THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A CODE OF CONDUCT IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LIMPOPO

by

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DECLARATION

I, Modishane Frank Sebisha, declare that this study entitled

The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo

is my own work and that this dissertation has never been submitted for any degree at any other university. All the sources in the study have been indicated and acknowledged by means of direct or indirect references.

Signed.. Date.......................................

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to

my late parents, Moyagabo Elizabeth and Semetu Johannes Sebisha

my brothers and sisters

my two beautiful daughters, Kgaogelo and Makgethoa

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ABSTRACT

One of the key challenges facing school governing bodies in South Africa is how to maintain school discipline and create an atmosphere which is conducive to effective learning and teaching. It is anticipated that adopting a code of conduct for learners may facilitate the attainment of this goal.

The aim of this study was to investigate the implementation of a code of conduct for learners in rural primary schools in Limpopo province. The investigation involved a case study of two primary schools in the Sekhukhune District. The data collection methods used included interviews and document analyses. The participants in the study comprised members of the school management teams (SMTs) as well as the principal and parent component of the school governing bodies (SGBs).

The findings revealed that, when properly implemented, such a code of conduct is an effective tool in managing the majority of learner behaviour, although it has a limited effect on serious misconduct. The study highlighted a number of challenges involved in the drafting of a code of conduct. These challenges arose primarily as a result of a lack of legislative knowledge on the part of the SGB members, as well as a lack of parental support. Parents are often away working in urban areas while children are cared for by illiterate grandparents and other family members. Additional challenges regarding the implementation of the code of conduct were mainly as a result of the lack of timely departmental support in the case of serious misconduct, peer pressure and socioeconomic factors.

The study recommended that the government should equip parents, SMTs and SGBs with the necessary skills and knowledge relating to educational law through workshops and the establishment of accessible, effective adult basic education centres. When policies are drafted, English should be used in conjunction with the other languages that are spoken by the majority of people in the area concerned, in order to ensure a better understanding of such policies than would otherwise be the case. There has to be better handling of disciplinary hearings and consistency in the implementation of the code of conduct. Teaching and learning should also be improved to minimise the necessity for learner discipline in schools.

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Chapter one

ORIENTATION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Discipline in schools is an urgent issue for the majority of educational stakeholders, including school governing bodies, principals and educators. Creating and maintaining a pleasant and safe environment and also one which is conducive to effective teaching and learning is one of the major challenges faced by education authorities in South Africa. Since 1994 South Africa has undergone major political and socioeconomic transformation. The changes in the education system have included the active participation of parents in the affairs of public schools and the abolition of corporal punishment. Before the introduction of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA) corporal punishment was used in schools as a way in which to bring about stability, peace, order and discipline in the schools. After the banning of corporal punishment a code of conduct for learners became one of the main strategies used to ensure the discipline required to support the learning and teaching environment.

However, as an educator in various schools over the past ten years, I have realised that there is a serious lack of learner discipline in South African schools. In some schools I encountered an average of 10 to 15 cases of misconduct on a daily basis, ranging from minor to serious transgressions. I have also attended several workshops in relation to learner discipline. It emerged from my interaction with my colleagues from other parts of South Africa that the majority of educators are experiencing a high level of learner ill discipline at their schools. In discussions it was argued that a code of conduct represents the main instrument that will create peace and stability in our schools and, indeed, almost all the schools in South Africa have put in place a learner code of conduct. However, the question arises as to why, despite the fact that a code of conduct has been developed and adopted in almost every school in the country, the rate of ill-disciplined learners in our schools remains so high. It was in an attempt to find answers to this question that I decided to embark on this research study and to explore the way a code of conduct for learners is implemented and its influence on learner discipline.

There has been little research conducted on codes of conduct both internationally and nationally. A study conducted in Australia by Lewis (1999) explored the issue of preparing students to become democratic and law-abiding citizens through their exposure to a school code of conduct. In addition, Lekalakala (2007), Joubert (2009) and Pentz (2011) have conducted studies in secondary schools in urban South Africa, while other studies have been conducted in secondary schools in the rural areas of the North West province (Mestry and Khumalo 2012). Pillay (2012) also conducted a case study on the challenges experienced by SGBs in the implementation of a code of conduct for learners in two secondary schools in the Mafukuzela-Gandhi circuit.

The literature review which was conducted revealed that there has not been sufficient research scrutinising the code of conduct for learners and its effect on learner discipline at a primary school level. In particular, there is very little knowledge about the implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in South Africa.

The aim of this study was to investigate the implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in South Africa. As such, the study involved a case study of primary schools in the Sekhukhune area of Limpopo province.

1.2 RATIONALE BEHIND THE STUDY

Learner discipline and school safety are important issues and it is essential that SGBs and SMTs actively engage with these issues. In my 10 years of experience as an educator, and currently as a principal, I have observed a drastic decline in learner discipline. This has had a huge influence on learner achievement and this, in turn, has ultimately contributed to a decline in educator morale and a high rate of educator attrition. In common with some of my colleagues I have increasingly come to believe that the lack of discipline in schools is related to the inability on the part of schools to enforce a code of conduct, with this inability arising primarily from the lengthy legal processes involved. These lengthy legal processes ultimately have an impact on the educators' workload. Educators appear to be constantly complaining about the lack of effectiveness of the code of conduct while maintaining that the abolition of corporal punishment has rendered them powerless. They assert that learners have

been given more rights than responsibilities. This study will attempt to explore some of these perceptions.

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1   Primary research question

•   How has a code of conduct for learners been implemented in primary schools in the Sekhukhune district?

1.3.2   Secondary questions

•   How do school stakeholders understand the role of the code of conduct in primary schools?
•   What are the challenges involved in developing and implementing a code of conduct?
•   To what extent does a code of conduct influence learner discipline?

1.4   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I chose a qualitative research approach in order to investigate the implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo province. Two rural primary schools from the Sekhukhune district of the province were used as a case study for the investigation. From these two primary schools, a total of twelve participants were used as a sample for the study. Five members of the school management team (SMT), including the principal and the chairperson of the SGB, were selected from each school. Interviews were conducted in order to collect the data required to obtain an understanding of the participants' perspectives on the way in which a learner code of conduct was drafted and implemented at the two schools. A document analysis was also conducted in order to collect data. Purposive sampling was used to select the research sites and the participants for the study.

1.5   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by Curwin and Mendler's (1980) three-dimensional approach to managing learner discipline. This three-dimensional approach includes the prevention, action and resolution dimensions. The first goal of the three-dimensional approach is to prevent the occurrence of problems relating to discipline, while the second dimension, namely, the action dimension, deals with the implementation of

the consequences associated with the rule which has been violated. The last dimension, namely, the resolution dimension, deals with the individual contracts that are formulated in conjunction with habitual rule breakers. The effectiveness of the learner code of conduct will be analysed using these three dimensions as a conceptual lens.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is anticipated that the study may provide SMT and SGB members with the essential knowledge required for the drafting and implementation of a learner code of conduct. The responsibility for drafting and implementing the learner code of conduct falls to the SMT, and it is hoped that the study will make them aware of the challenges they may encounter during this process.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This is a study of limited scope. Two primary schools only were selected for the purposes of the study and they may not be said to represent all rural primary schools in Limpopo province. The study was also conducted in primary schools only and not in secondary schools. It is possible that the findings of a study conducted in primary schools may differ from those of a study conducted in secondary schools. In addition, the study was conducted in the rural areas of Limpopo and not in the semi-urban areas of the province.

1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter one

This chapter discusses how the education system in South Africa has transformed since 1994. It also briefly describes the problem statement, aims of the study, research questions, rationale behind the study, research design, research methodology, conceptual framework used for the purposes of the study as well as the significance and limitations of the study.

Chapter two

This chapter contains a review of relevant literature on the drafting and implementation of a learner code of conduct in schools and, as such, the chapter

reviews the policies and the research literature on the drafting and implementation of such a code of conduct. The literature review focuses specifically on the aims of the learner code of conduct, guidelines for developing a code of conduct, strategies for developing and implementing a learner code of conduct and strategies for dealing with both minor and serious misconduct. The research findings of other studies on the drafting and implementation of a learner code of conduct are highlighted in the chapter.

Chapter three

This chapter introduces the conceptual framework that was used as the basis of the study. Curwin and Mendler's (1980) three-dimensional approach to managing learner discipline served as a lens for the purposes of the study. These three dimensions include prevention, action and resolution.

Chapter four

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology used in the study. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and employed a case study design using two primary schools in Limpopo province. The chapter also describes the data collection strategies used, namely, interviews and document analysis, as well as the sampling method, data analysis, ethical considerations and the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter five

The chapter contains the presentation of the data collected. It also describes the case used for the purposes of the study, namely, two rural primary schools in the Sekhukhune District. Other issues examined in the chapter include the stakeholders' understanding of a learner code of conduct, as well as the drafting and implementation of such a code of conduct. Finally, the chapter gives a summary of the data presented. The analysis is based on the three dimensions described in the theoretical framework.

Chapter six

The chapter presents the conclusions drawn in the study and also the recommendations that were subsequently made. The conclusion addresses, inter alia, challenges relating to the drafting of a learner code of conduct and its implementation, as well as factors that the code of conduct needs to control. Lastly, I discuss my own experience in relation to a learner code of conduct.

1.9   SUMMARY

This chapter served as a general overview of the scope of the study. The chapter briefly discussed the problem statement, research questions, rationale behind the study, research design, research methodology, and conceptual framework, significance of the study and the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter presented an outline of the chapters in the dissertation.

The next chapter contains the literature review.

Chapter two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review is a critical and integrative synthesis of the ways in which various researchers have dealt with the problem under investigation. One of the aims of the literature review is to justify the need for further research in a specific field (Vithal and Jansen, 1997).

This chapter reviews existing literature on a code of conduct for learners. The first section discusses what a code of conduct is and its aims. This is followed by a discussion of the guidelines for and the contents of a code of conduct. Strategies for dealing with both minor and serious misconduct are then outlined. The procedures involved in the adoption, stages and implementation of a learner code of conduct are scrutinised. Themes arising from the findings of various researchers on the drafting and implementation of a code of conduct are discussed and, finally, the impact of the code of conduct on learners is explained.

2.2 CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEARNERS

Rules in schools are essential for discipline as they denote how learners are expected to behave and what they are not allowed to do. A disciplinary policy such as a code of conduct helps to establish a well-organised and pleasant environment for effective teaching and learning. Section 8(1) of the SASA states that the SGB has the responsibility to adopt a code of conduct for the learners at the school. This adoption of a code of conduct should be done after consultation with the learners, parents and educators. SASA further states that the minister may determine guidelines that governing bodies should consider when adopting a code of conduct for learners (Leefon, Jacobs, Le Roux and De Wet, 2013).

A code of conduct for learners is regarded as a legal, formal consensus contract which has been agreed on by all stakeholders that are directly and indirectly involved in both teaching and learning. It is further described as a written statement of rules that applies to a specific group of people within a particular or specified context, or as a collection of binding rules and principles reflecting the moral standards and

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values of a particular school. "Conduct" reflects the behaviour, acts and omissions, and attitudes of learners in a school environment, and a code of conduct serves to create an environment in which learners behave with tolerance, appreciation and respect for one another (Lekalakala, 2007; Pentz, 2011; Joubert and Squelch, 2000).

2.2.1   Aims of a code of conduct for learners

Schools draft a code of conduct for various reasons including protecting the rights of learners, developing their self-discipline and promoting citizenship. A code of conduct may also foster the intellectual development of the learners, provide a happy environment and meet the needs of each learner. In addition, a code of conduct can promote the rules, and the consequences for breaking the rules, that are designed to create order in schools and to assist learners to understand the necessity for order in daily life. A code of conduct helps learners to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour (Lewis, 1999; Leefon et al., 2013).

Thus, the code of conduct is a document that aims to promote proper and good behaviour and to set standards for effective, proper and positive discipline. It also provides measures for dealing with negative behaviour on the part of learners. Thus, a code of conduct should promote proper and good behaviour among the learners and also encourage positive behaviour and self-discipline. Discipline should not only be applied when a learner is unruly, disruptive or mischievous but it may also be used to create a caring and loving relationship with the learners. It should also foster open and transparent governance and responsible decision-making by the SGB. It is a consensus document and, thus, it reflects the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom. As a functionary of the public school a code of conduct should act in the name of the school, while it should also promote the best interests of the school and all the learners (Bray, 2005; Mokhele, 2006).

The Department of Education's Guidelines for Codes (RSA, 1998) highlights the issue of the SGB creating a safe, purposeful and orderly school. A successful code of conduct should lay down a standard of moral behaviour that aims to guide the future conduct of the learners in society as reasonable and rational citizens.

A code of conduct encourages learners to refrain from abusive and aggressive behaviour such as victimisation, physical or verbal abuse and bullying. It aims to

create a disciplined and purposeful school environment which is conducive to improving and maintaining the quality of the teaching and learning in the school. It is essential that the code of conduct create a safe and secure school environment. The purpose of a code of conduct should be to inform learners how to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner, and to provide for their safety. In addition, it should encourage feelings of intimacy, friendship, belonging and family, while fostering sound relationships between the learners and other stakeholders that are based on respect and self-esteem (Pentz, 2011; Joubert, 2009; Joubert and Squelch, 2000).

2.2.2   Guidelines for developing a code of conduct

The guidelines for drawing up codes of conduct (RSA, 1998) highlight the importance of the SGB in creating a safe, purposeful and orderly school environment. The overall approach to formulating a code of conduct should be positive in order to facilitate a purposive and constructive learning environment. The key factors that render a code of conduct effective in terms of positive learner behaviour include the communication relating to the process followed in the implementation of the code of conduct, as well as regular reviews of the code of conduct. The code of conduct is a consensus document. In other words, all the parties involved either directly or indirectly in teaching and learning, such as parents, learners, educators, community members and non-teaching staff, should be involved in its drafting. In addition, the committee responsible for drafting such a policy should contextualise and formulate it in accordance with local conditions and practice (Joubert, 2009; Van Wyk and Marumoloa, 2012; Mestry and Khumalo, 2012).

The design and enforcement of the code of conduct for learners should be underpinned by the most important dimensional approaches that help in managing learner discipline in schools. When drafting the code of conduct, the SGB should adopt strategies that actively prevent problems relating to discipline from arising and also address the stress associated with classroom discipline. In addition, the code of conduct should include strategies such as the keeping of simple records and other ways in which to prevent minor problems from escalating into major ones. Community norms and values should also be taken into account when the code of conduct is drafted. The revision of a code of conduct should be based on the

comments and suggestions of the school community and the final draft presented for approval by the parents at a parents' annual general meeting. The code of conduct must be drafted in accordance with the legal framework provided by the South African Constitution. In addition, it should not conflict with the existing legislation and laws of the country, including any applicable legislation, instructions or policies of the Department of Education (Lekalakala, 2007; Mestry and Khumalo, 2012).

Lewis (1999) and Kindiki (2009) maintain that a school code of conduct should be drafted only once the entire school community has developed both a short-term and a long-term association with the aims, goals and objectives of the school. They further express the view that a school code of conduct should provide a general framework within which educators may be expected to develop their own specific procedures for dealing with learner discipline in the classroom. The school code of conduct should also address the rights of both learners and parents equally, while there should also be a connection or a link between rights and responsibilities.

2.2.3   Contents of a code of conduct

It has been reported that the general contents and design of learner codes of conduct may differ from one school to another. According to the Guidelines for the Consideration of the Governing Body in adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners (RSA, 1998), although the school code of conduct may differ from one school to the next, each code of conduct drafted must contain certain basic minimum information. This includes the preamble, the school's mission and vision, principles and values, responsibility of parents with respect to the code of conduct, punishment, disciplinary procedures and an appeal process (Joubert and Squelch, 2005).

2.2.3.1   Preamble

The values, principles and the ethos of the school must be clearly set out in the preamble and they must be in line with the Constitution of the country and the SASA. The preamble should also state the purpose and the aim of the code of conduct (Joubert and Squelch, 2005). It should also contain a description of the form of conduct that is encouraged by the school and that which is discouraged or undesirable, as well as the responses to such behaviours.

2.2.3.2   School's mission and vision

Khoboka (2009) and Joubert and Squelch (2005) suggest that a school's code of conduct should include the mission and vision of the school. A mission statement must be effectively communicated to all the stakeholders, as everyone who is involved either directly or indirectly in teaching and learning should strive to achieve the mission statement of the institution. The mission statement is an expression of what the school wishes to achieve. It should also provide the framework within which school strategies should be formulated (Khoboka, 2009). Thus, the mission statement is linked to the code of conduct and guides the way in which learners should behave. For example, the mission statement may declare that the school is committed to creating a peaceful and pleasant environment for effective teaching and learning by instilling Christian values in the learners. The school's code of conduct will be then be guided by that statement when setting out the norms of acceptable conduct on the part of the learners.

2.2.3.3   Principles and values

A code of conduct often contains a set of moral values, norms and principles for the development of learners into accountable and responsible adult citizens. It also includes the school rules and their legal status and should reflect constitutional democracy, human rights and transparency. The role of the learners in developing a pleasant learning atmosphere for all by taking care of school property and not causing any unnecessary disruption to the teaching and learning should be clearly stated (Joubert, 2009; Joubert and Squelch, 2005). A code of conduct should also contain the basic rules of acceptable behaviour in the school. In addition, it needs to include a description of behaviour which is forbidden and a list of prohibited items (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

2.2.4   Responsibility of parents with respect to the code of conduct

The policy assigns to parents the duty to ensure that the learners support and obey all the rules contained in the school code of conduct. Parents must ensure that their children attend school regularly and help them, where possible, with their school work. It is also the responsibility of parents to report any matter concerning their children to the school authorities. In addition, it is incumbent on them to attend and actively participate in all school meetings (SASA s 3(1)).

2.2.5 Punishment

Joubert and Prinsloo (2008) and Nakpodia (2010) describe punishment as a corrective measure imposed on a learner for breaking school rules. It is important for learners to know what the consequences of inappropriate behaviour are. When punishment is meted out to a learner, it is imperative that the educator explain the punishment to the learner and also what school rule has been broken. The educator should also record the punishment. When administering a punishment the educator must be fair, responsible, lawful and consistent.

2.2.5.1   Examples of minor punishment

Time-out

Time-out refers to a situation where an educator removes a disruptive, abusive or violent learner who refuses to settle down in class. The learner is isolated from other learners for a period of time (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

Withdrawal of privileges

A learner may be punished by privileges being withdrawn while he or she is at school. The withdrawal of privileges may include preventing a learner from going on a school trip or participating in sports or cultural activities. A learner may also be demoted from being a class representative or a team captain (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

Detention

Joubert and Prinsloo (2008) and Rossouw and Stewart (2008) explain detention as a form of isolation during break, after school or even during teaching and learning in a classroom. When imposing a detention, an educator should take certain factors into account such as the age of a learner, the distance a learner has to travel to and from school, the seriousness of the offence and the availability of transport to take the learner home. This means that an educator must be reasonable, fair and guided by common sense when imposing detention on a learner.

Assigning extra work

A learner who is guilty of misconduct may be given extra written schoolwork to complete. This will serve as a punishment. Learner may be allowed to do the extra work in the classroom while the learners are busy with their school work. (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

Community work

Joubert and Prinsloo (2008) describe community work as a type of punishment in terms of which a learner is given certain work to do. This may include cleaning toilets and classrooms or picking up papers in the school yard. Educators should make sure that such community work is supervised and that it is not carried out during class time.

Point system

In terms of a point system, a school awards points for good behaviour or deducts points for misbehaviour. Joubert and Prinsloo (2008) report that a code of conduct should specify the various offences which are dealt with through the point system. This form of punishment often leads to another form of minor punishment such as detention or the withdrawal of privileges.

Sending a learner home

Joubert and Prinsloo (2008) suggest that a learner may be sent home temporarily when he or she is being rebellious and disobedient. The learner should be assigned work to do while at home. In addition, catch-up programmes should be implemented to help learners who are sent home.

2.2.5.2   Examples of extreme punishment

Extreme punishment may be applied in schools with the full support of the department of education. The head of the department of education in a province must work closely with the SGB and the SMT of the school in cases in which extreme punishment is imposed (SASA, s 9(1). The following are examples of extreme punishment:

Suspension

According to SASA (s 9(1)), the governing body of a public school may, after a fair hearing and as a corrective measure, suspend a learner from attending school for a period of not more than one week. This may also be done in consultation with the head of department, pending a decision as to whether a learner must be expelled or not. A learner may be suspended if such learner threatens to use, is in possession of or uses a dangerous weapon or if such learner is in possession of or demonstrates visible evidence of unauthorised drugs, alcohol or intoxicants of any kind. Conduct which endangers the safety of and violates the rights of others, fighting, assault, immoral behaviour, harmful graffiti, hate speech, racism, theft, vandalism, criminal behaviour and infringement of examination rules may also result in a learner's suspension (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

Expulsion

Section 9 of SASA clearly states that a learner at a public school may be expelled only by the head of department and if found guilty of serious misconduct after a fair hearing. The head of department should find an alternative school for an expelled learner.

2.2.6 Disciplinary procedures

The code of conduct should contain a section on the appropriate disciplinary procedures that need to be followed every time a learner is disciplined. This section must also provide for due process. Due process may be explained as a fair process that should meet the standards of fundamental fairness. In other words, listen to the other side rule (*audi alteram partem*) should be included with the aim of remedial disciplinary measures and not punishment as the first option in the case of misconduct (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008; De Waal, 2011). Administrative action must be reasonable and should provide for an appeal. In addition, it must also provide support measures or structures for counselling learners involved in disciplinary proceedings. Discipline should be instilled by the provision of clear guidelines and limitations, with these being applied consistently and fairly, without favour. Consistent discipline will, ultimately, inculcate a sense of order in the daily lives of learners.

2.2.7   Appeal process

The South African Schools Act states that both a learner and the learner's parents have the right to appeal to the Member of the Executive Council for Education in a province. After disciplinary procedures have been carried out against a learner, both the parent(s) and the learner have a right to appeal against the judgment taken against them if they feel that the disciplinary procedures were not fair. Both the parent(s) and the learner must be informed about the appeal process (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

2.2.7.1   Strategies for dealing with minor misconduct

Khoboka (2009) reports that the school code of conduct should identify the various types of misconduct and rank them according to their severity. All the stakeholders who are affected either directly or indirectly by the learner code of conduct must be informed about the action that will be taken should a rule be contravened. In addressing the usual school behaviour problems, it is essential that trusted, reliable and simple interventions are employed. Non-verbal signs may be used as a strategy with the educator just looking at a misbehaving learner and even walking towards the learner without saying a word .This strategy is usually effective and does not interrupt a lesson. A verbal reminder may also be used as a strategy to deal with minor misbehaviour. In such instances, the learner who has broken a particular rule is reminded of the action that may be taken against him/her if such misbehaviour is repeated.

Praise may also be used as a strategy for dealing with minor misconduct. Learners who are doing well in class may be praised for their good behaviour in order to encourage them to keep up the good behaviour they are demonstrating. This praising of learners in front of misbehaving learners may result in an improvement in the behaviour of the latter. Minor consequences may be used as a last resort when dealing with minor misconducts. Educators may also use other strategies such as ensuring that lessons are interesting and lively in order to keep the attention of the learners focused throughout the lesson and, thus, to prevent the occurrence of behavioural problems. Learners should be given interesting and hands-on tasks to complete and that will keep them busy in class (Khoboka, 2009; Joubert and Bray 2007).

An educator may set up a formal, written contract with a learner who is guilty of misconduct. Such a contract may include the setting of specific goals that must be achieved within a certain specified time frame and also certain conditions (Joubert and Prinsloo, 2008).

Research on the implementation of a code of conduct in schools indicates that several schools are not using the strategies recommended by SASA when dealing with less serious types of misconduct (Lekalakala, 2007; Khoboka, 2009; Silbert, 2013). It would appear that educators are continuing to use corporal punishment when dealing with this type of behaviour, especially in the many disadvantaged, poor, working-class schools across the country. Some parents even encourage educators to use corporal punishment even though its use as a way of dealing with misconduct is prohibited.

2.2.7.2   Strategies for dealing with serious misconduct

It is recommended that educators use the aggressive learners to their advantage by giving such learners leadership roles in their groups to direct the action. The educator may work on reducing a learner's strong need for control by making a contract with an aggressive learner in terms of which the learner promises to improve his/her violent behaviour (Santrock, 2008; Mestry, Moloi and Mahomed, 2008).

In the studies they conducted in secondary schools in the North West Province and in senior secondary schools in the Eastern Cape Province respectively, Lekalakala (2007) and Khoboka (2009) found that the majority of schools were not following proper due process when dealing with serious misconduct on the part of learners. They also found that, in some cases, learners had been beaten with a cable as a strategy for dealing with misbehaviour. In certain instances educators had sent the learners home to call their parents to the school when serious misconduct had been committed and even suspended learners from attending school. In the majority of cases, SGB members and the parents of the misbehaving learners had not been present when the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour had been carried out.

2.2.8   Stages in developing a code of conduct

Guidelines for the Consideration of Governing Bodies in Adopting a Code of Conduct for Learners (Notice 776 of 1998) describes the various stages involved in developing a code of conduct. The first stage involves raising awareness. In this initial stage newsletters are often sent out in order to inform the various interested parties of the need to develop a code of conduct, with the SGB using this form of communication to explain its plans for involving people in the code of conduct drafting process.

The second stage involves information gathering and consultation. During this stage information is gathered from all the stakeholders who are involved in the drafting of the code of conduct. Various strategies may be used to gather information such as workshops, survey questionnaires and seminars. The information gathered usually includes information on people's attitudes towards discipline in the school and their expectations in respect of issues of discipline.

The third stage involves the drafting of the code of conduct .During this stage the disciplinary committee starts to draft a code of conduct as a consensus document, by integrating all the suggestions from the parents, educators and learners. A committee then circulates this draft code of conduct among the interested parties and invites open comments, evaluation and discussion.

The fourth stage involves revising the draft code of conduct. After the committee has circulated the draft code of conduct among the interested parties for open comments, evaluation and discussion, a revised code of conduct is drafted and presented for approval by the parent body and the learners.

The fifth stage involves the implementation of the code of conduct. The code of conduct is first communicated to all the learners, parents and educators in the form of rules, policy and procedures. After majority approval the code of conduct is formally implemented.

The last stage involves the review of the code of conduct, with the code of conduct being reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis. This will enable the committee to add to or amend some of the rules and consequences contained in the code.

2.2.9   Adoption of the code of conduct

Section 8(3) of SASA states that: "The Minister may, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine guidelines for the consideration of SGBs in adopting a code of conduct for learners." This section of SASA further states that "the SGB should consult with all stakeholders, including parents and learners, before adopting a code of conduct."

A code of conduct is a public document and, thus, it must be accessible to all stakeholders when necessary. If adopted correctly the code of conduct should promote and reflect good school governance and trust among all the stakeholders (Bray, 2005; Cloete, Wissink and De Coning, 2008).

2.3   RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE DRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

Research into the adoption and implementation of a code of conduct in South African schools reveals a number of issues. They will be discussed in the following sections.

2.3.1   Poor communication of the rules and regulations from management to the other stakeholders

It would appear that the main problem with the drafting and implementation of a school code of conduct relates to poor communication of the rules and regulations from the management to the other stakeholders (Pillay, 2012; Leefon et al., 2013; Steinmann, 2013). At some schools the learners and parents are not informed about the contents of the code of conduct while some learners and parents may not even be aware of the existence of such a document at their respective schools.

2.3.2   Lack of knowledge about legislation

Poor knowledge and inadequate skills relating to legislation and governance matters on the part of SGB members appear to be major factors that contribute to the poor drafting and implementation of a school code of conduct (Xaba, 2011; Joubert, 2009; Steinmann, 2013; Mestry and Khumalo, 2012; Pillay, 2012; Khobeka, 2009; Mncube, 2007). According to SASA, the term of office for SGB members is three years. However, this allows the SGB members little time to settle down and acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective governance. In addition, low levels of literacy on the part of the parent component often result in low self-esteem. The lack

of training often impacts negatively on the SGB members as they sometimes feel inferior and they are reluctant to participate in issues affecting school governance. The majority of the parent SGB members, especially in the rural areas, are illiterate with this illiteracy impacting adversely on their execution of their governance duties. They often have to be guided carefully to perform these duties. However, these illiterate parents are readily available to serve on the SGB and usually attend the parent meetings, as many of them are unemployed.

2.3.3   Incomplete and outdated codes of conduct

It has been found that the codes of conduct of the majority of schools are incomplete with several often lacking sections on learner responsibilities, hearing procedures and informing learners of their right to appeal. In some incidences proper due process is not followed as schools merely reach a conclusion without the parents of the learners who have transgressed even being informed. The majority of the codes appear not to contain a section on the mission, vision and purpose of the code, while some codes of conduct still refer to outdated legislation prior to SASA. Such legislation includes the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) and the guidelines of the South African Council of Educators (SACE), which are not applicable to discipline. Rules for parents and teachers were included in some of the codes but are not necessary in a learner code of conduct. The majority of SGB members appeared to be unable to differentiate between serious and less serious misconduct. It was also found that most of the codes of conduct did not refer to either the Bill of Rights or SASA, particularly section 8 of SASA (Xaba, 2011; Joubert, 2009; Steinmann, 2013; Mestry and Khumalo, 2012; Pillay, 2012).

2.3.4   English as a medium of communication

Most of the manuals on governance and also the guidelines on how to draft a code of conduct are written in English (Tsotetsi, Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2008; Mncube, 2007; Pillay, 2012). It was further found that the majority of schools draft their code of conduct in English and this makes it difficult for the parents to understand the contents of the code, particularly those parents who are illiterate. Most of the former model C schools still use English in their SGB meetings while their codes of conduct are also written in English. This often results in non-English speaking parents feeling excluded, especially black African parents.

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2.3.5   SGB and SMT collaboration

It was found that some of the SGBs were failing to execute their governance functions effectively because of a lack of collaboration between the SGBs and the SMTs (Xaba, 2011; Mncube, 2007; Chanza, 2012; Msani, 2009; Khobeka, 2009; Van Wyk and Marumoloa, 2012). The SMTs often blame parents' low education levels for their not performing their duties effectively, with the SMTs sometimes performing the duties of the SGB without informing them.

Although the SGBs are officially designated as having the most important role in policy issues, in practice SMTs often play a role in both policy making and policy implementation because the parents have not been fully capacitated by the SMTs to perform their duties. It has also been found that the majority of schools, especially secondary schools, were not allowing parents to play an meaningful role in the governance of the schools and that most of the decisions were being made by the SMTs instead of the SGBs. Some of SGB members were not even aware of any guidelines that should be followed by the educators when dealing with learners accused of bad conduct. In addition, the majority of SGB members appeared not to be aware of the legislation relating to the formulation of the code of conduct for learners because they had not been fully capacitated.

This lack of collaboration often results in the parent members becoming even more confused, particularly about the difference between their roles in school governance and in professional matters. In addition, parents often resign before their term of office has come to an end because of their frustration at not being able to carry out their duties properly, for example their duties in terms of the drafting and implementation of the school code of conduct. Moreover, the parents are often not aware of their rights and responsibilities as SGB members.

2.3.6   Parental involvement in and support for the code of conduct

It would appear that the majority of parents showed little interest in the education of their children and were not fully committed to helping their children with their studies. In addition, they tended to show little support for the implementation of the code of conduct, as it is the duty of the parents to ensure that their children arrive at school on time and behave well. When parents are summoned to attend a disciplinary

hearing of their children they often do not attend as they believe that the school should deal with the matter.

It was also found that the majority of the parent governors do not participate fully in matters pertaining to discipline while they do not attend SGB meetings. This lack of attendance at SGB meetings may be caused by various factors, for example parents who live at the places of their work, a lack of funds to travel to the school and other personal matters. However, even those parents who did manage to attend SGB meetings were often not actively involved; thus the SMTs were forced to take decisions on their behalf (Mestry and Khumalo, 2012; Mncube, 2007; Msani, 2009; Pillay, 2012; Chanza, 2012).

2.3.7 Drafting of primary and secondary codes of conducts

In a study conducted in more than 300 Australian schools, Lewis (1999) revealed that the codes of conduct for primary and secondary schools were drafted in different ways. In secondary schools the focus of the code of conduct is on learner self-discipline while, in primary schools, the focus is on the right to work and play. As compared to the secondary schools the primary school codes of conduct expressed more opinions about the happiness of learners and treating the learners with kindness and respect. On the other hand, the codes of conduct of the primary schools had less to say about the right to learning as compared to the codes of conduct of secondary schools which had much to say about this matter. However, although both the primary and secondary schools may have referred to the rights of learners they did not refer directly to their responsibilities. Many of the secondary schools recommended severe sanctions for misconduct, including detention, extreme work and expulsion.

2.4 IDENTIFICATION OF THE GAP

The literature review revealed that not enough is being done to scrutinise the codes of conduct and their impact on learner discipline in primary schools. The study conducted by Lewis (1999) in Australia explored the issue of preparing students to become democratic, law-abiding citizens through their exposure to a school code of conduct. Empirical studies conducted in South Africa by, among others, Lekalakala (2007), Joubert (2009) and Pentz (2011) were conducted in secondary schools in

urban areas. However, other studies have also been conducted in secondary schools in the rural areas of the North West Province by Mestry and Khumalo (2012), and in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal by Mncube (2007), Msani (2009) and Pillay (2012). It is, however, clear that there has been little research on the implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in South Africa.

2.5　SUMMARY

Since the aim of the study is to explore the influence of the code of conduct on learner discipline, this study will apply Curwin and Mendler's (1980) three-dimensional approach as the conceptual framework.

The next chapter will explore this three-dimensional approach further.

Chapter three

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the conceptual framework that guided the study; namely, Curwin and Mendler's (1980) three-dimensional approach to managing learner discipline. After an intensive literature review, I found this approach of Curwin and Mendler (1980) relevant for use as my conceptual framework in this study. The three-dimensional approach includes the prevention, action and resolution dimensions. All these dimensions are fully outlined in the next section.

3.2 THE PREVENTION DIMENSION

The first goal of the three-dimensional approach is to create an environment in which discipline problems are either minimised or their occurrence is prevented. Curwin and Mendler (1980) refer to the six stages of the prevention dimension and which are essential for the effective implementation of this dimension.

3.2.1 Increase self-awareness

During this stage, educators, as the policy developers, must increase their self-awareness as it is vital that they should take cognisance of their own beliefs, attitudes and values when implementing the rules contained in the code of conduct. There are a number of factors that may affect the atmosphere in a classroom and which may encourage or prolong disruptive behaviour on the part of the learners. Educators should always be aware of their classroom management style and what is required to ensure that their personal style of classroom management is consistent with their beliefs and values.

All teachers set rules for both themselves and for their learners. When everybody involved is aware of what these rules are and, if the rules set by the educator are congruent with the rules of the learners, discipline problems are usually minimised. If rules are clearly stated and consistently enforced by a congruent teacher this usually has the effect of removing the double messages that may lead to confusion and disharmony in the classroom. The imposition of rules in respect of which we feel no

ownership is one way of losing the respect of the learners and fostering disruptive behaviour.

It is also risky if educators follow their own beliefs particularly when these beliefs are in conflict with those of the prevailing system. Another way in which the educators may develop self-awareness is by obtaining periodic feedback from the learners regarding their classroom management. This may be done anonymously to enable the learners to express their opinions freely and with no fear of victimisation. Learners should be encouraged to respond honestly and they should be made aware that the purpose of the feedback is to help the educator to become more responsive to their views.

3.2.2   Increased awareness of the learners

This stage deals with the educator's awareness of the needs and desires of the learners. The learners' needs and desires play a major role in the creation of both a preventative environment and one that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. The greater the educator's awareness of the learners the more effective classroom discipline will be. Learners who are chronically misbehaved sometimes feel that neither the school nor their parents are interested in them while they are also often lacking in respect for authority. Accordingly, educators should pay attention to what the learners are feeling as this could help to prevent discipline problems from occurring because the educator is in good position to know how to handle each learner in a class.

3.2.3   Expressing feelings

Educators should be in touch with their own feelings towards the learners and they should also learn how to express those feelings safely in the interests of improved classroom discipline. Educators should know and be aware of their feelings, whether negative or positive, while they should also be aware of how their feelings impact on the learners. It is often an inability on the part of learners to accept themselves as feeling individuals that leads to destructive behaviour. It is both acceptable and rewarding for educators to encourage learners to become aware of and alive to their own feelings. The healthiest way of not feeling angry is to allow oneself to

experience the anger by fully recognising its existence. This also applies to other emotions such as sexuality, excitement, sadness and joy.

3.2.4   Discovering and recognising alternatives

This stage in the prevention dimension deals with the discovery of and differentiation between the various models of behaviour, research findings on psychology and education and theories of discipline as they apply to the concept of discipline. Such knowledge, used in conjunction with the other stages involved in the prevention dimension, may improve classroom management and enhance the discipline problem-solving skills of educators.

3.2.5   Establishment of social contracts

The educator may draw up a list of the rules that govern the behaviour of the learners and the consequences of transgressing such rules. During this stage the learners are also expected to draft their own rules and the consequences of transgressing these rules for both the educator and for the learners themselves. The educator and the learners then agree on the most effective rules and their consequences. The rules selected and the consequences of transgressing these rules are then adopted as a classroom social contract.

3.2.6   Implementation of social contracts

The final stage of the preventative dimension involves the transition from the prevention dimension to the action dimension. At this point all the rules and the consequences of transgressing such rules have been formulated and adopted by both the teacher and the learners and these rules are now implemented.

3.3   ACTION DIMENSION

Despite all efforts to prevent disciplinary problems from arising, such problems will inevitably occur, especially if there are several people involved and who are expected to work together for an indeterminate period of time, for example in a school environment. According to Curwin and Mendler (1980), the action dimension comes into play when a disciplinary problem occurs and action has to be taken quickly to prevent such a problem from escalating. This is done by implementing the consequences associated with the rule violation. The violation of rules should have

consequences which are corrective and not punitive. There should be at least four alternatives, ranging from just a reminder to a more serious consequence such as making a learner stay behind after school and do extra work.

A consequence should be designed in such a way that it manages misbehaviour effectively. During the application of a consequence, an educator should be firm and maintain eye contact with the learner(s) but remain calm. A warning or a reprimand is usually the first alternative when a learner has transgressed for the first time.

Social contracts should be monitored to ascertain those rules and consequences which are effective and those which are not effective. In addition, in order to monitor which learners have difficulty obeying certain rules, a record should be kept every time a learner is disciplined. Transgressions that are not covered in the code of conduct should also be recorded so that they are included when the code of conduct is revised. In addition, rules which are disobeyed on a regular basis should be re-evaluated and amended if possible.

3.4   THE RESOLUTION DIMENSION

According to Curwin and Mendler (1980), the resolution dimension refers to individual contracts that are concluded with the habitual rule breakers and/or the more extreme out-of-control learners. This usually happens after the social contracts have failed to work. Such failure may be the result of a learner not accepting a consequence stipulated in the social contract. Otherwise, the learner involved may simply be one who tends to break a number of different rules or else a learner who refuses to obey a certain rule contained in the social contract.

During this stage the educator identifies habitual contract-breakers by analysing the records which have been kept for monitoring purposes. The feelings of the learners and the rationale behind their transgressions are taken into account to enable the educator to approach the transgressor with a clear mind and to ensure that they are as objective as possible. A meeting must be scheduled between the educator and the learner to provide an opportunity for a common solution to be reached. It is important that the learner not regard this meeting as a form of punishment and, therefore, the meeting should be held during school hours. If a common solution is not reached, the educator should suggest calling in a third party to help with the

negotiations. Such a negotiator should not be either a friend or an associate of either one of the two parties.

Once a common solution has been reached, a resolution dimension contract should be signed by all the parties involved. Learners who, after two to three attempts, are not able to abide by such a contract then receive assistance from the administrator, their parents, a psychologist or any other support personnel.

3.5   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the conceptual framework that guided this study. In order for the framework to be effective, harmony and trust between the educator and the learners are essential. Both the educator and the learners need to know that it is their responsibility to develop social contracts that will help to create and maintain an environment that is effective and pleasant for teaching and learning.

The next chapter discusses the research design, data collection instruments and data analysis methods used in the study, as well as the ethical considerations and the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter four

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes in detail the research design used in the study, the instruments used to collect and analyse the requisite data, the ethical considerations, as well as issues concerning the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. A qualitative case study was used to investigate the implementation of a learner code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo. The main data collection techniques used included semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

4.2   QUALITATIVE APPROACH

This study is based on an interpretive paradigm. I chose a qualitative research approach in order to investigate the implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo Province. Such an approach was deemed appropriate to the purposes of the study as a qualitative approach allowed me to focus on the subjective views of the participants to find answers to the research questions (Basit, 2010). SMT members, principals and SGB chairpersons were interviewed in order to ascertain their viewpoints on how a learner code of conduct was drafted and implemented at their school. A qualitative research approach was also suited to this study as there were twelve participants only in the study. Basit (2010) and Coleman and Bergin (2001) report that a qualitative approach allows the researcher to focus on a detailed study and a limited number of participants.

4.3   CASE STUDY DESIGN

A case study design is a form of inquiry in which the researcher conducts an in-depth exploration of an event, an activity or a process in relation to one or more individuals. It is, thus, a systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events within the boundaries of the real-life context and with the aim of describing and explaining the phenomenon in question. A key strength of a case study is the use of multiple techniques and sources in the data gathering. The researcher plans in advance what data analysis techniques to use and what evidence to gather in order to answer the formulated research questions. In case study design, data is largely qualitative

where tools to gather data include surveys, interviews, documents analysis and observations (Creswell, 2009; Bailey, 1994).

Two rural primary schools from the Sekhukhune District in Limpopo Province were used as the case study for the investigation. A total of twelve participants were sampled for the study which aimed to investigate the implementation of code of conduct for learners. I chose a case study design because the study focused on social phenomena via the analysis of an individual case. In addition, the case study was deemed appropriate as I wanted to conduct an in-depth inquiry into the implementation of a learner code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo Province. The study fulfils the requirements of a case study as it has as its boundaries two primary schools and used multiple sources of data gathering such as interviews and documents analysis.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

4.4.1 Interviews

The main tool of an interpretive case study is the interviews conducted with the participants. Kvale (1996) describes an interview as an interchange of ideas and views between two or more people on a topic in which all the parties have a common interest. The parties interact for the purpose of knowledge production in the search for data. Basit (2010) reports that, in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer poses pre-formulated questions and then follows on with supplementary questions in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question. In this study the phenomenon under investigation was the implementation of a code of conduct for learners.

I chose interviews as a data collection method because I wanted to acquire an understanding from the participants on how the learner code of conduct was implemented at their schools. In addition, I chose to use a semi-structured interview because I wanted to use the opportunity to probe the participants' responses further for clarification if necessary. The participants were interviewed on an individual basis to ensure confidentiality. In addition, the one-on-one interviews provided them with the opportunity to relax in the privacy that they needed during the interview session.

During the 30 to 45 minute interviews I encouraged them to express their feelings and perceptions freely.

During the interview sessions I requested the participants' permission to use a tape recorder to record the interview sessions. These recordings helped me to compile in-depth and detailed transcripts as I listened to the tapes over and over again in order to obtain a sound understanding of what the participants wanted to share. A range of questions were asked (refer to the Appendix H).

The questions asked were clear and unambiguous. I tried to avoid asking questions that required either a "yes" or a "no" answer. Leading questions were also avoided at all costs. At certain points during the interviews sessions I had to suppress both my own knowledge of the issue of learner discipline and my experience in drafting a learner code of conduct in order to listen to the experiences of others.

The questions contained in the interview schedule were guided by the three-dimensional approach of Curwin and Mendler (1980) to managing learner discipline. The first dimension of the approach is the prevention stage which deals with the drafting of rules while the second dimension deals with the implementation of consequences for learners who break the rules and how the sanctions contained in the code of conduct are applied. The third dimension deals with the drafting of alternatives to deal with learners who break the rules repeatedly.

4.4.2   Document analysis

Document analysis pertains to the written communications which a researcher scrutinises in order to obtain information that may shed light on the phenomenon that is being investigated (Maree, 2007). Document analysis provides data that is permanent and which may be used over and over again for the purpose of analysis. Document analysis serves as triangulation for the purpose of validity and obtaining rich, thick data. In addition, I decided to use this method of data collection because it would assist me to find out about past events that had happened at the schools.

Documents such as the learner codes of conduct, the learner registers of misconduct and the school registers of misconduct were made available to me for the document analysis. These documents helped me to determine whether the relevant contents

that usually form part of a code of conduct such as the preamble, aims and objectives, school vision, school mission statement, legislative framework and rules that all learners must obey had been included. I analysed the learner registers of misconduct in order to determine the number, type and the severity of the misconduct committed by specific learners.

I also analysed the school registers of misconduct to check the general types of misconduct committed by the learners at the schools. All the documents that I analysed were of a sensitive nature and, thus, I was allowed to analyse them only at schools under the strict supervision of SMT members and I was not allowed to photocopy them.

4.4.3   Sampling method

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), a successful research project depends primarily on the suitability of the sampling strategies used. They further report that there are certain factors that must be taken into consideration when choosing an appropriate sampling strategy. For example, it is essential that the researcher considers the sample size, access to the sample, sampling strategy, representatives and the parameters of the sample. The purposive sampling method is a sampling method which is used in particular situations in which the sampling is done with a specific purpose in mind (Maree, 2007; McMillan and Schumacher, 1993).

I used purposive sampling to select the research site and the participants. Based on the Annual National Assessment (ANA) results of all the primary schools in the Sekhukhune District I chose one poorly performing school and one school which was performing well. I chose the schools with no fewer than 200 learners because these schools have more staff members than the smaller schools and, thus, five SMT members would be readily available. All schools should have a learner code of conduct, a misconduct register for learners and a school register of misconduct. The schools I chose were also easily accessible while the distance between the schools was not more than 80 kilometres.

I selected five SMT members, including the principal, and the chairperson of the SGB, from each school as they would have been directly involved in the drafting, adoption and implementation of the learner code of conduct at their schools.

4.4.4   Data analysis

The data analysis refers to the organising, accounting for and making sense of the data which has been collected in relation to the participants' perceptions of the situation in question. The data analysis involves the establishment of patterns, themes and categories (Cohen et al., 2007). The study used thematic analysis as a form of data analysis. Thematic analysis identifies analyses and reports patterns within the data. It also interprets various aspects of the research topic (Taylor-Powell and Renner, 2003). Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns between the categories (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006; 2010).

After collecting the data required I listened to the tape recordings several times in order to obtain a general impression of the quality of the data. I then transcribed the data which had been collected and read through the transcripts several times to obtain a deeper understanding of my data. Based on the research questions and the theoretical framework underpinning the study I then organised the data. In other words, all the responses to a particular question were grouped under that question.

The data was then organised separately into a few workable units. Codes such as skills, commitment, parental support, consistency, drug abuse and violence emerged from the data. I also read through the transcripts again to find the themes that appeared repeatedly in the data. The themes identified included a lack of legislative knowledge, lack of commitment to policy drafting, lack of parental support, consistency in policy implementation and departmental support. I then used the themes and connections that I had developed to explain the research findings.

4.5   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics deals with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad – in other words, the principles of what is fair or unfair. It is never an easy task to maintain a high ethical standard in research. Difficult ethical challenges often occur throughout a study (Basit, 2010).

I took the following into account during the data collection process and publication phase, namely, aspects such as informed consent, access and acceptance, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality to ensure that the study was of an acceptable ethical standard.

4.5.1   Informed consent, access and acceptance

Basit (2010) defines informed consent as the participants agreeing to participate in a research study. It is vital that the participants are all fully informed of the contents and all aspects of the research study, what the data will be used for and what will be expected of them during the study. Diener and Crandell (1978) describe informed consent, access and acceptance as the procedures during which, after having been given all the facts and information about the proposed research, individuals choose whether or not to participate in the research procedures. Cohen et al. (2000) suggest that informed consent is particularly important if the participants may be exposed to any danger, stress or pain or to what they may perceive to be an invasion of privacy. It is mandatory to obtain permission from the participants located where the investigations will be done prior to embarking on any research.

The principals of the schools where the study was conducted granted me permission to conduct the research study at their schools. I then arranged a meeting with all the participants so I could meet them personally. At the meeting I explained to the participants the aim and intention of the study. After explaining everything to them I asked them to sign consent forms as a form of agreement to participate in the study.

4.5.2   Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality

Cohen et al. (2007) suggest that the greater the sensitivity of the information provided by the participants, the greater the number of safeguards that are required to protect the privacy and anonymity of the participants. It is, thus, essential that the setting or the research site be very private in order to ensure the privacy of the participants. A researcher should also ensure confidentiality by making sure that information provided is not made known publicly. The secrets which the participants may have shared with the researcher must be protected at all times.

All the information provided by the participants in this study was treated as confidential. In addition, I also made sure that all the interviews were conducted in a

private and convenient place. I used the positions held by the participants in schools to ensure their anonymity. All the information gathered during the interviews as well as from the document analysis was treated as confidential and was not discussed with anyone outside of the research project.

4.6   CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Validity in qualitative research refers to the credibility or trustworthiness of a study. Triangulation may be used to enhance this credibility and trustworthiness. Triangulation refers to the practice of trying to render the results as credible and trustworthy as possible by using multiple methods of data collection and data analysis (Maree, 2007). For the purposes of triangulation, in this study I used both interviews with different stakeholders and document analysis. During the data analysis I listened to the tape recordings repeatedly to ensure that I had heard and understood the information provided. I also read the transcripts several times to ensure that I understood them clearly.

All the transcripts were presented to the participants to allow them to confirm the veracity of the contents and to recommend corrections where necessary.

I also had the assistance of my supervisor who acted as my peer researcher in assisting with the interpretation of the data.

4.7   SUMMARY

This case study enabled me to gain an understanding of the basic principles of qualitative research. However, in view of the fact that the study was conducted as a partial requirement for a course-work master's degree, it is limited both in scope, as it was done in two primary schools only, and in depth, as the data covered only two primary schools. Therefore, the findings have low generalisability potential.

The next chapter presents the data collected during the study.

Chapter five

DATA PRESENTATION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings which were collected from the research site through the semi-structured interviews and the document analysis. The first section describes the code of conduct in each school and addresses the stakeholders' understanding of a learner code of conduct, while the second section explores the drafting of a code of conduct. The third section discusses the implementation of a code of conduct, while the fourth section explains the process by means of which learners are identified who constantly break the rules and the measures taken to assist them.

5.1.1   School A

The structure of the learner code of conduct in school A was elaborate and almost all the basic features of a learner code of conduct were included. The document included the preamble, aims and objectives, school vision, school mission statement, legislative framework consulted during the drafting stage, rules that all the learners had to obey, learners' dress code, the rights and responsibilities of learners, disciplinary and punishment procedures at the school level, punishment and corrective measures for learners who broke the rules and examples of both minor and serious misconduct. The code of conduct for the school was available in English only and, thus, the school did not acknowledge the diversity of learners present, as the majority of the learners were Sepedi speaking. The stakeholders explained that they had written the code in English as English was the only language of communication used at the school.

The supporting documentation for the implementation of the learner code of conduct, such as the school register of misconduct and the learner misconduct register, revealed that these documents were not being used consistently as some of the acts of misconduct committed at the school had not been recorded in the school register of misconduct. My scrutiny of the documents revealed that serious acts of misconduct, such as bringing alcohol to school, assault and malicious damage to property, were the only types of misconduct recorded in the registers.

It appeared that the reason why minor misconduct was not recorded in the registers was that such misconduct happened so often that the school had decided to use verbal warnings and the application of relevant sanctions only in dealing with such misconduct and without recording it.

5.1.2   School B

The code of conduct in school B was a short document of approximately two pages and included only the rules that the learners at the school were required to follow. The rules contained in the code included the learners having to be punctual, respecting and taking care of school property, behaving honestly and complying with all the instructions and general rules of the school. The learners were not allowed to colour their hair and no learner was allowed to vacate the school premises during school hours unless the office of the principal had been informed. The code of conduct was written in English only.

Both the school register of misconduct and the learner misconduct register were available. However, as in school A, in school B the registers for managing misconduct in the school were not being used on a regular basis. The registers were not being updated as some of the misconduct that happened in school had not been recorded. In line with this, the SMT members reported that the rate of misconduct was so high that some misconduct was not recorded.

It emerged from the data I obtained from both the schools that the level of discipline in these schools was not good. The high rate of misconduct at the schools was such that the schools were forced to record the serious misconduct only and not the minor misconduct as it occurred so frequently.

5.2   STAKEHOLDERS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In spite of the poor discipline, the majority of the participants appeared to agree that the learner code of conduct had a positive impact on learner behaviour, maintaining that if the code of conduct were properly and effectively implemented it would yield good results.

It does mould learners in a proper way for them to become responsible citizens in future. Learners are trained at an early stage on how to live with others in peace and harmony (Chairperson of SGB B).

Most of the participants stated that the aim of drafting the learner code of conduct was to bring about peace and stability in the schools and that the code of conduct created and maintained a peaceful environment which was conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Schools draft the learner's code of conduct to create peace and harmony among the learners themselves and respect towards the educators (HOD A).

Some of the participants appeared to be of the opinion that the aim of the code of conduct was to provide the learners with guidelines for correct behaviour. They believed that, if the code of conduct were effectively implemented, the learners would know how to behave in an acceptable manner on the school premises.

Learners always know which rules are there not to be broken and, if broken, they know exactly the consequences of those actions are, so the code helps them to know how to conduct themselves at school (Principal A).

The majority of the participants commented that the code of conduct is a document that is used by educators as a tool both to regulate the behaviour of learners and to inform the educators of what they should do if a learner breaks a school rule.

It is a tool that is drafted at school to be used by educators to control the behaviour of the learners at school and to channel their behaviours towards the direction desired by the institution (senior teacher B).

Some of the participants maintained that a code of conduct is drafted primarily to protect the rights of learners at school as the code of conduct should be in accordance with the Bill of Rights. Accordingly, the rights cited in the code of conduct should reflect the constitutional rights of individuals. In other words, documents such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and SASA should be consulted when the code of conduct is drafted.

Documents like SASA and the Constitution of the Republic should be used in helping drafting a well outlined policy that is not against the supreme law and the Schools Act (SGB chairperson A).

5.2.1 Summary

It would thus appear that participants were of the view that the code of conduct had multiple purposes. Some of them regarded it as a tool for disciplining learners while others regarded it as a tool to protect learner rights. However, overall it appeared that the code of conduct is regarded a tool with which to create and maintain a productive learning environment. So, to what extent is the code of conduct able to meet all these requirements and what are the challenges that arise in the drafting and implementation of a code of conduct?

In view of the fact that the main aim of the code of conduct is to maintain discipline in the school, this study will explore the drafting and implementation of the code of conduct through the lens of Curwin and Mendler's (1980) three-dimensional approach to discipline.

5.3 THE PREVENTION DIMENSION

This dimension of the code of conduct focuses on preventative measures and, thus, addresses the way problems relating to discipline can be averted at school. In this context the development and drafting of a code of conduct is an important measure to prevent disciplinary issues from arising. During this stage it is essential that the developers of the code of conduct demonstrate self-awareness, as well as awareness of their own beliefs, values and attitudes when drafting the policy. In addition, it is vital that those developing the policy bear the needs and values of the learners in mind when drafting the policy.

According to SASA (S8), the governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for learners that reflect the values and attitude of the community that the school serves. One of the aims of the code of conduct is also to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment which is conducive to effective teaching and learning. However, it would appear that the SGBs are delegating their duties in this regard to the SMTs.

It emerged from the study that the SMTs appear to consult various documents such as the documents supplied by the Department of Education to schools, the SASA and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, when drafting the code of conduct.

> We also got a policy guide on how to draft the learners' code of conduct; it was called the National Education Policy Act (HOD A).

One principal described how the SMT had tried to involve the SGB, parents and staff after the SMT had drafted the code of conduct and to engage in collaborative efforts in order to produce a consensus document.

> We took our draft to the SGB for analysis, comments and corrections. A staff meeting was then called for educators' comments on the draft and the SMT then gave every staff member a copy for further scrutiny. We requested both parents and staff members to bring back their comments and inputs and this was done within two weeks. We then used both the staff comments and parents' inputs to develop a final draft (Principal B).

The other principal commented that they took the needs of the learners into consideration when drafting the learner code of conduct. A bottom-up process was implemented in terms of which every educator formulated class rules in conjunction with the learners in the class.

> During the drafting stage the SMT requested every educator to draft classroom rules with their learners and those rules were modified and incorporated into the draft of the learner code of conduct (Principal A).

It emerged that the drafting of the code of conduct posed a number of challenges to the SMTs. The major challenge appeared to be the request of SGB members to include certain sanctions in the draft code of conduct that were in contravention of the Constitution and transgressed the rights of children. For example, some of the SGB members suggested that corporal punishment be used as a relevant form of punishment for learners.

After giving the parents the draft of the code of conduct for inputs and suggestions, a few drafts were returned that suggested corporal punishment as a form of punishment for learners who broke the rules (HOD A).

The parents had also suggested that learners should not be allowed to go for a break and eat their lunch as another form of punishment if they transgressed the school rules. They maintained that these learners should spend the entire day in the classroom without being allowed either to eat or to visit the toilet as this would improve discipline.

Children should not be allowed to eat for the day at school as a form of disciplining them when they break the rules (SGB chairperson A).

Another challenge that SMTs faced was when they try to obtain "buy in" from the parents to ensure that the code of conduct was a consensus document. However, some of the parents had not returned the drafts of the code that had been given to them for comments.

Most of the codes of conduct drafts given to parents to comment on were never returned (Principal A).

Principal B explained that the lack of participation on the part of parents is often related to a school context in which the majority of the children were being brought up by illiterate grandparents while their biological parents worked far away in urban areas.

Furthermore, a lack of experience in policy drafting appeared to be the major challenge as most of the members of the SMTs and the SGBs, as well as the parents, experienced problems in drafting a code of conduct. The majority of them were not aware of the steps involved in drafting such a policy nor what documents they should use, while they had also never been involved in policy drafting before.

Our biggest challenge was the fact that most of us were developing such a policy for the first time and we did not have any knowledge of how to go

through the process of drafting the policy. We were just relying on trial and error method (HOD B).

The code of conduct for learners is a dynamic document that must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it is in line with every amended section of the Constitution and SASA. In school A the code of conduct was reviewed and updated regularly on an annual basis.

> At the end of every year, all staff members draft their challenges and suggestions with regard to the learners' code of conduct and submit them to the SGB and disciplinary committee as inputs for the review of the policy (HOD B).

However, the other school reviewed the code of conduct only when the need arose.

> We only review our learners' code of conduct when there is an amendment done in the Constitution or in SASA that affects our policy (Senior Educator A).

5.3.1 Summary

It emerged that the SMTs tended to apply preventative measures by attempting to engage all the stakeholders in the process of policy drafting. It appeared that the parents, educators and learners were encouraged to take part in the process by providing comments, input and suggestions during the drafting process.

However, this was not always successful; as it emerged that the involvement of the majority of the parents in the policy development was minimal. This was fuelled by a lack of experience and knowledge of policy drafting. Moreover, in the rural context, many children are brought up by less literate family members, with the more literate members working far away from home.

5.4 THE ACTION DIMENSION

This dimension of the code of conduct refers to the implementation of the rules and sanctions outlined in the code. The action dimension comes into play when a disciplinary problem arises. When a rule contained in the code of conduct is broken then it is essential that action is taken as quickly as possible to ensure that the

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problem does not escalate. Thus, at this stage, the consequences as outlined in the code of conduct are put into effect.

However, it emerged from the study that the implementation of the learner code appeared to be creating some challenges for almost all the staff members and, particularly, for the SMTs. Most of the parents did not seem to be providing support in the disciplining of the learners at the schools, appearing to have renounced all their responsibilities in disciplining their own children. They did not want to be involved in the behaviour of their children at school.

> Parents are not helping when it comes to their involvement in the disciplinary hearings of their children. They simply do not respond positively when called for the disciplinary hearing for their children. They always claim to have no time as they are out in urban areas working (Principal A).

The HOD In school B described the challenges associated with involving the parents in the drafting of the learner code of conduct. In his school only the SMT was involved in the drafting of the code of conduct as most of the parents and guardians in the area were illiterate. At his school, after the code had been drafted, a parents' meeting was called at which the draft was communicated to all the parents and then adopted by the SGB.

> The majority of our parents here are working in urban areas and the learners are left with their grandparents and most of them are illiterate. During the drafting stage, the grandparents were the only ones available for comments on and input into the draft. As a result of their illiteracy they contributed little to the code of conduct so most of the draft's contents were from the SMT (HOD B).

At school B it was reported that minor misconduct was always addressed as soon as possible before it developed into something more serious. When acts of minor misconduct occurred, such as arriving late for school, failure to do homework and absenteeism without valid reasons, decisive measures such as the withdrawal of privileges and the deduction of points were implemented as soon as possible.

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> Every learner gets an equal number of points at the beginning of the year and, every time a learner commits misconduct, a point is deducted until all the points are finished and then a learner becomes eligible for punishment. Sanctions like the withdrawal of privileges where a learner is not allowed to participate in a favourite sport activity or not allowing a learner to take part in an excursion are often implemented for minor misconduct (Educator B).

The HOD of school A had the same to say as the educator from school B (cited above) and added that there had been some isolated incidences of minor misconduct, such as learners verbally abusing one another, pinching, pushing and shoving. Such misconduct was dealt with by applying appropriate sanctions.

> Minor misconducts are normally dealt with by giving the perpetrators a verbal warning and instructing a rule breaker to apologise to a victim. We sometimes instruct those who commit misconduct to pick up papers around the school yard or give them extra school work to do (HOD A).

One head of department reported that a lack of consistency on the part of staff members on the implementation of the learner code of conduct was one of the major challenges faced. It appeared that the majority of the educators displayed favouritism when implementing the code of conduct. In other words, if their favourite learners were guilty of minor misconduct, such as late coming, eating in class, not wearing the proper school uniform and swearing at other learners, these educators would tend to turn a blind eye, even if such incidences had been seen or reported.

There is a proper protocol that must be followed when a disciplinary hearing is held at a school. One of the HODs commented that, during a formal hearing, the principal usually acts as judge. The learner who has committed the misconduct is allowed to bring witnesses, if possible, while the learner must also be allowed to present his/her side of the story.

The majority of the participants expressed concern about the issue of disciplinary hearings. They indicated that the process of organising a disciplinary hearing and the sitting of the hearing took up considerable time. In addition, the hearing took up much of the time which should be devoted to teaching and learning, as the learner who had committed the misconduct had to attend the hearing together with the

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teachers who served on the disciplinary committee and, thus, they were not in the classroom teaching.

> The process of organising a disciplinary hearing, starting with the invitation to the affected parties to the process of the hearing itself, is a long process that consumes a lot of time for both the educators and the learners affected. They spend long hours locked in the hearing room while other educators are busy teaching and learners learning (Principal B).

Furthermore, proper evidence is crucial for a fair hearing. However, it appeared that the learners did not want to be involved in a disciplinary hearing, especially when they were supposed to act as witness to some misconduct which had allegedly been committed by fellow learners and this made it difficult to organise such hearings.

> Most of the learners, when are asked to come forward with some crucial evidence that could help in a disciplinary hearing, they refuse to help as they fear victimisation by both follow learners and educators. They just prefer to act as if they did not see or heard anything to do with case (Senior teacher A).

It emerged that implementation challenges also arose when applying the code of conduct to serious misconduct that required departmental collaboration. The Department of Education appeared to be somewhat passive about its involvement in assisting with learner discipline in schools. As stipulated in section 9 of SASA, the Department of Education should assist schools to impose sanctions such as the suspension and expulsion of learners for serious misconduct.

> We are not getting that necessary support the department is supposed to give, especially when dealing with serious misconduct. The department does not act swiftly when serious misconduct is reported to it. One may find a case of serious misconduct dragging for more than two years to complete. Some cases are not even being attempted by the department; It is sometimes up to the school to use its power to conclude a case (SGB Chairperson B).

Certain of the procedures that need to be followed to ensure a fair and free tribunal must also be followed in a disciplinary hearing.

> When a learner has committed misconduct, we inform the concerned learner together with the parents in writing about the type of a misconduct committed and the time, venue and date of the formal hearing. We issue a notice at least seven working days before the hearing can be held. Normally when a minor misconduct was committed, a verbal warning is given to a transgressor and, if the same misconduct is committed again, a learner gets a written warning and the third time a formal hearing is called (Principal A).

It would appear that some of the sanctions recommended by the Department of Education are not practicable. One of the sanctions recommended is community service, which is extremely hard to implement especially over the weekend, as there is no one to supervise the learners because staff members are not available at that time.

> In some incidences one may find that a learner is available for community service but there is no one to supervise such a learner or one may find the situation the other way round, where a supervisor is present and the learner is absent for the service (HOD A).

The chairperson of the SGB at one of the schools explained that, when dealing with serious misconduct such as assault, cheating in examinations and the possession of drugs and illegal firearms at school, those types of misconduct should be reported to the police or the district office.

> When a learner has committed a serious misconduct at school, the disciplinary committee, together with SGB, refer the matter to the circuit as stated in our learner code of conduct. Serious misconduct is dealt with only at the level of circuit and above. We, as the SGB, normally recommend a sanction which would normally be suspension or dismissal (Chairperson of SGB A).

5.4.1 Summary

There are clearly challenges which may arise during the implementation of the learner code of conduct. These challenges include the fact that parents often leave the responsibility for discipline to the educators as they cannot be part of disciplinary procedures which involve their children. Some educators are guilty of favouritism when they implement the rules and sanctions contained in the code of conduct, turning a blind eye when rules are broken by certain favoured learners. In addition, it would appear that the Department of Education is not expending much effort on helping schools to deal effectively with disciplinary issues. Disciplinary hearings have many shortcomings, which have a negative impact on the teacher's effectiveness in the action dimension.

5.5 THE RESOLUTION DIMENSION

To what extent does the code of conduct help schools to deal with the more extreme cases of misbehaviour?

The resolution dimension focuses mainly on learners who break the rules repeatedly. In terms of Curwin and Mendler's (1980) theory, in the school context, this last dimension deals with the establishment of individual contracts with the most extreme out-of-control learners. The resolution stage takes place after social contracts have failed to work after the learners have broken the contracts which were signed.

The code of conduct of school A contains a provision that habitual contract-breakers may be identified by analysing the records monitoring the out-of-control learners. The educator should schedule a meeting between the learner who has broken the contract and him/herself during school hours to ensure that the meeting itself is not perceived as a form of punishment. In addition, a neutral third party must be present to help with negotiations. If the contract is broken then the assistance of a psychologist or other support personnel will be recommended.

Every educator should record all the misconduct committed in the classroom and the list of the learners involved should be sent to the disciplinary committee.

> Every educator has a misconduct register to record all the learners who broke the rules and every month end a submission is made to the

disciplinary committee. This helps us to get information about the types of misconduct often committed and learners who committed such misconduct (Principal A).

HOD A reported that when extreme out-of-control learners have been identified, they are summoned together with their parents to attend a special meeting to discuss their habit of continuously breaking the rules. The learners are given the opportunity to present their side of the story and they are also given an opportunity to offer suggestions as to how they would want to be disciplined at school.

> After the list of learners who break the law in class has been handed over to the disciplinary committee, a special meeting is called between the learners and the committee in the presence of the SGB and the parents. Special coaching is given to those learners and a contract is signed by the learners to bind them that they will obey and respect the learners' code of conduct (Principal A).

An educator of School A endorsed what Principal A had said above and added that, if such learners break the contract, then a final meeting is called with a neutral party who acts as a negotiator between the learner and the school disciplinary committee. At this meeting professional help may be recommended for the learner in order to identify any underlying factors that may be causing the learner's behaviour.

Drug abuse is a serious problem in the area in which the study was conducted. It appeared that those learners who were habitual rule-breakers also often smoked dagga and sniffed glue. Dagga and glue are easily accessible to the learners, especially glue, as the learners are able to buy it from the local shops without raising the suspicion of the shopkeepers.

> Some of these learners are from the families where dagga is sold and it is easy for them to access the drug. Most of the community members are poor and unemployed so they sell this drug to survive. Glue is another drug commonly used by these learners (Educator A).

It also appeared that adolescence often had a negative impact on learner behaviour particularly with the older learners who often manifested aggressive behaviour towards both their educators and fellows learners for no apparent reason.

> Most of older learners, especially the boys, are the ones who give problems at school and are consistently committing misconduct as most of the them are at their adolescent stage (Educator B).

Peer pressure appeared to be yet another factor that impacted negatively on learner behaviour at school. Some of the learners deliberately broke the rules in order to show off to the other learners that they had power and that they could be manipulative.

> Some learners will deliberately commit misconduct in order to draw the educator's attention and to show other learners in class that they can be troublesome at some stage (Principal B).

The majority of the participants also reported that the psychologist's reports revealed that many of the rule breakers were underachievers. Because they did not perform well in class they tried to cover up their weaknesses by consistently breaking the rules.

> It has been found that learners who struggled with their school work always commit misconduct at school as the result of being frustrated for not doing well in class (Principal A).

Domestic violence at home also appeared to play a role in bad behaviour at school. Many of the learners who frequently broke the school rules came from violent families with the violence at home affecting them to such an extent that they tended to copy what was happening at home when they came to school.

> After referring learners with discipline problems to professional psychologists, the results usually had shown that the learners were affected by constant exposure to domestic violence at home (Chairperson of SGB A).

5.5.1 Summary

According to the registers of learner misconduct, after the learners had signed a contract with the disciplinary committee, they often did not commit as much misconduct as was previously the case. This was confirmed by the fact that their names often appeared less frequently in the misconduct registers than before they had signed the contracts. Even if they did still commit misconduct it seemed that the rate of such misconduct decreased after an agreement between the disciplinary committee and the rule-breakers had been signed.

It appears that the code of conduct has an influence on learner discipline, especially on minor misconduct, as learners often improve their behaviour after being disciplined in accordance with it.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the measures taken during the drafting and implementation of the learner code of conduct in terms of trying to cut down on the rate of rule breaking in schools. The chapter also discussed the factors that appear to influence learners who repeatedly break the rules in schools.

The next chapter will discuss the conclusions drawn from the study and the recommendations made on the basis of the study findings.

Chapter six

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study in terms of the insights gained into the implementation of a learners' code of conduct in the Sekhukhune District. In addition, the chapter contains recommendations based on the findings.

6.2   ADOPTING THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In both case studies the schools had adopted a learner code of conduct with the main purpose of establishing a constructive, safe and effective environment for both teaching and learning. However, the study found that there was no one standard code of conduct, as one school had an elaborate policy while the other had a short policy that stipulated only the rules that learners were required to obey. Both the documents had been developed and adopted by the SMTs and SGBs and had been presented to the learners on various occasions such as special meetings with the learners at the beginning of every year and in assembly. In the one school there had been an attempt to make the drafting of the code of conduct a bottom-up process in terms of which the learners were involved in drafting class rules which were then included in the code of conduct.

The process of drafting and implementing a learner code of conduct presents its own unique challenges.

6.3   CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE DRAFTING OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

6.3.1   Lack of legislative knowledge

This study revealed that the majority of parents lacked the skills, knowledge and experience needed for policy drafting. For example, during the drafting stage of the policy, parents had recommended corporal punishment as a form of discipline for learners who broke the rules. They had also suggested other punishments that were abusive and in contravention of section 12 of the Bill of Rights.

The punishments suggested included depriving the miscreant learners of the right to eat their food during lunch time and denying them the right to use the toilet during teaching and learning time. This confirms the finding of Xaba (2011) to the effect that the inadequate knowledge and skills regarding legislation and governance matters on the part of SGB members constitute major factors that contribute to the poor drafting and implementation of a code of conduct in schools.

6.3.2 Lack of capacity to draft policy

Although the code of conduct is supposed to be a consensus document, the parents were not fully involved in the drafting of the learner code of conduct. The parents had been given the draft and requested to comment on it but they often did not return the draft to the school and showed little interest in participating in policy formulation. The main reason for this was probably because the parents had not been fully capacitated to be actively involved in the drafting process. In addition, they were not aware that it was their democratic right to take an active role in the drafting of the code. This confirms the viewpoint expressed by Chanza (2012) who states that, although the SGB is officially designated as the most important role player in policy issues, in practice the SMT plays the major role in policy making and policy implementation, mainly because the parents have not been fully capacitated to perform their duties in this regard. This was further supported by Van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012) who reported that a lack of capacitating often results in parents resigning before their term of office has expired because of their frustration at not knowing their rights and responsibilities.

6.3.3 Single language usage

The analysis of the data revealed that both schools use English only when drafting the learner code of conduct even though the majority of the parents are Sepedi speaking. Using English in policy drafting poses challenges to communities in which English is not the mother tongue and, consequently, many parents do not have access to the policy document. It is apparent that diversity is also not taken into consideration when policies are drafted. This confirms the report of Tsotetsi et al. (2008), who found that the majority of schools draft their codes of conduct in English and that this makes it difficult for parents to understand the contents of the code. This conclusion was also confirmed by Pillay (2012) who found that most of the

former model C schools continue to use English as the medium of communication in SGB meetings and policy drafting and that this makes parents other than the English-speaking parents feel excluded, especially the African parents.

6.4 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

6.4.1 Lack of parental support

The study found that the parents tended to hand over the responsibility for learner discipline to the school. They appeared to be unable to take full responsibility for the disciplining of their children and offered various reasons as to why they were not able to attend disciplinary hearings. Many of the parents live and work far away in urban areas and, as a result, are unable to attend disciplinary hearings. Moreover, Mestry and Khumalo (2012) suggest that even though parents may attend meetings, their contribution is minimal as they are not actively involved. It would appear that the parents did not possess the skills required to engage meaningfully in the disciplinary process.

6.4.2 Departmental support

According to section 9 of SASA, it is the responsibility of the Department of Education to assist schools, especially in cases of a serious nature, to deal with rule breakers by applying either suspension or expulsion as a sanction. Furthermore, section 19 of SASA states that the head of department must initiate a programme to train newly elected SGB members and continue such training to enable them to perform their functions in such a way as to promote the effective performance of their duties. The findings of this study revealed that the Department of Education has reacted slowly when dealing with issues of discipline, leaving the schools to deal with extreme cases on their own. There were also indications that not enough training is provided and that the department has not provided SGBs with the knowledge required for effective for policy implementation. This supports Xaba's (2011) findings that SGBs are not given adequate training to enable them carry out their duties effectively, including the drafting and implementation of a learner code of conduct.

6.5 FACTORS THAT POSE CHALLENGES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

6.5.1 Drug abuse

It would seem that controlling drug abuse on the part of some of the learners in the schools is posing a challenge to the implementation of the code of conduct. There are learners who abuse drugs and who then start to behave strangely at school and this, in turn, presents a challenge to learner discipline at the school. Serakwane (2007) has found that some learners are not cooperative towards their educators and they may resort to violent and aggressive behaviour, smoking dagga and carrying dangerous weapons. Lekalakala (2007) also reports that the use of drugs and alcohol is one of the factors that causes misconduct in schools and makes the implementation of a code of conduct a challenging issue in schools.

6.5.2 Peer pressure

The aim of a code of conduct is to manage discipline in schools. The findings of this study revealed that the disciplinary challenges at schools may be aggravated by peer pressure among the learners and which the code of conduct is often unable to control fully. Some learners deliberately break the rules to show off and to attract the teacher's attention; being regarded as naughty often means such learners gain recognition. Lekalakala (2007) reports that the gangs that operate in schools often come from the community outside schools and disputes between gang members are brought into the schoolyard to be settled. Learners sometimes feel pressure to belong to a certain gang in order to experience a sense of belonging and power.

6.5.3 Socioeconomic factors

It emerged that domestic violence impacted negatively on learners' performance at school. Lekalakala (2007) maintains that learners who are abused at home are affected psychologically and that, at some stage, these learners copy what is happening at home and are violent towards educators and fellow learners. The unemployment rate in rural areas is high, thus many parents are not working and often spend much of their time abusing drugs and alcohol. A learner code of conduct is not able to deal effectively with the socioeconomic factors that affect learner behaviour in school. In addition, poverty and hunger contribute to poor learner

behaviour as the learners are sometimes forced to engage in criminal activities in order to eat and survive.

6.5.4   Lack of consistency in policy implementation

The study highlighted a number of issues in respect of the implementation of the learner code of conduct and the impact it has on the credibility of the policy. One such issue is a lack of consistency in the implementation of the learner code of conduct. The SGB may implement sanctions which are applied to certain learners while educators turn a blind eye when other learners commit such misconduct. This is often the result of educators showing favouritism to some of the learners, particularly those learners who are intelligent or are relatives of the teacher concerned.

Inconsistencies in policy implementation may result in learners who are usually well behaved and loyal misbehaving, as they see little point in behaving well when they realise that some learners who break the rules are not punished for their actions. Thus, such inconsistencies result in the learners not respecting the code of conduct.

6.6   TO WHAT EXTENT DOES A CODE OF CONDUCT INFLUENCE LEARNER DISCIPLINE?

It would appear that a code of conduct has a slight effect on learner discipline, particularly in minor misconduct by the learners. The rural primary school registers of misconduct showed that the majority of learners tended not to repeat the same misconduct after they had been called to a disciplinary hearing and had signed a social contract with the disciplinary committee.

However, it would appear that a code of conduct is not effective in cases of serious misconduct. According to SASA, serious misconduct that warrants suspension and expulsion must be dealt with by the head of the Department of Education in the province. However, it emerged as one of the challenges in the implementation of a code of conduct that the department appears not to be doing enough in its dealing with this type of misconduct. The department does not act swiftly to resolve issues of serious misconduct in schools and, in some cases, these issues even drag on for so long that they end up in court.

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6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.7.1 Government intervention

Government should provide parents, SGBs and SMTs with the necessary skills and knowledge of legislation through workshops and should also establish accessible adult basic education centres. This is most important in rural areas where the level of unemployment and illiteracy is high. In addition, parents should be made aware of the importance of their becoming involved in the policy drafting process. The department should also act swiftly, especially when dealing with issues of serious misconduct at schools, while additional powers should be given to the SGBs and SMTs to deal with serious misconduct at schools.

6.7.2 Consistency in the implementation of a code of conduct

It is essential that SMTs should make educators aware of the consequences of not applying the code of conduct in a consistent manner. All learners must be treated in the same way, no matter where they come from or their family background. In addition, SGB should bring the issue other Bill of Rights to the attention of all educators so that they could not practise any unfair discrimination among the learners.

6.7.3 Handling of disciplinary hearings

It is recommended that disciplinary hearings take place after normal teaching and learning time. Learners who are witnesses in cases should be encouraged to come forward to provide evidence. In order to minimise the possibility of victimisation this may be done in private with these witnesses being assured of anonymity.

6.7.4 Drug awareness campaign

Since disciplinary problems often relate to major social issues such as drug abuse, schools should ensure that they run drug awareness campaigns to inform their learners about the dangers of drugs and drug abuse. The schools may also get together with the local police to conduct random searches for drugs at the schools on a regular basis. This has to be done within the policy of drug search in schools to avoid the violation of the right to privacy.

6.7.5   Improving teaching and learning

It is well known that many disciplinary issues relate to poor teaching and learning. Accordingly, schools could initiate remedial classes to provide assistance to underachieving learners. Schools could also make use of the services of relevant experts to provide professional help and expertise to both educators and underachievers to assist them to deal with the challenges they face.

6.7.6   Language used in policy drafting

When school policies are drafted, English should be used in conjunction with the other languages spoken by the majority of the people in the area to ensure that diversity is acknowledged and such policies are understood by all concerned.

6.7.7   Further research recommendations

The study was undertaken in rural primary schools on a small sample. Further research could be done on a large scale, using a different methodology and different strategies of data collection. Research could also be undertaken at secondary schools or in the further education and training phase where students would be meaningfully and actively involved in the drafting of the code of conduct through Learners Representative Councils (LRCs).

6.8   CONCLUSION

This exploration of how a learner code of conduct is implemented in rural schools in Limpopo province has been an incredible experience for me. Through this exploration I was able to reflect on my practice and to learn from other educators' experiences.

I also realised that, if a code of conduct of conduct is to achieve what it is intended to achieve, in spite of the challenges, it is essential that the implementation of such a code of conduct is effective. If the code of conduct is correctly drafted and implemented in accordance with the guidelines given to SGBs on how to draft such a code, it increases the chances that the code of conduct will be successful. It is evident that codes of conduct are more effective for addressing minor misconduct than serious misconduct. It would appear that learners do sometimes improve their behaviour somewhat when the code of conduct is applied to misbehaviour,

especially after the learners have signed a social contract with the disciplinary committee.

It was clear that the effectiveness of the code of conduct in rural primary schools is compromised if it is applied inconsistently with learners sometimes taking advantage of those educators who do not implement the code of conduct firmly and consistently by not obeying to the rules stipulated in the code. A further negative aspect of a code of conduct is that the administration of disciplinary hearings often takes up a considerable amount of teaching and learning time for both teachers and learners, as the majority of disciplinary hearings take place during school hours. As stated in SASA, incidences of serious misconduct that warrant suspension and expulsion are dealt with by the head of the department in the province and, thus, the resolution of such cases was often a lengthy procedure as the departments often do not act swiftly.

Nevertheless, I strongly believe that the learner code of conduct in rural primary schools is an effective tool for managing learner behaviour, provided that it is properly drafted and effectively implemented and monitored.

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

http://www.up.ac.za.

The department of Education

Sekhukhune District Senior Manager

Private bag x 70

Lebowakgomo

0737

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for Med (Masters) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report about my work. I would like to ask whether you are willing to allow me to conduct a part of this research in primary schools in Sekhukhune district.

The topic of my research is: **The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.** A code of conduct plays a very important role in facilitating and maintaining good learner behaviour. Some research has been done in this field in secondary schools, but we hope to determine what the situation is in rural primary schools. The research will include interviews with all SMT members and the chairperson of the SGB. Analyses of documents such as a code of conduct for learners, a school register of misconduct, a learner register of misconduct, and learner disciplinary history will also be done. The information will be used for academic purposes only.

Interviews will be conducted at a suitable venue after teaching hours. Each interview will not take longer than an hour. Audio tapes will be used and transcribed by me for analytical purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time and will not be

penalised in any way. The identities of the school and all participants will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used when necessary.

If you agree for this research to take place, please complete the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, kindly contact me or my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

………………………………….

Mr M.F. Sebisha (Student) Prof. C. Herman (Supervisor)

sebishafrank@yahoo.com chaya.Herman@up.ac.za

………………………….…….

Date ....

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

http://www.up.ac.za.

Dear Headmaster

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a postgraduate student studying through the University of Pretoria, and currently enrolled for the M.Ed. degree (Master's in Education) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module, and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report. I would like to ask you whether you would be willing to allow me to conduct part of this research at your school.

The topic of my research is: **The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.** A code of conduct plays a very important role in facilitating and maintaining good learner behaviour. Some research has been done in this field in secondary schools, but we hope to determine what the situation is in rural primary schools. The research will include interviews with all SMT members and the chairperson of the SGB . In this study the researcher will analyse the code of conduct for learners to check whether all aspects that need to be contained in the code of conduct have been included, and whether proper procedure has been followed during the drafting process. Another document to be analysed will be a learner register of misconduct. This register will help in determining the number of misconducts committed by a particular learner and the type of misconducts less and more often committed by that learner. Documents such as a learner's disciplinary history will be checked to determine the pattern of misconduct committed by the learner. Learners to be observed are those who commit both less and serious misconducts on regular basis and the types of misconducts often committed by learners.

Teacher's conduct regarding the management and control of misconduct will also be analysed. The information will be used for academic purposes only.

Interviews will be conducted at a suitable venue after teaching hours. Each interview will not take longer than an hour. Audio tapes will be used and transcribed by me for analytical purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information. Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time and will not be penalised in any way. The identities of the school and all participants will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used when necessary.

If you agree to take part in this research, please complete the consent form provided. If you have any questions, kindly contact me or my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

………………………………….

Mr M.F. Sebisha (Student) Prof. C. Herman (Supervisor)

sebishafrank@yahoo.com chaya.Herman@up.ac.za

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER TO SGB CHAIRPERSON

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

http://www.up.ac.za.

Dear Chairperson of SGB

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

I am a postgraduate student studying through the University of Pretoria, and currently enrolled for the M.Ed. degree (Master's in Education) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module, and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report. I would like to ask you whether you would be willing to participate in that research.

The topic of my research is: **The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.** A code of conduct plays a very important role in facilitating and maintaining good learner behaviour. Some research has been done in this field in secondary schools, but we hope to determine what the situation is in rural primary schools. The research will include interviews with all SMT members and the chairperson of the SGB. In this study the researcher will analyse the code of conduct for learners to check whether all aspects that need to be contained in the code of conduct have been included, and whether proper procedure has been followed during the drafting process. Another document to be analysed will be a learner register of misconduct. This register will help in determining the number of misconducts committed by a particular learner and the type of misconducts less and more often committed by that learner. Documents such as a learner's disciplinary history will be checked to determine the pattern of misconduct committed by the learner. Learners to be observed are those who commit both less and serious misconducts on regular basis and the types of misconducts often committed by learners. Teacher's conduct regarding the management and control of misconduct will also be analysed. The information will be used for academic purposes only.

Interviews will be conducted at a suitable venue after teaching hours. Interviews will not take longer than an hour. Audio tapes will be used and transcribed by me for analytical purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information.

Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time and will not be penalised in any way. The identities of the school and all participants will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used when necessary.

If you agree to take part in this research, please complete the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, kindly contact me or my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

………………………………

Mr M.F. Sebisha (Student) Prof. C. Herman (Supervisor)

sebishafrank@yahoo.com chaya.Herman@up.ac.za

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

http://www.up.ac.za.

Dear SMT Member

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

I am a postgraduate student studying through the University of Pretoria, and currently enrolled for the M.Ed. degree (Master's in Education) in the Faculty of Education. I have to complete a research module, and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report. I would like to ask you whether you would be willing to participate in that research.

The topic of my research is: **The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.** A code of conduct plays a very important role in facilitating and maintaining good learner behaviour. Some research has been done in this field in secondary schools, but we hope to determine what the situation is in rural primary schools. The research will include interviews with all SMT members and the chairperson of the SGB. In this study the researcher will analyse the code of conduct for learners to check whether all aspects that need to be contained in the code of conduct have been included, and whether proper procedure has been followed during the drafting process. Another document to be analysed will be a learner register of misconduct. This register will help in determining the number of misconducts committed by a particular learner and the type of misconducts less and more often committed by that learner. Documents such as a learner's disciplinary history will be checked to determine the pattern of misconduct committed by the learner. Learners to be observed are those who commit both less and serious misconducts on regular basis and the types of misconducts often committed by learners. Teacher's conduct regarding the management and control of misconduct will also be analysed. The information will be used for academic purposes only.

Interviews will be conducted at a suitable venue after teaching hours. Each interview will not take longer than an hour. Audio tapes will be used and transcribed by me for analytical purposes. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this information.

Participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time and will not be penalised in any way. The identities of the school and all participants will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms will be used when necessary.

If you agree to take part in this research, please complete the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, kindly contact me or my supervisor.

Yours faithfully

……………………………….

Mr M.F. Sebisha (Student) Prof. C. Herman (Supervisor)

sebishafrank@yahoo.com chaya.Herman@up.ac.za

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

CONSENT FORM

I, ..., Headmaster

of...primary, agrees to allow **Frank Sebisha** to conduct research in this school. The topic of the research being: **The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.**

I understand that the SMT and chairperson of the SGB of this primary school will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit the participants. Interviews will not interfere with school activities and teaching time and they will be audio taped.

I understand that documents such as learner codes of conduct and learner behaviour registers will be analysed. In this study the researcher will analyse the code of conduct for learners to check whether all aspects that need to be contained in the code of conduct have been included, and whether proper procedure has been followed during the drafting process. Another document to be analysed will be a learner register of misconduct. This register will help in determining the number of misconducts committed by a particular learner and the type of misconducts less and more often committed by that learner. Documents such as a learner's disciplinary history will be checked to determine the pattern of misconduct committed by the learner. Learners to be observed are those who commit both less and serious misconducts on regular basis and the types of misconducts often committed by learners. The information will be used for academic purposes only. No copies of a school register of misconduct, a learner register of misconduct, and learner disciplinary history register will be made.

Translators, photographers or transcribers will not be used in this study and researcher will interpret data by himself under a supervision of his supervisor.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation in research*: participants may withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent:* research participants must at all times be fully informed about the purposes of the research and its processes, and they must give their written consent to participate in the research.
- *Safety in participation:* respondents should not be exposed to risk or harm of any kind, particularly when the research involves young children.
- *Privacy:* the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust:* respondents will not be exposed to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature	Date

APPENDIX F: CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY CHAIRPERSON

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

CONSENT FORM

I, ...SGB member
of..primary, agrees to take part in research to be conducted by **Frank Sebisha** at this school. The topic of the research being: **The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.**

I understand that the SMT and chairperson of the SGB of this primary school will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit the participants. Interviews will not interfere with school activities and teaching time and they will be audio taped.

I understand that documents such as learner codes of conduct and learner behaviour registers will be analysed. In this study the researcher will analyse the code of conduct for learners to check whether all aspects that need to be contained in the code of conduct have been included, and whether proper procedure has been followed during the drafting process. Another document to be analysed will be a learner register of misconduct. This register will help in determining the number of misconducts committed by a particular learner and the type of misconducts less and more often committed by that learner. Documents such as a learner's disciplinary history will be checked to determine the pattern of misconduct committed by the learner. Learners to be observed are those who commit both less and serious misconducts on regular basis and the types of misconducts often committed by learners. The information will be used for academic purposes only.

No copies of a school register of misconduct, a learner register of misconduct, and learner disciplinary history register will be made.

Translators, photographers or transcribers will not be used in this study and researcher will interpret data by himself under a supervision of his supervisor.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation in research*: participants may withdraw from the research at any time.

- *Informed consent:* research participants must at all times be fully informed about the purposes of the research and its processes, and they must give their written consent to participate in the research.

- *Safety in participation:* respondents should not be exposed to risk or harm of any kind, particularly when the research involves young children.
- *Privacy:* the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust:* respondents will not be exposed to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

APPENDIX G: CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

CONSENT FORM

I, ... SMT member
of...primary, agrees to take part in research to be
conducted by **Frank Sebisha** at this school. The topic of the research being: **The
implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo.**

I understand that the SMT and chairperson of the SGB of this primary school will be
interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will
suit the participants. Interviews will not interfere with school activities and teaching
time and they will be audio taped.

I understand that documents such as learner codes of conduct and learner
behaviour registers will be analysed. In this study the researcher will analyse the
code of conduct for learners to check whether all aspects that need to be contained
in the code of conduct have been included, and whether proper procedure has been
followed during the drafting process. Another document to be analysed will be a
learner register of misconduct. This register will help in determining the number of
misconducts committed by a particular learner and the type of misconducts less and
more often committed by that learner. Documents such as a learner's disciplinary
history will be checked to determine the pattern of misconduct committed by the
learner. Learners to be observed are those who commit both less and serious
misconducts on regular basis and the types of misconducts often committed by
learners. The information will be used for academic purposes only. No copies of a
school register of misconduct, a learner register of misconduct, and learner
disciplinary history register will be made.

Translators, photographers or transcribers will not be used in this study and
researcher will interpret data by himself under a supervision of his supervisor.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation in research*: participants may withdraw from the
  research at any time.

- *Informed consent:* research participants must at all times be fully informed
  about the purposes of the research and its processes, and they must give
  their written consent to participate in the research.

- *Safety in participation:* respondents should not be exposed to risk or harm
  of any kind, particularly when the research involves young children.

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- *Privacy:* the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust:* respondents will not be exposed to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

_____   _____

Signature   Date

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Pretoria 0002 Republic of South Africa

Tel: 012 420 4111 Fax: 012 420 2698

http://www.up.ac.za.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE A: A SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

The purpose of this schedule is to determine how a code of conduct for learners is drafted and implemented and its influence on learner discipline in schools around the Sekhukhune district.

The following questions are relevant:

- How long have you been in this position?
- Can you describe the school demographics of both staff and learners?
- How would you describe the discipline at the school?
- Which factors do you think influence learners behaviour?
- What is your understanding of the code of conduct?
- How do you maintain learner discipline? (I would like to speak specifically about the code of conduct)
- What is the role or its aim of code of conduct?
- Do you think code of conduct achieve its aim? Why?
- Who is involved in the drafting of the code of conduct?
- How is the code of conduct drafted?
- What are the challenges in drafting a code of conduct?
- How is the code of conduct implemented?
- What are the challenges in implementing a code of conduct?
- How is a code of conduct monitored?
- How are extreme out-of-control learners identified?
- How are extreme out-of-control learners handled?
- To what extent does the code of conduct influence learner behaviour?
- What is your opinion on the code of conduct?
- Should the code of conduct be changed?
- Is there any ethnic groups among the learners?
- What can be done to improve implementation of code of conduct?
- When does code of conduct normally used?
- How do learners react to be disciplined by the code of conduct?

APPENDIX I: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**CLEARANCE NUMBER :**	EM 14/02/06
DEGREE AND PROJECT	MEd	
	The implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo	
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Modishane Frank Sebisha	
DEPARTMENT	Education Management and Policy Studies	
DATE CONSIDERED	19 June 2015	
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	APPROVED	

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE	Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
DATE	19 June 2015
CC	Jeannie Beukes
	Liesel Ebersöhn
	Prof C Herman

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following condition:

1. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.

APPENDIX J: PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT

Enq   : Mothiba B.O
Tel no : 015 6337154
Date   : 11 Febraury 2014

To   : Mr. M.F. Sebisha (Studentfor Med (Masters)

           University of Pretoria

From   : District Senior Manager

           Sekhukhune District

SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT.

1. The above matter refers.

2. Kindly be informed that your request to conduct research focused the topic: **Investigating the implementation of a code of conduct in rural primary schools in Limpopo Province** is approved.

3. Please note you should conduct your research in line with research ethics as prescribed by your institution and internation norms and standards for research.

4. The district wishes you well in your project and awaits your findings with great interest.

11/02/14

DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER   **DATE**

MR. NKADIMENG T.G

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PERSONAL ASSISTANT
GREATER SEKHUKHUNE DISTRICT

2014 -02- 1 1

PRIVATE BAG X 70 LEBOWAKGOMO 0737
LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT