

MAINTAINING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS IN THE POST- CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ERA

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DECLARATION

I declare that, Maintaining Discipline in Schools in the Post-corporal punishment era is my own work and that all the resources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree or examination at another university.

M. TUNGATA (MR)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to look at instilling discipline of learners at schools after corporal punishment was abolished by identifying causes of disciplinary problems, alternatives to corporal punishment, and the attitudes of learners, teachers and parents towards alternatives.

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and observation. Data were collected from learners, teachers and parents. Two neighbouring schools in the Mthatha District of Education were used. A qualitative research approach was used in the study.

Findings reveal and support literature consulted that there is a wide range of causes of disciplinary problems at schools. According to the findings, the outstanding difference between respondents on causes of disciplinary problems was on home background. Learners are not in agreement with literature, teachers and parents who all agree that background is the cause of misbehaving of learners at school. The study reveals that learners, teachers and parents hold different views about alternatives to corporal punishment. While teachers, parents and literature are in agreement on using parental involvement as an alternative to caning, learners do not want parents to be involved. Teachers, the findings reveal, are not in favour of alternatives that need to be supervised by them.

The final outcome of this study focuses on positive alternatives to corporal punishment. These include parental involvement, manual work, the application of school rules and enforcement of the code of conduct. Learners would also like to be disciplined and parents are in favour of being involved in the maintenance of discipline in schools.

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INSTILLING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS IN THE POST-CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ERA

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Behavioural problems in schools generally are and have been an area of concern for teachers, educational authorities, policy makers and the general public for as long as one can remember. Cohen and Cohen (1987:1) write about an ‘... increasing concern ... expressed about the extent and frequency of disruptive behaviour in secondary schools and its growing incidence among younger pupils in junior and infant classrooms’. The ‘growing incidence’ of disruptive behaviour is posing a challenge to everybody and needs to be tackled by every means at our disposal. It is for this reason that a study, however limited, on the perennial problem of discipline is of great importance.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Discipline of learners in all schools has been and is still regarded as a very important and valuable cornerstone of learning. According to Wilson (1974: 79), discipline refers ‘... to the kind of order involved in trying to reach appropriate standards or follow appropriate rules of engaging in a valued activity’. The ‘valued activity’ of learners involves all that is meant to be formally learned in school. Wilson is of the opinion that for one to reach appropriate standards or follow appropriate rules for engagement, one needs to be a disciplined individual. That individual is one

who will listen, obey, respect and carry out instructions given. He / she will respect other individuals' right to listen, obey and learn. For learners in particular, I think they need all the respect they can give for a learning environment situation and its participants.

According to Sonn (2002:26), discipline also refers to '... understanding of what is right and wrong or self-discipline ... more than an obedience to rules'. She adds that knowing the difference between right and wrong should be accompanied by understanding '... what they (learners) will gain by being punctual ... and what they will lose if they are late' (to school). Learners, I think, will also be self-disciplined if they understand their rights as much as they understand their responsibilities and behave accordingly.

In the classroom or in a learning situation or during a 'valued activity', the intended outcomes of teachers and learners may not be achieved if there is a lack of discipline from participants. Actions that are or can be linked to any anti-social behaviour, laziness or acts of violence, are always associated with a lack of discipline. Even learners themselves in coming to the classroom with learning goals to achieve, expect their classmates to be well disciplined or display behaviour that will not interrupt their own learning or that of their classmates. They should adhere to Wilson's view (1974:38) that discipline is a kind of 'moral compulsion' that one should submit to. Learners therefore need to subject themselves to discipline without which it would be difficult to engage themselves in any 'valued activity'.

Generally, although there are exceptions, the classroom, wherein you find learners and a teacher, is subject to varying degrees of unwanted behaviour. According to Bull and Solity (1996:135),

unwanted behaviour is one which is anti-social and has detrimental effects on a child's interaction with his/her teacher or classmates. It is a type of behaviour that may cause harm or even compromise the child's safety and that of others. It may result in loss or damage to school equipment or others' belongings. Goldstein, Harootunian and Conoley (1994:7-9) associate student aggression towards persons - violence, and aggression towards property - vandalism, with lack of discipline on the part of the doer. All the above, i.e. unwanted behaviour, anti-social behaviour, violence and vandalism teachers complain, may manifest themselves in the classroom or during any teacher-learner interaction at school.

In 1996, the South African government passed a law that abolished corporal punishment in schools. The Department of Education (2001:5) in a document explaining alternatives to corporal punishment refers to the South African Schools Act (1996), the South African Constitution (Section 12) and the National Policy Act all emphasizing the fact that corporal punishment or 'any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish or contain him/her' (www.child-advocate.org.htm 28.01.2006) has been outlawed.

When the abovementioned laws were passed, schools and teachers were left with a number of problems. Firstly, alternative ways or suggestions to deal with disciplinary problems at school were not immediately available from the Department of Education. Teachers, and even parents, were left to themselves to provide alternative ways to corporal punishment in disciplining children. A member of Childline South Africa speaking at a discussion convened by the South African Human Rights Commission (Daily

Dispatch, 27 January 2006), said that ‘... not enough was being done to train teachers in alternative methods or discipline, with educators “floundering” to find alternatives which enabled them to feel in control of the children they taught.’ As a result, he continues, the organisation ‘has come across many incidents in which children were humiliated and hurt emotionally and psychologically because of a lack of knowledge of alternative methods of discipline’ (Daily Dispatch, 27 January 2006). The above remark shows clearly that the problem of using alternative methods to corporal punishment by teachers as disciplinary measure still exists even ten years after corporal punishment had been banned.

Secondly, learners who used to be disciplined by corporal punishment or any other physical means and can now no longer be physically punished, continued to misbehave but on a larger scale. It became clear that the only disciplinary measure they know is corporal punishment.

The first written document (Alternatives to corporal punishment, 2001) from the Education Department on alternatives to corporal punishment came approximately five years after the banning of corporal punishment. While it was not easy for teachers to use the alternatives or other strategies to discipline learners, it was also not easy to abandon the old ways of keeping discipline in schools through corporal punishment. Some of the alternative strategies to corporal punishment needed specialised training for any effective implementation. For example, a departmental publication on alternatives to corporal punishment suggests that if there are learners who display particular difficulties in the classroom such as ‘... aggressive behaviour, bullying and so on, seek help from your colleagues and if necessary from

professionals such as psychologists or community councillors'. (Department of Education, 2001:14). The professionals or psychologists to whom schools and teachers are referred are usually not available to most schools, especially in rural areas of South Africa.

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of this study is to explore the learners', educators', and parents' perceptions of problems in maintaining discipline in schools at a time when corporal punishment is no longer used. Ill-discipline and multifarious behaviour problems in school and classroom mentioned before emphasize the need to investigate ways in which discipline can be maintained in schools.

The investigation also looks into the effectiveness of alternative approaches to corporal punishment for maintaining discipline. The focus is on the outcomes resulting from these alternative approaches including those that have been suggested by the National Department of Education. Possible difficulties in the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment should be understood by both teachers and parents with the purpose of improving the disciplinary process in our schools. The findings of the research will culminate in strategies and recommendations which may be incorporated in alternatives to corporal punishment to resolve and improve the issue of learner discipline in schools. This is of importance to teachers and parents who need to work together in order to create, manage and maintain a culture of learning among the learners. They need an undisturbed and stable learning situation for all learners and teachers. It is also important for parents to understand the new school situation because in the past the disciplinary processes of schools had

always been trusted by parents.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The behaviour problems encountered by teachers in schools pose problems to all those directly affected, as well as other stakeholders in the field of education. What seems to confront teachers mostly is the legal position of what was once believed to be the effective remedy to bad behaviour. Corporal punishment is no longer legal and cannot be administered as a corrective tool. The former national education minister Kader Asmal (2001:1), in the preface to a document that outlines alternatives to corporal punishment agrees: 'Many educators find themselves in a position not knowing what to do in the absence of corporal punishment'.

The legal position of corporal punishment of children has added to the teachers' problems with respect to ill-disciplined learners. Recently 'nine teachers in the province (Eastern Cape) have been subjected to some form of discipline related to corporal punishment in the past 12 months' (Daily Dispatch, 16 June 2004). One parent observes that the '... legal position on caning is unequivocal, it criminalizes educators, who technically can be found guilty of common assault even if a learner is touched with a feather duster'. (Sunday Times, 18 July 2004).

Instilling discipline in schools, teachers argue, is problematic. The topic of discipline without the use of corporal punishment in school is important, and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency because of fast deteriorating situations with respect to behaviour. 'Today we have a culture of disrespect, defiance of authority, truancy and arrogance. Ill-discipline abounds and respect and morality have declined' (Sunday Times, 18 July 2004). While

teachers are assigned and burdened with the task of fostering a culture of teaching and of learning, the situation, conditions and environment to achieve these honourable goals, are fast crumbling. It may be a frustrating and demoralising state of affairs for educators.

1.5 THE STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM / QUESTION

Research Question:

How can the discipline of learners at two schools in the Mthatha district be effectively instilled using alternatives to corporal punishment?

Sub-questions:

1. What causes disciplinary problems among school learners?
2. What are possible approaches for the effective inculcation of discipline in schools?
3. What are the positives and negatives with respect to the implementation of these approaches?

1.6 DEMARCATION OF STUDY

The two schools used in the study are in the Mthatha District of Education. The first is a junior secondary with classes from grade one to grade nine. Ages of learners, especially with grade nine learners, are up to sixteen years. The second school is a senior

secondary with classes from grade ten to grade twelve. There are learners, especially males, who are above eighteen years old in this school.

Learners from both schools are a mixture from rural and urban areas. A large number also comes from the informal settlement areas surrounding Mthatha. Firstly, the two schools were chosen for their proximity to me as a researcher. Secondly, I as the Deputy Principal in one of the schools, am aware of prevalence of disciplinary problems in my school. The schools are one kilometre apart and three kilometres outside Mthatha.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is important to define some of the terms used in the study. It is important to know the context in which these terms have been used to understand the researcher's line of argumentation and his findings.

- Corporal punishment. Any deliberate act against a child that inflicts pain or physical discomfort to punish or contain him/her. This includes, but is not limited to, spanking, slapping, punching, paddling or hitting a child with a hand or with an object; denying or restricting a child's use of the toilet; denying meals, drink, heat and shelter, pushing or pulling a child with a force, forcing the child to do exercise (www.childadvocate.org.htm)
- A disruptive pupil. A child who distracts other learners or the teacher from class work or activity (Fontana, 1994: 63).
- Disciplinary problems. Problems associated with lack of control, obedience or in complying with rules.
- Disciplined behaviour. Orderly and obedient behaviour

(Hawkins, 1998:130).

- Punishment. Penalty inflicted on somebody who has done something wrong (Hornby, 1989:1013).
- Alternative approaches to caning. Any means / ways other than physical in correcting the behaviour of learner.
- Pastoral support programmes. (Rogers (ed.) 2003:71). Programmes that use parental support and other adults with the necessary expertise in dealing with ill-discipline with respect to learners.
- Effective instructional approaches. These are approaches in teaching that produce intended results and aim to change bad behaviour.
- Intellectually or mentally disabled child. 'A handicapped child who deviates from the majority of children in body, mind or behaviour...' (Steenkamp & Steenkamp, 1992:1).

1.8 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study is of importance to people involved in the education of children. It is of special help to teachers in dealing with the discipline of learners in schools. The study will contribute to an increased awareness of causes of disciplinary problems in learners and thus may help to control bad behaviour and to maintain discipline in schools. The study may also bring about changes in the approach and strategies in maintaining discipline, especially at a time when corporal punishment of children is no longer legal in schools.

1.9 FRAMEWORK OF CHAPTERS

The remaining chapters deal with the following issues:-

Chapter two covers the literature study on the research problem.

Chapter three is about the design of the empirical study which includes the research paradigm, research design, data gathering, instruments, sampling, data gathering process, data analysis and data interpretation.

Chapter four is about conclusions arrived at, and recommendations emerging from the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Jones and Jones (1995: 15), referring to Munn (1992), say that in the past teachers in some states in the USA were offered 'extrinsic rewards' for classroom organisation and discipline. This meant some remuneration above the ordinary regular salaries. The offering of rewards for classroom organisation and discipline happened over a hundred years ago because of disciplinary problems at school. Even though that happened over a long period ago, discipline (poor) in schools is still a problem. Jones and Jones further state that Munn (1992) argues that beginning teachers are in search of recipes which will ensure effective discipline, but such recipes do not exist. Concerning this, I personally think each school and teacher could adopt a range of disciplinary strategies to suit their own particular circumstances.

2.2 CAUSES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

2.2.1 Home background

According to Robertson (1999:78), some children at schools can be disruptive because 'they have been subject to distorted or inadequate care throughout childhood due to a variety of family and economic difficulties'. It is because of that neglect that they are now demanding attention in the classroom. In addition, he says that school failure and behaviour problems that may have their origin on home background are strongly associated. When children with similar problems are not doing well in their learning areas or subjects, they have a tendency to disrupt the attentive

and concentrating learners.

Guinness (1994:8) supports the view of the family conditions as either a positive or negative contributor to learner behaviour. Accordingly, he says that the individual child's family, too, 'can seep negatively (and, of course, positively) into the classroom'. He argues that children coming from 'homes with no tradition of valuing education' often develop learning problems. He says that such a child mostly fails to see the value or importance of education and this negatively influences the child's interest towards education. Jones and Jones (1995:6) write about some social factors in the life of a child that may positively or negatively influence his/her behaviour. They mention family break-ups, poverty, stressful lives and substance abuse.

2.2.2 Physically and mentally affected learners

According to Steenkamp & Steenkamp (1992:1) an intellectually or mentally disabled child '... should not attend an ordinary class in an ordinary school ... but is nevertheless educable'. This type of child, authors claim, who may be harmful to him/herself and others in class, needs love and feels insecure. To defend himself he may 'become obstinate and even aggressive' (p:5) in the class. Smith (in Kapp 2003:430) claims that 'physically disabled children often have a poor self-image which results in the formation of a negative self-concept.' The author further claims that poor self-image leads to a 'feeling of uselessness' which ultimately destroys intrinsic motivation and may even cause the child to distance himself from others and 'experience socializing problems - especially with children in mainstream education' (p: 430).

2.2.3 Class size and other problems emanating from classroom situation

The big numbers of learners that teachers have to deal with in one classroom are a 'daunting and intimidating prospect' (Fontana 1985:11). People who take interest in the education of children are aware of this problem. 'Teachers agree that once the class size rises above 35, it is impossible to maintain discipline, or even an acceptable low noise in the classroom' (Daily Dispatch, 16 June 2004).

According to Obediant (in Ohsako 1997:30) underqualified teachers in overcrowded classes can lead to violence in schools. The author also writes of teachers' 'use of fixed and predetermined curricula (as) a particular source of classroom violence' (p:37).

2.2.4 School administration

Jones (in Tattum 1986:70) cites Doyle (1985) who claims that 'interdependence of management and instruction (teaching) functions' in a classroom and therefore in school. Schools without 'planning, or getting ready for classroom activities' and 'management, which has to do with controlling students' behaviour' (p: 71) give learners a chance to misbehave and may find difficulty in responding to disruptive behaviour. The response to disruptive behaviour may be worse where there are no 'firm and fair codes of conduct that are enforced consistently' (p: 76).

2.2.5 Children's need for status

Authors such as Fontana (1985:9-11) draw our attention to the causes of bad behaviour. One of the causes of bad behaviour 'is the children's need for status and prestige in the eyes of the class'. As children grow up, this 'need for status and prestige' grows and it means that they want to be thought of well by their friends. It is at this stage of growth that children also try to establish their own identities. In the process they become hostile and aggressive towards their teachers and usually want to be supported by the whole class. He goes on to say that children always criticise adult behaviour. Children always look up at teachers as people who can not fulfil learner demands. They look upon teachers as failures who can not fulfill the children's expectations. He argues that all these factors contribute to behaviour problems in the class.

Cowley (2001:81) understands that peer pressure among learners is a strong factor in the disruptive behaviour of learners. In the classroom the learner who 'can manage to make the whole class laugh at the teacher ...gains a great deal of status within the group'. Rogers (2000:114) agrees with Cowley about peer pressure and its influence in child behaviour. He draws our attention to 'attention seeking behaviour' which sometimes is accompanied by 'inappropriate or bad language or swearing' (p: 26).

2.2.6 Acceptance by others

Anti-social behaviour of school children can also manifest itself outside the classroom - on the playing field for instance. Authors and researchers (Walker, Colvin & Ramsay, 1995:13) argue

(citing Walker, McConneke & Clark, 1995) that children need to overcome any problems of adjusting to good, acceptable and tolerable behaviour in order to be accepted by teachers and their peers. The failure to adjust and be accepted by other learners can go a long way in causing and worsening bad behaviour in children.

2.3 POSSIBLE APPROACHES FOR THE EFFECTIVE INSTILLING OF DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOL

2.3.1 Introduction

Disruptive pupils in the classroom have long been a problem (Fontana, 1994: 63). Fontana writes about classroom control and strategies for guiding and reshaping problem behaviours. He refers to attempts made in the USA and in the UK to improve behaviour. The suggestion of a behaviour modification approach takes its starting point from the recognition that the behaviour which is acceptable tends to be rewarded while those types of behaviour that receive no reward tend to be eliminated.

Charlton & David (1993: 127) argue that 'a behavioural approach assumes that, if a problem behaviour occurs because of particular antecedents and consequences, it can be made to occur less by changing those conditions'. They also suggest that disruptive behaviour can be reduced through good pastoral care planning together with more discussion and less shouting.

Fontana (1994: 98; 102; 122) writes about the cognitive approach to the problem of disruptive behaviour. The cognitive approach deals with the question of motivation, interest and life goals. If levels of motivation and interest are high, then learning takes

place more readily. Although individuals may vary, in most cases where children are allowed or given chance to manage themselves by, for example, choosing own leaders to monitor noise levels and task completion, they will behave better.

Another author and scholar, Wilson (1974:94) citing Ausabel, writes that by discipline is meant the imposition of external standards and control on individual conduct. He goes on to say that reward and punishment are techniques of control. He (p:94) also cites Sears and Hilgard, who claim that employment of these techniques of behaviour control is part of 'the teacher's responsibility' for maintaining discipline in the classroom.

2.3.2 The role of rules

As is the case with many other aspects of our lives, the effective inculcation of discipline in schools or classroom is dependent on certain rules. Rules for behaviour are needed to set limits on what can or can not be done.

According to Chaplain (2003:140-141) the goal pursued with rules for the classroom and the whole school is a safe environment and good working relationship. Rules should be clear, achievable and be subject to the school policy and government regulations. Rules can be for prevention and also, after the act of misbehaving, prescribe the consequences of the offence in relation to its seriousness. Chaplain (p:150) citing Hargreaves et al. (1975), says that the rules in schools are mostly rules that relate to 'teacher - pupil and pupil - pupil relationships'.

2.3.3 The code of conduct

The code of conduct of a school can maintain or improve an existing positive learning situation. It can, if rules and regulations included are enforced by school authorities and complied with by learners, reduce the task of using tough disciplinary actions or measures against misbehaving learners.

The School Governing Body of each school should draw up a code of conduct for its school (Department of Education 2001:20). The code of conduct should be drawn up as required by and in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996. In the code of conduct 'disciplinary procedures to be followed by the school must be set out' (p: 20). The aim of the code conduct should be '... to maintain the disciplined and purposeful school environment that exists at ... school' (p: 21).

In the absence of the code of conduct, a guideline code of conduct from either the Provincial or National Department of Education should be used. While the code of conduct should agree with the South African Constitution, it should also '... set standards of moral behaviour, promote self-discipline and constructive learning and be based in mutual respect and tolerance' (p: 20). The administration and all the teachers of a school should implement the stipulations of the code of conduct drawn up for the school. A successfully implemented or enforced code of conduct can contribute to good discipline in a school.

2.3.4 The role of parents

According to Mercure (1995:1-2), a list of alternatives to discourage misbehaviour used in US schools includes the use of

parents. A principal can invite parents to school to 'literally baby-sit' children who are unruly. During their stay at the school their children can recite or repeat the schools' attitude pledge or whatever is about the schools' basic rules. The aim with the exercise is to instil discipline. Miller, cited in Rogers (2002:71), says the emphasis should be on the responsibilities of parents towards their children's attendance and behaviour.

Schools need to set up pastoral support programmes especially for learners already identified as difficult to manage. Parents and schools need to draw up and agree on strategies that contain clear

expectations from learners towards attaining acceptable behaviour. According to Rogers (p.72) this home-school approach can achieve good outcomes. Parents should always be informed about their children's behaviour patterns.

2.3.5 Reduced class sizes

Alexander and Carla (1995:2) believe that small classes have a positive effect on student behaviour. In addition to small classes, the above-mentioned authors also recommend that schools that are smaller and whose curriculum is easy to adjust may contain programmes aimed at changing perpetrators or aimed at prevention of ill-discipline. Such programmes may be those that can promote social and cognitive skills in learners and are easily applied.

2.3.6 Role modelling

Vockell (1991:278 - 283) is of the opinion that generally parents and teachers should reinforce behaviours that are compatible with

any desirable behaviours in children through being exemplary. Roffey & O'Reirdan (2003:15) refer to behaviour that is consistent with what students expect from adults. Normally, students or children expect from adults a type of behaviour that is characterised by good manners and a helping hand to others. Wolfgang (1999:95) agrees and says that a teacher should at all times be exemplary in being responsible and committed to people around him or her. The above is based on the fact that learners or children in general, worship their heroes and imitate those whom they appreciate and admire.

2.3.7 Antecedent control techniques

Smith & Misra (1992:1-2) suggest antecedent control techniques. These strategies are mainly for the prevention of bad behaviour and should include activities that eliminate boredom and frustration in the classroom. Rules and seating arrangements accompanied by promotion of good relationships amongst learners are also suggested here. Evertson, Emmer and Worsham (2003:193) support the idea and say that preventive measures are more important than reactive measures. Algozzine and Kay (eds.) (2002:14) agree with the abovementioned idea and even suggest productive academic instruction i.e. a programme during teaching that will aim to prevent bad behaviour in learners.

2.3.8 Detention and revocation of privileges

According to Dadisman, King, Manahan, and Quade, (1990:8), after-school detention and revocation of privileges like recess approaches are more enlightened and constructive than beating learners. These authors share Mercure's (1995) ideas with respect to in-school isolation. This approach suggests that

learners involved in bad behaviour should be removed from other learners and be asked to do their class work or assignments in isolated classrooms or halls. They also agree that these are meant to be 'constructively punitive' rather than creating playtime during isolation. Evertson et al. (2003:179-180) write about withholding a privilege in order to lessen unproductive social behaviour. The privilege can be any popular or desired activity and it could be restored provided an appropriate behaviour has been displayed again.

2.3.9 Empathy

Feshback (1983:267), in her approach to the disruptive aggressive child, suggests the promotion of empathy among children and control of aggression through empathy. She defines empathy as the ability to assume the perspective and role of another person and the ability to respond effectively. She says that empathy improves behaviours that are incompatible with aggression. An emotional empathetic response can act as an inhibitor of learner individuals' aggressive words and action. However, the same author warns that empathy can not be an overall solution for all classroom problems.

Charles & Charles (2004:57) write about a sense of community where every member of a class is concerned about each member of the class. When this sense of community has been built up, groups will work co-operatively without feeling aggressive to other members of the class and with less tension. The non-aggressive attitude, can, according to these authors, for example, be achieved through dramatic performances or the whole class producing a class magazine or similar projects.

Sapon - Shelvin (1999:16-17) writes about schools as communities where misbehaviour is much reduced because of the relationships and feelings between the members of the community. To be a good empathiser, the teacher would have to understand the background of the learner (Macnamar & Moreton 1995:25). To know the motives behind the child's behaviour, the teacher must be aware of the child's background, and any problems that do exist.

2.3.10 Effective Instruction

Eggleton, (2001:1) citing Killion, says that effective instruction, accompanied by wide effective classroom management strategies and alternative school programmes that aim to discipline for reform, should inform the disciplinary approach in schools. Disciplinary strategies for reform may include therapeutic counselling and remedial assistance. He also suggests a school-wide discipline policy supported by teamwork (educators) and a 'visible principal' i.e. a principal who is present when disciplinary problems need to be attended to, without always delegating disciplinary responsibilities to the Head of department or Deputy Principal.

Zabel & Zabel (1996:208) agree that effective instructional approaches will help in monitoring behaviour in learners and that such approaches usually lead to an effective classroom management and the possible creation of order in a particular classroom.

2.3.11 Student centred approach by educator

A teacher who approaches his class with honesty, trustworthiness

and being exemplary will in turn be received with warmth and eagerness by learners. In such situations learners will not be rebellious (Charles & Charles 2004:58). Emmer et al. (2003:133) suggest as an alternative to corporal punishment that educators help each learner to realize that his/her behaviour is not acceptable and can be transformed. They suggest teachers should not attribute all the bad behaviour to the child's choice. Unwanted behaviour may have been enforced on him or her. Teachers should not always assume that the learner is the one who cannot make good choices of behaviour.

2.3.12 Reinforcement of positive behaviour by praise

Docking (1996:42) says that praising good behaviour in the classroom 'maintains appropriate behaviour' and reduces behaviour problems. He warns against criticizing bad behaviour while ignoring good behaviour. Wragg (2001:18) supports the idea of praising good behaviour by suggesting that a teacher needs to promote good behaviour by a reward or recognition e.g. praise. On the same principle Weinstein & Mignano (1993:109-110) write about systematic behaviour modification. Such approach, they claim, needs to be paired with the teachers' attention to desired behaviour.

2.3.13 The use of punishment

As punishment for any inappropriate behaviour, learners could be punished by requiring them do some repetitious work e.g. a written passage or paragraph (Evertson et al 2003:180). However, the authors warn that if such a task has been defined as punishment, it may negatively affect students' attitude towards that task. This may be detrimental to the learner who needs to

approach all his or her school work positively.

2.3.14 The use of cooling-off time

Evertson et al. (2003:191) recommend the use of a type of cooling-off period whenever learners' emotions go out of control, e.g. when they become embroiled in a fight. This could mean in practice to let those involved wait in separate rooms or areas, and then to involve the mediator. While and after thinking about their actions respectively, communication will be better and each will understand the others' point of view.

2.3.15 The use of behaviour management programmes

According to Macnamar et al. (1995:19-20), behaviour management programmes are discussed with students so that they can realize and understand their own patterns of behaviour. It is then that they will be able to control those patterns of behaviour. This applies to both good and bad behaviour. Weinstein & Mignano (1993:95) write about schools or individual teachers building or creating opportunities for students where they can take responsible actions to fashion their own behaviour.

Following the same approach, Duke (1980:19) writes about curriculum adaptation and augmentation procedures that are meant to prevent undesirable behaviour in schools. The above refers to courses that appeal to students' special interest and cater for different levels of ability. Accordingly, Duke (p: 19) recommends curriculum augmentation procedures, courses dealing with education, morals and clarification of values. What he recommends, he believes, can work as 'prevention procedures' for most students.

2.3.16 The use of humour

Smith & Laslett (1995:38) say that humour can be used as an alternative to harsh punishment that can increase tension in the classroom. This can be very effective, especially if it redirects the focus away from the disruptive learner. Humour helps to defuse tension from a class which wants to see the teachers' reaction where the disruptive learners' behaviour aims to satisfy the 'class feelings' (p: 62).

A relevant joke or comment that will refer to the awkward side of the situation is suggested (p:38). Weinstein & Mignano (1993:98) suggest the use of humour which, if used well, can gently remind children to mend their ways. It can also be a way of showing your learners that you can also understand the funny side of classroom life. Moreover, it shows them that you are still in control of the situation.

2.3.17 Verbal and non-verbal interventions

According to Weinstein & Mignano (1993:96), verbal and non-verbal interventions can be used when dealing with minor misbehaviour. Verbal interventions can include giving commands softly, calling the inattentive students' name or calling the same to participate in the lesson. Non-verbal interventions such as signals, eye contact, facial expressions and proximity control allow the teacher to warn the misbehaving learner without interrupting his or her lesson.

2.3.18 Taking points away / response cost / demerits

The approach by Smith & Laslett (1995:109) aims to show that bad behavioural manifestations by learners can cost them something. Any child who misbehaves at a school where the demerit system in maintaining discipline is used, is penalised. After being penalised his or her behaviour status changes from good to bad depending on how many times he or she has been penalised for misbehaving. The behaviour status on record of such a penalised individual child is no longer at the same level with that of a person not yet been penalised. Good behaviour points that have been taken away can only be recovered by the wrongdoer or restored by the school authorities dealing with discipline through an acceptable behaviour of the child over a certain period (as) determined by the disciplinary committee. Therefore to regain prior status i.e. good, the misbehaving child will have to improve his or her behaviour patterns. Emmer et al (2003: 177) also write about a demerit system in a school whereby the misbehaving learner's name ultimately appears on the notice board of the school's disciplinary committee. If the learner continues to misbehave, such appearance of the name on the notice board warrants the principal's and school governing body's attention.

2.3.19 Pastoral support programmes

According to Miller, cited in Rogers (ed.) (2003:71), parents' responsibilities towards their children's attendance and behaviour should be of use to schools. Schools should set up pastoral support programmes especially for students already identified as difficult to manage. Such programmes would focus on the provision of counselling opportunities for learners with behavioural

problems. These programmes can also be supported in extreme cases, by the use of professional assistance (Dept of Education 2001:14). The assistance can be sought from psychologists or community counsellors for e.g. emotional problems, aggressive behaviour or emotional or other distress.

In strategies drawn up and agreed upon by parents and schools, clear expectations should be included. The home - school approach thus formulated can achieve good outcomes and parents need to be fed information by the school that concerns learners' progress in behaviour improvement.

2.3.20 The reality therapy model

This model (Evertson et al. 2003:182; Bianco 2002:172) advocates a teacher who needs to help a student who is also willing to solve his/her behaviour problem. A caring relationship between teacher and the learner must prepare him/her to plan and commit him or herself to action or a plan for change. Wolfgang (1999:85-88) says that the individual learner can only be helped or the reality therapy model can work if the misbehaving child acknowledges his or her wayward status. It is difficult to help change bad behaviour of someone who denies that he/she is misbehaving.

2.3.21 Ignoring unwanted behaviour

According to Wragg (2001), ignoring the unwanted behaviour leads it to its 'extinction'. Antisocial behaviour is often not repeated if no one pays any attention to it. Docking (1996:76) writes about 'tactical ignoring' which, he says, can carry a message of unacceptable behaviour.

2.3.22 Concluding comments

All the above referred to and quoted authors and researchers on child behaviour agree that learners can be disciplined by using some means other than corporal punishment. They emphasise ways in which teachers should respond to the children's discipline problems and how such responses can help in maintaining discipline using alternatives to corporal punishment.

2.4 POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE APPROACHES FOR THE EFFECTIVE MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

2.4.1 Introduction

The implementation of alternative approaches to corporal punishment has its own advantages and disadvantages. Both positives and negatives can manifest themselves during or after the application of any disciplinary process.

Authors on discipline have wide and differing opinions about some approaches to disciplinary measures that can be taken against misbehaving learners. Accordingly Smith & Laslett (1995:108) claim that '... though it (disciplinary measure) may stop a bad behaviour, it will not of itself start a good one'. There is a suggestion here of looking or engaging in alternative approaches that will aim or have a potential at reinforcing good behaviour. They (p: 108) also warn against any delays in the application of alternatives to corporal punishment or disciplinary measure as this may cause loss of 'appreciation of cause and effect'.

2.4.2 Detention after school

While detention after school will not disturb classroom lessons, the teacher and more of his/her time will be needed to supervise the detainees. The teacher concerned will be disadvantaged by using his/her spare time on such supervision. According to Evertson et al. (2003:180), detention after school is disliked by most learners since they are removed from the rest of the class. Therefore such detentions can have a discouraging effect on potential wrongdoers. By removing the wrong doer from the rest of the class, the attention seeking-scene one is looking for fails to materialise. The class will then be able to continue undisturbed with its normal activities.

2.4.3 Time-out / suspension

According to Algozzine & Kay (2002:175), although time-out, i.e. when a learner is taken away from class during a lesson, will not disturb teaching, some learners find time-out a rewarding period which they enjoy.

They may even time their actions for any class activity they dislike to solicit suspension. Evertson et al. (2003:179) agree and write of learners who will engage themselves in 'leisure time' or 'playtime' when sent out of the classroom. The punishment then will not serve its intended purpose.

2.4.4 Stopping some privilege or pleasant activity

Smith & Laslett (1993:109) see the withdrawal of some privileges or stopping of pleasant activities as easy to apply or impose. However, they also argue that all activities considered as pleasant

by teachers may be less valued by learners. It is therefore possible that the learner may enjoy the action (privilege withdrawal) rather than having the experience of being punished.

2.4.5 Tactical ignoring or indifference to misbehaviour

Weinstein et al. (1993:36) and Docking (1996:76-79) believe ignoring the unwanted behaviour may help improve the situation in the class. Wragg (2001:18) even believes that ignoring the unwanted behaviour can lead to its extinction. He (p: 18) warns about the fact that some learners are determined to self-attraction. He says such learners will continue to misbehave and others may enjoy the scene as an entertainment.

2.4.6 The use of punishment

Punishment is quick to administer. The teacher will e.g. order the child to write some passages repeatedly (Evertson et al 2003:179-180). Some authors alert us to the danger of learners' negative attitude towards any school work that has been 'defined' punishment. As much as this approach is easy to apply, it may be overused by teachers. This, they claim, may render it useless as a disciplinary approach.

2.4.7 Reprimanding

According to Docking (1996:75) reprimanding quickly spells out how far an unacceptable behaviour can be 'tolerated'. However, it may also raise the 'public status' of the wrongdoer or the unwanted behaviour. Reprimanding is often accompanied by outbursts of anger from the teacher. It can therefore make relations to worsen and the situation to deteriorate to shouting and

criticizing.

2.4.8 Response - cost / taking away points

Before children are disciplined for the first time, they are considered to have a clean behaviour record. In a school where the demerit system is used they are considered to have all the good behaviour points e.g. 10 points. On doing something wrong or being found guilty of misconduct, depending on the severity of misconduct, one or two points will be deducted or taken away. Taking away points from a child can show that certain behaviour is unacceptable. If the wrongdoer comes to realize that taking away points for any undesirable behaviour results in some suffering, he / she may reverse his / her wayward actions and then the class monitor or educator needs to compensate or return the docked points. However, according to Smith & Laslett (1993:109) the whole exercise is a burden for the educator who has to 'monitor' both negative and positive behaviour.

It is due to the facts mentioned above that Smith & Laslett (1993:108) caution against the danger of 'unwanted consequences' that may 'embarrass' both the teacher and learner during or after the application of the alternative approaches to corporal punishment.

2.4.9 Concluding comments

The above literature review shows some depth of the research problem proposed. This is in line with what has been said before that discipline in schools has been and is still a concern to all those interested in the schooling of children.

CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Having completed the literature study on the problem of disciplinary problems in the absence of corporal punishment, I had to find out what the situation was in two schools in my area.

3.2 PARADIGM

I decided to do a qualitative study. According to Verma & Mallick (1999 :1&5), research 'involves finding out something which was previously not known or (involves) shedding fresh light on an issue or problem'. The aim of qualitative research is '... understanding experience as nearly as possible as its participants feel it or live it' and also aims at '... discovery that leads to new insights'.

I used a qualitative research approach in my study to understand what learners, teachers and parents experience in the process of maintaining discipline when corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure is no longer used in schools. While I, as researcher, wanted to understand how the participants relate with the problem through their own perspective, I also wanted to gain understanding within my theoretical and conceptual framework and try to arrive at findings that will help solve the problem in the practical context of the school.

When I conducted the study no experiments or artificial conditions were involved. The study I conducted was a naturalistic inquiry during which according to Macmillan & Schumacher (1993:372) '... participants [learners, educators and parents in my study] were encouraged to relate their experiences on the problem under study. In my study learners,

teachers and parents related their experiences in dealing with discipline after the corporal punishment was abolished at schools.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

My research focussed on two schools in my area. From each school, 15 learners and 5 teachers were chosen, and from the community 10 parents linked to either of the schools.

The questionnaire was completed by 15 learners, 5 teachers from each school as well as the 10 parents.

From the above, group interviews were conducted with 6 learners and 5 teachers from each school, while individual interviews were conducted with 10 parents. The above will be expanded upon in paragraph 3.4 (Data gathering).

I also used observation as a method to gather information because it '... has been found to be a useful way of looking at many education research questions ...' and 'can give direct access to social interactions' (Muijs 2004: 51 - 52). I particularly observed how the teachers, including the principal, at my school were coping to maintain discipline without using corporal punishment. I was also able to observe the behaviour of learners towards the application of alternatives to corporal punishment in my school. I was not able to observe what was happening at the neighbouring school used in my study.

At my school, as a deputy principal, (see Chapter 1.6) and a member of the disciplinary committee, I am involved in the maintenance of discipline. I did not answer the questionnaire but became a participant observer and was therefore '... able to discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs'. (Cohen & Manion, 1995:110). As participant observer I became

a '... conscious and systematic sharing (researcher) ... in the life activities and ... in the interests and affects of a group of persons' (Burgess, 1988:25).

Teachers and learners for the study (see sample) were selected from my school, a junior secondary school, and from a neighbouring school, a senior secondary school. Parents for the study were selected from the neighbourhood of the two schools and were purposely chosen because of their specific involvement in the disciplinary matters of both schools.

3.4 DATA GATHERING

3.4.1 Background to data gathering

Data for the study were obtained from learners, educators and parents. I obtained permission from the two principals of the two schools I was going to use as research sites before distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with teachers and learners.

From school A, five teachers and fifteen learners completed the questionnaire, and from these groups six (6) learners and five teachers were interviewed in two groups. The same procedure was followed with school B. In addition to these, I conducted ten individual interviews with parents.

After distributing the questionnaire on learner discipline to 5 teachers of each school and 15 learners of each school, I explained to them that the purpose of the inquiry was to focus on inculcating discipline in schools without corporal punishment. I explained to them that the purpose of the inquiry was to focus on instilling discipline in schools without corporal punishment. I tried to build some trust with all the participants. No names were to be written on responses. Anonymity was assured because I wanted all the participants to feel comfortable (Anderson et al.

2004:26) and share their experiences and opinions about the problem.

The trust building exercise was also done with the ten parents I interviewed for my study. The explanation concerning the study for learners and teachers was repeated with the parents. It took me more time to explain this to parents. The learners and teachers were interviewed in small groups and the parents individually.

During data gathering, I used triangulation which is ‘... a process of corroborating judgements by drawing on evidence from more than one source ...’ (Verma & Mallick, 1999:205). Triangulation also ‘... involves contrasting the perceptions of one actor in a specific situation, against those of other actors in the same situation’ (Hopkins 2002:133). I therefore used the questionnaire, interviews and observation to triangulate the data obtained from various sources.

3.4.2 Data gathering instruments

3.4.2.1 Questionnaire

The main data collecting instrument was the questionnaire. According to Macintyre (2000:74), ‘the questionnaire is a survey of different opinions from (usually) large numbers of people who provide anonymous replies’. While Mckernan (1996:126) agrees with Macintyre, he adds that it (the questionnaire) contains ‘factual items’ (that) collect data about the case. The questionnaire I used was separated into three sections because I wanted the study to use the three research questions. A single section could not have achieved this. I used the literature study as basis for the content of the questionnaire.

In the questionnaire, the first question (Addendum A) was about

causes of disciplinary problems at schools, the second question (Addendum B) required learners to list possible alternatives to corporal punishment. I included the question because 'this open format forces the respondents to think of answers without having a list of "acceptable" options from which to choose' (Anderson et al. 2004:173). I also wanted learners to answer the question using their experiences on alternatives to corporal punishment that may have been applied to them. I used an open-ended question (question 2(a) as a second question for the learners because I felt that they (learners) would provide more information on the problem under study than they would through a close ended question. The open-ended question in the questionnaire (for learners only) was '... used deliberately to encourage respondents to give their opinions ..., describe their experiences, provide insights ...' (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:206). The third question tried to identify the attitude of learners towards the application of the alternatives to corporal punishment in the maintenance of discipline. (See copy of question Addendum D).

For the teachers, the first question of the questionnaire was similar to the one given to learners. It was about causes of disciplinary problems at school. Data on alternatives to corporal punishment (provided by the learners in answering question 2a) from teachers were obtained through responses to question 2b (see Addendum C). I therefore did not ask teachers to list alternatives to corporal punishment as I did with learners (see data gathering process). The second and third questions of the questionnaire I gave to teachers and parents were administered after the learners had listed their alternatives to corporal punishment. In the second question for teachers and parents i.e. alternatives to corporal punishment, I used learners' alternatives and also drew on the literature (Chapter 2) reviewed on the problem.

Questions for parents i.e. question 1, 2 and 3 were similar in all respects to those of teachers.

3.4.2.2 Interviews

I conducted interviews using the interview schedule (see Addendum E) with small groups of 6 (in the case of selected learners) or groups of 5 (with teachers) and individually with all parents. (See sampling).

While the interviews were extended to learners, teachers and parents, the big number of learners used in the study, i.e. 30 learners from both schools, as well as limited time persuaded me to interview only 6 learners from each school to extend my information gathering process.

I used the tape-recorder for the interviews and later transcribed the responses. Tape recording the interviews ‘... ensures completeness of the verbal interaction and provides material for reliability checks’ (Macmillan & Schumacher 2006: 355).

The ‘semi-structured interviews’ (Lankshear & Knobel 2004:201) I conducted included a ‘list of pre-prepared questions’ (Addendum E) used as a guide only. The semi-structured interviews I conducted allowed me ‘to probe interviewees’ responses’ (Ibid. p 202).

The small-group or focus group interviews (with learners and teachers) helped me to collect enough data within smaller time frames than what would have been the case in one-to-one interviews (Lanshear & Knobel, 2004:208). I conducted one-to-one interviews with all (10) parents used in the study.

In the interviews with all participants, I opted for an open approach so

that I '... would be free to follow where the interviewee led as long as it was within general framework'. (Mcniff, Lomax, and Whitehead, 2001: 101). Also as interviewer I had a 'considerable flexibility over the range and order of questions within a loosely defined framework' (Parsons 1994 cited in Wellington, J. 2004:76). With '... open ended interview, there are ... set questions to be asked and space for some divergence' (Wisker, 2001:168). Questions were administered face-to-face in a simple language the participants could understand.

3.4.3 Sampling

The choice of participants for the study was purposive which '... involves ... hand-picking respondents for a study ... for the specific qualities they bring to the study' (Lankshear & Knobel 2004:148).

The two groups of learners, fifteen from my own school and a similar number from the chosen neighbouring school were those who were involved in the day to day inculcation of school discipline. There were two heads i.e. a head boy and head girl from each school, twelve class leaders i.e. two from grade 9A, B and C and two from grade 12A, B and C. Lastly, seven prefects from grades nine and twelve were used in the study. All the chosen learners were able to write and list alternatives to corporal punishment, because they had been involved with the instilling of discipline for quite some time.

Ten educators i.e. five from each school included both heads and deputy heads. As stated in the background, (Chapter 1.6) I am one of the two deputy principals at my school. For the purposes of this study, the other deputy principal was included in the group of educators from my school participating in the study. The rest were made up of, three heads of departments from each school. They were all chosen because of their involvement and experience in dealing with disciplinary problems in their

schools.

The group of ten parents approached was a combination of retired educators who were either parents of learners at one of the two schools involved, or current members of governing bodies of the two schools. They had been approached because of their awareness of the current legal position concerning caning of children in schools. They had also been approached because they had, at certain times, been involved in disciplinary matters in both schools. Parents who were not governing body members had on certain occasions been called in to attend to disciplinary problems of their own children who are learners at one of the two schools.

For the interviews (teachers and learners) I used stratified random sampling (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:120) to select participants. The names of the first 5 interviewees were randomly drawn from the original 10 teachers included in the study. The same method was used in selecting learner interviewees.

3.4.4 Data gathering process

3.4.4.1 Introduction

Data gathering for the study was done in the Mthatha District of Education. The two schools that were used in the study are three kilometres outside the city of Mthatha and are one kilometre apart. Both schools have a mixture of learners i.e. some from the high socio-economic background and some from low socio-economic environment. The study was undertaken during a period of almost six months stretching from late January to July 2005.

3.4.4.2 Learners

The first question of the questionnaire I distributed to learners was about possible causes of disciplinary problems of learners in schools. The question followed the Likert Scale format with a four-point scale (Anderson & Arsenault, 2004:174) because ‘... Likert scales provide an excellent means of gathering opinions and attitudes ... a great deal of information in a short period of time and lend themselves (Likert scales) to simple and effective analysis’ (p:175). The question consisted of five items or statements and these statements are also accompanied by shorter and clear components to give better information (see addendum A).

The five items or categories identified were deduced from the literature study, in which reference was made to causes of disciplinary problems (see paragraph 2.2).

The stems of the statements of the question were neutral. For example, the learner background and its influence on disciplinary problems of learners at school referred to both negative and non-negative backgrounds. The emphasis is on any learner background. Each learner had to answer each question by making a tick on whether he/she strongly agrees, agrees, disagrees or strongly disagrees with a statement as a possible cause of unsocial behaviour by learners in school. Responses from learners on this question were returned on the same day.

The second question sought alternatives to corporal punishment. (See addendum B). The question wanted learners to list alternatives to corporal punishment or any possible approaches other than caning in maintaining discipline at school. When I asked this question most learners could not understand what was actually expected until after a full explanation on what corporal punishment entails and includes.

For example, they constantly mentioned ear twisting (by some teachers) until I explained that this was just another form of physical punishment. Some said that they preferred corporal punishment because it was over quickly and afterwards one could go on with his/her business or even playing.

After some further explanation on how other physical means of discipline were also prohibited as they amount to corporal punishment, learners started to come up with relevant responses to the question put to them.

Responses to alternatives to corporal punishment, i.e. the lists on alternative were returned on the same day (the first day of data gathering).

The last question of the questionnaire (question 3; Addendum D) was administered on the first day of data collection. The last question sought attitudes of learners towards alternatives to corporal punishment. In the question, learners were required to state what they experienced and perceived to be positive or negative when alternatives to corporal punishment were applied or implemented in the instilling of discipline in school.

On the second day of data collection from learners, I interviewed only twelve learners from the original thirty who completed the questionnaire. The selected participants (in the case of learners) were 'in all important respects' (Lankshear & Knobel 2004:147) similar to those who were not selected. The 'small-group' interviews for learners and teachers were 'intended to maximize data collection' and were to (Ibid. p: 208) 'generate discussion rather engage in question and response sequence.' The interview schedule was semi-structured with a list of pre-prepared questions to go deeper into

interviewees' responses.

3.4.4.3 Teachers

The questionnaire I distributed to 5 teachers of my school and 5 teachers of the neighbouring school contained 3 questions to be answered. Distribution of the questionnaire to my neighbouring school was through a teacher who acted on my behalf but was not going to complete the questionnaire. Responses on the three questions from both schools were returned within one day. Interviews which I personally conducted with all the teachers (in groups as explained before) were done on two sessions of the same day. On the second day of data collection from teachers all the teachers came to my school where the interviews were held. In all the interviews the same interview schedule (addendum E) was used.

3.4.4.4 Parents

I was not able to let the parents complete any of the questionnaires although I initially intended to do so. When I managed to get to parents individually, lack of time and a convenient place to write comfortably forced me instead to interview them on all the questions I used for the study. I also thought that two of the parents could not answer the section on the questionnaire specifically dealing with classroom related disciplinary problems on their own without (much) explanation. They had never been teachers although they had always been included and involved in learner disciplinary problems in the school used in the study. Since I based my interview questions on the questions of the questionnaire on discipline, they were able to answer all the questions after thorough explanation.

I was only able to interview and record one parent at a time. It took me more than three months to interview all the parents.

While parents were interviewed individually, the interviews with learners and teachers asking them to explain and elaborate on their responses to the questionnaire took place in 'focus groups' (Mills 2003:61).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

3.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Data collected through the various data-gathering methods were analysed manually by looking for categories of responses emerging from data. No electronic form or computer software were used to analyse data. Instead I repeatedly organised and examined recorded data with the aim of ultimately making general statements for the report. The framework for reporting my findings was built after finding major relationships (patterns) from the recorded data (MacMillan & Schumacher 2006:380).

According to Mills (2003:104)'... data analysis is an attempt by the researcher to summarise the data in a dependable, accurate, reliable and correct manner.' Another author, Wolcott (1994 cited in Mills (2003:104), describes data analysis as the 'presentation of the findings of the study in a manner that has an air of undeniability'.

I first present a quantitative summary of the data gathered through the questionnaire and then go on to a discussion of the qualitative data gathered.

3.5.2 Quantitative summary

The following tables represent a quantitative summary of the responses of the various groups of respondents on the questions put to them in the questionnaires:

Table 1.1

Learner's views about causes of disciplinary problems at school (n = 30).
In the table below that summaries evidence I have taken all the "strongly agree" and "agree" as "agree" and "strongly disagree" and "disagree" as "disagree".

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. Learner home background	9	21
2. Personality learning problems	22	8
3. Physically and mentally affected learners	20	10
4. Problems emanating from classroom situation	18	12
5. School administration	27	3

Table 1.2

Teachers' views about causes of disciplinary problems at school (n = 10).

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. Learner home background	9	1
2. Personality learning problems	10	-
3. Physically and mentally affected learners	10	-
4. Problems emanating from classroom situation	8	2
5. School administration	5	5

Table 1.3

Parents' view about causes of disciplinary problems at school (n = 10).

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. Learner home background	10	-
2. Personality learning problems	10	-
3. Physically and mentally affected learners	10	-
4. Problems emanating from classroom situation	10	-
5. School administration	8	2

Table 2.1

Teachers' views about alternatives to corporal punishment (n = 10)

ALTERNATIVE	AGREE / DISAGREE	COMMENTS FROM INTERVIEWEES
(5) Parent involvement	10 agreed	Learners do not want parent intervention
(9) Effective instruction (good lessons; well prepared lessons).	10 agreed	With prepared lessons learners always occupied
(1) Detention, isolation time out (short duration).	4 agreed and 6 disagreed	Detention of learners after school will use teacher's time for supervision
(2) Suspension (from 1 day to 2 weeks)	4 agreed and 6 disagreed	Suspended learners will be left behind in school work
(10) Reinforcement of good behaviour by praise and ignoring unwanted behaviour	7 agreed and 3 disagreed	Cannot ignore learners who do as they like and disturb the whole class
(8) Small class size	7 agreed	Better controlled
(11) Good behaviour management programmes	7 agreed and 3 disagreed	
(4) Codes of conduct rules - enforcing	10 agreed	Guide on how to discipline
(7) Professional support - psychologists, counsellors etc.	5 agreed	Hard to get and engage them
(12) Verbal and non-verbal intervention	2 agreed	
(15) Empathy (Identify yourself mentally and understand him/her).	2 agreed	
(3) Manual work (light to hard work)	10 disagreed	This will need supervision
(6) Privilege withdrawal	10 disagreed	They claim it an infringement on individual rights
(13) The use of humour	10 disagreed	This can cause the class going out of control with learners misbehaving on purpose
(14) Reprimanding only	10 disagreed	They claim it wastes time when learners grew up being beaten

Table 2.2

Parents' views about alternatives to corporal punishment

ALTERNATIVE	AGREE / DISAGREE	COMMENTS FROM INTERVIEWEES
(4) Codes of conduct / rules - enforcing	10 agreed	Learners know what to do
(5) Parent involvement	10 agreed	The best
(7) Professional support - psychologists, counsellors etc.	10 agreed	They have no knowledge of service
(11) Good behaviour management programmes	10 agreed	
(9) Effective instruction (good lessons well prepared lessons)	10 agreed	Keep all learners focused
(8) Small class size	7 agreed	Better controlled
(3) Manual work	5 agreed and 5 disagreed	Some learners will not feel that they are being punished
(6) Privilege withdrawal	3 agreed	Problem nowadays
(13) The use of humour	10 disagreed	Waste of time
(14) Reprimanding only	10 disagreed	Children do not mind/care for this
(10) Reinforcement of good behaviour by praise and ignoring unwanted behaviour		All parents interviewed revealed that they had never applied these alternatives and can not make any comments about them.
(1) Detention, isolation, time out (short duration)	*	*
(2) Suspension	*	*
(12) Verbal and non-verbal interventions	*	*
(13) Empathy (identify yourself mentally and understand him/her)	*	*

* The open categories imply that there were no responses from parents with respect to these categories

3.5.3 Qualitative data analysis

3.5.3.1 Causes of disciplinary problems

3.5.3.1.1 Home background of learners

Of the 30 learners questioned on whether home back-ground of a learner had any influence on disciplinary problems found on learners, a minority (9 out of 30) agreed and the majority (21 out 30) disagreed with the idea. During interviews on the same question, learners were of the opinion that misbehaving children could be from any background. 'The problem lies with the individual:' said one interviewee.

Out of ten teachers asked the same question, most (9) agreed that learner home background has an influence on discipline of the individual at school. In the interviews the idea was supported with specific examples. These teachers said that single parent homes, and more specifically female headed families, are a major factor in the general breakdown of discipline amongst children. At school learners from such homes are confronted by a different situation where they are required to observe certain rules. Young mothers usually have no muscle to enforce strict rules on children at their homes. Children coming from such homes find it difficult to accept instructions from anyone. These children often come to school without having done their homework. Only one teacher disagreed and was therefore in support of the majority of learners.

All (10) parents asked agreed that home background has a strong influence on behaviour of learners. In the interviews, though individually conducted, all revealed that it was difficult to deal with learners who specifically come from fatherless homes with only a young mother as apparent.

Based on my own years of observation both as a teacher and deputy principal, I also concur with the idea that how children behave at school has much to do with the type of home the child comes from.

3.5.3.1.2 Learning problems

Twenty two (22) learners agreed that learning problems are a cause of misbehaving by learners at school. During interviews learners revealed that those with learning problems will often threaten to harm others when they would not give them assistance e.g. to copy the undone homework. Interviewees talked of learners who would always be roaming about in class when (they) are unable to do their work especially if the teacher is out of the classroom. Some learners, it emerged during interviews, are not afraid or worried about any other form of disciplinary measure other than corporal punishment.

On learning problems, e.g. no motivation to learn, academic failure or no learning skills, all (10) teachers agreed that such learners always misbehave in the class. In the interviews, teachers were able to explain their responses on the questionnaire they had already answered. They agreed that children with learning problems are often a nuisance to the whole class concerned. Besides not complying with or not engaging in class work or activities when given time to do so, they often disrupt others. They, interviewees claimed, usually develop strategies to disrupt lessons. The child who does not know where or how to start with the assigned task or class work will move from desk to desk, or from group to group pretending to ask for help. Such a child will even quarrel with those not willing to help him or her. Such a learner, one teacher claimed, will sometimes sit quietly at his/her desk doing nothing. He/she wants to be seen by the teacher to be busy with the work the rest of the class is busy with.

All the parents (former teachers) interviewed agreed that learners with learning problems find it difficult to be stable in the class. They would often find excuses to move outside the classroom or not to do any class work.

I have personally observed learners continuously disturbing the teaching and learning process in the class in the same way as revealed by teachers.

3.5.3.1.3 Physically disabled and mentally affected learners

Concerning learners with the above mentioned disabilities, the majority (20) of learners who completed the questionnaire, agreed that they (learners) had observed disruptive tendencies from affected learners. The rest of the respondents (10) disagreed that these disabilities had anything to do with the learners' behaviour at school.

In the interviews, one learner revealed that some disabled learners are provoked by e.g. others calling them names or ridiculing them on their disabilities and in their reacting, finding themselves breaking school rules e.g. fighting in class. It emerged from the interviews that the physically disabled learners often think that they are being undermined and laughed at. They tend to be aggressive and cause some disturbance in and out of the class.

With the same question asked, all (10) teachers completing the questionnaire agreed that affected learners tended to disrupt classes during school. It was during the interviews that teachers showed different attitudes to these conditions as being causes of disciplinary problems. Different levels of sympathy seemed to be affecting their responses and elaboration on the matter. While one teacher said that

some, especially the physically affected e.g. a hunchback, were sometimes aggressive and provocative, another teacher claimed that all the types referred to sometimes were reacting or misbehaving unintentionally. The latter claimed that, for example, the physically disabled child will fight for recognition in the same way as a normal person and the mentally affected will not be quite aware of his /her actions.

In the case of the parents responding to the same question, all (10) agreed that such (disabled) learners were causing problems in their classes. Most parents were quick to point out that these learners were not in all cases to be blamed. They revealed that when (parents) were called to some serious disciplinary hearings at school, they had experienced that in most cases, the disabled had been provoked to aggressiveness.

I have also seen, through my observation, the physically disabled misbehaving in school and that they expected to be pitied and not be punished like other learners. To me, some of these disabled learners seem to use their condition(s) to manipulate teachers.

3.5.3.1.4 Classroom related problems

On problems that arise out of the classroom situation or that confront learners in class, e.g. dull lessons or overcrowded classrooms, more than half (18) completing the questionnaire agreed, but the rest (12) disagreed that unfavourable classroom situation may be the cause of ill-discipline in a school. One learner said that if they are engaged in a boring and uninteresting lesson, they find excuses to go outside the classroom i.e. asking permission from the teacher. One learner even said that it is sometimes even possible to slip away from the classroom unnoticed especially from a teacher who is always sitting

down marking books at the table.

The majority (8) of teachers were of the opinion that classroom related problems (see the questionnaire) had nothing to do with the bad behaviour of learners. My own observation informed me of teachers who wanted to shift the blame and accuse learners of misconduct.

All the parents interviewed were of the opinion that what individual teachers do in their classrooms has a great influence on learner behaviour. One parent, who, he claimed, once came to school and noticed learners sitting outside the classroom while the teacher was teaching inside, blamed the school system. He said if the teacher comes to a class for only one period i.e. is not teaching all the subjects in that class, that teacher cannot be in control of the class. He was supported by former (old) teachers who used to teach the same class all subjects and had therefore established stronger relationship between them and the learners. They (all parents) claimed that learners will always misbehave and dodge teachers with whom they do not have a strong relationship.

I had observed that an unprepared teacher in the classroom can easily be exposed by an alert and clever learner. Such a child can ask a few questions and upset the teacher. After failing (the teacher) to answer some questions and showing unpreparedness, class control can collapse. Such classroom situations can contribute to bad discipline in classes in particular and in school generally.

3.5.3.1.5 School administration

On school administration and the role played by the school leadership, the majority of learners agreed that administration of a

school will either directly or indirectly affect or contribute to antisocial behaviour of learners in a school. Only a few disagreed that school administration, whether weak or strong can be the cause of disciplinary problems at school.

During the interviews, one learner said that if the principal and deputy are away from school, most learners, especially boys, will ignore the ringing of bells and continue to play after recess. They claimed that as prefects and class leaders they are sometimes not supported by the remaining teachers.

On school administration, half (5) of the teachers agreed in their responses to the questionnaire that any type of administration can cause disciplinary problems at school. During the interviews they said that an administration with many or too strict rules may cause problems as much as poor administration. They said that too many rules tend to confuse learners and those who must administer them e.g. teachers and learner leaders. The other half (5) of teachers were certain that poor administration in a school is a direct cause of poor discipline. One teacher suggested in the interviews that if the principal is a weak disciplinarian, the situation needs to be counteracted by a collective school management team or supportive staff action. If such action is not forthcoming, the discipline of the school will be bad.

The majority of parents, especially former principals, agreed that school administration (by school leadership) contributes to the type of discipline that you get in a school. A poor leadership role, i.e. when school leaders do not take active part in disciplinary matters, will result in more disciplinary problems in the school.

3.5.3.1.6 Other causes

There were other issues that came out of the interviews that had not been covered by responses to the questionnaire. Some learners were disrupting lessons or showing general disobedience because they were no longer interested to go on with schooling. Some were misbehaving so that they may be expelled from the school they were attending.

It also came out during interviews that some teachers were discussed at homes in the presence of learners or with learners. Teachers that were despised by certain parents, for various reasons, also became victims at school of being looked down on by some learners. The result of such a mind set is disrespect and contempt of teachers by learners. Teachers were also blamed for leaving classes unattended with learners being able to do as they like and thus obstructing others from doing their work.

3.5.3.2 Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

The second research question was formulated differently for the learners (Addendum B) and for the adults (teachers and parents). The learners were simply asked to list alternatives to corporal punishment. Based on learners' responses as well as alternatives identified in the literature study, the second question for adults (Addendum C) consisted of a list of alternatives which they had to prioritize.

3.5.3.2.1 Learners

In the second question (Addendum B, see 3.4.2.1) where I asked learners to list possible alternatives to corporal punishment, I found

that the thirty learners involved in the study provided me with sixty eight alternatives. On average, each learner had given about four alternatives but some of these responses overlapped or some were also given by other learners. I eventually had 68 responses that were divided into five main categories. The learners' responses to alternatives to corporal punishment were grouped in the following categories: manual work; suspension from school; parent involvement; isolation; detention and time out and privilege withdrawal. On alternatives to corporal punishment, I had to accept those that were compatible with rules and regulations of the Education Department and within the laws of the country.

From the 68 responses (from learners) the majority (51) suggested manual work. Manual work varied and ranged from cleaning the classroom, writing boards to preparing new school playing grounds. The suggestions ranged from light to heavy manual work from a few minutes to many hours of hard work. The final decision should, it was suggested, depend on the severity of the offence. A few (8) responses suggested suspension from school and the suspension to range from one day to two weeks all in relation to the offence.

The isolation, detention and time out for misbehaving by learners came out of 6 of the responses. Suggestions about isolation, detention and time out should, however, not be seen in the same light as suspension from the classroom since the former is only for a short duration. Isolation, detention and time-out should not extend from one day to another day. The withdrawal of privileges and parental involvement as disciplinary measures for antisocial behaviour in schools were suggested by 2 responses and 1 respectively.

I also interviewed a group of 12 learners from the 30 learners who had answered the questions. They explained some of the alternatives

and were able to provide more detail on others. They explained why parental involvement was the most unpopular alternative to corporal punishment with learners. School children do not like their parents to know about what they do at school. They do not like to see their parents at school since the parents may even find out who their friends are and disapprove of them. During interviews one learner for example, said that when teachers call parents to school, parents may be told of minor offences they had, at some time, been disciplined for but which the parents did not know about.

According to my observation, the majority of learners were in favour of manual work as an alternative to corporal punishment because they want to be in groups. It is a common practice by teachers to group all the punished learners doing manual work for easy supervision. Children enjoy to be in groups and hate isolation. I also observed how we as teachers at school usually succeed in disciplining a child whose parent had been summoned to school and is known by teachers. Calling parents to school, which is hated by children, is effective as an alternative approach to corporal punishment in maintaining discipline at school.

3.5.3.2.2 Teachers

Data from teachers on alternatives to corporal punishment were obtained through a question (Addendum C, see 3.4.2.1).

Fifteen possible alternatives to corporal punishment (numbered 1 to 15) were put to teachers as suggestions for instilling discipline in schools without using corporal punishment.

Teachers were then asked to re-arrange the alternatives in the order of how each (teacher) considers them to be effective if applied to

inculcate discipline in schools. The alternative or alternatives chosen as number one will be the alternative that that particular teacher considers or thinks can be the most effective in instilling discipline. The one considered to be the least effective was to be listed as number 15.

Out of ten teachers given the question, (7) of them suggested alternative 10, i.e. reinforcement of good behaviour by praise and ignoring unwanted behaviour, as the best. Alternatives 11 and 8, i.e. good behaviour management programmes and small class size, were approved by (5) of the teachers as good alternatives to corporal punishment for misbehaving children. Alternatives 4, 5 and 9 received approval from (3) of the ten teachers involved in the study. The alternatives are:- the application and enforcement of codes of conduct and school disciplinary rules, parent involvement and effective instruction. The last group of alternatives to be rated, however lowly, seen as of any possible effect in instilling discipline in schools were:- (1)detention, isolation and time out, (2) suspension from classes, (7) the use of professional support i.e. psychologists and counsellors; (12) verbal and non-verbal interventions and (15) empathy.

The remaining possible alternatives i.e. (3) manual work, (6) privilege withdrawal, (13) the use of humour and (14) reprimanding only, were not approved by any teacher as a possible alternative to corporal punishment.

On interviewing the second group of 5 teachers (the first group had also been interviewed on all the questions) about their responses on alternatives to corporal punishment, more explanations were given on why some were considered to be more effective than other alternatives while some were not even rated as alternatives to corporal punishment.

The interviewed teachers agreed that it was generally easy to reinforce good behaviour by other means at your disposal e.g. praise and by ignoring the unwanted behaviour. However, one teacher expressed some difficulties in ignoring learners who are doing as they like while the rest of the class looks on. I then realised that this particular statement of the questionnaire (i.e. alternative no 10) dealt with two issues. While the teacher might be praising the good behaviour of another child through talking, he/she must also ignore the other who, at the same time, is disturbing the class and needs to be ignored. They claimed that it was a waste of time to reprimand only (one of the unchosen alternatives) learners who know only beating as punishment. Learners they claimed, may be misbehaving deliberately in order to be taken out of the classroom. The teacher may find himself/herself shouting and losing control of the class in the process.

The possible alternatives to corporal punishment not chosen, or rated, selected interviewees claimed, were not even worth trying in the class.

For example, they claimed that disciplining misbehaving learners through giving them manual work would need teachers' supervision. Teachers showed reluctance to do such supervision instead of attending to own problems at a time they consider to be outside their working hours.

With the use of humour as an alternative to corporal punishment, teachers said they feared the worst i.e. a class getting out of control every time the technique is used. Teachers became concerned with learners who will misuse the chance to correct themselves while the teacher tries to neutralise the situation (through humour). They also feared that some teachers may turn the situation into abuse against offending learners. They (teachers) may, for example, turn to ridicule such learners.

Concerning privilege withdrawal, there was the fear of interfering with individual rights. Teachers could not take away what the learners were entitled to (their free time) e.g. detention during break time, lunch or sport periods as this would be disadvantaging learners. This would go against the spirit of fair play and could be seen as violation of individual rights.

My observation of some teachers' choice or grading of alternatives to corporal-punishment suggested that it was not about the effectiveness of these measures. Teachers were also concerned about how some alternatives were to affect them. They did not want to carry an additional burden for the sake of disciplining learners. This applies to manual work and supervision as stated above.

3.5.3.2.3 Parents

When I dealt with parents in the question (alternatives) I realised that I had to explain the current situation, i.e. the illegality of corporal punishment as a means of instilling discipline at schools. All those who had been teachers had left the teaching profession when corporal punishment was still allowed as a disciplinary measure at schools. The 10 parents involved in the study were (after explanation) each then able to participate in the grading of the 15 alternatives to corporal punishment. They had (as teachers had done above) to grade the given alternatives (see Addendum C) according to what they consider to be their effectiveness when applied in instilling discipline in schools. After grading the alternatives, I interviewed each parent asking them to expand on their responses i.e. giving reasons on how they had arrived at their choices.

All ten parents who individually answered the questionnaire on alternatives to corporal punishment chose the enforcement of the code of conduct and strict application of school rules as the best approaches or strategies to instil discipline in schools. Later during the interviews they supported the

response by suggesting the calling of parents to school when learners were failing to observe school rules. I was able to realise then why all (10) parents had chosen parental involvement as their second best strategy to lessen misbehaving of learners at school. Professional support i.e. the use of psychologists and counsellors and good behaviour management programmes were rated thirdly and fourthly respectively by all the ten parents who had participated in the study. The alternatives, small class size, manual work and privilege withdrawal were chosen by seven, five and three parents respectively and rated 5th, 6th and 7th.

According to my observation, which was later supported during interviews, alternatives not rated or not chosen (by parents) had never been applied by parents, especially former teachers, and therefore had never been experienced.

In the interviews, all the parents (ten) were of the opinion that some of the alternatives or strategies (those chosen or rated as possible effective) could be applied and succeed if teachers could be working as disciplinary teams. They emphasised that in schools where discipline is looked upon as the principal's duty, alternative approaches other than corporal punishment could fail. They said that learners are quick to notice non-co-operation among school authorities and could get out of control easily. All the parents in the study were of the same opinion as teachers that alternatives such as the use of humour, reprimanding only and manual work as strategies that will be of little effect, or could even bring about unintended negative results. One parent said that, for example, manual work as punishment can pose problems for some learners who grew up under very protective parents and are not used to do anything for themselves. If some children can not do even small house hold chores at their homes, it could cause problems if they were forced to work hard in the garden, they claimed.

Another parent mentioned the influence of television which may be a

cause of problems in the inculcation of discipline in schools. The parent went on to say that children are easily influenced by e.g. foreign culture. For example, a misbehaviour based on foreign culture acquired by children through television watching could be something new to teachers. Teachers therefore, may have no strategy or approach to apply in controlling misbehaviour.

By considering the alternatives suggested by parents, they (parents) look upon teachers as the only people who can apply these approaches. That implies that teachers should not look elsewhere other than themselves to improve the situation. Another parent went on to say that teachers should not look to the Department of Education for help but only work as teams at school. They (teachers) should not look only at principals as people responsible for discipline at school. I thought these views emanated from their experiences as former teachers, principals and maintenance of discipline in their schools.

3.5.3.3 Attitude towards Alternatives to Corporal Punishment

Teachers had been, up to 1996, using corporal punishment without restrictions to instil discipline in schools. When corporal punishment as a corrective measure was made unlawful in schools, (see 1.2 background to the problem), teachers had to look for alternatives or other strategies for effective inculcation of discipline. The study I conducted on instilling discipline without use of corporal punishment in schools, was extended to look at the attitudes of learners, teachers and parents towards the application of alternatives or possible approaches for the effective instilling of discipline in schools. The study (see 1.5 question 3) specifically tried to look at positives and negatives with respect to the implementation of these approaches in schools by teachers in behaviour control.

3.5.3.3.1 Learners

Although I anticipated that respondents would answer the whole of question 3, they only answered question 3a in writing. In the majority of cases, question 3b was left open, and only discussed during interviews (in all of the groups). So in the end, much discussion took place about the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives to corporal punishment.

The last question to be answered by learners investigated their attitudes about the already-mentioned alternatives to corporal punishment when implemented in their schools. They were able to reveal the positives and negatives of alternatives to beating children at school. The question was important since it sought to assess whether the alternatives could be effectively applied or not. It was also important to gauge how learners will react to the implementation of alternatives to corporal punishment.

Eighteen of the learners felt that alternatives to corporal punishment were bad measures for achieving discipline amongst the learners. Although they were of the opinion that the alternatives suggested generally were bad measures, they were able to point out a few they regarded as good.

Learners said it was not good to do manual work which you had no idea how to do it but would rather prefer it against all other alternatives. They claimed there were health hazards or the possibility of being hurt while working with, for example, garden tools. They also mentioned embarrassment in front of other learners when doing dirty manual work on school grounds. They were also concerned about being left behind on lessons when suspended from classes for misbehaving. On being detained after school, transport problems or walking alone home were mentioned. The fear of rape, molestation or being mugged was also mentioned. For them it was negative because of detention during

breaks. Learner A from the group interviewed said: 'you even miss out on learner gossip, you are left out on the latest news if detained during the lunch hour or going home alone'. They also claimed that all these types of disciplinary measures took a longer time than corporal punishment.

Twelve learners were of the opinion that there were positives to some of the alternative approaches to corporal punishment at school. During the interviews (12 learners) they agreed that some alternatives were good and even educational if taken seriously. Some positive experiences were to be gained, for example if sections of the school work could be covered when detained after school. If detention after school was hated by learners, then it was good as a deterrent to misbehaving in school. If learners hated these alternatives to corporal punishment, then it was a positive thing for the school in instilling discipline. That is why parent involvement as an alternative to corporal punishment in inculcating discipline at schools can also be claimed a good measure since most learners do not like their parents to being called to school. Most learners do not feel comfortable with all the school stories known to parents.

During the oral presentation of their responses, two learners voiced concerns about some alternatives. They singled out a few that can have an educational negative effect on learners, e.g. privilege withdrawal and learner suspension. Suspended learners always come back after a few days and are then behind in their school work. The condition may occur even if they had been sent or provided with work covered during their suspension.

Since the majority of learners were against other alternatives to corporal punishment except manual work, to me this seemed to be associated with ways of punishment implemented at homes. My perception is that most parents still beat their children who misbehave rather than use

other means or approaches. Even the alternative which looked popular with learners, i.e. manual work, is preferred because of a specific reason (see 3.5.2.1).

3.5.3.3.2 Teachers

The ten teachers involved in the study also answered the question on positives and negatives to corporal punishment. On answering the question, teachers related their own experience on alternatives they had implemented to instil discipline in their schools. Some of the alternatives were coming from the Education Department while others had been formulated by the schools concerned. Alternatives used in the study fall into both groups:

Eight of the ten teachers (all ten teachers were involved in all stages of data collection) involved in the study felt that most of the alternatives to corporal punishment were good measures to maintain discipline in school. In their answers to the open-ended question and during interviews, teachers were able to explain why they were mostly positive about the majority of the alternatives to corporal punishment. Alternatives already applied had changed the situation which had emerged since corporal punishment was outlawed at their schools, they claimed. Teachers also alleged that since all alternatives to corporal punishment were compatible with the laws of the country, they (teachers) were no longer liable for prosecution or being sued in courts of law for wrongly or excessively punishing learners.

The alternatives that the majority of teachers felt positive about or preferred were those they thought would be easy to apply and at the same time produce good results. Interviewees claimed that parental involvement, although sometimes problematic, was the best alternative to control children. It was the best because children behave better whenever their parents are involved. It also came out during interviews

that teachers learn more about learners when they contact and interact with their parents. After being acquainted with relevant parents' background, status and attitude towards the school system, it becomes easier to deal with the child of that parent. Teachers also claimed that alternatives such as ignoring the unwanted behaviour in the classroom save time although it poses some challenges. Other teachers seemed to favour the idea of small class sizes. The interviewees said that class control is usually at its best in a class of few learners.

Alternatives like the code of conduct and school disciplinary rules make learner control easier, teachers said. They said that learners inside and outside the classroom e.g. at sports field will be disciplined and rules will work better if the whole school (everybody) applies them. With the code of conduct and rules teachers know what behaviour to expect and what disciplinary measures to take. On the issue of professional support, e.g. the use of psychologists, teachers said that they favoured such measures. They felt that professional support could be of great assistance especially in cases where they had had problems with mentally and physically disabled misbehaving learners.

After teachers had voiced their opinions about alternatives to corporal punishment, they concluded that, if the alternatives could be implemented, they could in future work better with learners, parents and even the education authorities to instil discipline in schools.

Two (2) of ten teachers interviewed felt that (all) alternatives were not good measures to instil discipline in schools. They gave some reasons to support their claim:

They felt that these measures were time wasters. They claimed that to use a cane to discipline learners takes a very short time. Valuable teaching time will be wasted if the alternatives were to be applied, they said. During the interviews, one teacher said: ' In a forty minute teaching period, you can beat all the wrongdoers in five minutes and

you'll have the best of their attention during the other thirty five (minutes)'. The interviewee was supported by a colleague: 'Our children behave better and learn only when they have something to fear'. They also claimed that with children who grew up being beaten by parents, other forms of behaviour correction will not be successful. They even claimed that since corporal punishment was outlawed in schools, discipline has deteriorated and learners were not doing their work. Teaching has been made more boring and frustrating, they claimed. These two teachers, who opposed alternatives to corporal punishment, concluded that they could not see any better approach of instilling discipline in schools other than the corporal punishment.

3.5.3.3 Parents

When parents were asked about alternatives (question 2) and also about their attitude towards those alternatives, they showed that they did not have much experience with respect to these alternatives. I discovered that this was because when they were still teachers, alternatives were applied voluntarily or according to one's own initiative since corporal punishment was still allowed in schools.

One parent said that it would be difficult to recommend or condemn any alternative they never tried or applied as a disciplinary measure. It would be difficult to talk of its success or failure, he said.

However, besides the parents' limited knowledge about other strategies in instilling discipline in schools without using the cane, the majority (8) of those involved in the study favoured parental involvement. The alternatives that followed were reduced class size, strict application of school rules and professional support.

During the interviews I noticed how all those parents involved liked to be

informed about the progress of their children at school.

3.6 DATA INTERPRETATION

3.6.1 Introduction

This section focuses on the interpretation of findings that emanated from the questionnaire (with three questions), interviews and observations on the inculcation of discipline in schools after corporal punishment had been outlawed.

Interpretation involves building up of ‘... data into larger coherent wholes’ (Mouton, 2001:109). This implies making sense of the data and to offer or advance sound explanations. In the process of sense making, the research purpose is always kept in mind. According to Wolcott (1994) (cited in Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:369) the sense made of the data should be justified and be relevant to the data analysis.

As qualitative research was used in the study, I did not use extensive numerical statistics in the interpretation of data. Tables have been included only to summarize the results.

The research sought to answer the question posed in the research problem: How can discipline of learners at two schools in the Mthatha district be effectively instilled using alternatives to corporal punishment? The study specifically sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What causes disciplinary problems among school learners?
2. What are possible approaches for the effective instilling of discipline in schools?
3. What are the positives and negatives with respect to the implementation of these approaches?

3.6.2 Causes of disciplinary problems

In the first research question (1.5.1), learners, teachers and parents were asked to find or identify the main causes of disciplinary problems at schools.

The study revealed that the majority of teachers and parents agree that the home background of a child can be the cause and influence the behaviour of a child at school. The study also revealed that both teachers and parents believe that the structure of a family has an influence on the discipline of learners. The study conducted supports the literature consulted on the matter. Robertson (1999) writes about disruptive learners who had been through insufficient care during childhood (see 2.2.1). He argues that those learners may be demanding the attention they never received by misbehaving in the class.

The study also revealed that learners disagreed with the idea that home background has anything to do with misbehaving of children at school.

From my own observation I came to establish that children do not agree because they are protective of their homes and background. To agree that one's misbehaviour is due to the home background would amount to admit that one's background is a bad one.

On learning problems the study revealed that the majority of respondents were of the opinion that learner problems were indeed the cause of some of the disciplinary problems in classes and consequently in school. Again Robertson (1999) is supported by the study when he argues that children who are not doing well in the class i.e. in learning areas or subjects have a tendency to disrupt other learners. Jones & Jones (1995) are supported by the findings when they argue that inadequate personal skills in learners result in instability of that particular learner in the classroom.

The majority of respondents agreed that physically and mentally disabled

learners are often the cause of disruption in a class. However, the study also established that disabled children cannot always be blamed for class disruptions.

With respect to classroom related problems as causes of disciplinary problems at school, the study revealed that the majority of learners and all parents argue that teachers are in control in classes. Therefore what happens in class depends on how a teacher handles a class. The teacher's management of the class will to a greater extent, determine the type of behaviour one would come across in a class. While some teachers disagreed with the abovementioned idea, it became clear to me that their argument can not be very strong. I realised they were shifting the blame to others. The findings of the study largely agree with or support the literature consulted on the matter. For example, Jones & Jones (1995) argue that teachers, who are not properly trained for organizing and managing classrooms, will find it difficult to control classes with a wide range of students e.g. children with high or low interest in learning or high or low academic abilities. Eggleton (2001) is supported by this study in his argument that effective instruction used with effective classroom management should inform disciplinary approach in schools. Zabel & Zabel (1996) are also supported by the study in their approach that effective teaching approaches help in instilling good behaviour in learners.

Concerning school administration as one of the factors in the inculcation of discipline in schools, the study revealed that weak administration and non-co-operation on disciplinary matters by staff could encourage or worsen poor discipline in a school. All the respondents were of the opinion that good discipline in a school goes hand in hand with good and effective policy guided administration. The Department of Education (2001) is supported by these findings because it emphasizes that the School Governing Body of each school should draw up a code of conduct to be observed in a school. This code of conduct should be administered in

such a way that it sustains the disciplined school environment.

3.6.3 Alternatives to corporal punishment

The second research question to address refers to alternatives to corporal punishment or possible approaches for the effective inculcation of discipline in schools.

Research findings reveal that learners were highly in favour of manual work whereas teachers were totally against this form of behaviour correction. Teachers detest the extra work of supervising while this manual work is done by learners especially after tuition time. The study shows that learners are positive about manual work as punishment because it is usually done in groups and therefore they may do it without taking it seriously as a punishment. Parents were not strongly in favour or against it.

The study also reveals that while parental involvement is very popular with teachers and parents, it is one of the most unwanted approaches by learners to keep bad behaviour under control at schools. The findings of the study support the literature consulted on the study. Mercure (1995) and Miller (cited in Rogers (2002) emphasize the responsibilities of parents towards their children's attendance and behaviour. They claim that these can contribute to the improvement of learners' behaviour. Rogers further writes of a home-school approach that can achieve good outcomes.

According to study findings, teachers and parents are in favour of enforcement of rules and the code of conduct in schools where the study was conducted. The findings support Chaplain (2003) who claims that rules are for prevention and should prescribe what should be done in the case of misbehaving. The literature consulted agrees with the views of teachers and parents, as the study has revealed, that a small class size is

a good alternative and has a positive effect on student behaviour. For example, Alexander & Carla (1995) do not only believe that small classes influence student behaviour positively, but also that smaller schools stand a good chance with programmes that aim at the prevention of ill-discipline. They further argue that programmes that promote social and cognitive skills are easily applied there (in small classes and small schools). Praising good behaviour was also favoured as an alternative approach by parents. These findings also support Docking (1996) and Weinstein & Mignano (1993) who respectively argue that praising good behaviour 'maintains appropriate behaviour' and teachers need to pay positive attention to the desired behaviour. The findings that teachers and parents favour praising of good behaviour as a means of eliminating bad behaviour in schools supports Wragg (1993) who suggests that teachers need to promote good behaviour by e.g. rewarding such behaviour. The study also established that teachers are no longer prepared to waste time on unwanted behaviour in the class.

It also came out of the study that teachers and parents, although in favour, are not considering the use of professional support, i.e. the use of psychologists and counsellors, as an important possible approach in helping to instil discipline in schools. Although I did not agree with their attitude towards this approach (professional support), I understood how they feel towards a facility they neither had any experience of it nor any hope of getting it in their schools.

Learners, it came out of the study, are not in favour of suspension, isolation, detention and time-out as a means of disciplinary measures. This means that their views about these approaches do not agree with literature consulted. Evertson (2003), Dadisman et al. (1990) and Mercure (1995) are of the same opinion that these measures can lessen unproductive behaviour. It emerged out of this study that because these measure isolate wrongdoer(s) from others, these measures are unpopular with learners. I have established that these measures can be effective in

instilling discipline in the two schools where the study was conducted. The only problem is the reluctance of teachers to supervise such work.

Concerning the withdrawal of learner privileges, the study reveals a negative attitude about this measure from teachers and parents. They argue that their disapproval is based on the principle of human rights which should not be violated. That is why the literature reviewed on the topic is not supported by teachers and parents. Thus the study disagrees with Evertson et al. (2003) who recommend withholding privileges in order to lessen unproductive social behaviour by learners. Verbal and non-verbal interventions are not supported by teachers and parents. This goes against the suggestion by Weinstein & Mignano (1993) that these interventions warn misbehaving learners without interrupting lessons.

It was also revealed by the study that teachers and parents do not approve the use of humour in class as an alternative to caning, whereas Smith & Laslett (1993) see humour as an alternative to harsh punishment, such as the re-writing of can ease tension in the class. Reprimanding and the use of a punishment, such as the re-writing of paragraphs are not favoured by either teachers or parents. However, literature consulted (Evertson et al. 2003) on this aspect, recommend these measures for any inappropriate behaviour. The study reveals that, teachers in particular, fear that the situation may get out of control e.g. shouting and harassment (while intending to reprimand) by some (teachers). It also came out of the study that teachers consulted were no longer in support of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure.

3.6.4 Attitude towards alternatives to corporal punishment – positives and negatives

3.6.4.1 Learners

The findings of the study clearly indicate that learners who participated in the study are not very clear about most alternatives

that could be applied to correct misbehaving if corporal punishment was to be spared. This finding reveals their limited use in school and at homes and the frequent use of corporal punishment as a means of behaviour correction. Their preference for manual work to me was in the light of being forced to choose an alternative to corporal punishment. However, there were some alternatives that the learners seemed to be totally against e.g. parental involvement. To conclude, learners have not yet experienced much of the alternatives to corporal punishment as suggested in the literature consulted.

3.6.4.2 Teachers

The study revealed that teachers of the two schools used in the study generally approved of the idea of alternatives to corporal punishment although with some reservations and even outright objections to some (alternatives). The positive attitude, as the study showed, manifested itself more so as teachers hoped this can fill the gap left by the banning of corporal punishment in schools.

3.6.4.3 Parents

The study revealed that parents were generally positive about alternatives to corporal punishment of learners. This was despite the fact that they had no experience of such a situation. They could not be sure of results, they said. I concluded that they were just accepting these alternatives at face value.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has dealt mainly with the various aspects of the empirical study which included the research paradigm, research design, data gathering, data analysis and data interpretation. This chapter summarizes the conclusions that can be drawn from the study. Recommendations or suggestions for a practical course of action are also dealt with in this chapter. Since recommendations should suggest ‘... attainable improvement’ (Hall & Hall, 1996:246) they should therefore ‘arise best from the people you have interviewed ...’ (p: 246). This implies that recommendations should ‘be clearly derived from the data (Robson, 1993 cited in Hall & Hall 1996).

4.2 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions and recommendations arrived at about instilling discipline in schools in the post-corporal punishment era were derived after research was conducted at two schools in Mthatha. They also emanated from the background of literature consulted on the topic.

4.2.1 Literature study

Literature consulted reveals that discipline at school is a concern especially after corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure was prohibited by legislation. Literature also reveals that no proper training of teachers and any documents on alternatives to causing were made available to close the gap left by the banning of corporal punishment.

Literature consulted reveals that home background, academic and other

personal problems of learners, physically and mentally affected learners and overcrowded and unmanageable classrooms should be regarded as the most common causes of disciplinary problems at schools. Unprepared teachers, under-equipped schools, poor school administration, lack of professional counsellors are also revealed by literature as causes of disciplinary problems at schools. There are also children, such as those in need of attention, others who seek to enhance personal status and those who fail to adjust to school environment who can be the cause of disciplinary problems at school.

Literature consulted reveals a very wide variety of alternatives to corporal punishment that teachers can apply in the instilling discipline at schools.

Concerning the application of alternatives, while literature approves some, it also warns against others that can produce unintended results, for example, those that can evoke hatred or cause poor or bad teacher-pupil relationships in class or school. Therefore, some alternatives to corporal punishment, literature reveals, should be applied with caution.

4.2.2 Learners

Learners used in the study do not think home background of a learner is associated with any behaviour at school. Learners, it seems, do not want to draw people's attention to their homes. Most learners also do not want their parents to come to school and find more about what they do there. While it came out of the study as a surprise that learners are totally against parental involvement as a measure to help maintain discipline at schools, the attitude could possibly be linked to their belief that home background has no influence on learner behaviour at school. Therefore children would like their homes and parents not be linked with their behaviour. To me this needs further investigation.

Learners used in the study are generally of the opinion that school administration is directly or indirectly responsible for both good and bad occurrences at school including their own misbehaving. Lastly children at school hate being isolated hence the general approval of group manual work as an alternative approach to inculcate discipline.

Learners used in the study are interested to be disciplined. They are also worried about other learners who disrupt classes at school. Learners also need to be helped to be disciplined. However, they are not sure which disciplinary measures could be applied to correct their misdeeds at schools. Their attitude towards the alternatives to corporal punishment is difficult to assess.

4.2.3 Teachers

Teachers generally believe that home background has much to do with the behaviour of a learner at school. Teachers do not want to take any blame for issues affecting them as causes of disciplinary measure e.g. classroom related problems and administration. Teachers generally approve of parental involvement as a means to improve discipline at school. They are also not in favour of disciplinary measures that will put a bigger responsibility on them, such as manual work which they will have to supervise. They are generally in support or positive about the alternatives to corporal punishment especially because of the fact that behaviour of learners has worsened after corporal punishment was outlawed.

4.2.4 Parents

Parents generally see the family structure and therefore the home background as a big factor that can influence child behaviour at school. They, like teachers, approve mostly of parental involvement as a key to

improve learner behaviour at school. All the parents are positive about alternatives to corporal punishment at schools.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed important opinions on each of the three questions investigated. Since various laws, especially the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (Department of Education 2001:5) which abolished corporal punishment came into force, a great negative impact on discipline has been noticeable. In the light of that, this study has contributed to knowledge and on the basis of the findings it is recommended that:-

1. Parents should be encouraged to work with teachers to improve discipline at schools with the aim of strengthening better relationships between schools and communities.
2. Teachers should acquaint themselves and learn to know learner home - backgrounds in order to understand learners they are dealing with.
3. Co-operation or teamwork in the execution of school rules and codes of conduct should be promoted at each school.
4. Teachers, including schools management teams, should be developed and empowered through workshops with specialised knowledge or managerial skills. The skills could include discipline without corporal punishment, class management and organization and effective teaching.
5. Special schools for learners with special needs or specialised training for teachers are to be put in place if such learners are to be included

in ordinary public schools. The latter alternative is recommended if discrimination on grounds of disabilities is to be avoided.

6. The Department should find ways to limit class size, since bigger classes are difficult to control.
7. Properly supervised manual work and detention as alternatives to corporal punishment should be highly considered with motivated teachers to play a responsible role.
8. Good lesson preparation under the supervision of senior teachers or heads of departments could play an important role in improving the discipline situation, especially with reference to under-qualified and inexperienced teachers.
9. Professional support i.e. psychologists or educational counsellors should be increased to support schools.

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ADDENDUM A

QUESTIONNAIRE : MONITORING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS IN THE POST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ERA

QUESTION 1

Possible causes of disciplinary problems among school learners

This question attempts to identify possible causes of disciplinary problems among school learners. The names of school and respondents will not appear anywhere in the question. Information gathered will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes. After reading possible causes of disciplinary problems among school learners, answer the questions that follow by making a tick (T) in the column of the opinion you think is the appropriate answer.

Key: A - Agree; S.A - Strongly Agree; D.A - Disagree and S.D.A - Strongly Disagree

Disciplinary problems amongst learners at school are caused by or due to:-

STATEMENT / QUESTION**RESPONSE**

1. Learner background	SA	A	DA	SDA
Disadvantaged homes; well to do families; homeless; very strict parents; over permissive; alcohol abuse; single or no parent; no family values; quarrelling parents; violent environment; will educated parents and uneducated parents.				
2. Academic and other learning problems	SA	A	DA	SDA
No motivation to learn; no learning skills; academic failure; failure to adjust to classroom situation; negative attitude about school; age difference with co-learners; feeling having no role in class, intellectual weakness.				
3. Physically and mentally affected learners	SA	A	DA	SDA
Depressed; hyperactive; physically handicapped; affected attention span; severely disturbed child; intellectual weakness.				
4. Problems emanating from classroom situation	SA	A	DA	SDA
Dull lessons; poor quality teaching; overcrowded classrooms. Under prepared teachers; poorly managed classrooms; peer pressure and influence; under qualified teachers; teachers poor in organisation and management; shallow knowledge.				
5. School administration	SA	A	DA	SDA
Weak administration; invisible principal, non co-operation by teachers on disciplinary matters; no school discipline policies; no codes of conduct; un-enforced school rules; too many rules or restrictions				

ADDENDUM B

QUESTIONNAIRE: MONITORING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS IN THE POST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ERA

QUESTION 2A (LEARNERS ONLY) POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES, STRATEGIES OR OTHER APPROACHES TO MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOLS

This question seeks learners to list all possible alternatives, strategies or other approaches that can be used to maintain discipline after corporal punishment was abolished by law at schools.

1. List below any alternatives, strategies or any other approaches that can be used at school to maintain discipline in the place of corporal punishment that has since 1996 been outlawed by the government of South Africa. Alternatives given should be those that exclude any other physical forms of punishment and also be permissible in terms of the law (legal).

ADDENDUM C

QUESTION 2B TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Listed below are alternative approaches in maintaining discipline in schools at a time when corporal punishment is no longer legal. Rate the given alternative approaches in the order in which you think these alternatives will be effective in maintaining discipline in schools. The alternative you think is the most effective will therefore be number 1 (one) with the least effective being number 15 or the last.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Detention, isolation, time out (short duration). | |
| 2. Suspension (from 1 day to 2 weeks). | |
| 3. Manual Work (light to hard work). | |
| 4. Codes of conduct / rules - enforcing. | |
| 5. Parent involvement. | |
| 6. Privilege withdrawal. | |
| 7. Professional support - psychologists, counsellors etc. | |
| 8. Small class sizes. | |
| 9. Effective instruction (good lessons; well prepared lessons). | |
| 10. Reinforcement of good behaviour by praise and ignoring unwanted behaviour. | |
| 11. Good behaviour management programmes. | |
| 12. Verbal and non-verbal interventions. | |
| 13. The use of humour. | |
| 14. Reprimanding only. | |
| 15. Empathy (identify yourself mentally and understand him/her). | |

ADDENDUM D

QUESTIONNAIRE: MONITORING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS IN THE POST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ERA

QUESTION 3 POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

This question seeks to test whether suggested alternatives to corporal punishment are good or bad measures to maintain discipline in schools.

The names of school and respondents will not appear anywhere in the question. The information gathered through this questionnaire will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes.

A. In general, do you think the alternatives to corporal punishment in the maintenance of discipline are good?

YES	NO

B. If you feel that the alternatives to corporal punishment suggested are good (yes) or not good (no) give reasons (positives or negatives) for your opinion.

ADDENDUM E

QUESTIONNAIRE: MONITORING DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS IN THE POST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ERA

QUESTION 3 POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

This question seeks to test whether suggested alternatives to corporal punishment are good or bad measures to maintain discipline in schools.

The names of school and respondents will not appear anywhere in the question. The information gathered through this questionnaire will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes.

A. In general, do you think the alternatives to corporal punishment in the maintenance of discipline are good?

YES	NO

B. If you feel that the alternatives to corporal punishment suggested are good (yes) or not good (no) give reasons (positives or negatives) for your opinion.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- a) Explain whether the learner background (Statement 1) has an influence on disciplinary problems encountered at school?
- b) Do you think learning problems (statement 2) of a learner can be a cause of disciplinary problems?
- c) To your knowledge, do you think physically disabled and mentally affected learners (statement 3) have or cause disciplinary problems in school? Explain.
- d) Looking at problems that emanate from the classroom (as described in question 1 statement 4:) do you think these can contribute to bad behaviour by learners?
- e) In your view, how school administration can contribute or influence discipline in school?

QUESTION 2

- a) Considering the alternatives or other strategies (see questions 2a and 2b, Addendum C) that can be applied in the maintenance of disciplinary in school at a time when corporal punishment is no longer allowed, explain why you think some of these alternatives can be effective and why others (according to your responses in question 2a and 2b) can not be effective?
- b) What other comments do you have in relation to the implementation of the alternatives in monitoring discipline at school?

QUESTION 3

Section B of this question in the questionnaire required and allowed respondents to explain their responses on A (of the same question).