expulsion  
F. Special circumstances:  
   1. Classified Students  
   2. Firearms/Weapons/Dangerous Instruments and Assault  
   3. Drug possession  
   4. Homicidal/suicidal threats

### 3.7 LAWS

South Africa has a number of laws that protect the learners at their schools. Before 1997, corporal punishment was one of the methods to discipline a learner. The Clinical Service Director at the Teddy Bear Clinic, Dr Shaheeda Omar, told The Daily Vox, “Discipline means teaching acceptable behaviours and unlearning maladaptive behaviours with support, guidance and direction in managing behaviour.” (Mail &Guardian, 2017).
Section 12(1) of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996c) states that everyone has the right to freedom which include the right to be free from all forms of violence inhuman and degrading. According to Section 28(1)(d), every child is protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation. Section 10 states that everyone has inherent human dignity and the right to protection. Section 10(1) of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) provides that no person (teacher, principal or any staff member) may administer corporal punishment at a school against any learner. The person who finds himself/herself guilty will receive a sentence that can be imposed for assault. Section 7(1)(h) of the Children’s Act (RSA, 2005) mandates the Minister of Education to develop policies ensure that no person will administer psychological or physical abuse to learners at any educational institution.

3.7.1 Laws that affect schools and governing bodies

The following laws affect schools and their governing bodies:

1. The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996c),
2. School-specific legislation,
5. Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (RSA, 1998),
7. General labour legislation,
8. Children’s Act No. 38 of 2005 (RSA, 2005), and

In terms of the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), the governing body of every public school must adopt a Code of Conduct after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school (Clarke, 2012:214). It states in chapter 2, section 8(4), and (5):

Code of Conduct
“8 (2) A Code of Conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process.

“(4) Nothing contained in this Act exempts a learner from the obligation to comply with the Code of Conduct of the school attended by such a learner.

“(5) A Code of Conduct must contain a provision of safeguarding the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings.”

The above sections are key to the purpose of the Code of Conduct, its scope and the process of dealing with non-compliance. Clarke (2012:17) highlights that, when establishing a Code of Conduct and the disciplinary processes linked to it, it is also important to remember that a school is not a court of law and that a learner who transgresses a school’s Code of Conduct has the right to put his side of the matter and to be heard.

Before the abolishment of apartheid in 1994, South Africa had an education system based on racial inequality and segregation. After the country’s first democratic election, a new, national system for schools that aims to equalise past injustices in education, were needed. In the same manner that education was utilized to propagate the values of apartheid, the education system after 1994 was also burdened with the obligation to assist the government in transforming the South African society.

This “new” education system endeavours to provide equal education for all learners, irrespective religious affiliation, race, gender, ethnicity or other factor formally used to keep the education system segregated. It should be able to provide the platform for the

… development of all people’s talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State. (South African Schools Act, RSA, 1996b)

In creating and implementing such an education system, it is necessary, however, to have a shared value system where every learner and educator in every school in South Africa follow the same
norms and standards. Schools throughout South Africa should also be governed and funded uniformly.

The *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996b) underpins the new trend for education in South Africa. Within the Act, the Code of Conduct is a section that enables schools to control the discipline and other related-learner issues. Within the school system, School Management Teams and School Governing Bodies are responsible for the creation and implementation of the Code of Conduct and ensuring that the *South Africa Schools Act* are adhered to for a specific school. The Act itself ensures that no legal action for school education can be taken even by a provincial government in accordance with the Constitution and this Act. The Code of Conduct is subjected to any applicable provincial laws. The governing body of all public schools are thus required to implement a Code of Conduct for learners after consultation with all the relevant stakeholders such as parents, learners, and educators.

### 3.8 SUMMARY

Looking back on the topic, “Teachers perspectives on the Code of Conduct”, I would like to end off by explaining the importance of this chapter. The Code of Conduct helps with the culture of discipline in the school environment and with the values of the school. The importance and purpose of the Code of Conduct are to promote positive discipline and constructive learning in the school; hence the whole-school discipline policy must be adopted. Buch (2011:72) states that the Code of Conduct must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment.

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature related to my study, and the purpose and meaning of this literature. I have touched on understanding the Code of Conduct, the concept, the history, its translation into high schools and my research site. This was followed by an analysis of the concept of discipline in the Code of Conduct to gain a deeper understanding. The main reason for conducting a literature review was to construct the meaning of teachers’ perspectives of the Code of Conduct for my study. I identified several recurring elements of the Code of Conduct in the literature reviews: school culture, shared vision, school-wide improvement, school-wide discipline
plan, procedures, systems, climate, caring teachers, student involvement, good behaviour, consistency, fairness, follow-through and commitment to a plan and structures.

In the next chapter I will explore how these meanings and views are constructed and articulated in the policy and school documents of my research site.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF POLICIES, SCHOOL DOCUMENTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I am going to discuss the research that I have conducted at two high schools in the Western Cape area. Teachers completed a questionnaire on their view of the school's Code of Conduct for their school. I am also going to touch on educational documents to get a deeper understanding of the school's discipline, as well as highlighting some of the disciplinary offences according to the teachers that keep the school hostage.

4.2 WHAT IS EDUCATION POLICY?

There are Acts, regulations, policies, guidelines and resolutions that merit a discussion to develop a deeper understanding of the legislative framework for school management.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL AS AN ORGAN OF STATE

- A public school, as in this study, is established with public funds by the state to perform a public function, therefore an organ of state and needs to be governed and managed in terms of legislation. This means that the school may only perform functions as resolute by law when managing teachers, learners, parents, finances and facilities.

THE SCHOOL AS JURISTIC PERSON

- A being other than a natural person (human being) established by law and recognized as a legal entity having a distinct identity, legal personality, and duties and rights, is a juristic person. A school is a juristic person and is allowed by law to elect an SGB (School Governing Body) which then legally represents the school.

SCHOOL POLICY AS AN INSTRUMENT TO ENSURE ITS FUNCTIONING AS AN ORGAN OF STATE

- As an organ of the state, the school has to formulate its policies to ensure that it functions within the valid legislative framework. School policy is therefore of extreme importance and needs to be formulated in terms of all the relevant laws, regulations and policies.
THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND RELATING PROCEDURES GREEN PAPER AND WHITE PAPER

- A Green Paper is published by the Government to encourage discussion on proposals concerning the way forward with a particular matter. A White Paper is published by the Government to advise the public on its intentions concerning a particular matter. Green and White Papers are not rigid. However, a White Paper is normally supposed to be operationalised utilising a law, regulations and policy. In unique cases, a White Paper can be proclaimed as policy without an act being promulgated.

BILL AND ACT

- A Bill is a draft of a proposed Act (Law) presented to parliament and the public for discussion. Once accepted, the Bill is promulgated as an Act.

REGULATIONS AND POLICY

- Once an Act has been promulgated, the relevant Minister issues regulations and/or policies to govern the implementation of the Act. Regulations have more law-making power than policy. For example, while the national policy is binding on public schools as organs of state, it is not necessarily binding on independent schools, whereas regulations are.

GUIDELINES

- Guidelines are issued to support the interpretation and implementation of regulations and policy.

RESOLUTIONS

- Resolutions are decisions taken by legally constituted structures such as the ELRC (Education Labour Relations council) and school governing bodies. Resolutions have to comply with government legislation and are therefore legally binding on the parties concerned.

4.3 PAM DOCUMENT

- Personnel Administrative Measures: This document applies to all educators as defined in the EEA (Employment of Educators Act, RSA, 1998). In respect of the matters regulated in this PAM, there may be no deviation from the prescribed measures. The educator post
establishment of a provincial Department of Education consists of the post created by the
MEC responsible for education in terms of the measures set out in paragraph A.2.2.

The HOD of a provincial Department of Education must, in terms of section (2) of the EEC,
determine the educator post establishment of each public school in the province in question (ELRC
Resolution No. 7 of 1998). These measures cover all full-time educators. The work done by
educators includes the core duties covered during a formal school day and outside the normal
school day. Teachers are expected to:

- Scheduled teaching time,
- Relief teaching,
- Extra and co-curricular duties,
- Pastoral duties, ground, detention, scholar patrol,
- Admin,
- Supervisory and management functions,
- Professional duties (meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.),
- Each teacher at any post level within a school has different duties and responsibilities,
  There should be an equitable distribution of workload between the different post levels,
- All educators should be at school during the formal school day (7 hours), and
- An educator shall, during his/her official duty, give his/her full attention to the duties
  entrusted to him/her, and shall not without the consent of the head of the institution or
  office be absent from school during school hours.

4.4 THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

It is the task of the Governing Body to govern the school according to the relevant legislation. In
other words, the SGB’s task is to set objectives and direction for the school. Governance is
therefore about setting the course for the school as an organization. Governance is also checking
that the course is maintained. Management is thus the active process of putting the plans and
intentions of governance into operation. The school management team (SMT) consists of educators
who are responsible for implementing policies and running the day-to-day operations of the school.
The SMT may help/assist to formulate policies, for example, the Code of Conduct for learners, by
contributing insights from their expert knowledge, but the policies must first be adopted by the SGB before they can implement it.

According to teachers at School A, their top structure (SMT) keeps on changing; hence the unstable atmosphere at school. The frequent turnaround in staff and management brings about a platform of instability. The disturbances in management result in a lack of continuity. The Governing Body is responsible for establishing policies and guidelines that will be the basis of the school's character and operational programme, but if management and staff continuously change, it is not possible for the school to have a stable character.

According to the *South African Schools Act 84* (RSA, 1996b), governance implies setting the course for the school and organization through objectives, policies, budgets, etc. and checking that the course is maintained through regular reports from the principal, SMT and official School Governing Body committees. The composition of the elected SGB members for a high school is seven parents, two educators, one non-teaching staff, two learners, ex-officio members, and the principal. Up to six persons may be co-opted as members because of expertise but they have no voting rights.

The **Compulsory** Committees of the SGB are:

- Executive Committee,
- Finance Committee,
- Disciplinary Committee, and
- Selection Panel.

**Optional** committees

- Fundraising Committee,
- Sport Committee,
- Grounds and School Building Committee, and
- Health and Safety Committee.

The law stipulates the functions that the SGB must perform on behalf of the school. It is compulsory to promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through
the provision of quality education for learners. A constitution and a Code of Conduct for learners must be adopted for the school. It is also the task of the SGB to develop the vision and the mission statement of the school and be part of the strategic planning process, e.g. to determine the time of the school day. The school have a history of a big staff turnaround and a management component that is not very stable (permanent); thus, the SGB is not very effective and constant. The disciplinary matters of the school also suffer a lot.

The *South African Schools Act* No. 84 (RSA, 1996b) provides guidelines to SGB in adopting a Code of Conduct for learners. The *National Education Policy Act*, No. 27 (RSA, 1996a) regulates the admission policy. The school's Code of Conduct must aim at establishing a disciplined and purposeful environment to facilitate effective education and learning in schools. When adopting the Code of Conduct it must be subjected to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996c), the *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996b) and provincial legislation. The Code of Conduct must reflect the constitutional democracy, human rights and transparent communication which underpin South African society.

A school’s Code of Conduct must inform the learners how they should conduct themselves at school in preparation for their conduct and safety in civil society. The school has a Code of Conduct, but the implementation thereof is not very effective. According to the data, learners roam around during school time and it seems that there are no consequences for their transgressions, even if it is on paper in the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct must set a standard of moral behaviour for learners and equip them with the expertise, knowledge and skills they would be expected to demonstrate as worthy and responsible citizens. The aim is to have well-disciplined and value-driven learners. The Code of Conduct must promote the civic responsibilities of the school and it must develop leadership. The main focus of the Code of Conduct must be positive discipline that will lead to constructive learning.

The Code of Conduct must be tailor-made for a specific school, because each school is unique and has its context. After formulating this document, the stakeholders must research consensus. Each stakeholder must receive a copy thereof and the stakeholders must also be consulted when the Code of Conduct is reviewed or when amendments are made.
The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to promote positive discipline, self-discipline and exemplary conduct, as learners learn by observation and experience. The Code of Conduct:

- must contain a set of moral values, for example, respect, responsibility, citizenship, and care,
- must have a set of norms and principles which the school community should uphold, and
- should be directed towards a culture of reconciliation, teaching, learning and mutual respect and the establishment of a culture of tolerance and peace in the school.

Section 8 of the *South African Schools Act* (RSA, 1996b) provides that a governing body of a public school must adopt a Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct must suit the development of the learners and fit the different school levels. The format must be user-friendly and the language used must be easily understandable for the learner. According to the *Nation Education Policy Act*, Act No. 27 (RSA, 1996a) and the Minister of Education must determine national education for the control and discipline of learners at education institutions. The *South African Schools Act*, No. 84 (RSA, 1996b), section 8(1) empowers a governing body of a school to maintain discipline at a school; hence the Code of Conduct must prescribe behaviour that respects the rights of learners and educators. Learners must understand that action may be taken against them if they should misbehave. When the discipline committee acts against the learner, an educator at the school shall have the same rights as a parent to control and discipline the learner according to the Code of Conduct during school time, functions, and excursions.

In terms of the *Control of Access to Public Premises and Vehicles Act 53* (RSA, 1985); the *Drugs and Drug Trafficking Act* No. 140 (RSA, 1992); the *Arms and Ammunition Act*, No. 75 (RSA, 1969), the principal or an educator, upon reasonable suspicion, has the legal authority to conduct a search of any learner or property in possession of a dangerous weapon, firearm, drugs, or harmful dangerous substance, stolen property, or pornographic material brought on the school property. During the search, human dignity shall be observed and learners shall be searched in private by persons of their gender, preferably in the presence of at least one other person. The school must keep a record of the search procedures and outcomes.
The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 (RSA, 1998; PAM chapter A, Section 4.2 (e)(i)) informs us that it is one of the principal’s tasks to keep the school's journal containing a record of all important events up to date. Journaling and keeping the school's relevant information and activities up to date build a portfolio of evidence. This useful information forms part of the school's culture and the way forward. This practice is not followed at this school, as staff come and go. New appointees will soon find their way around the school ethics if there is such a document. The information given in the questionnaires tells us that management is not stable; hence, keeping a relevant and up to date school journal can help the process of handing over the baton, in this case, the school, easily. The turnaround staff may accrue, but the routine and culture of doing things must stay the same to help the learners deal with constant change. This change has a massive impact on learners.

A good journal must consist of the following information:

- It is an official document and must be kept in diary form, and should be kept in a safe and secure place,
- The opening and closing of the school each term,
- The number of pupils officially enrolled on these days as well as the figure of the school on the 10th day of the year,
- Names of the school staff members and any important reorganization of work during the year,
- Exceptional achievements by educators or pupils of the school,
- Any unusual temporary closing of the school, and
- General matters such as building additions, concerts, sports, meetings, school excursions, epidemics, and functions to celebrate special days.

The history of the school

A school is expected to record its history in one way or another; if the history is not documented, valuable information is lost. The history of a school forms part of the school’s culture and helps with the way forward for new and replacement teachers.
The history of the school should be recorded and preferably kept by the principal of the school or a delegated member of the staff. The document may have information such as:

- Commemorative magazines and annuals,
- School journals,
- Minutes of SGB meetings, minutes of Representative Council of Learners' meetings,
- Correspondence,
- Photographs and newspaper clippings reflecting school activities,
- Photographs of memorial stones, monuments, foundation stones, buildings, etc.
- Tape and sound recordings of operettas, choirs, speeches, etc.
- Articles in school museums,
- Admission registers and annual returns,
- Reports and professional visits,
- Education and school documents,
- Records of interviews with ex-principals, ex-educators, ex-pupils, and ex-parents of the school,
- Programmes of invitations to functions,
- Development of the school building and school site,
- Brief biographies of former principals,
- Exceptional achievements (academic, sporting, culture and social) in various spheres of school life, for example, fêtes, festivals and meetings, and
- Relevant events.

This book should be kept up to date and in chronological order, with written particulars of school activities, and illustrated, where possible, by photographs and newspaper clippings. Such information may be stored electronically.
4.5 ANALYSIS OF CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOLS A AND B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL A</th>
<th>SCHOOL B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The layout of the document:</td>
<td>• School name: School B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School name: School A</td>
<td>• School badge: School B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School badge: School A</td>
<td>• Mission of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reply slip of receipt to the parent for reading through the document and discussed it with the learner.</td>
<td>• Vision of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No signature of commitment.</td>
<td>• Learners name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rules</td>
<td>• Parents name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Behaviour and Attendance</td>
<td>• Signature of commitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participation of program in the school.</td>
<td>• Index page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mission</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Vision</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Section B: Rights, Obligations and Responsibilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Section C: The school Rules</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Section D: The disciplinary system of the Code of Conduct</td>
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<td>• Section: E Disciplinary Structures Measures at school B</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the analysis of the two documents is not to compare the content in the document but to enhance and share best practices.

• The layout of the documents is different and School A can use the same framework for their Code of Conduct. Both schools have their name and badge of the school on the cover page; however, School A can follow School B’s example of the cover page. School A starts its document with the Mission and Vision of the school and it is clear that the school aims to provide quality, forward-looking education based on the Gospel values. Therefore, one of their visions is to have students who are inspired with hope and confidence for the future. School A, on the other hand, have no Mission or Vision stated on their Code of Conduct consequently the absence of a mission and vision can lead to no culture and direction. School culture manifests itself in customs, rituals, language (Deal & Kennedy, 1983; Nias,
1989). To be successful in the day-to-day running of the school, the management needs to set the rules, and the Code of Conduct is an instrument to set the boundaries. If there is no visible Mission and Vision, the school will move blindly into no man’s land, resulting in chaos because there is not a proper way of doing things.

- The School Governing Body consists of the principal, teachers, learners and parents and their core duty is to govern by setting policies. The principal and the senior management teachers must implement the policies. When parents sign the Code of Conduct they need to commit to it and make sure that their children understand it and will adhere to the rules. If they are not happy with the rules it is their prerogative to move to a school of their choice; hence, signing this document is very important. In addition, schools must workshop their parents on the Code of Conduct. The only expectation that School A has is that parents must send the reply slip and in doing so acknowledge the receipt of the document. Therein lies a gap, because parents can turn back and say that they did not commit to or accept the rules stated in the document. The document of School B is well-drafted and in writing, and it is evident that it is well structured. The document has a cover page with the school's name on it, which gives one a clear indication that the school has a history and is in touch with its identity.

- The document makes provision for the learners and the parent's signature to ensure the validity of the document. By signing this document, the learners and parents undertake to adhere to the Code of Conduct. The language used in this document is easy to understand and to interpret and thus it makes the document user-friendly.

- The Mission and Vision are clearly stated in the Code of Conduct and this document provides the school community with direction. The school aims to provide quality, forward-looking education based on the Gospel values to the girls, resulting in their being model South African citizens. School B aims to promote sensitivity amongst themselves and the girls. Another aim of the school is to develop young people with self-discipline, independent thinking and a sound set values so that they will be able to realize their potential. The Vision of School B is to have students who are inspired with hope and confidence for the future. The school promotes a partnership between home, school and the parish community. The school would like to instil a sense of it being a privilege to be part of a school with a unique character, tradition and history. Expectations of learners,
educators and parents are clearly articulated in section B. The school rules, disciplinary system, structures and measures in the Code of Conduct are neatly organized in the content page of the Code of Conduct. Under the heading general rules, the school spells out their expectations of the learners.

To conclude, from the analysis of the Code of Conduct of School B and comparing it with the questionnaires their teachers completed for the study it is evident that the school has direction and stability. Based on the results of the survey conducted at School B, it is apparent that transgressions of the Code of Conduct are dealt with effectively and expeditiously. The Code of Conduct of School B furthermore clearly stipulates the expected behaviour and conduct of teachers. This section of the Code of Conduct is set out in an easy and user-friendly layout, enabling teachers to access and interpret the content.

In contrast, School A's Code of Conduct does not include any section that speaks directly to the behaviour of teachers. The focus of School A is therefore primarily on the behaviour and conduct of learners. According to the results of this study the learners attend class poorly; they play truant regularly; however, this transgression is graded as a level 1 offence and the only punishment is detention by the class teacher or subject teacher. The transgression is clear on paper but the question is: does it happen in practice? The learners bunk class in volumes and teachers said that it made it difficult for them to teach properly. This behaviour of the ringleaders infringes on the rights of the other learners to have a fair chance on education. The learners that disrupt the school get away with murder because teachers do not follow up, and if they do, they are not consistent. Melissa Kelly (30 August 2017) states that consistency, fairness and follow-through reduce classroom disruptions.

In this study, the results on the graphs highlight that smoking, bunking and fighting are at the highest level of the bar graph. In addition to this, the culture, educational environment and discipline suffer tremendously at this school. Drawing attention to the Code of Conduct of the school and keeping in mind that the staff turnaround is constant, it is evident that there is a link between staff turnaround and following through the Code of Conduct.
This study has shown that learners bunk their classes regularly, smoke on the school premises and engage in unacceptable behaviour, such as fights on and off the school grounds. Learners do not adhere to the Code of Conduct; they get away with these offences and continue with disrupting the school program.

In the Code of Conduct of School A, if a learner should bunk his/her class he/she must stay for detention with their class/subject teacher. This is a Grade 1 offence and if a learner should smoke or fight at school, this offence is a Grade 2 offence and the DC (Disciplinary Committee) must keep the learner for detention. The following three transgressions (bunking, smoking and fighting) occur continuously at School A and disrupt the daily school program, contributing to the lawless status of the school. These transgressions are some of the factors that lead to the school being dysfunctional. No culture of learning or environment conducive to learning exists at School A.

In concluding the analyses of the Code of Conduct, these transgressions cannot be allowed to continue disrupting the teaching program of School A. I would recommend that the sanctions for these transgressions be elevated to a more serious punishment level, as these offences hold the whole school hostage. Section 8(1) of the South African Schools Act, No. 84 (RSA, 1996) empowers a governing body of a school to maintain discipline at a school.

4.6 QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

The analyses of the respective participants follow.

Perspective of Participant A (Q1), School A

The perspective of Participant A is that a school must create an environment of culture so that the learner can learn and excel to his or her full potential. All role-players (staff, the governing body, parents and learners) must be involved in drafting the Code of Conduct. When drafting this document schools must be mindful of the WCED Policy document that guides this process and keeps in mind the religion, language and culture of the learner. Furthermore, parents and learners
should study the Code of Conduct carefully. When all are in agreement, the document must be signed by both the parent and learner. Educators and prefects must IMPLEMENT these rules. Should learners not adhere to the rules that they signed, they must face the CONSEQUENCES. All staff members must be CONSISTENT in PROGRESSIVE discipline. If all learners adhere to the Code of Conduct, the school will become an excellent centre of learning and creativity.

**Perspective of Participant B (Q1), School B**

The perspective of Participant B is that their school has a CLEAR Code of Conduct; however, everything does not have CLEAR CONSEQUENCES. The participant thinks that they as teachers do not FOLLOW up on learners that do not comply. According to the teacher, the learners’ behaviour are deteriorating (misbehaviour); however, there is a CULTURE OF CARE AND HELPFULNESS amongst the staff. They have GOOD VALUES that they want to uphold; however, with the increasing workload it becomes difficult to solve all the problems their girls have. The girls suffer because of their circumstances. The teachers feel emotional about the fact that they cannot do more to maintain these values.

**Perspective of Participant C (Q1), School B**

The perspective of Participant C is that their school has a problem with late coming, learners that do no homework and do not want to wear their school uniforms. The school has a one-hour detention after school to discipline learners, but that structure is not effective, because of social ills such as drugs and gangsterism. The school needs to think of learners’ safety. The disciplinary action that seems to help is when the school calls in the parents.

**Perspective of Participant D (Q1), School A**

The perspective of Participant D is that their Code of Conduct is just words on paper. The implementation thereof is lacking at this school. Their environment is not conducive to the
cultivation of discipline and learners easily notice if there is an inconsistency in following through with procedures.

The culture of the school cannot be put into place because of the constant change in management. As soon as you say, “This is how we do things at this school”, … new management, new rules, new practices.

There are excellent core values embedded in their Code of Conduct. Unfortunately, the values are not communicated properly by all educators to the learners.

**Perspective of Participant E (Q1), School A**

Participant E thinks that currently, the school is not far from being dysfunctional. According to the participant, leadership at the TOP lacks the WILL to turn things around. Some of the colleagues buy into trying NEW APPROACHES as far as disciplining learners is concerned. Others choose to preserve their lackadaisical ways of dealing with awkward learners, although they are in the minority.

A learning culture is absent among some learners. Ambition is absent. Survival is the only thing on learners’ minds and in their actions. The Code of Conduct is comprehensive, but according to participants, they failed terribly to abide by it, and at times they were hesitant to follow through with sanctions.

**Perspective of Participant F (Q1), School B**

Participant F thinks that a Code of Conduct is a set of regulations/instrument/tools that deals effectively with school discipline.

This set of regulations creates a conducive environment for learning. The Code of Conduct helps to develop a set of values/cultures to enhance teaching and learning. If the Code of Conduct is absent it will seriously impact schooling, teaching and learning.

**Perspective of Participant G (Q1), School A**
Participant G thinks that the Code of Conduct is a GUIDELINE for learners, parents and educators. The Code of Conduct is the CORNERSTONE around which to build the ETHOS and PRIDE of the school. It needs to be ACCEPTED by learners, parents and educators. All STAKEHOLDERS need to avail themselves of what is EMBEDDED in the document. The Code of Conduct SHOULD BE VISIBLE at all times. Learners need to know what the CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR ACTIONS/TRANSgressions are. This is a manner in which we teach our learners RESPONSIBILITY and ACCOUNTABILITY. This is a VALUABLE LIFE SKILL which creates UNIFORMITY and everybody is treated the same.

**Perspective of Participant A (Q1), School A**

The perspective of Participant A is that a school must create an environment of culture so that the learner can learn and excel to his or her full potential. All role-players (staff, the governing body, parents and learners) must be involved in setting up the Code of Conduct. When setting this document of the Code of Conduct, one has to be mindful of the WCED Policy document that guides this process and keeps in mind the religion, language and culture of the learner. Furthermore, parents and learners should study this document of the Code of Conduct carefully. When all are in agreement, the document must be signed by both parent and learner. Educators and prefects must IMPLEMENT these rules.

Should learners not adhere to the rules that they set up and signed, they must face the CONSEQUENCES. All staff members must be CONSISTENT in PROGRESSIVE discipline. If all learners are in line with the Code of Conduct, the school will become an excellent centre of learning and creativity.

**Perspective of Participant B (Q1), School B**

The perspective of Participant B is that their school have a CLEAR Code of Conduct; however, everything does not have CLEAR CONSEQUENCES. The respondent thinks that they as teachers do not FOLLOW up on learners that do not comply. According to the teacher, the learners’ behaviour are deteriorating (misbehaving). However, there is a CULTURE OF CARE AND HELPFULNESS amongst the staff. The teacher said that they have GOOD VALUES that they
want to uphold; however, with the increasing workload it becomes difficult to solve all the problems their girls have. The girls suffer because of their circumstances. The teachers feel emotional about the fact that they cannot do more to live out these values.

**Perspective of Participant C (Q1), School B**

The perspective of Participant C is that their school has a problem with late coming, learners that do no homework and do not want to wear their school uniforms. The school has a one-hour detention session after school to discipline learners but that structure is not effective, because of social ills such as drugs and gangsterism. The school needs to think of the learners’ safety. The disciplinary action that seems to help is when the school calls in the parents.

**Perspective of Participant D (Q1), School A**

The perspective of Participant D is that their Code of Conduct is just words on paper. The implementation thereof is lacking at this school. Their environment is not conducive to the cultivation of discipline and learners easily notice if there is an inconsistency in following through with procedures.

The culture of the school cannot be put into place because of the constant change in management. As soon as you say, “This is how we do things at this school” they counter and say it is new management with new rules and new practices.

There are excellent core values embedded in their Code of Conduct. Unfortunately, the values are not communicated properly by all educators to the learners.

**Perspective of Participant E, (Q1), School A**

Participant E thinks that currently, the school is not far from being dysfunctional. According to the respondent, leadership at the TOP lacks the WILL to turn things around. Some of the colleagues buy into trying NEW APPROACHES as far as disciplining learners is concerned. Others choose to preserve with their lackadaisical ways of dealing with awkward learners, however, they are in the minority.
A learning culture and ambition are absent among some learners. Survival is the only thing on learners’ minds and in their actions. The Code of conduct is comprehensive, but they fail terribly to abide by it and at times they are hesitant to follow through with sanctions.

**Perspective of Participant F (Q1), School B**

Participant F thinks that a Code of Conduct is a set of regulations/instrument/tool that deals effectively with school discipline. This set of regulations creates a conducive environment for learning. The Code of Conduct helps to develop a set of values/cultures to enhance teaching and learning. If the Code of Conduct is absent it will seriously impact on schooling, i.e. teaching and learning.

**Perspective of Participant G (Q1), School A**

Participant G thinks that the Code of Conduct is a guideline for learners, parents, and educators. The Code of Conduct is the cornerstone around which to build the ethos and pride of the school and needs to be accepted by learners, parents, and educators. All stakeholders need to inform themselves of what is embedded in the document. The Code of Conduct should be visible at all times. Learners need to know what the consequences of their actions/transgressions are. This is a manner in which we teach our learners responsibility and accountability. This is a valuable life skill which creates uniformity, and everybody is treated the same.

**Most Prominent Misbehaviours: School A and B**

**VISIBILITY OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visible</th>
<th>Not Visible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1 shows that smoking, bunking, and fighting are the disciplinary issues plaguing both School A and School B the most. The response of Participants D, E, F and G clearly express their dissatisfaction with how misbehaviours are dealt with within their school context.

Is the Code of Conduct visible at your school?

SCHOOL A

- Visible: 33%
- Not Visible: 67%

**FIGURE 4.2: VISIBLE CODE OF CONDUCT AT SCHOOL**
Figure 4.2 shows that 67% of participants feel that the Code of Conduct is not visible at School A. Printed versions of the Code of Conduct ends up in the teachers’ files or portfolios. The Code of Conduct needs to be a working document, visible to all learners, teachers, all staff, relevant role-players, and visitors to the school. Participants noted that the Code of Conduct was reviewed annually, and all relevant role-players were actively part of the review process.

**FIGURE 4.3: VISIBILITY OF CODE OF CONDUCT: SCHOOL B**

The responses of these participants of School B clearly states that the Code of Conduct is not visible at all. Some educators also noted that they had not even received any such documents or related documents since starting their teaching career at this school. There is no Code of Conduct in the entrance, staffroom, or administrative block of the school.

**QUESTION 2: On a scale of 1-4 rate how your school DEALS with the following misbehaviours, with 1 being not effective and 4 outstanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL B</th>
<th>SMOKING</th>
<th>BUNKING</th>
<th>FIGHTING</th>
<th>LATE FOR SCHOOL</th>
<th>NO HOMEWORK DONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL A</td>
<td>SMOKING</td>
<td>BUNKING</td>
<td>FIGHTING</td>
<td>LATE FOR SCHOOL</td>
<td>NO HOMEWORK DONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant G</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTION 3: Explain why you gave Code 2**

**SCHOOL A**

| Participant 1 | To maintain discipline is too much for the number of teachers to supervise. |
| Participant 2 | No help from management in this regard. The teacher needs to work out appropriate disciplinary measures, which is sometimes difficult to follow up and becomes a lot of admin work. |
| Participant 3 | No comment |

**QUESTION 3: Explain why you gave Code 1-2**

**SCHOOL B**

| Participant D | Punishment for these behaviours are set out in the Code of Conduct, but proper procedures are rarely followed |
| Participant E | Effective systems are lacking, and sanctions not administered vigorously. |
| Participant F | In class minor discipline problems, e.g. loud noise; rudeness, etc. |
| Participant G | At the moment there are no structures in place. It is left to class educators to deal with issues. |
QUESTION 4. What would you recommend to help the school to achieve better to outstanding dealing with discipline?

**SCHOOL A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant A</th>
<th>Yes, for a school to operate efficiently it is imperative to deal with discipline.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant B</td>
<td>Consistency is important. There should be a clear message to the learners that all subjects are important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant C</td>
<td>Call in the help of parents – unemployed ones.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SCHOOL B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant D</th>
<th>Proper structures must be out in place. Teachers have to be monitored by an SMT (School Management Team). The SMT has to be monitored by WCED staff, for example, the Circuit Manager.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant E</td>
<td>Leadership to be firmer from the top.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant F</td>
<td>Structures and processes. However, implementation is the challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant G</td>
<td>Be consistent. All parties take responsibility. Zero tolerance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTION 5: NAME COMMON DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Late-comining, most learners travel – but get detention the next day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The noise level when teachers are absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learners outside classrooms are disruptive and it takes time to settle them down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Now and then fighting between two learners breaks out. The Disciplinary Committee dealt very well with that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C | Selling of drugs (dagga) on school. No. The culprits go unpunished, but there is very little to follow up procedures set in place. Use of cell phones and other electronic equipment.  
---|---
D | Learners stay away from classes, roaming around the school blocks, disrupting.  
---|---
E | Being busy teaching a class makes it impossible to reach these lost ones.  
---|---
F | Late coming, bunking, issue letters to the parents.  
---|---
G | Smoking weed/use drugs. Absenteeism. Code of conduct should apply but it does not always.  

### QUESTION 6: PLEASE GIVE TIPS HOW DO YOU AS TEACHER DEAL WITH DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>School premises</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Identify poor-performing learners and ringleaders. First, subdue ringleaders and then attend to poor performing learners. Build a good relationship with learners and know their home circumstances.</td>
<td>Ensure constant supervision during breaks. Staff must run the school nor learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I make sure learners always have work to do even if I am not in class/school. I explain to learners what I want and expect from them.</td>
<td>I speak to girls to have a conversation with them. Ask them how they are. This helps, it shows them I care and thus makes sure they listen to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Each one has her seat. Keep possible friends apart. Each one must have her text/writing book.</td>
<td>With the supervision of a teacher, the prefects do it quite well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>I remove learners from the situation to a neutral place where I am in a position of authority.</td>
<td>I single out those learners that I know/teach and use them to influence the others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>I use a whole week during the start of the school year to build rapport – to “connect” with all my learners.</td>
<td>Be visible and speak to wrongdoers with respect and they will listen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Being strict and consistent in applying classroom rules.</td>
<td>Applying the broader school rules consistent with staff in general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seating plan, isolation, most of all be prepared for the lesson. 

Reprimand learners when I come across them.

QUESTION 7: Answer YES OR NO. The Code of Conduct is efficiently followed and implemented. In setting up your Code of Conduct where the parents, learners and teachers involved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>PARENTS INVOLVED</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Not sure, new teacher.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>No parents do not part take. Learners and teachers alone</td>
<td>No. Time constraints</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Yes, SGB</td>
<td>No. No checks and balances are in place.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>No, only those in SGB</td>
<td>No, sanctions are not enforced carried through.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>No, more could have been done.</td>
<td>No, we need more leadership from the office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Yes, they were initially</td>
<td>No, we have not discussed it this year nor given it to the learners and parents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 8: How do the disciplinary structures work at your school? (pattern)

| A | Disciplinary Committee (DC), deals with discipline, detention classes | |

Stellenbosch University  https://scholar.sun.ac.za
B I normally sort it out on my own. If I cannot I refer the matter to one of the management team members.

C Class teacher, principal, discipline committee.

D Subject/class teacher-grade head-disciplinary committee – SGB. Only level 3 and 4 and level 1 and 2 repeat offences

E Teachers in the classroom deal with minor infringements. More severe cases are referred to as grade heads and DC

F It is implemented not strictly enough

G Class/subject teacher grade head school's disciplinary committee. Principal, Governing Body, DC.

**QUESTION 9:** Are the proceedings clear and learner-friendly?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Yes. Learners are quite aware of consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Yes. I warn them and inform them that if the behaviour continues, I will refer the matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes. Teacher and learner in office. The teacher explains. The problem-learner is asked to explain. Many time problems are solved in the office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>No. Somewhere along the line the trail and paperwork stop. Then the blame game starts. Follow-ups are very seldom done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Yes, but some learners (with parents) choose to ignore attending hearings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very obscure – Teacher does not always know the procedure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>It is supposed to be but should be visited annually to amend it. It stays a working document.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 10: Is the Code of Conduct visible at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Not visible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>It is not visible. The secretary has a copy, which is available on request. All gr. 8 girls and new entrants are given a copy of the Code of Conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes. Each new learner and parent receive one at applications. Lear asked to keep it visible at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>No. Most teachers (me too) have it in a file somewhere, collecting dust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Not really but visible in some classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>It must be pasted against the classroom's wall. In children's workbooks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 11: How often does your school revise the Code of Conduct?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Every year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>No idea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Not really. Discipline is contained successfully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Last time it was revised in 2016, after that it was 3 years before that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Not very often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Not regularly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 12: Do you think that your school’s rules are appropriate for your learning environment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>I think it should be revised more often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D No. A lot of the sanctions have to be revisited to be on par with changes in technology and the type of learner that the school is attracting.

E No, this is a ‘township’ school – Innovative measures should be put in place.

F To a degree Yes

G If it is implemented, yes.

QUESTION 13: What rule/s of your school would you like to change in your school’s Code of Conduct?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Cell phone policy – learners are not allowed cell phones, but I use it as a tool for research in History.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Hair policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>None so far.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Cell phone policy-Phones should be allowed, but with some restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>That sanctions be administered consequently and vigorously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Quick sanctioning if transgressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Nothing. Maybe drug usage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTION 14: Is there a rule that is outstanding at your school that you would like to recommend to any other school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Strick uniform policy – if the small things fall in place, the bigger problems will also be attended to. Do not overlook the small things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes. Wearing jewellery and using cell phones at school/during lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Yes, the second and at times the third opportunity learners get to redeem themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>No, I do not know the context of other schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.7 SUMMARY

To summarize this chapter, I am going to try to capture in brief what the teachers’ responses of School A and School B were and will discuss it in detail in Chapter 5.

Educators think that schools need to create a culture of learning so that learners can excel. To achieve this goal, all role-players should be on board; however, to reach this goal, teachers need to have a clear understanding of their school’s Code of Conduct. The role-players must make that commitment because the school is the property of the community; hence the School Governing Body (SGB) should set up policies and take the lead. The school should become the beacon of hope in the community where there seems to be no hope.

The Code of Conduct is the backbone of the school. It should be visible, reviewed and revisited all off the time. The school must adopt a zero-tolerance attitude. Teach all the role-players to take pride in the school’s name, uniform, ethos and building structure. An environment conducive to teaching and learning derives from a good Code of Conduct that are accepted, adopted, implemented, and understood by all stakeholders.

The identity of the school and the way they do things makes the school unique and gives character to the school. Van Wyk (2009:344) goes further and says that human interaction is a very important feature at an institution, and it applies to the high schools in my study. Teachers agree that there are still a great majority of learners with good values despite the ongoing misbehaviours, and that is a sign of hope.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings presented in Chapter 4 concerning the two research questions. I analysed the questionnaires on the teachers’ interpretations, perspectives, and implementations of the Code of Conduct for learners. The research that was conducted, together with the analysis, is integrated in such a manner that the conclusions and recommendations can be presented. An attempt has been made to analyse the data to draw conclusions and make recommendations on the study. Given this information, it will hopefully be possible to identify or solve the challenges.

5.2 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

After studying and reading up on discipline nationally and internationally, it was clear that organisational factors have a significant effect on delinquency rates (Gottfredson, 1984). I have concluded that planning, organising, and implementing can make or break a school or any organisation. To establish a total-school climate, the school must adopt the approach of shared values. Wayson (1985) reports that four of five discipline incidents originate in organisational characteristics, including how we organise and run schools. To improve the culture of the school, all stakeholders must buy into the vision and mission of the school; hence, the basic functionality of a school must include the smoothness at which the school runs, for example, the attendance of learners and educators and their interest in their work. The effectiveness of a school’s procedures plays a key role in the functionality of the school culture and organisation. Leadership and management of a school have to lead with the mission and objectives of the school in mind; however, this is not going to be effective if there is constant change in management.

- To improve the school, constant reviews and follow-up need to be conducted by the leadership and management of the school,
- Basic functionality of the school,
• Leadership and management,
• Governance and relationships,
• Quality of teaching, learner and educator development and achievement,
• Curriculum provision and resources,
• School safety, security, and discipline,
• School infrastructure, and
• Relationships with parents and the community.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In analysing data to gain insight into the perspectives of the teachers on the Code of Conduct for learners of a selected high school in the Western Cape, four themes were identified to help the school to have an environment conducive to learning and to operate effectively. The first theme is discipline at school. Theme 2 deals with the school environment and the importance thereof. The third theme speaks to the culture of the school, and how it creates the identity of the school. Theme 4 focuses on values, and how they link with the community and the importance of learners’ family background.

5.3.1 Discipline

The school governing body (SGB) can and should play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of sound discipline (Joubert & Bray, 2007:80) and, for this reason, the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) mandates SGBs to adopt a Code of Conduct for learners as a way of “establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to improving the quality of the learning process”. Disruptive behaviour in South African schools has been reported widely and is said to include learners in possession of prohibited substances such as drugs and alcohol (News24.com, 2006). After analysing the information from my data, it became evident that the sustained abuse and misbehaviour at the school of my research are very high. The Code of Conduct for learners is therefore a form of subordinate legislation that reflects the democratic principles of the Constitution (RSA, 1996c) by supporting the values of human dignity, equality, and freedom. The Code of Conduct spells out rules regarding learner behaviour and describes the disciplinary
process to be implemented in relation to transgressions by learners (Department of Education, 2008:1). It is further mentioned that a Code of Conduct is a consensus document and its drafting process should be characterised by the involvement of parents, learners, educators, and non-educators at the school.

According to a study conducted by Rossouw (2003:413), there has been a decline in the level of discipline in schools in recent years, and this has a serious effect on the teaching and learning process. A study by Thomas (2009) on primary and secondary education in South Africa confirms that there has been a breakdown in discipline in schools. The research site of my study has a Code of Conduct on paper; however, the important condition for the effectiveness of the learner Code of Conduct lies in its enforcement. The research site experiences a constant change in staff in its top structure, which is possibly one of the biggest challenges a school can face.

The Department of Education (2000:12) proposes that there are ways to encourage a positive culture, which in turn will help with good discipline. Schools may adopt a whole-school approach and, in addition to this strategy, effective leadership, clear communication and good planning by teachers are some of the factors that are essential for preventing disciplinary problems. The educators of the schools think that the school needs to create a culture of learning so that the learners can excel to their full potential; therefore it is imperative that all role-players – the governing body, staff, learners and parents – must be involved in drafting the Code of Conduct. Learners, parents, and staff should study this document, and this will pave the way at the school. Educators should have a clear understanding of the Code of Conduct, and it is imperative that educators commit themselves to implement the rules according to the document in full and not deviate from its path.

Should a teacher not implement the school rules, there should be a form of discipline for the educator; however, this does not happen at this school. How can this gap be filled and who is going to monitor the educator? This action should be guided by a Code of Conduct for teachers. The school is the property of the community; therefore, the governing body should set the policies and the principal must implement them during a normal school day. Parents should take ownership of the school, because the school should be the pride and joy of the community, especially in this
gangster-ridden area. The school should focus on being a beacon of hope for the learners and the community at large.

According to the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (RSA, 1996c), Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights states the rights of all people in our country, and also affirms our freedom; however, the people of this area do not have this freedom because of fear. These challenges of the community cripple the growth of the school, and therefore the implementation of discipline. This school has a big turnaround of staff, especially in the top structure. It is the governing body’s task to interview and appoint staff at the school. According to Sallis (2001:1), the ability of parents to govern effectively is sometimes constrained by a common sentiment that they are people without training and experience, and therefore should not be allowed to interfere in professional activity. This leads to continuous changes in staff and management positions; hence the instability of the staff component rippling out to school discipline. One of the important duties of the governing body is to assess the need of the school in terms of curriculum and, through an interview, determine who will be appointed in the management position. According to the Report of the Ministerial Review Committee on School Governance (RSA, 2004:175), SGBs in South African schools are under-capacitated and not effective in dealing with the business of education. Newcomers only stay for a year or two and then leave the school.

The logical questions that arise is – does the school not have competent staff to fill the managerial positions? Or is there no ambition to move up? What is the reason for this gap? These are questions for further research. The school is suffering the consequences. This is evident in the chronic poor school results: a 39.5% matric pass rate in the 2017 National Certification examinations. One of the participants felt that although the Code of Conduct was clear, there are no clear consequences, and structures are followed haphazardly. Having studied the Code of Conduct, I found, for example, that level 1 fighting and level 4 assaults of a learner causing bodily harm are not very clear. What do they mean or understand under fighting and assaulting? Due to insufficient consequences, learners take matters into their own hands. Therefore, the school has become a den of ongoing gang wars that come from the community. Regular shootings occur in the community, and it is not safe to walk by day or night. The learners feel unsafe in the community and on the school grounds.
This unsafe environment and the unstable atmosphere are transferred into the staffroom, where there is infighting in the top structure of the school. This harms the progress of the school, hence the ongoing discipline challenges of the school. Learners have developed a bad attitude towards both teachers and parents, and this is magnified by the overemphasis of children’s rights (Rossouw, 2003:413).

Learners sense this unstable environment and want to take the lead themselves by forming gangs and defying ‘authority’. A teacher mentioned that the Code of Conduct is only on paper and implementation is lacking. Having studied the Code of Conduct of this school, I found that it was not clear and therefore confusing. The disciplinary infringements are written in levels and grades, and the punishment does not match the infringements. According to the Code of Conduct of this school, a level 1 offence is when the learner shows uncooperative behaviour, in which case he or she must stay for detention organised by the class teacher. However, when the learner disregards authority, he or she must go to the disciplinary committee of the school, which brings me to the question, who is the authority? The challenge of keeping learners for detention is the gang fights in the area, thus making it unsafe for the learners to stay after school. They therefore do as they please, for the hands of the teachers are tied. Because of community influences, the policies should be a working document, meaning that the school should be proactive and adjust, add to, or amend the policies regularly. One of the teachers made a bold statement by saying that the school was not far from being a dysfunctional school, and that the leaders lacked the willpower to change things.

What makes this school dysfunctional? According to the research, learners roam around outside while a teacher tries to teach. Some learners are blatantly disrespectful towards teachers and fellow learners. Howard and Taylor (2007) state that, in order to deal with ill-disciplined learners, a more holistic strategy must be followed. Why are they not in class? According to the Bill of Rights (sections 7-9) in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA 1996c), everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. It could be that the learners of this school are not aware of the importance and seriousness of the Constitution and the Code of Conduct, hence their bad behaviour. At this school, the Code of Conduct states that, if a learner bunks class, he or she must sit detention conducted by the class teacher. The class teacher can be likened to the guardian of the learner at school. If a learner stays away from a subject teacher’s class, why must the class teacher be responsible for reprimanding and punishing the
learner? If the subject teacher does not report the misbehaviour, the class teacher will not know about the learner’s transgressions. The challenge or gap is effective communication. Are there structures in place and is the implication thereof realistic?

Bunking classes causes disciplinary challenges on the school grounds, and learners are literally getting away with murder (figuratively speaking). The learning culture at the school, therefore, is absent.

The Code of Conduct is perceived as a set of rules, instruments, and tools to deal effectively with issues of discipline at schools. In the absence of an effective Code of Conduct, the school discipline, environment, culture, and values will suffer, and this will have a serious impact on teaching and learning. Some educators felt that the Code of Conduct was only a guideline for learners, parents, and educators; however, this guideline needs to be implemented and monitored. The effectiveness will grow only if all role-players buy into it and commit themselves to the school. With so many teachers leaving the school, how can the school settle down and work on its challenges? It appears that some of the staff are not loyal to the school, and the challenge is that this cannot be measured because people can resist without showing it.

How does one measure values? It will be good practice to incorporate values into the CAPS curriculum, as this will help with restoring discipline. Good practice will be to get teachers to commit to the school by completing agreements and attending workshops for new teachers, as well as to follow up on established teachers as a monitoring tool for quality purposes.

Positive staff development and training can help, but this depends on the individual. An effective Code of Conduct is the cornerstone on which to build the ethos and pride of the school. The Code of Conduct should be visible at all times, and learners need to know what the consequences of their transgressions are. The Code of Conduct should be on the walls in the foyer of the school, and in the hall and corridors of the building. The Code of Conduct needs to be discussed, accepted, and signed by all role-players. All must accept the policy and enforce the implementation thereof by all role-players. The Code of Conduct must be relevant to a particular school; schools may use other schools’ Code of Conduct as a guideline but must not just copy it. If they do, there will be
gaps, because each school and each community have their own identity and ‘personality’, which cannot be copied.

New learners, teaching staff and non-teaching staff must familiarise themselves with the Code of Conduct of the school to understand the rules and the way things are done at the school. The new intakes will have a reasonable time to either accept or reject the idea of attending the school. The Code of Conduct needs to be reviewed and revisited at least once a year. According to the teachers, the Code of Conduct was last revisited in 2015; hence the statement that the school is dysfunctional.

A clear Code of Conduct is the backbone of a well-disciplined school. The staff need to perceive, understand, and implement the Code of Conduct. Uniformity, in other words speaking out of the same mouth, is key. Discipline is everybody's work, not just management; hence, if all role-players do not implement the rules, the school will be dysfunctional and not an easy or safe environment to work in.

### 5.3.2 Environment

According to Section 24 of the Constitution (RSA, 1996c), everyone has the right to an environment that is not bad for them, and this includes the environment of the school where teaching and learning take place.

Participant A said that the school must create the environment for every child to learn and to excel to his or her full potential, and furthermore the teacher’s opinion is that to achieve that environment, a culture must be created at the school. According to Joubert and Squelch (2005:23), the school environment is as much a factor in the discipline as home circumstances and personality. For this to happen, a Code of Conduct must be drawn up, signed, and accepted by all role players. When the teacher speaks about all role-players, the teacher refers to the staff, the governing body, the learners (RCL) and the parents. Only once all have agreed must the Code of Conduct be adhered to.
In my experience as a teacher, I conclude that if people do not agree or have not been consulted over a matter, they do not take ownership of it. The school staff consists of more than five people and, if one wants your staff to create and grow an environment conducive to teaching and learning, one needs to take into account that one works with human beings.

To create the environment, one cannot divorce the Code of Conduct from the old prefect system. The prefects, through the RCL, must enforce the Code of Conduct and there must be consequences if the code is ignored.

The staff members must study the Code of Conduct, take it seriously and be consistent in progressive discipline. As an experienced teacher, I have noticed that if one particular teacher is strict in implementing the Code of Conduct, the other teachers will give ownership to that particular teacher for discipline. All staff members must adopt a zero-tolerance attitude towards the learners when it comes to the Code of Conduct. Furthermore, to create a good environment at a school, the staff, community, and learners must take pride in the school’s name, school uniform, school ethos and structure. Once the mind-shift and mindset to create a better school environment have been adopted and all role-players have committed to a shared vision of and goals for the school, everything will fall into place.

The participants agreed that if all learners are in line with the Code of Conduct, the entire school will become an excellent centre of learning and creativity.

At the neighbouring school, despite the community being drug and gangster ridden, they do not have that environment inside the school. The challenge they have is to keep their learners safe. This school reaps a lot of success through calling in the parents of learners who are ill-disciplined and therefore disturb the learning environment.

An environment conducive to teaching and learning derives from a good Code of Conduct that is accepted, adopted, implemented, and understood by all stakeholders. All stakeholders need to honour and respect what is embedded in the document. To create this environment, the document should be visible at all times. Learners need to know what the consequences of their actions or
transgressions are. This is a manner in which we can teach learners responsibility and accountability – valuable life skills. A good Code of Conduct helps to create a good and clean environment. The Code of Conduct for learners also creates uniformity that will lead to better understanding, resulting in an environment conducive to learning and growing.

5.3.3 Culture

The Department of Education (2000:12) posits that there are ways and means in which a positive culture of teaching and learning can be created at a school by implementing creative ideas. These ideas include the adoption of a whole-school approach that ensures that classroom discipline mirrors the school’s policies; the construction of ground rules, commitment to and professional management of the learning process and the learning environment; effective use of learning materials and the proper teaching methodology; inclusivity; giving learners the opportunity to make a success of their schooling; allowing learners to take responsibility; involving parents; and getting assistance from professionals (Department of Education, 2000:12, 14).

The participants responded by saying that schools are responsible for creating the culture and environment of the school by vigorously implementing the Code of Conduct. It seems that the Code of Conduct is the backbone of a school and, if not in place, the school will be paralysed. When I refer to school culture, I refer to the culture of learning, the culture of the way things is done there.

Kabende (2015) and Van Wyk (2009:332) assume that a university has a dominant culture and that there is an inescapable, pervasive culture that determines how things are done. I would like to highlight that comment taken from this study. I have learned that teachers reiterate the fact that they do not have a stable way of doing things anymore, due to the instability in the top structure in this school, which is also an institution. Van Wyk (2009:344) concludes in his analysis that culture connects people; hence it is clear that the connection of the staff, learners and parents is wobbly. The school struggles to recreate the stable culture that it had years ago. Continuity is lacking at this school due to the constant staff turnaround and, in the interim, the staff relations and interpersonal relations suffer.
The identity of the school and the way it does things make the school unique and give character to the school. How can a school create a culture? According to Van Wyk (2009:344), human interaction is a very important feature in an institution and attention must be paid to how people interact with one another and how to organise the institution, in this case the school.

A teacher at a neighbouring school said that there was a culture of care amongst the staff at their school; however, according to the answers to the questionnaires, it seems that this element lacks at the school of this research. It seems that teachers have lost faith in the management of the school. A teacher commented that the culture of the research school could not be established because of the constant change in management. They continued to say that, as soon as they were ready to say this is the way we do things, then the management changes, coming with new rules and new practices. Here I would like to ask the governing body why it does not appoint staff from inside the school. This could help with continuity and consistency. Furthermore, is it that the teachers are not capable of leading the school, or is it a matter of professional jealousy? To summarise what the participant said, ambition is absent in a lot of households and this contributes to the learning culture that is absent at the school.

5.3.4 Values

The teachers’ perspectives on values are more or less the same, even at the neighbouring school. The teachers reckon that there is still a great majority of learners with good values, despite the ongoing misbehaviour at school, and that this is a sign of hope. One teacher said that the Code of Conduct was a tool to deal with discipline effectively, and the document had to develop a set of values for the learners. Another teacher at the research school was of the opinion that there were excellent core values embedded in the Code of Conduct; however, the teacher said, “Unfortunately it is not communicated properly by all educators, resulting in it not being portrayed in the behaviour and attitude of the learners.” A participant at the neighbouring school responded by saying that they had good values that they tried to uphold; however, their workload did not allow them to attend to all of the problems their learners have.
In analysing data to gain insight into the perspectives of the teachers on the Code of Conduct for learners of a selected high school in the Western Cape, four themes were identified to help the school to have an environment conducive to learning and to operate effectively. The first theme is discipline at school. Theme 2 deals with the school environment and the importance thereof. The third theme speaks to the culture of the school, and how it creates the identity of the school. Theme 4 focuses on values, and how they link with the community and the importance of learners’ family background.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SCHOOL

To conclude this study, I want to make a few recommendations to the school that I used as my study location. I shall make recommendations on the following:

- The vision of the school,
- The mission of the school,
- The Code of Conduct,
- Discipline,
- Interpersonal relations, and
- Staff relations.

5.4.1 Vision of the school

The documented vision that is documented must be clear and shared. This study has shown that all stakeholders must be present when deciding, and that they all need to buy in. The staff need to work, speak, and operate from the same platform. The vision of the school should be visible on the walls and in the eyes of the community, and it must be clear and understandable. The Code of Conduct, the vision, the mission, and the values should be visible where there is foot traffic. It should be pasted on the walls in the foyer, corridors, classrooms, and hall. Poster-size, coloured portraits will attract the eye.

5.4.2 Mission of the school
The mission should be clear and visible at all times, for example, on the walls in the foyer, other walls and in the corridors. Currently, teachers have it in a file or a drawer in the classroom or at home. The staff must know and understand the mission of the school, because if you know your vision and your mission, they will form part of your daily operations.

The staff, learners, parents, and community must be well informed of what the school aims to achieve. The school staff needs to have the same goals, and all the stakeholders need to follow the same structures, implement them, and follow through at all times. Accountability and responsibility should be among the aims to make sure that the systems work.

5.4.3 The Code of Conduct

Educators, parents, non-teaching staff and learners should know and study the Code of Conduct. This document should be visible and be revisited regularly. Amendments and recommendations should be revisited regularly.

To bring about change in the perspective of teachers and how they perceive the Code of Conduct at their schools, they need to have a clear and simple, straightforward understanding of how things are done at their schools. The entire staff, including non-teaching staff, and the parents and learners need to study and understand what must be done when and where. Each member needs to know the structures and procedures. Training should be provided by management to ensure a clear roadmap of how things work at the school. In this way, they will create a culture, values, and ethos for the school.

The Code of Conduct must be clear and loopholes such as levels and transgressions should be revisited. There should only be one Code of Conduct and it must be authentic, not a copy of that of a neighbouring school with a different setup. Schools can strive to be as successful as other schools; however, they must be realistic and also bear in mind the geographical area the school is situated in, and the community it serves. There should be orientation sessions for new educators and learners at the start of each term. New teachers should have a mentor and learners should have a guardian teacher. In that way, learners will not follow the wrong leaders at the school. There
should be a day allocated to revisiting the Code of Conduct in relation to the day-to-day running of the school, reflection on the past term and what can be expected of the new term.

The Code of Conduct should be pasted on the walls of all classrooms. The learners should realise the seriousness of their transgressions. They must all take responsibility for the discipline; it is not only the job of the school management team, hence the total lawlessness of the learners. With management being unstable, the learners have lost their trust in and respect for the system and are defiant towards authority.

According to the Education Management and Development Centre: Metropolis North Western Cape (2007), learners’ behavioural problems is a major concern for teachers, administrators, and parents. After the abolishment of the system of corporal punishment, an urgent need arose to deal with behavioural issues in different ways. Metropolis North adopted the positive behavioural approach in that they lean towards a developmental and restorative approach. The aim was to enable learners to progress towards responsibility, relationship-building and a greater sense of well-being. This approach is in line with the South African Constitution, the South African Schools Act, and specific outcomes of the National Curriculum Statement that promote the concept of responsibility. Learners should learn the concept of action and consequences. This approach must be supported by clear guidelines for actions taken by the learner; therefore, the Code of Conduct is the disciplinary structure to guide schools.

5.4.4 Discipline

The South African Constitution (RSA, 1996c) and the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b) have had a radical impact on the management of learner discipline in schools. Although it is the daily duty of the principal, senior management team and educators to be most visible to drive the disciplinary process at school, the SGB has a legal duty to ensure that correct structures and procedures are put in place so that any disciplinary measures taken against ill-disciplined learners are administered fairly and reasonably in accordance with the laws.
Teachers are the ultimate drivers of discipline at any school. If the teachers do not care, the school community will surely suffer. The school will eventually sink (go down). No individual can run the school; it is a team effort. Discipline has a domino effect – if one falls to the back or the front, the others will come tumbling down. In this community, we struggle with participation by some of the parents. The Code of Conduct must include appropriate disciplinary processes for disciplining learners, and measures that will be followed in disciplinary processes. This process will ensure that SGBs manage learner discipline fairly and justly in line with the provisions of section 12(1) of the Constitution (RSA, 1996b), which provides for the right of everybody to freedom and security of the person, including the right not to be tortured in any way and not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way. This area and all its challenges have a major impact on the school and its day-to-day running. One of the participants was of the opinion that the staff needed to stop or try to slow down the ‘game’ of passing the blame: the principal blamed the teachers, the teachers blamed the parents, the parents blamed the community, the community blamed the government, and so forth. A participant said that the staff needed to take responsibility for their school and learners, because they looked up to them as grown-ups and educated people: to lead, to guide and protect them.

The research site has structures in place, but due to regular changes in the leadership of the senior management team (SMT), there is a lack of follow-up consistency and continuity.

Teachers and learners have no trust in or respect for school structures anymore, which leads to a lack of discipline, poor results, and junk status at the Department (underperforming school). Integrity – the professionalism of the educator as the role model, leader, and adviser – is an important key to the success of the school.

I would like to recommend a few structures and values to be reinstated at the school. Reshuffle the staff according to their abilities and move away from post levels. Post levels limit the teachers from giving their best; hence the attitude of, you are in charge, and therefore I am not going to give my best. The human factor of jealousy, professional jealousy, soft sabotage or resisting of directives from top management is disrespect that one cannot measure or prove, but it is evident in the attitude of how things are done.
Absenteeism among staff, with up to a total of nine teachers per day are absent, should also be addressed, as this will help a lot with the management of the school environment, discipline, and the learning culture of the school.

The school is a technical focus school with an academic stream. Discipline is one of the biggest contributing factors to the poor results and the school being almost dysfunctional. I therefore recommend that the school must add a skills stream as well. A more appropriate solution for the community would be a school of skills. When drafting the Code of Conduct, the basic approach in the formulation should be positive and preventative, to facilitate constructive learning (Rossouw, 2007:80; Bray, 2005:135). I would recommend that the Code of Conduct be revisited regularly, and learners should know the seriousness thereof. Research has shown that a punitive approach does not lead to changes in learners’ behaviour. Rossouw (2007:80) and Jackson (1994) think that positive discipline and self-discipline should be promoted, and exemplary conduct should be rewarded to the same or a greater extent as the reaction to or punishment of misconduct. Furthermore, in the formulation of the Code of Conduct for the learners at the school, the development level of the learner should be borne in mind and the language used must be comprehensible for the learner.

There should be a zero-tolerance approach by all the stakeholders in the school. According to Joubert and Bray (2007:80), the Code of Conduct should contain a set of moral values, norms and principles following the ethos of the school and that of the wider community. Teachers, parents, and learners must re-dedicate themselves to the school, and this must be documented and kept on record if the stakeholders resist or fail to do their part. The staff must have regular breakaways to build trust and respect for one another.

5.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Throughout the study, importance has been placed on the educator’s interpretation and understanding of the discipline and how it works, and how it is implemented at the school. Chapter I contains the introduction, background to the study, clarification of concepts, the aims and the objectives of the research, an explanation of the methodology and a conclusion.
In Chapter 1, the aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the educator’s perspective on the Code of Conduct for learners at two high schools in the Western Cape. This was an interpretive study that drew on hermeneutical inquiry and a study of Gadamer’s theory, and for the reader to understand the context of the study I gave a historical background to the study. Gadamer (1975) says that one way to understand a phenomenon or a text is to understand it from a historical consciousness perspective. The schools are situated in a financially poor community that struggles with social issues such as poverty, drugs, single-parent households, and gang violence. The Department of Basic Education categorises the school as a quintile four school. Thus, the school is a fee-paying school, even though finance is a challenge in the community.

My concern was the rapid decline in learner discipline at School B, which is speedily mirroring the social ills of the community in which it is situated. The school has a disciplinary structure, but somehow it seems that there is a gap between the disciplinary offences and the execution of the sanctions attached to the transgression. Therefore, the study aimed to research the educators’ perspectives on discipline in the Code of Conduct for learners.

In Chapter 2, I introduced the Interpretive approach, as it seemed to be the most appropriate for this study. Within this approach, I focused on hermeneutics, which includes written, verbal, and nonverbal communication.

This study aims to help with the on-going research for discipline in the Code of Conduct and how teachers perceive it. This study also helped me to gain a deeper understanding of teachers’ perspectives on the Code of Conduct for schools. Similarly, the questionnaires and policies gave me a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive the Code of Conduct and how they implement the documents. This research can be a benefit and of greater advantage to the school and the Department of Education. Through my study, I have realised that documents and policies can be neatly set out on paper, but the implementation thereof is more important.

The human factor or nature plays a crucial role in this study. If people do not perceive, understand, or work from common ground rules and structures, they can be misunderstood. This study has shown that proper procedures are rarely followed, and effective systems are lacking. If the top
structure is not constant and stable, the teachers will all have their own understanding of the rules and each one takes their own initiative if they do not want to go through the procedures.

The research site faces numerous challenges, such as:

- Structures and processes,
- Values vs. survival,
- Roles and responsibilities,
- Leadership,
- Staff relations and interpersonal relationships,
- Parental involvement,
- Classroom management, and
- Security.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

For me, the study has its limitations insofar as the parents are concerned. For further study, I would like to work with the parents because I believe that, for any school to operate effectively, the parents, teachers and learners must be connected and need to know and understand what is expected from them. With all respect to the governing body, I feel that in our underprivileged communities the parents are somehow not involved, but they must be involved. There is a gap between parents and the school. My follow-up would be to find a link between parents and the school. I feel strongly with this new era of technology we can close the gap, because most of the people are in some way connected through social media.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Recommendations emanating from this study are as follows:

- If one wants to be an effective teacher in the 21st century, one needs to be a lifelong learner, therefore for further study I would recommend research on how to create a link between discipline at home and discipline at school.
• Research is needed on the history of the learners, the families, the community, and the school to make sense of the bigger picture. Studies that can be conducted at this research site are:
  • The SGB’s perceptive on the Code of Conduct for learners needs to be heard regularly,
  • The teachers’ Code of Conduct must be updated,
  • The impact of the staff relationships and interpersonal relationships on the school, and
  • Staffroom bullying.

5.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the main findings of my study, and drawn on my review of the literature, my analyses of the questionnaires, and school policies and Code of Conduct of the school.

The design and enforcement of a learner Code of Conduct should be underpinned by Curwin and Mendler’s (1980:33) three-dimensional approach to managing learner discipline:

1. The SGB must adopt a prevention plan that deals with classroom problems,
2. The action dimension of the SGB, and
3. The resolution dimension (develop strategies that can resolve problems).

I have highlighted the significance and limitations of my study. This research site is close to my heart and I would like to see that this school become one of the top schools in the area again.

As a lifelong learner, I believe that there is a possibility for future studies in this field. To conclude my study, I will echo my main research question: We need to know the educators’ perspectives on the Code of Conduct for learners at selected high schools.
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NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

10 March 2020

Project number: 11640

Project Title: Educators' perspectives of the Code of Conduct for learners at selected high schools

Dear Mrs Haley Hanslo

Your REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form submitted on 8 February 2020 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

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GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (11640) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD
Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

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If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.
The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Protection of Human Research Participants

As soon as the Research Ethics Committee approval is confirmed by the REC, the principal investigator (PI) is responsible for the following:

Conducting the Research: The PI is responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC-approved research protocol. The PI is jointly responsible for the conduct of co-investigators and any research staff involved with this research. The PI must ensure that the research is conducted according to the recognised standards of their research field/discipline and according to the principles and standards of ethical research and responsible research conduct.

Participant Enrolment: The PI may not recruit or enrol participants unless the protocol for recruitment is approved by the REC. Recruitment and data collection activities must cease after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

Informed Consent: The PI is responsible for obtaining and documenting affirmative informed consent using only the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their affirmative informed consent. The PI must give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents, where required. The PI must keep the originals in a secured, REC-approved location for at least five (5) years after the research is complete.

Continuing Review: The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is no grace period. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, it is the PI’s responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur. Once REC approval of your research lapses, all research activities must cease, and contact must be made with the REC immediately.

Amendments and Changes: Any planned changes to any aspect of the research (such as research design, procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material, etc.), must be submitted to the REC for review and approval before implementation. Amendments may not be initiated without first obtaining written REC approval. The only exception is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

Adverse or Unanticipated Events: Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to the REC within five (5) days of discovery of the incident. The PI must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants.

Research Record Keeping: The PI must keep the following research-related records at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence and approvals from the REC.
**Provision of Counselling or emergency support:** When a dedicated counsellor or a psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

**Final reports:** When the research is completed (no further participant enrolment, interactions or interventions), the PI must submit a Final Report to the REC to close the study.

**On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits:** If the researcher is notified that the research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, the PI must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MRS H. HANSLO

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

15/5/2017

TEACHER’S PERSPECTIVES ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Please help me to collect information on your perspective regarding the Code of Conduct at your school. I need to find out what you think, in order to help me write an essay to complete my Master’s degree in Education.

All information and opinions will be treated as CONFIDENTIAL.

Thank you!

Questionnaire

1. What is your perspective of your Code of Conduct in terms of your school’s discipline, environment, culture and values?

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2. On a scale of 1-4, rate how your school DEAL with the following misbehaviours, with 1 being *not effective* and 4 *outstanding*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MISBEHAVIOURS</th>
<th>1. NOT EFFECTIVE</th>
<th>2. MODERATE</th>
<th>3. EFFECTIVE</th>
<th>4. OUTSTANDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Smoking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Bunking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3 Fighting

2.4 Late for school

2.5 No homework done

3. If you gave a code 1-2 for some misbehaviour, would you please be so kind to briefly explain why you gave those codes?

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4. What would you recommend to help the school to achieve better to outstanding dealing with discipline?

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5. Name 2 or more common disciplinary problems that your school encounters during a normal school day and can you always apply the Code of Conduct on that moment?

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6. Please give us tips: How do you as a teacher deal with discipline:
   a) In your classroom?
   b) On the school’s premises?

7. Answer YES/NO and motivate your choice
   a) The Code of Conduct is efficiently followed and implemented at your school.

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b) In setting up your Code of Conduct were the parent, learner and teacher involved?

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8. How do the disciplinary structures work at your school? (What pattern do you follow?)

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9. Are the proceedings clear and learner friendly? (Briefly explain your answer)

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10. Is the Code of Conduct visible at your school? If so where at school is it visible?

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11. How often does your school revise its Code of Conduct?

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12. Do you think that your school’s rules are appropriate for your and learning environment (school)?

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13. What rule/s of your school would you like to change in your school’s Code of Conduct?

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14. Is there a rule that is outstanding at your school that you would like to recommend to any other school?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION