TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS FRAMEWORK IN A GAUTENG FULL-SERVICE SCHOOL

by

Narescha Naidoo

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Supervisor

Professor Motlalepule Ruth Mampane

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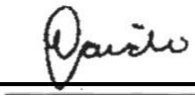
DECLARATION OF ORGINALITY

I declare, that the mini-dissertation titled *Teachers' perceptions of positive behaviour interventions and supports framework in a Gauteng full-service school*, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis, in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.



3 December 2021

Naresha Naidoo Date

ETHICS STATEMENT

The author, whose name appears on the title of this mini-dissertation, has obtained for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of Ethics for Researchers* and the *Policy Guidelines for Responsible Research.*

Naresha Naidoo	3 December 2021
	Date

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Faculty of Education

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CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: **EP 17/04/06**
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CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Funke Omidire

CC

Ms Thandi Mngomezulu
Prof Motlalepule Ruth Mampane

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

DEDICATION

To my parents,

Neelakhandan Benny Naidoo and Esthernashe Swartz

Thank you for lifting me up and allowing me to soar.

To all God's children who have made the shadows their dwelling place

Arise, shine for your light has come (Isaiah 60:1)

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- My Heavenly Father, thank you Lord for your perfect plan towards me. Relying on your strength and guidance have kept me.

- My husband, Storm. You are a stabilizing force in my life. You have been a pillar of strength, an accountability partner, my prayer warrior and my shoulder to cry on. There were many times that without you, I may have given up.

- My father, you have sacrificed and continued to work hard so that I may have all that I dream of. You have always believed in me and encouraged me. I appreciate you and love you.

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ABSTRACT

Managing disruptive learner behaviour has been the concern of teachers and school administrators for years and it still continues to be a significant challenge today. Research has shown that incessant disruptive behaviour creates a chaotic school climate that negatively impacts on learner achievement. Many international schools have since implemented disciplinary programmes that prove to be ineffective due to their punitive and reactive approach. This has led to a need for an approach to discipline that is prosocial and promotes a healthy school climate. Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is one such approach that has been implemented in over 25 000 schools internationally. This qualitative study therefore seeks to gain insight into the perceptions of the teachers working at a full-service school where this approach has been implemented. In order to do so, the study followed an interpretivist epistemology. Four teachers were interviewed using semi-structured interviews and thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data generated. The findings from the study show that PBIS has been a valuable contribution to the school and has assisted them in managing learner discipline. However, the importance of ensuring that an approach is suited to one's context and to a school's own needs has been highlighted.

KEYWORDS: prosocial learner behaviour, healthy school climate, positive discipline strategies, PBIS, effective framework, perceptions of teachers

PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

NARESCHA NAIDOO

Magistar Educationis
(Educational Psychology)

in

Department of Educational Psychology

Faculty of Education

University of Pretoria

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Cilla Dowse
03 December 2021

Cilla Dowse	Rosedale
PhD in Assessment and Quality Assurance in Education and Training:	Farm
University of Pretoria 2014	P.O. Box 48
Basic Editing and Proofreading: McGillivray Linnegar Associates 2008	Van
Programme on Editing Principles and Practices: University of Pretoria	Reenen
2009	Free
Editing and Proofreading for Academic Purposes: McGillivray Linnegar	State
Associates 2021	cilla.dowse@gmail.com
Professional Editors' Guild Associate Member, DOW003	Cell: 084 900 7837

ACRONYMS

DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plans
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
PBIS	Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

For decades teachers and school administrators have been challenged by learner behaviour that is disruptive and tends to defy social expectations and conventions (Eriksson et al., 2011; Glock & Pit-ten Cate, 2021). Research has shown that incessant disruptive behaviour soon starts to manifest in a chaotic school climate that negatively impacts on learner achievement, an aspect evident in our education system today (Herman et al., 2020; Koumas, 2015; Martin, 2013). As a result, teachers and school administrators have been placed under increased pressure to be accountable for learner achievement as well as their discipline (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Herman et al., 2020; Martin, 2013). However, many teachers, who after being unsuccessful in managing learners' behaviour, develop low self-efficacy, feel ill-equipped and are unable to do their jobs (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; de Witt & Lessing, 2013; Joubert & Serakwane, 2009; Reinke et al., 2012). Not only do these disruptive behaviours have an effect on teacher motivation and self-efficacy, but they also put these learners at risk for future development of adjustment and psychopathology problems (Joubert & Serakwane, 2009; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012; Tillery et al., 2010).

In an attempt to address this problem, schools globally implement disciplinary programmes; however, when these programmes are deemed ineffective due to their one-size-fits-all-punishment style, discipline resorts to being punitive and reactive which only increases the high suspension and drop-out rates (Herman et al., 2020; Lampron & Gonsoulin, 2013). In South Africa, the dropout rate has reached a national crisis. It is estimated that approximately 60% of learners entering Grade 1 will drop out of school without completing Grade 12 (Weybright et al., 2017). This only adds to an already increasing unemployment and crime rate (Lindsey, 2008; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

With one of the highest incarceration rates in the world and one of the highest recidivism rates, there is a constant interchange in and out of our South African prisons (Cameron, 2020; Murhula & Singh, 2019). This implies that the dangers many prisoners face within the prisons are often blended into society (Cameron, 2020).

Therefore, the learner discipline problem needs to be addressed and should begin within the schools (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Researchers attempting to solve this problem, have found that having effective school-wide discipline strategies not only reduce discipline problems but may even prevent them and allow for the development of a classroom environment conducive to learning (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). For this change to occur, the discipline strategies would need to be alternative, positive, strength-based and inclusive (Bradshaw et al., 2010; Martin, 2013). Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is one such approach that has rapidly spread across approximately 25 000 schools in the United States (US) and in other countries like Canada and Singapore and is a fast-growing solution to behaviour management (Reinke at al., 2012; Tyre et al., 2018).

PBIS is a flexible, comprehensive and effective framework designed to support learners and staff in adopting evidence-based practices that birth a culture of positive behaviour (Bradshaw et al., 2010; James et al., 2019). It assists schools in developing behavioural supports for their learners in a promising and constructive environment (Eiraldi et al., 2019; Reinke et al., 2012; Sugai et al., 2000). In schools where PBIS has been established, fewer discipline referrals have been experienced, resulting in more contact time with learners and positive interactions between teachers and learners (James et al., 2019; Noltemeyer et al., 2018). Ultimately, the PBIS system has proven to be rather effective and useful in managing behaviour (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Nocera et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2018).

1.2 RATIONALE

In an attempt to effect a similar change in the South African schooling system, research has been conducted on PBIS. One study was conducted in a primary school in the province of Limpopo and the other involved a study at a university where fourth year in-service teachers were taught about the system in their Inclusive Education module (Dwarika, 2019). In both studies, each set of participants found the PBIS framework to be a useful one and felt that more information and training would be beneficial. The framework has also received some attention from the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2018).

I worked at a full-service school in Gauteng that not only has a large number of learners with behavioural difficulties but also with barriers to learning, all of whom need to have their needs accommodated. On a yearly basis, I witnessed the learner behaviour grow more disruptive and unmanageable. As a result, referrals to behavioural clinic schools and discipline meetings increased. After implementing numerous unsuccessful approaches to manage discipline problems, PBIS Africa was introduced as a possible solution to address the challenges the school was experiencing. PBIS Africa is an initiative founded by Professor Khalil Osiris where the principles of PBIS are taken and modified to suit the needs of the African context (Osiris, 2013). This particular school started to implement PBIS Africa, but due to financial constraints as a government institution, the school opted out of using PBIS Africa but continued to implement the global principles of PBIS. However, there is a limited amount of academic literature that has been published on this system in South Africa.

When taking into consideration that a large number of schools are experiencing similar problems, it is crucial that positive and pro-social approaches to managing behaviour are developed and practised in South African schools and it is with this in mind that this research study aims to focus on the PBIS system as a possible agent of change (Motseke, 2020).

Teacher buy-in and support is imperative to the success of PBIS implementation and I was therefore particularly interested in exploring the teachers' perceptions of the discipline system. Research has shown that teachers play an integral part in buying in to a system and effectively implementing it (Nocera et al., 2014). It is my hope that through gaining insight into the perceptions of the key stakeholders, such as the teachers of this system, that light may be shed on possible solutions and preventive measures for many of the schools' discipline problems.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is recommended that research questions are simplified in order for the study to have very specific points to investigate (de Vos, 2021). These research questions also initiate the way forward in selecting a research design for the study (Denscombe, 2012; de Vos, 2021). The primary research question that this study will attempt to

answer is: *How do teachers in a full-service school perceive the Positive Behaviour Supports and Interventions (PBIS) system?*

The main question necessitated the formation of secondary questions. These secondary-questions are formulated as follows:

1. What do teachers in a full-service school understand effective discipline to entail?

2. To what extent do teachers at a full-service school believe PBIS to be an effective means to foster discipline in schools?

1.4 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study was explorative and interpretive in nature, aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of the PBIS system. This was first done by conducting an extensive literature study on the PBIS system. Insight was further gained by exploring the teachers' perceptions of the system by conducting semi-structured interviews. By conducting these interviews, it was hoped that rich information would be obtained which might shed light on the possible utility of this system in developing pro-social and positive interactions with learners, their peers, teachers and the surrounding community.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Managing learner discipline is a challenge that schools across the globe have attempted to address through the implementation of various programmes and systems (Netshitangani, 2017; Schwab et al., 2019). Without leaner discipline in a school, a chaotic school environment is often the result (Cyril & Raj, 2017; Gage et al., 2017). Where effective learning and teaching cannot take place, teacher burnout and turnover increases and more learners face suspension and eventually expulsion (Dwarika, 2019; Human-Vogel & Morkel, 2017). Many of the programmes have been punitive and reactive in nature, only exacerbating the situation (Herman et al., 2020). Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a framework that has been implemented all across the states to address challenging learning behaviour and build towards a value driven society and has experienced success (Bradshaw et al., 2010; James et al., 2019). Through finding out teachers' perceptions of the framework, it is hoped that light may be shed on its implementation in a South African context.

1.6 CONTEXT OF STUDY

The research study was conducted in a full-service school. Full-service schools were established as a further attempt to practise inclusive education and cater to children of all educational needs and abilities (DBE, 2011)

1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

1.7.1 Teacher

The act of imparting skills and knowledge to another person is commonly referred to as teaching (Rajagopalan, 2019). Therefore, a teacher is a person who assists learners or students in acquiring knowledge and competence. While many people can be taught informally, in the context of this study, a teacher is a paid professional employed by a school. Teaching is complex in nature due to it being a social practice and it takes place in a specific context and teachers can often be shaped and influenced by the values in their particular contexts (Cochran-Smith, 2016).

1.7.2 Perception

Perception involves the way we see and understand the world around us using our senses and cognitive process. It is a unique way of understanding things by interpreting sensory information based on experience, processing information and forming mental models (Walker & Avant, 2005). For perception to occur, sensory experience is necessary, as well as personal experience and comprehension which can lead to a response about the experience.

1.7.3 Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS)

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support can be understood as a universal school-wide preventative framework that aims to reduce behaviour problems by assisting schools in designing effective behaviour supports and practices as well as age-appropriate incentives (Bradshaw et al., 2008). It has been successfully implemented in over 25 000 schools in the United States of America (USA).

1.7.4 Full-Service School

As an attempt to include all learners into mainstream schooling, the Ministry of Education selected approximately 500 out of 20 000 primary schools to be converted

into ‘full-service schools’ (see Guidelines for Full-Service and Inclusive Schools, DBE, 2009).These are not special schools but mainstream schools that are resourced and supported to provide the full range of learning needs to all learners (see Guidelines for Full-Service and Inclusive Schools, DBE, 2009).

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1 consisted of a starting discussion on essential components of this research study followed by the rationale. This chapter then presented the primary and secondary research questions. A summary of the paradigmatic perspectives, research design and research methodology was provided as well as quality assurance criteria followed throughout the research were introduced in this chapter. The final section offered concept clarification of concepts included in the research questions and literature review and used throughout the study.

Chapter 2 contextualises the research question in scientific literature. Background on the Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports system (PBIS) is given as well as literary evidence of its practice. The theoretical framework of this study is then discussed in relation to the research question and the research aims.

Chapter 3 describes the research process. This is introduced by a discussion to explain the research methodological assumptions, with precise focus on the research design, the data collection technique and the method for data analysis and interpretation. This chapter then concludes with a discussion on ethical conduct and quality control.

Chapter 4 explains the data analysis and interpretation. A discussion of the findings found in this study is then presented in relation to the relevant literature.

Chapter 5 comprises of a synopsis of the previous chapters as well as the conclusions and recommendations of this study. Quality assurance criteria are then discussed as well as the manner in which this was adhered to and the role of the researcher throughout this study. The chapter then concludes with a discussion on the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the existing literature that is centred on the Positive Behavioural Intervention and Supports (PBIS) framework. The key topics surrounding this framework include the history, fundamental principles, applications, benefits and results of PBIS.

2.2 LEARNER DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE SCHOOLING CONTEXT

According to Burton (2008:15) schools are the place where children learn and "are socially and intellectually prepared to become responsible adults who actively participate in, and make a positive contribution to, society and the economy". For our children to effectively learn and be taught, good classroom management and instruction is essential (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Herman et al., 2020). Even with the highest level of classroom instruction, if pupils within the classroom setting are distracted and are not well behaved, it will be difficult for most of them to learn (Cyril & Raj, 2017; Gage et al., 2017).

Good discipline is able to reduce disruptive and aggressive behaviour within the classroom; however, good discipline does not merely happen — it comes as a result of educators enforcing and encouraging it (Cyril & Raj, 2017; Motseke, 2020; Oliver, Wehby & Reschly, 2011). Classroom rules are integral to effective classroom discipline and management (Alter & Haydon, 2017). It is recommended that classroom rules are established as a collaboration between teachers and learners (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Jones & Jones, 2016; Kerr & Nelson, 2010).

Another recommendation is that rules should be positively stated and emphasis is placed on the desired behaviours (Alberto & Troutman, 2013; Zirpoli, 2016). It is suggested that rules are stated clearly and are specific so that learners are well aware of what is expected of them (Alter & Haydon, 2017). Other factors that research showed to aid effective discipline were routine, praise and encouragement, consequences that have a logical fit to the behaviour and intentional engagement (Alter & Haydon, 2017; Greenberg, Putman & Walsh, 2014). Classroom teacher and

learners both have a responsibility and contribute towards effective classroom discipline (Cyril & Jay, 2017; Motseke, 2020).

Recent research has made the connection between teachers' social and emotional intelligence and their discipline strategies (Cyril & Raj, 2017; Jeloudar & Yunus, 2011; Feza, 2019). This research aims to create an awareness around the benefits of metacognition when administering and fostering discipline (Feza, 2019). It argues that discipline is more than checking items of behaviour on a list; but it actually requires planning, reflection and self-evaluation from the educator (Cyril & Raj, 2017). When good discipline management is missing in a school, it gives rise to a chaotic school climate where learning and holistic development of learners is compromised (Branson et al., 2014; Motseke, 2020).

It is well known that schools both nationally and internationally have continued to experience challenges when having to manage learner discipline within the classroom (Netshitangani, 2017). Learner behaviour that is overtly disruptive and unruly has been the concern of teachers and school administrators for years and it continues to be a significant challenge today (Schwab et al., 2019). Behavioural difficulties like this have an effect on the learners, their futures, their peers, their teachers, the education system, the employment sector and the progression of the country as a whole (Dwarika, 2019; Human-Vogel & Morkel, 2017).

Behavioural difficulties are not caused in isolation nor do they occur in isolation. For teachers striving towards quality instruction for all, having to deal with behavioural difficulties on a continuum affects the pace, the instruction and the quality of teaching and learning (Branson et al., 2014; Motseke, 2020). In recent years, much research has gone into the psychological well-being of teachers (Evans et al., 2019; Health & Safety Executive, 2015). Research from North America shows that between 40% and 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Keating, 2016). In the United Kingdom (UK), stress, elevated rates of job attrition and suicide experienced in the teaching profession have been reported (Aud et al., 2011; Brown & Ralph, 2018)

In South Africa, teachers work in an education system that is flawed, where poor teacher morale, poor work ethic, low levels of support and accountability are experienced (Mouton et al., 2013; Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). While there

are many other occupational sources of teacher stress for these findings, problems with learner discipline are repeatedly mentioned as a major factor (Chan et al., 2010; Schwab et al., 2019).

Continuous disruption and boisterous behaviour result in large rates of violence in schools (Human-Vogel & Morkel, 2017; Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). Burton and Leoshut (2013) report that just over a fifth of primary school children have experienced violence at school. What concerns researchers the most is that these acts of violence only appear to exacerbate the existing lack of learning culture within schools which has a ripple effects on learners (Burton & Leoschut, 2013).

According to Papatheodorou (2005:13) “behaviour that has an effect on the learner’s own and other learner’s well-being and on the teaching and learning process should receive due attention to eliminate future difficulties”. When any kind of difficulty experienced by a child, be it emotional, educational, mental or behavioural, is left untreated at an early age, there is the risk of severe academic failure and the development of a range of mental health problems in adolescence and adulthood (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014; Ogundele, 2018). As a country, South Africa has born witness to the effects of this perpetuating cycle (Netshitangani, 2017).

2.3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM IN CONTEXT

South Africa, similar to many other developing countries, has low academic outcomes, high drop-out rates, a shortage of unskilled workers, high unemployment rates, and a large informal sector (Flederman, 2009; Motseke, 2020; Yu, 2013). What then occurs in schools is a reflection of the state of society. Therefore, when looking at the South African education system, it is imperative that it is understood in context, taking its history into account (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014).

In the 17th Century, the penal justice system was introduced in South Africa and corporal punishment was instituted (Morell, 2001; Nkabinde, 2016). Corporal means ‘relating to the body’, therefore corporal punishment “is defined as the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child pain, but not for injury, for the purposes of correcting or controlling the child’s behaviour” (Donnelly & Straus, 2005:3; Maree, 1995). This type of punishment has its roots in slavery and grew in the colonial era and later in the apartheid era (Gallo, 2020; Nkabinde, 2016; Maree, 1995).

Before 1994, learners in schools were racially segregated. Under the National Party's rule, Bantu Education was instituted (Gallo, 2020; Hunter, 2019). This was the inferior education system for black learners that was introduced. In these schools, there were few resources, teachers taught by means of rote learning, content was mostly meaningless and the aim of the entire system was not to educate but to suppress and control (Hunter & Morell, 2021). Even though corporal punishment was eradicated after 1994, its effects are still evident (Breen et al., 2015; Jansen, 2015; Nkabinde, 2016).

Many teachers today who were either exposed to corporal punishment as pupils or were a part of administering it, used physical punishment to control (Du Toit & Manganyi, 2016). Children internalised it as the consequence of their conduct and would abstain from the behaviour without developing any understanding or cognitive benefit like agency and problem-solving skills. Research has shown that the removal of corporal punishment has left many teachers feeling disappointed (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010; Morris et al., Steinberg, 2013) and unable to cope with poor behaviour and discipline.

Black learners were the most disadvantaged and neglected by this system and while a lot has changed, the majority of black learners in the country still attend rural and township schools where the quality of education remains poor due to socio-economic difficulties (Burton & Leoschut, 2012; Maree, 2012).

The disparities that exist within the South African education system are known all too well and are worrisome to say the least (Jansen 2015; Moloi, 2019; Pretorius, 2014). The South African education system is comprised of two divisions: one that is efficient, resourced and able to educate its learners and another that is poor, dysfunctional and unable to equip learners with the necessary educational skills and skills needed for early employment (Jansen, 2015; Van Der Berg et al., 2015). Unfortunately, learners in the latter-mentioned schools account for 80% of the total number of enrolments in elementary and secondary education, making them essential to the national educational progress (Grossen et al., 2017; Moloi, 2019). Poverty, exposure to crime and violence, poor infrastructure and neglect put these learners at a greater risk of developing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

2.4 THE EFFECTS OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN SOUTH AFRICAN CLASSROOMS

Within the South African education system, behavioural difficulties faced by learners are considered to be one of the most important problems facing teachers (Prinsloo & Gasa, 2016). There appears to be a general climate of disrespect and disregard for authority, not only in schools but within society at large (Motseke, 2020). Disruptive behaviour, truancy, bullying and violence have reached alarming rates in South African schools (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). According to Hadebe (2020), 64% of all adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18 experience two or more forms of violence, while 34% experience between four or five forms of violence between these ages. With such extreme and harmful behaviour found in schools, effective teaching and learning cannot be consistently attained (Cyril & Raj, 2017).

Learner discipline and effective school management allow teachers to be responsive to the educational needs of their learners (Motseke, 2020; Oliver et al., 2011). However, with teachers having to deal with all of the above disruptions, this exacerbates teaching and learning difficulties (Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014). Since many schools are poorly resourced, poorly managed and teachers have classes of 50 learners and more, academic outcomes are impeded (Jansen, 2015; Weybright et al., 2017). Drop-out rates increase rapidly once learners enter the senior phase even before learners have completed compulsory schooling at Grade 9 level (Corno, 2019; Weybright et al., 2017). Along with high drop-out rates, there is a similarly high retention rate (Grossen et al, 2017; Sing & Maringe, 2020). In 2014, the retention rate was at 9% which is higher than most developed and developing countries (Grossen et al, 2017). By the time learners are in Grade 10, 52% have been retained at least once and from this stage, learners are pushed along until they complete their secondary education (Grossen et al., 2017). This results in learners exiting schools before the foundations for further learning or education opportunities are developed (Sing & Maringe, 2020). In this way, the education system further legitimises the existing inequalities in the country (Jansen, 2015).

The problems experienced in schools are not left there but over time the problems of South African schools become the problems of society (Moloi, 2019; Munje & Maarman, 2018). In order to reduce these behavioural problems in schools, there is a

call to consider and challenge the culture and climate existing within the schools (Jansen, 2015; Moloi, 2019).

Organisational culture such as school climate, is important. Research has shown that schools with a positive school climate are less prone to behaviour infractions and violence (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). School climate cannot be changed with the reactive and punitive zero-tolerance policies used in the past but a redefinition of culture is needed where shared values and beliefs are created (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). This will allow for a method of character development to be modelled that will ensure that young people leave school as well-adjusted members of society (Delale-O Connor et al., 2017).

Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is one such method that is driven by values and aims to create positive interactions in schools and foster a positive school climate (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). To understand the PBIS and its ability to be effective and efficient, understanding its history is crucial.

2.5 THE HISTORY OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)

During the 1980s and 1990s in the United States of America (USA), there was a great deal of concern about problematic learner behaviour and its impact on quality education (Martin, 2013; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). The American administration saw the ineffectiveness of punitive discipline approaches like zero-tolerance and began to make a shift towards a more pro-social approach to behaviour and discipline (Noltemeyer et al., 2018; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Researchers at the University of Oregon conducted numerous studies on problem learner behaviour and presented the concept of Positive Behaviour and Supports at a conference where it became a school-wide initiative (Martin, 2013; Simonsen & Sugai, 2012). This initiative put interventions and strategies in place to achieve desired behavioural outcomes (Sugai & Horner, 2020).

The interventions and strategies initiative continued to grow in popularity until it became part of legislation in the amendments made to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 (IDEA, 1997). Schools were legally required to list positive behaviour supports in the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for those learners whose behaviour has affected their learning or the learning of others (IDEA, 1997;

Sugai & Horner, 2020). Schools had to organise themselves into supporting learners with behavioural needs and not just those with disabilities or special needs (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) then referred to the strategies which could be implemented on a school-wide level to reduce behaviour problems (Noltemeyer et al., 2018).

Once PBIS was incorporated into legislature, the growth was exponential and further encouraged in 2001 when President George W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). As schools in the country were becoming increasingly diverse and dealing with an array of learning and behavioural problems, the government called for equal education opportunities for all (Sugai et al., 2000). To take this act a step further, in 2015, the US federal government signed the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2018). This act empowered states and local jurisdictions to make decisions to implement academic and behavioural systems that improved academic and accountability standards and allowed for the healthier functioning of schools (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2018; O'Brennan et al., 2017). Not only did this act increase the funding towards schools but they also put new measures in schools for holding them accountable for quality learning (Noltemeyer et al., 2018; O' Brennan et al., 2017). The government did this by requesting uniform standards, practices and methods of assessment from every state in order to create federal accountability (Martin, 2013).

Schools across the various states began adopting and implementing PBIS to address behavioural difficulties that affected the education they were aiming to deliver (Horner et al., 2010; Martin, 2013). The intention of the act was to level the playing field so that all learners, regardless of background, would have access to quality education (Plans, 2015; Strobach, 2018). To understand the expansion of PBIS well, understanding its basic tenets and principles is essential (Horner et al., 2017; Strobach, 2018).

2.6 THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS FRAMEWORK

Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports is one of the most extensively known evidence-based approaches and is a set of ideas and tools that schools use to improve the behaviour of learners (Kittelman et al., 2019; McDaniel et al., 2018). It is composed of a three-tiered framework that methodically organises and implements behavioural

supports to encourage students' behavioural and academic outcomes (Freeman et al., 2016; Kittelman et al., 2019; Tyre et al., 2018). The system rests on the "scientific assumption that human behaviour, while affected by a complex mix of biological, societal and learning factors, can change as a result of the actions of others in a supportive, caregiving role and is for people from all cultures, ages and levels of competence" (Dunlap et al., 2009: 4).

2.6.1 Three-Tiered Framework

The PBIS framework is not a curriculum but rather a process, a process that is not based on a new theory but instead draws upon several existing theories that have been well researched for decades (Bradshaw et al., 2015; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Incorporated into this framework are principles from applied behavioural analysis, social learning theories and positive youth development theories (Martin, 2013). Due to the preventative and inclusive nature of PBIS, it comprises of multiple levels of support; hence it is known as a three-tiered framework (Freeman et al., 2016). The interventions and the intensities thereof vary, depending on the needs of the student (James et al., 2019).

2.6.1.1 Tier I

This tier is known as the universal tier as it aims to preventatively meet the needs of majority of the learners (Horner & Sugai, 2015). The school does this by firstly developing a core PBIS team consisting of various staff members that are involved in leading the implementation process (James et al., 2019; Horner & Sugai, 2015). These team members need to regularly conduct meetings, attend training and be a part of the development and implementation process for other staff members (James et al., 2019). It is this team's job to select three to five behavioural expectations in the form of values that are modelled and consistently taught to learners (OSEP Technical Assistance, 2018a). For example, if the expectation is "Be respectful", this expectation will be defined according to the different ways of expressing this in various settings like the classroom, the playground and at home (Noltemeyer et al., 2018). A school-wide system of reward is designed for all the learners meeting the expectations and likewise an agreed-upon system is used to address the violations of these expectations (OSEP Technical Assistance, 2018a). PBIS is an evidence-based

practice informed my data, therefore in this tier a formal system is created to collect and analyse data (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

2.6.1.2 Tier II

Once the first tier has been implemented, there will be a percentage of learners who are not responsive to the supports in Tier I (James et al., 2019; Martin, 2013). These learners will require more intensive support strategies; therefore, the focus of Tier II will be on selected interventions and this will allow the learners who are at risk to be assisted and prevent them from further harm (Bradshaw et al., 2015).

2.6.1.3 Tier III

Individual support is the central point of Tier III (James et al., 2019). There may be a percentage of learners within the school who still may not have responded positively to the supports and interventions designed in Tier I and Tier II (Martin, 2013). These learners may require support of a more intensive nature. When staff are designing their interventions, it is important to take into account the protective factors and strengths of these learners as well as their risk factors to help guide the process (Horner & Sugai, 2018).

Instead of external workshops and training, PBIS prefers an on-site approach where a team of the school staff is assembled, assisted and guided by an external coach who provides consultation and support (McIntosh et al., 2010). The PBIS framework focuses on reinforcing the positive behaviours and when one considers the need for a more pro-social approach, the rapid spread across states and countries come as no surprise (Reinke et al., 2012; Tillery et al., 2010).

2.7 IMPLEMENTATION OF PBIS

In accordance with US legislation and in an attempt to have classrooms centred on positive interactions, more than 25 000 schools in over 44 states as well as in Canada, Norway, Netherlands, Australia and Singapore have adopted and implemented PBIS (Horner & Sugai, 2018; Nelen et al., 2020; Reinke et al., 2012). Research has shown that when PBIS is implemented with high fidelity, it is effective and can reduce discipline problems, disrespect, alter the school climate and organisational health of a school and increase teacher motivation and efficacy (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Kittleman et al., 2019).

Randomised trials and longitudinal research on PBIS have shown its effectiveness on achieving positive student outcomes (Horner & Sugai, 2018; Kittleman et al., 2019). In a study conducted in the school district of Connecticut, discipline infractions had significantly reduced after two years of PBIS implementation (Nocera et al., 2014). The office discipline referrals reduced by 36%, suspensions reduced by 39%, behaviour infractions reduced by 40% and an overall change in the school climate and academic success was seen (Nocera et al., 2014). In 2012, Jurupa in Southern California had a high rate of suspensions and disorderly behaviour; they had also been known for classifying many of their students as emotionally disturbed (Driscoll-Mink, 2018). In order to combat these difficulties, the district implemented PBIS in order to train teachers to create more progressive interactions with learners and manage discipline (Clayton Johnson, 2020; Driscoll-Mink, 2018). They modified PBIS to contextually fit their environment and their new model influenced their lessons and programmes at the school (Clayton Johnson, 2020). Prior to the implementation of PBIS, the district reported 852 suspensions for defiant behaviour; between the years of 2014 to 2015, this reduced to 393 and was expected to reduce to 210 in 2016 (Clayton Johnson, 2020).

Another elementary school in the city of California that had previously overflowed with discipline infractions, is now a place of learning and collaboration. Over the last six years, through the implementation of PBIS, there has been an 84% reduction in school suspensions (Anderson-Saunders, 2016). This school now works together and reviews data regularly to guide their decision making (Anderson-Saunders, 2016). Other studies done in rural and urban middle and elementary schools have shown a 42% reduction in discipline referrals (Bradshaw et al., 2010). In the second year of a study done in an elementary school with 468 students, it was found that with the implementation of PBIS, inappropriate behaviour reduced by 66% while physical aggression and insubordination reduced by 40% and 43% respectively (Sherrod et al., 2009).

2.8 PBIS IN NON-TRADITIONAL SETTINGS

A growing body of research sharing the successful outcomes of PBIS in traditional school settings has led to an interest in extending these practices to non-traditional school settings (Jolivette et al., 2013; Scheuermann & Nelson, 2019). These can

include alternative education settings like schools with a particular disciplinary or therapeutic focus or even juvenile care facilities. Settings like this are designed to address emotional, mental, behavioural needs that cannot be successfully met within a public school (Swain-Bradway et al., 2013). The adolescents enrolled at these facilities are at a high risk and tend to display behaviours that would be incongruent to the expectations at a traditional school (Eiraldi et al., 2019; Scheuermann & Nelson, 2019).

For many of these young people, this is their last opportunity to receive adequate support and intervention. As a result, many alternative educational setting and secure care facilities have implemented PBIS across various states and districts (Eiraldi et al., 2019; Scheuermann & Nelson, 2019). The expectations set out have had to be modified to suit the particular context and when done successfully, the outcomes appear to show great benefit (Eiraldi et al., 2019). These benefits have included reduced behavioural occurrences, lower rates of exclusionary discipline, greater perceived safety and improved rates of programme completion (Scheuermann & Nelson, 2019).

2.9 BARRIERS TO SUCCESFUL PBIS IMPLEMENTATION

While there is extensive research on the successful outcomes of PBIS, there has been contradictory information where office discipline referrals have not significantly reduced, or there has not been noticeable improvement in the school climate or academic achievement (Evans et al., 2019; Martin, 2013).

According to much of the research, when significant impacts are not made, one has to consider the fidelity of the implementation of PBIS (Kittleman et al., 2019). For PBIS to be successfully implemented, it is essential that it is correctly understood (Noltemeyer et al., 2014). PBIS is not a framework aimed at merely teaching rules, it is concerned with improvement of the quality of one's life (Martin, 2013). In order for PBIS to work, it requires the commitment of a range of stakeholders, from teachers, leadership, counsellors to parents, family members and the surrounding community (Evans et al., 2019; Freeman et al., 2016).

Teachers will be consistently modelling expectations and have interactions with learners on a daily basis (Nelen et al., 2020). For PBIS to be implemented in any

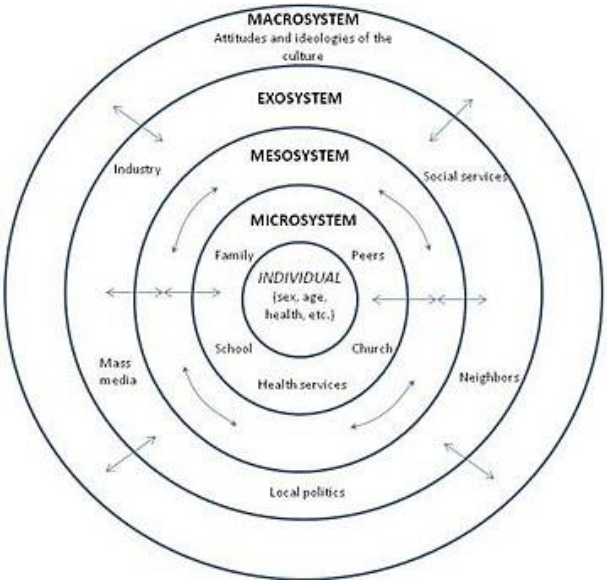
organisation, it is imperative that there is buy-in or acceptance of this programme by the staff (Nocera et al., 2014). When staff feel forced or obligated, they may not implement the processes effectively (Horner & Sugai, 2015; Nelen at al., 2020; Nocera, 2014). According to Sullivan et al. (2011), 80% of staff buy-in is required for PBIS to be successfully implemented.

Therefore, organisations that are hoping to implement PBIS successfully need to acknowledge the perceptions, ideologies and understanding of their staff and identify if any of these may differ to those of the programme being implemented (Nelen et al., 2020). This will enlighten management about additional work that is needed (Evans et al., 2019; Horner & Sugai, 2015). However, ensuring that PBIS is culturally a good fit for the country and the way education is done, is also important (Nelen et al., 2020).

2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: BRONFENBRENNER'S BIOECOLOGICAL MODEL

When researching a particular concept or phenomenon, it is imperative that the research is viewed from a particular theoretical lens (Ary et al., 2010; Baxter & Jack, 2015). Due to the inclusivity of PBIS, this research study viewed the work done through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model. Bronfenbrenner viewed the individual's development as an occurrence of the interaction between their different interacting systems (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). He believed that the events and interactions of one system affects and is affected by other systems which means that Bronfenbrenner proposed that relationships in their very nature are reciprocal, complex and multifaceted (Bronfenbrenner; 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Swart & Pettipher, 2016)

In the 1970s, Bronfenbrenner presented an ecological systemic model that explained the direct and indirect influences on a child's life that led to its growth and development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Onwuegbuzie, Collins & Frels, 2013). These influences were described as the many levels of contexts of the individual's life being the *microsystem, mesosystem, exosytem, macrosystem and chronosystem* (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).



Source: Wikipedia Commons, 2020

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's ecological systemic model

Bronfenbrenner believed that a person's development is the product of a network of interactions between the person and their social contexts (Bronfenbrenner. 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). He argued that both the environment and processes that one experiences facilitate potential development and in many unfortunate cases, facilitate risk and harm (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). There are four dimensions that need to be considered in Bronfenbrenner's theory and these are *proximal process, person characteristics, contexts* and *time* (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013).

Proximal processes are based on the assumption that development happens when there is interaction between a person and his or her environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). These processes are particular forms of interaction between organisms and environment that operate over time and are posited as the primary mechanisms producing human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006; Tobach, 1981). For the interactions to be effective, they must occur on a regular basis (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Examples of enduring patterns of proximal processes are parent-child relationships, peer-peer relationships, and teacher-student relationships all of which can promote development or be destructive but they do not act in isolation (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Person characteristics are the characteristics that a person has that result in different responses within that person's environment (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The first characteristic is demand *characteristics*, which refer to the most basic physical attributes that elicit an immediate response, for example, gender and age (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). *Resource characteristics* are assets and liabilities that influence a person's capacity to engage in proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). These resources can be developmental like particular skills and abilities or they can be material resources like where you stay or which school you attend (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013). *Force characteristics* can mobilise proximal processes and sustain their operation (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000). These are also known as one's disposition and may include anything like temperament, motivation, persistence and curiosity (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Contexts in this model refer to the many levels that influence a person's development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The first system, the *Microsystem* is the immediate environment in which an individual exists, such as family, school, peer groups and community (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This system is usually the one in which the child spends most time and therefore in this system, the interactions should be aimed at being supportive and accepting (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In homes where children are disadvantaged or neglected, their microsystem can be a risk factor to their development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The *mesosystem* exists between two or more *microsystems,* for example the relationship between the school and the family (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Experiences in one microsystem can influence the happenings of the next system (Swart & Pettipher, 2017). Schools have the ability to become protective buffers by providing constructive relationships (Swart & Pettipher, 2017). The *exosystem* is one in which the learner is not directly involved but decisions made in these systems can have an effect on the child, like the education system or the health care system (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The *macrosystem* refers to the social beliefs and attitudes inherent in the systems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). *Time* is part of every single system and influences the individual throughout their life.

This theory or model is significant in that it has the potential to explain the nature and dynamics of implementing a large-scale process like PBIS (Lourenco, 2021). The behaviour of learners which the framework hopes to change, does not occur in isolation. Instead, it is a result of all the interactions between the various systems that

exist within the learner's life (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2013). Poverty, abuse, neglect that may happen at home has a direct influence on the school microsystem and the characteristics of the person will play a large role in how they navigate through these challenges (Swart & Pettipher, 2017).

In South Africa, behavioural challenges in schools are a major concern. Teacher attrition, teacher burn out, low academic outcomes and poorly resourced schools are but a few conditions that characterise the education system (Motseke, 2020). All of these conditions form part of the system in which the learners exists. The implementation of the PBIS framework is a possible solution to fostering a healthy school climate in which behaviour infractions are reduced and a positive culture of learning is cultivated (Nocera et al., 2014; Noltemeyer et al., 2014). The framework shows how change begins in the microsystem, in the hope to influence the interlinking systems. Teachers are essential to the effective implementation of this system (Martin, 2013). Therefore, this study focused on the perception of teachers regarding the implementation of this system. It is hoped that by gaining insight into teachers' perceptions at a school that has difficulty with discipline, it may assist other schools in implementing a system that has proved to have high student outcomes.

2.11 CONCLUSION

Throughout this chapter, emphasis was placed on the behavioural and discipline challenges in South African schools. The connection between these challenges and the increasing dropout and retention rates were highlighted. All of the findings indicated the burning need for a move away from punitive and restrictive discipline systems and motivated a move toward a system that reinforces the positive, one that is inclusive and holistic. Positive Behaviours and Intervention Supports (PBIS) is one such system that has major success across the globe and this study aims to gain insight into how it has been implemented at a full-service school in South Africa and a deeper understanding of teachers' perceptions of PBIS (Freeman et al., 2016).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I present and discuss my chosen methodology and how it relates to the purpose of the study in an attempt to answer the research question: *How do teachers in a full-service school perceive the PBIS system?* The flow of this chapter follows the designed plan outlined in the figure below:

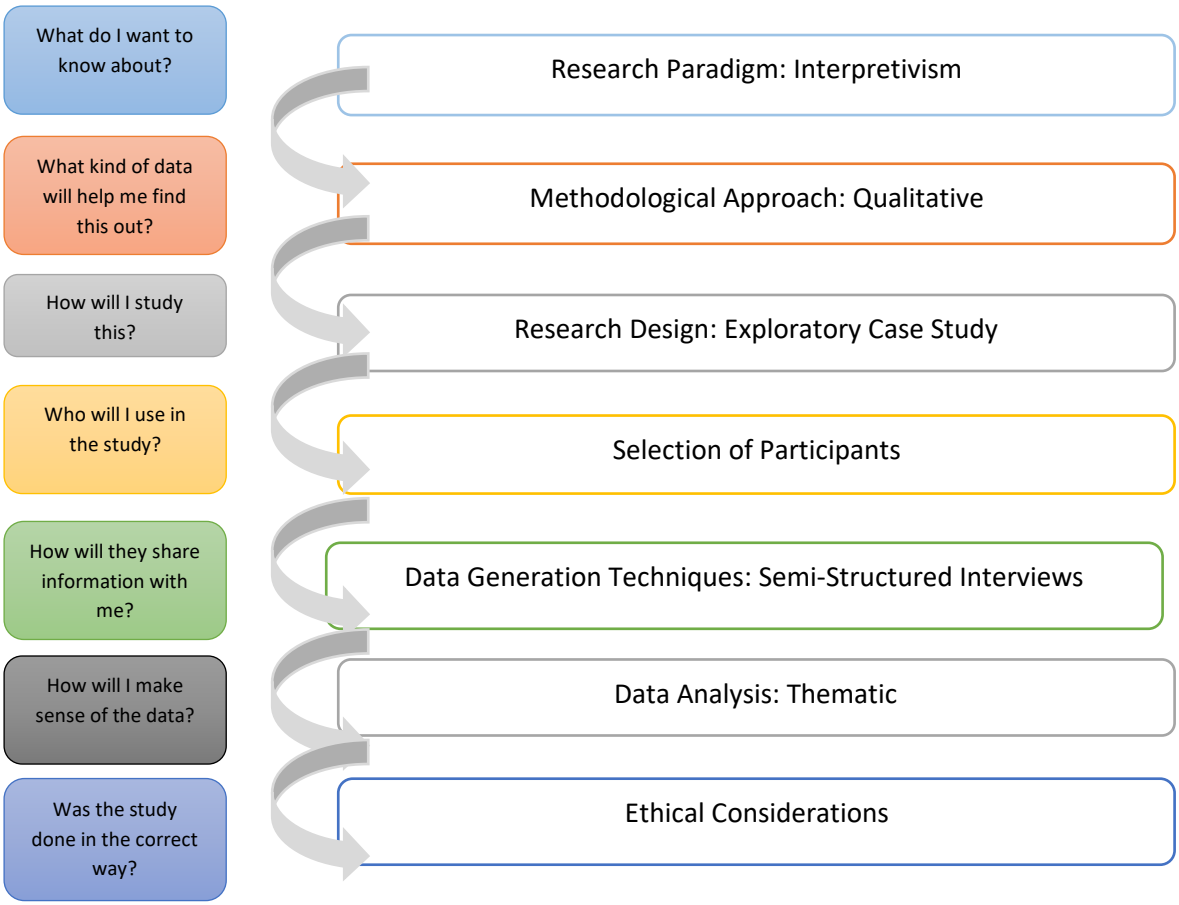


Figure 3.1: Outline of methodology chapter

The research design of this study is discussed with specific data generation techniques that were utilised. All the data analysis procedures used are also described. The chapter concludes by highlighting the quality criteria incorporated and the ethical considerations that were involved.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVISM

Selecting a suitable paradigm is essential as it guides all action throughout a research study (Neuman, 2011). According to Kuhn (1977), a paradigm refers to a particular research culture that is utilised, along with the paradigm's set of beliefs, assumptions and values that will act as a framework for the nature of the research to be conducted. Nieuwenhuis (2007) describes it as the fundamental beliefs that give rise to a particular world-view and it will act as an organising principle for how reality is interpreted. In an attempt to carry out this study successfully and in a manner that is suitable to its aim, an interpretivist paradigmatic perspective was selected.

Interpretivism rests on the belief that reality is constructed through subjective experiences of the world and that there are no prescribed routes into the inquiry of knowledge (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Myers, 2009; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Walsham, 1993). This approach assumes that there is no objective reality that is devoid of subjective human thinking and reasoning (Myers, 2009). Interpretivist researchers work on the assumption that reality is only accessible through social constructions; therefore, the social world is not a 'given' (Myers, 2009; Walsham, 1993). Instead, it is produced and reinforced by humans through social interaction and should be interpreted from the meaning that the participants attach to it (De Vos et al., 2011). Interpretivism argues the need for a research methodology and data generation techniques that are relevant to the participants in the study (Grix, 2010).

In this particular research study, interpretivism was deemed most suitable as it is concerned with understanding social phenomenon or process in its natural setting. As a result, interpretivism accommodates contexts that are unique and varied in human experience (De Vos et al., 2011). This is extremely beneficial to this study as each teacher's perceptions of the PBIS system are bound to differ. The selected paradigm also allows for these variations in subjective experience to be reflected in the findings as it contributes to the rich information anticipated to be obtained from this study (Myers, 2009).

This epistemological stance has limitations like any other and it is imperative that these are brought into consideration. While interpretivism places emphasis on subjective experience, the knowledge that is generated has limited transferability (Scotland, 2012). However, the study focused on the perceptions of the teachers and this allowed

for subjective accounts that do need to be measured according to a set standard. In this paradigm, the researcher and participants were able to explore the reality of the phenomenon or system being studied (Myers, 2009). This indicated that the information found was insightful and highlighted occurrences relevant to that particular context but that it cannot be generalised to a number of settings (de Vos et al*.,* 2011*).*

After taking all of this into consideration, along with the purpose of the study, interpretivism was deemed to be the most suitable paradigm for the study. The intention of this study was not for it to be replicated to various contexts but to gain true insight into the experiences and perceptions of teachers in one particular context. When employing this paradigm, it has been suggested that with interpretivism there are not any correct or incorrect theories but it is about ways in which one views the world (Walsham, 1993). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, utilising this paradigm was a way to gain insight into an aspect of the world in which my participants find themselves.

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

For the purpose of this study, a qualitative methodological approach was most suitable. Qualitative research consists of a broad range of methodologies which all aim to depict and explain the social world and it is particularly helpful when studying processes in educational settings (Ary et al., 2010). A qualitative inquiry aims to understand and interpret human behaviour as it is lived by participants in a particular setting (de Vos et al., 2011). Qualitative researchers argue that human behaviour is bound to the context in which it occurs and that social reality cannot be reduced to quantitative variables (Baxter & Jack, 2015; de Vos et al., 2011). Under normal circumstances this would have meant that my chosen approach would guide me to collect data within the field in a real-life setting so that the entire focus is on the perceptions and understandings of my participants. However, due to the data collection being done during a global pandemic and the country being under lockdown, the data was collected virtually from the participants' home.

A qualitative approach is particularly useful when a researcher aims to explore and gain insight into a concern where little information surrounding it has been divulged (Graue & Karabon, 2013). This type of research makes it possible for the researcher to understand the meaning participants attach to processes and situations (Graue &

Karabon, 2013; Willig, 2008). It is able to produce a thick narrative description in order to illuminate information previously unknown. This approach complimented my study so well because through it I was able to obtain insight and gain rich detailed descriptions by the people who are living in their natural situations.

Very often, researchers have gone into settings as the experts who use their knowledge and skills to solve a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). However, this qualitative approach allows for the focus to be on understanding a phenomenon from the perspective of the insider who lives through the situation daily (Graue & Karabon, 2013). It tends to be open-ended and places a focus on mutual meaning-making where the researcher and participant work collaboratively to better understand the participants' perceptions (Finlay, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

On account of very little research being done on the PBIS system in the South African context, a qualitative approach was used as it was thought that it would allow access to holistic and rich information (Ary et al., 2010; Dwarika, 2019). The focus of the study shifted from the many others done internationally which have mainly paid attention to percentage reductions in office referrals and discipline matters; instead, this study attempted to gain an understanding of the teachers' perceptions of this system as they are key stakeholders in the implementation and fidelity of the PBIS system (Cyril & Raj, 2017). Qualitative research allows for a detailed picture of the teachers' perceptions to be painted and places emphasis on valuing these perceptions as opposed to ranking them (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Given the subjective nature of the findings, it is important to note that the findings cannot and should not be generalised to other contexts (Scotland, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012). Generalisation and explanation are not the aims of a qualitative study like this; insight into a system that could possibly reduce behaviour problems and the possibility that the system may lead to future research in South Africa is what was aimed for (Grix, 2010).

3.3.1 The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher can be considered as an instrument of data collection (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003). All data collection, whether it is through interviews or questionnaires, is essentially being received through this instrument (Ary et al., 2010). According to O'Sullivan (2015), the way that the researcher understands the

perspective of the participants is largely dependent on the researcher's own understanding of their role. A researcher does not just become an instrument in their data collection process but develops into the role. Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe it really well by encouraging researchers to develop the art of hearing data and develop "the use of self in relationship building...to communicate with people to create stories" (Nunkoosing, 2005:698). My role in this study was to act as a primary instrument for the generating of data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016) that would enable me to truly understand the participants' perceptions and provide an authentic view so that their voices may be heard.

It is important to clarify that while I, as the researcher, aimed at exploring the perceptions of the participants, the participants were people that I knew. Having previously worked at the primary school, the participants were former colleagues, an aspect that is further discussed when considering the ethics guiding this study. Knowing the participants was necessary to ascertain their exposure to the PBIS system and the length to which they had been part of its implementation. From the onset, participants were assured about the confidentiality that would be adhered to regarding the information shared. All participants were quite eager to share their views and wanted their views shared with the school so that it could be helpful; hence, transparency from the participants was not a concern.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: A CASE STUDY

Drawing on the work of Nieuwenhuis (2007), a research design is the strategy that not only encompasses the underlying assumptions of the study but prescribes the selection of participants, the data gathering techniques and the data analysis. For the purpose of this study, I selected an exploratory case study design. An exploratory case study design is a robust research design that allows for a phenomenon to be explored within its natural context allowing the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2014; Maree, 2012; Tellis, 1997).

This design is flexible as it allows the researcher to discern when and what boundaries should be set and adjusted (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2007). An exploratory case study design allows the researcher to closely examine the data in a specific context eliciting rich and holistic information from the participants (Creswell,

2014; Yin, 1984). It is open-ended in nature and aims to provide the researcher with great insight, allowing the study to be descriptive as well (Creswell, 2014).

Exploratory case studies enable the researcher to explore a phenomenon that is of interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Data collected in this particular type of study are not controlled and meddled with but are a recount of the participants' experiences and perceptions in the context in which the activity or experiences actually occur (Burton, 2000; Yin, 1984). Detailed information from one context gained in the case study can then be used in relation to other contexts. Since this research was collected from one school only, the findings are by no means a generalisation of experiences in other schools. Instead, the data collected from this study will provide a synthetic perspective on the experiences of the teachers from the particular school (Maree, 2012). While case studies can often yield a large volume of data that can require a lengthy time period to work through, they do yield detailed information which is an aim of this study.

3.5 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The selection of participants or sampling refers to the process of selecting the group of people who would work with me to answer my research questions and strive to meet my research aim (Creswell, 2014). Many researchers argue that random sampling is always best to acquire in-depth information yet it is possible to achieve this through the use of purposive sampling (Ary et al., 2010; Creswell 2014). Therefore, this study employed purposive sampling. The sampling criterion used to intentionally select teachers was that the teachers needed to be well acquainted with the PBIS system and have experience in implementing the discipline system in their classrooms. Purposive sampling was used to ensure that the participants selected provided information with rich descriptions that were able to answer the research questions accordingly (Wayhuni, 2012)

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is often used in qualitative research when researchers want to select the participants because they are studying specific processes with specific aims (Wayhuni, 2012). In order to gain an in-depth understanding, only a limited number of participants were involved in the study and could therefore not be selected at random (Nieuwenhuis, 2007).

Ary et al. (2010) state that the technique chosen for sampling should be one that provides the maximum insight and understanding for the study. Purposive sampling is selected because it illustrates features of the case that are of interest to the study and it is dependent of the judgement of the researcher (Ary et al., 2010; Nieuwenhuis, 2007). This sampling criterion was most suitable for the study as it allowed for all participants to be knowledgeable on the system adding to the thick detailed description of data.

In order to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the PBIS system as implemented in a full-service school, four participants were selected in order to collect data. The participants ranged from teachers in the Foundation Phase right through to Senior Phase and all of whom were quite knowledgeable on the PBIS system.

3.6 DATA GENERATION TECHNIQUES

In order to remain true to the interpretivist qualitative methodological approach, in this research study, I made use of the term data generation as opposed to data collection since the data was co-constructed and produced between both the researcher and the participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Data generation in qualitative data should allow the researcher the opportunity to holistically understand and convey a contextualised image of the people and the phenomena (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The data generated are therefore dynamic and emergent.

For the purpose of this study, the data generation technique was selected on the basis of it being useful to the research aims. The data generated needed to provide insight and rich detail about a system that is not well known. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were selected as the preferred method to generate data.

3.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Holstein and Gubrium (1995:8) describe the interview as: “a social interaction with the interviewer and interviewee sharing in constructing a story and its meaning; both are participants in the meaning-making process”. For this reason, interviews are at the centre of many qualitative studies as they provide deep, detailed and contextual data into a phenomenon (Ravitch & Carl, 2016)

Semi-structured interviews allow for the researcher to understand the event of the phenomena being studied through the perspective of the participants (Ary et al., 2012). This type of interview is extremely suitable as this study required detailed insights from the participants (Gill et al., 2008). Due to very little research being done on the PBIS system, semi-structured interviews provide the opportunity for the generation of detailed information from the participants (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This type of interview made provision for flexibility and was able to accommodate personal views that emerged.

The following key characteristics of qualitative interviews, outlined by Ravitch and Carl (2016) were applied to the semi-structured interviews conducted in this study as presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Key characteristics of qualitative interviews

CHARACTERISTIC	APPLICATION
Relational	Due to the participants being former colleagues, there was a brief relationship formed prior to the data generation process. The last year of employment with the participants I interviewed was in 2018 and the interviews for the research study were done in 2020. It is beneficial to note that given the lapse in time since my employment at the school, the participants were able to respond to me as a researcher and not as a colleague. This allowed the interview process to remain professional whilst still having an element of trust.
Contextual	During the interview process, it was especially important to take account of the fact that all the participants occupy many different contexts and have views that are influenced accordingly. Therefore, it was imperative to always ask for clarity when needed during the interview process.
Non-evaluative	My aim as a qualitative researcher, throughout this process was solely to understand and not to evaluate the quality or accuracy of a participant's response.
	Throughout the interview, I adopted a process where I recognised the participant as the expert of their experience. In moments

CHARACTERISTIC	APPLICATION
Person-centred	where they brought a familiar scenario the fore and asked for a response, I would briefly engage without deterring from the subject of their content.
Temporal	During the interview process, particular reference was made to time and history. The participant was asked to share information about their history in education and the time set for each interview was adhered to.
Partial	As the researcher, I am only able to get a glimpse into the lives of the participants. Therefore, it is important that I did not assume apposition where I knew it all but rather provided the space for the participant to share their experience with me.
Non-neutral	Each participant has their subjective experience that influenced their views on what was being asked and I too, as the researcher came with my own subjective experience, that influenced my interpretation.

While these characteristics were suitable in guiding data generation in this study, it is imperative to note that interviews involve interaction which dictates collaboration; however, collaboration between two people cannot always be guaranteed (de Vos et al., 2012). One of the major challenges when conducting interviews according to de Vos et al. (2011) is being able to establish rapport with the participants whilst maintaining professionalism. Due to the fact that the participants were previous colleagues, establishing rapport was not a challenge. As the researcher, I also ensured that there was not any teaching or preaching to the participant. The sole purpose of the study was to gain insight from the subjective views of the participant (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). One of the other dangers of interviews is that the participants may get side tracked (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). To avoid this from happening, I continually drew participants' attention back to the question being asked in a gentle and affirming manner.

Semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview schedule (*cf*. Appendix E), were conducted online using virtual platforms such as Zoom or Google Hangouts, as the interviews were done during lockdown due to the global pandemic caused by the Corona virus and access into schools was not allowed. With the participants' consent, the interviews were audio-recorded using a recording device and observations were recorded in a reflexive journal. Participants were also given the interview schedule prior to the interview so that they had enough time to think about the questions and to reflect on their experiences and perceptions of PBIS prior to the interview.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data in this study were analysed utilising thematic data analysis, which is a method for recognising, examining and reporting patterns or themes within data (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Braun & Clarke, 2012). It was presumed that the majority of the participants would have many similarities and differences in their experiences making it crucial to place information in relevant themes while maintaining flexibility to highlight the authenticity of their individual experiences. By making use of a thematic data analysis approach, the large volume of information was nominally organised and resulted in rich and holistic data (Braun & Clarke, 2008).

The initial step in the thematic data analysis was to immerse myself in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2008). A data set was chosen starting with participant one and the focus when reading this set of data related to the primary research question at first. Based on the focus, the data set was open coded, after which an axial code was given that summarises the open code. Once the open codes had been listed, the inclusion and exclusion criteria for these codes were listed. Many teachers may have rather varying perceptions, some may be positive, educational, negative, concerning or challenging. Intense scrutiny of the axial codes was necessary in order to identify the key themes. Themes were also allocated for identifying the different perceptions in order to answer the primary research question (Ary et al., 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2008). The research data were recorded and checked for the necessary themes after a period of two weeks to ensure that no relevant information was omitted (Anney, 2014).

The second step in this process was to take the information and have it analysed according to relevance and importance among the identified themes. In doing this, the researcher ensured that rich data was gathered and extraneous information was

omitted (Ary et al., 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2008). The following step being the third step, comprised the analysis process. The researcher had to engage sufficiently with the data and the research questions in order to formulate how the attempts of the research study may be reflected in the findings (Ary et al., 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2008). For quality assurance, it was planned that member checking would be done, however due to South Africa being in lockdown level 3 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, this was not possible.

3.8 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Many positivists have questioned the trustworthiness of qualitative research because there cannot be exact rigorous measures for validity and reliability; however, there are ways to affirm and assure the quality of qualitative research (Anney, 2014; Bitsch, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Qualitative research can be judged according to the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994)

3.8.1 Credibility

The criterion of credibility involves the level of confidence that can be placed in truthfulness of the findings, questioning how compatible the findings are with reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; MacNee & McCabe, 2008). Credibility refers to the degree to which all data and interpretations concur with information received from the participants (Shenton, 2004). It can be achieved through a prolonged time in the field, peer examination and member checking (Anney, 2014; Bitsch, 2005).

Given that I was an employee at the site of research, a prolonged period of time was spent in the research context where insight and understanding of the cultural context was gained (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Data were gathered from four participants, each of whom were given the opportunity to have an hour-long interview. During these interviews, there was continuous clarification to ensure that I, as the researcher, understood all that participants were sharing and that they had the opportunity to clearly communicate their thoughts.

3.7.2 Transferability

This criterion refers to the extent to which the findings in this study could be applied to other situations and other contexts (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Normally, quantitative data is able to meet this criterion rather well when there is control of the sample size, when the sample is representative of the population and random sampling was used (Creswell, 2014). However, none of these measures can be applied to qualitative data (Maree, 2020).

One of the strategies used to address this concern is that the data gathered aims to provide thick and rich detailed descriptions of the phenomenon studied. This was done by aiming to make the interview process as open and inviting for the participant as possible whilst adhering to the interview schedule as a guide and maintaining professionalism.

3.7.3 Dependability

In quantitative research, the study, its methods and results should be able to be replicated in other contexts yet in qualitative research this cannot be assured due to the ever-changing context in which these types of studies occur (Anney, 2014). All the qualitative researcher can assure to ascertain dependability is that the processes carried out throughout the study may be utilised in another study for another context (Bitsch, 2005). For this to be possible, accurate and detailed accounts of data collection and constant reflexivity of the entire research process was followed (Shenton, 2004). In this study this was done by having a comprehensive audit trail and immersing myself in the data.

3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings can be corroborated by other researchers (Anney, 2014). In order to assure this criterion in this study, an extensive audit trail was produced and a detailed reflexive journal kept that includes any personal influences, reflections or biases.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure that the study was conducted justly, ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University

of Pretoria (*cf*. Appendix A). This was done prior to the commencement of any research activities.

Before participants could be contacted, the Department of Basic Education was first contacted and permission requested to conduct research at a government school. The Department provided permission on the condition that the interviews were conducted electronically, as visitors were not allowed on school premises during lockdown as a result of the Corona virus (*cf*. Appendix B).

Once this permission was granted, permission from the school principal was requested and once received only then were participants contacted (*cf*. Appendix C). The participants were given a letter inviting them to participate in the study. This letter was emailed to each participant and it detailed the rationale of the study as well what would be expected of them. In this letter, each participant was informed of the ethical considerations to which they would be subjected during the research (*cf*. Appendix D).

These ethical considerations taken from Alfred Allan (2016) included:

- Informed consent - participants were fully informed about the research process and the expectations.
- Anonymity – the identity of the participants was protected through the use of pseudonyms during the transcription.
- Voluntary participation – this meant that participants could withdraw from the study at any time during the study.
- Safety in their participation - participants were assured that they would not be placed at risk of harm of any kind.
- Privacy - confidentiality and anonymity of participants was protected at all times.

Concern has been raised regarding placing the participants under undue influence. This can occur when there is an unwarranted or inappropriate reward in obtaining a participant's compliance or in conducting the study, making the participant vulnerable (Allan, 2016). Another concern was one of conflict of interest given that I was previously employed at the school and familiar with the PBIS system. Both of these concerns are addressed in the transparent and clear way in which the study was conducted. Ensuring that the participants are fully understood and their perspectives

have been shared accurately adds to the credibility of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Participants were fully aware of the aim and purpose of the study which was to gain insight into the PBIS system, not to promote it or discourage it but merely share the rich experiences of those who have implemented it. Given that I was no longer employed at the school, nor did I hold any managerial position, sharing their perceptions would not make the participants susceptible to vulnerability.

3.9 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I outlined the research paradigm and the methodological approach chosen for this study. Reasons for why these approaches having been chosen and how they benefit the study have also been discussed. The way data were generated and how participants were selected was shared and I reflected on the role I employed as the researcher. The chapter concluded with the ways in which I aimed to assure the quality of the data generated and the ethical considerations that guided the process. The following chapter presents the findings of the study and outlines the themes and sub-themes found.

CHAPTER 4: THE FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to gain insight into teachers' perceptions, whilst learning more about the system of PBIS and its possible effectiveness in dealing with discipline challenges within a school. The primary research question guiding this study was: *How do teachers in a full-service school perceive the Positive Behaviour Supports and Interventions (PBIS) system?* and was undertaken to assess the possible usefulness of implementing the system in other schools.

The data collection strategies and a detailed description of the methodology were given in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the findings of the qualitative data analysis of the study are presented.

4.2 REALISATION OF SAMPLE

For this research study, purposive sampling was employed. Four participants were selected on the basis that they each had experience in implementing the PBIS system at the full-service school at which they are employed. While four is a small number, it was deemed that interviewing four participants qualitatively would yield rich and detailed information meeting the aims of this study. The participants selected were from different grades, from the Foundation Phase, Intermediate and Senior Phase. Table 4.1 illustrates the demographic information of the participants and gives the key codes for each participant.

Table 4.1: Demographic background of the participants

Participants and participant key codes	Age	Gender	Phase taught	No. of years teaching	No. of years involved with PBIS
Participant 1 P-1	34	Female	Foundation	9	7
Participant 2 P-2	56	Male	Senior	34	7
Participant 3 P-3	58	Male	Intermediate	14	7

Participants and participant key codes	Age	Gender	Phase taught	No. of years teaching	No. of years involved with PBIS
Participant 4 P-4	42	Female	Intermediate	19	7

4.3 EMERGENT THEMES

As stated in Chapter 3, data for this research study was generated through conducting semi-structured interviews. Interview transcriptions were then produced, analysed and given open codes. These open codes developed into emergent themes.

Three themes emerged from the data. These themes are the conceptualisation of discipline, participants' experience of PBIS in the school and the future of PBIS and these are presented in Figure 4.1 with the relevant sub-themes.

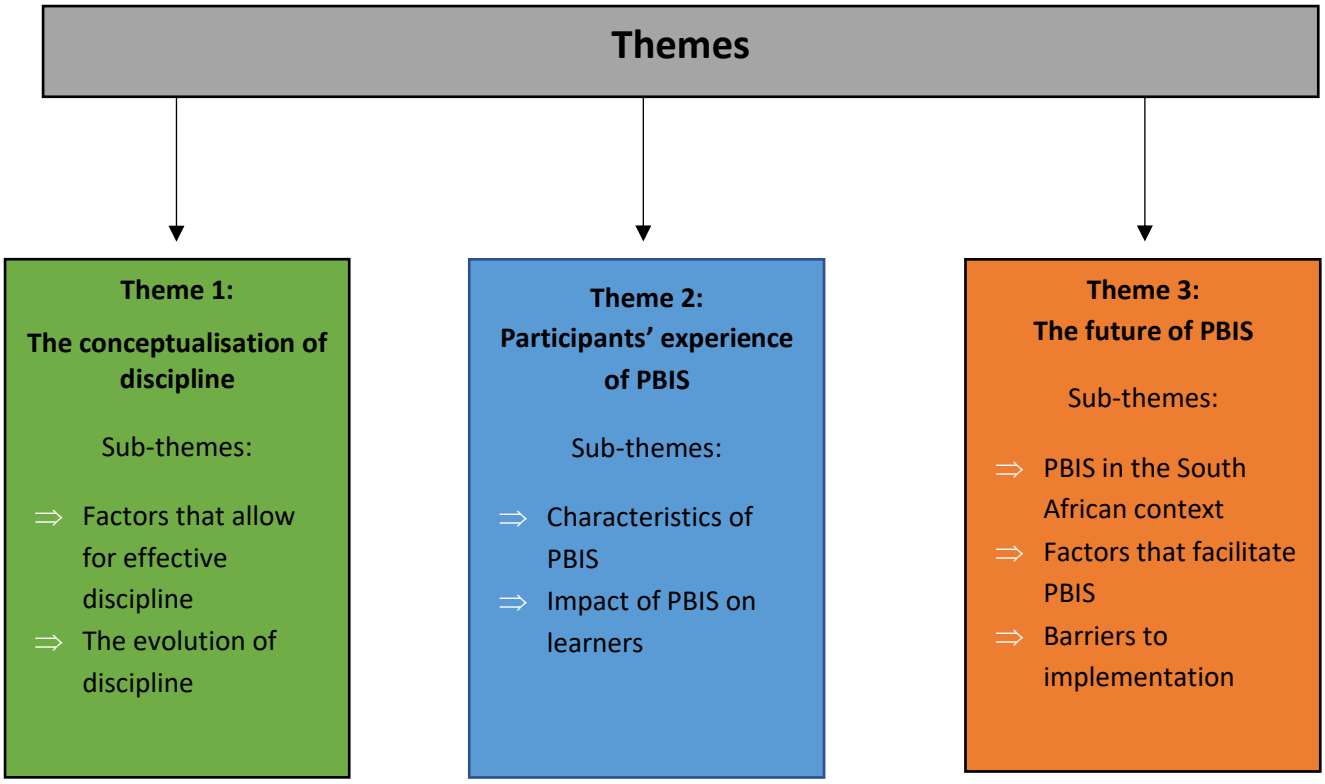


Figure 4.1: Emergent themes and sub-themes found in data generated

In the next sections, each theme is discussed with its sub-theme supported by evidence from the participants to validate each theme.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Conceptualisation of Discipline

This first theme refers to the participants' conceptualisation of discipline. Discipline is the teaching of acceptable behaviours as well as the unlearning of those behaviours that are maladaptive with support and guidance (McCurdy et al., 2016). It involves setting limits, clarifying roles and responsibilities and mutual expectations and in schools and is associated with high student engagement and achievement (Ndofirepi, Makaye & Ndofirepi, 2012; Virtudazo & Guhao, 2020). In the context of a classroom, discipline is achieved through the teacher employing classroom management strategies in order to create an atmosphere that is conducive for effective learning (Bechuke & Debeila, 2012). Discipline is essential to learning (Marengo et al., 2018)

Given that all the participants have had to enforce discipline throughout their years of teaching, each one shared extensively on their experience with discipline and its practice within their journeys at various schools. This provided rich insight into the role of discipline within schools and from this data, two sub-themes emerged being *factors that allow for effective discipline* and *the evolution of discipline.* Table 4.3. outlines each sub-theme as well as their inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 4.2: The inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 1: The conceptualisation of discipline

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Factors that allow for effective discipline	Any reference to techniques, approaches, methods or views that allow for effective discipline	Any references to techniques, approaches, methods or views that do not allow for effective discipline
The evolution of discipline	Any reference to how discipline has transformed in schools and communities, highlighting what it used to be like and sharing what it is	Reference that ignores how discipline has transformed in schools and communities, highlighting what it used to be like and sharing what it is

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
	like currently or hoped to become.	like currently or hoped to become.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Factors that allow for effective discipline

Discipline that is effective, is not merely born but there are factors that constitute it and it requires one to enforce and encourage it (Fabelo *et al.,* 2011). Classroom discipline is imperative to effective teaching as it contributes to a learning environment where learning will occur. All of the participants shared extensively on the factors that constitute effective discipline. Figure 4.2 is a graphic representation of a summary of these factors.

Figure 4.2: A summary of the factors that allow for effective discipline

When sharing their experiences with discipline, the participants delved into what they have learnt about discipline and the ways in which they achieve discipline. One of the participants placed a great deal of emphasis on a teacher having routine and structure and she shared that it was from this, that discipline was birthed: *"I've learnt over the years that routine is crucial"* (P-1. Int., 47) and *"you have to have a very structured*

environment for children to understand what their boundaries are and they need to know what is expected of them" (P-1. Int., 48-49).

From the information the participants shared, it became evident that discipline needed to involve clear communication about expectations, boundaries and consequences and this communication has to be two-way, placing some of the responsibility in discipline with the educator. This is clearly articulated in this participant's views: *"And if you explain to a child what you require and why you require it and they understand it, then it's so much easier for them to do what they need to do without it being that constant bickering and fighting."* (P-4. Int., 1374-1377).

Discipline does not happen outside of relationship; there is engagement and interaction. As the educator, there is a responsibility to: *"be respectful, you need to be fair, you need to be consistent."* (P-1. Int., 53-54). The role of relationship and communication is further explored in the following statement: *"Also your relationship with that child, in every single teacher's class maybe that the child will not always behave the same way because of the teacher's personality and the relationship that they have with one another. It's very important. I think fairness in that sense is also very important. A learner with behaviour issues needs to know that they can confidently come to a teacher and say today is not a good day and the teacher can guide and help throughout the lesson while they are teaching"* (P-1. Int., 303-310). When these fundamental building blocks of discipline are not instituted, it is suggested that misbehaviour and ill-discipline only become more difficult: *"slip up on that and it just makes things a bit more challenging to deal with"* (P-1. Int., 55-56).

Participants went on to share that discipline involves building relationships between real people and as a result, flexibility in the discipline approach is needed as no day is the same. This is supported in this participant's view: *"it's a give and take and sometimes you have to adapt the discipline you use according to the child and their background and their circumstances"* (P-4. Int., 1317-1319). The challenge when disciplining in a school is then further elaborated by the following statement from this participant: *"you know a school is a very difficult thing because there are so many children, some days some people build the relationships and the next day because of this because of that because of what happened at home, they're completely different."* (P-3. Int., 575-578).

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: An evolution in discipline

Throughout the responses shared by the participants, there was insight given into the way in which discipline in schools and in homes has evolved. Schooling and education sectors across the globe have witnessed the inefficiency of punitive discipline systems for more than a decade now (Gershoff & Grogan-Kaylor, 2016). Increased learner dropout and suspension rates have led to a complete reform in the way discipline is facilitated in class (Losen et al., 2015; Noltemeyer, Ward & Mcloughlin, 2015). The evolution of discipline can then be understood as the move from punitive and reactive measures of discipline like corporal punishment to more positive and prosocial approaches that are aimed at the holistic development of the learner (Gage et al., 2019). While this move may have been difficult, all of the participants shared their views on the necessity of this process of evolution in disciplinary practices. Therefore, this sub-theme is central to the participants' conceptualisation of discipline today.

When asked to reflect on their experiences of discipline, participants gave a brief insight into old methods of discipline practices, approaches and old ways of thinking about discipline: *"When I started, we used the cane, corporal punishment for children for discipline, using the cane no, I shouldn't say discipline, they were punished using the cane."* (P-2. Int., 483-485*) … "so during that time, it was relatively simple to administer this. If you don't listen, I beat you"* (P-2. Int., 486-487). The participant went on to share that because of the simplicity of this method of discipline and the degree of fear it instilled, it continued: *"Out of fear, most times children obeyed"* (P-2. Int., 488).

Moving away from these punitive measures of discipline was a huge transition. The following participant shared how the removal of corporal punishment was difficult for many teachers: *"At the beginning, when corporal punishment was taken away and we were changing all the ways in which we addressed children and things like that, people were frustrated and they gave up hope and they just wanted to resign. And this wasn't for them. And they were quite negative"* (P-4. Int., 1390-1394). This was echoed by another participant in his response: *"teachers complain all the time, and say you've taken away corporal punishment and you've given us nothing"* (P-2. Int., 497-500).

Participants then shared how corporal punishment allowed for control over ill-discipline and misbehaviour but they feel that this control has been lost, and as a result, some

teachers feel that they have been left without a way to manage discipline. This is shared in the following response by a participant: *"So we still want to punish. But because we can't instil fear or that degree of fear into the child, it seems like there is no way to discipline the child. In fact, we don't have a means to punish"* (P-2. Int., 491-496).

The participants then advocated for a move to an approach of discipline that is positive and promotes the holistic development of the child. Participants shared the importance of being cognisant of how, as the educator, they spoke to or reprimanded the learners and how this needs to change to ensure that old approaches are not perpetuated: *"Firstly, I think that you as a person have to look at the way you are used to saying things and the way that you were spoken to like, "Don't do this or don't do that". You have to really change your whole way of thinking and I think that process is quite challenging for most people"* (P-1. Int., 156-159). The participant went on to share that: *"You have to change your whole way of being so that you can become more focused on positive reinforcements."* (P-1. Int., 160-163).

Participants further encouraged an unlearning of old methods of discipline and the adoption of a new and healthier way of approaching children within the schooling context: *"Your whole mind shift needs to change because you need to think about everything as an opportunity to teach a child positivity and see themselves as a human being"* (P-1. Int., 248-251). This move was further promoted by another participant who shared her experiences*: "And of course, changing my disciplining techniques and actually making a change in who they are, rather, just in that in that same minute, their behaviour, you know, I found that instead of just like punishing them for what they're doing and whatever, I found that it was actually better if you taught them a skill for them to learn how to deal with their anger and their frustrations"* (P-4, Int., 1338-1346).

The desire then for the progression of discipline is for it to make a lasting impact in the lives of learners and for all to understand that: *"Discipline is not punishment, discipline is teaching the behaviour you would like to see and it takes support for the child and it needs to be done, you know … So, it's a long process, but ultimately, we're looking at good citizenship"* (P-2, Int., 534-540). The aim is therefore focused on*, "building self-esteem and self-confidence rather than just listening to you out of fear"* (P-4, Int., 1346-1348).

In summary, the participants' conceptualisation of discipline comprised of two sub-themes: the factors of effective discipline and the evolution of discipline. Through their experience in education, participants have discovered the tenets of effective discipline. They have seen that discipline does not materialise on its own, but it is taught and reinforced. It comes through an establishment of routine and structure and it is encouraged through communication and relationship. For the discipline strategies to be effective, flexibility in approach is essential. This type of flexibility has been shown to be pivotal as teachers have seen the evolution of discipline and its necessity to change from previously used methods. Teachers have witnessed the move from reactive and punitive measures of discipline like corporal punishment and punishment class to discipline that is engaging and reflective. From this theme, it was found that discipline is not punishment but it involves using every opportunity to teach. However, this transition has required a complete shift in the way teachers view discipline and their perspectives of it.

4.3.2 Theme 2: The Participants' Experience of PBIS

Since the research study is centred on teachers' perceptions of Positive Behaviour Intervention and Supports (PBIS), their experience informs their perceptions and therefore, these experiences of the system were a predominant feature when the data were generated. Experience of PBIS refers to the participants' physical contact with and their observation of the system and this is the second theme to emerge from the data. This theme can be further divided into two sub-themes: *the characteristics of PBIS* and *its influence on the learners*. Table 4.4 presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria for Theme 2 and its subthemes.

Table 4.3: The inclusion and exclusion criteria of Theme 2: The participants' experience of PBIS

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Characteristics of Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS)	Any references that include descriptions, understandings and thoughts on PBIS.	Any references that do not include descriptions, understandings and thoughts on PBIS.

Sub-theme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Influence of Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS) on learners	Any reference or account that includes the way PBIS has had an influence on the learners at the school	Any references or account that shares about the learners at the school but has not been as a result of PBIS.

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Characteristics of PBIS

According to the literature, PBIS is a comprehensive framework, one that is inclusive and preventative and aimed at cultivating positive values in learners (James *et al.,* 2019; Kittleman et al., 2019). Through teaching values and modelling the desired behaviour, it hopes to cultivate a culture of behaving appropriately in a manner that is respectful and responsible, not only to one's self but those around. This sub-theme includes responses from participants that highlight what they view the characteristics of PBIS to be. Figure 4.3 below is a visual summary of the characteristics of PBIS as shared by the participants.

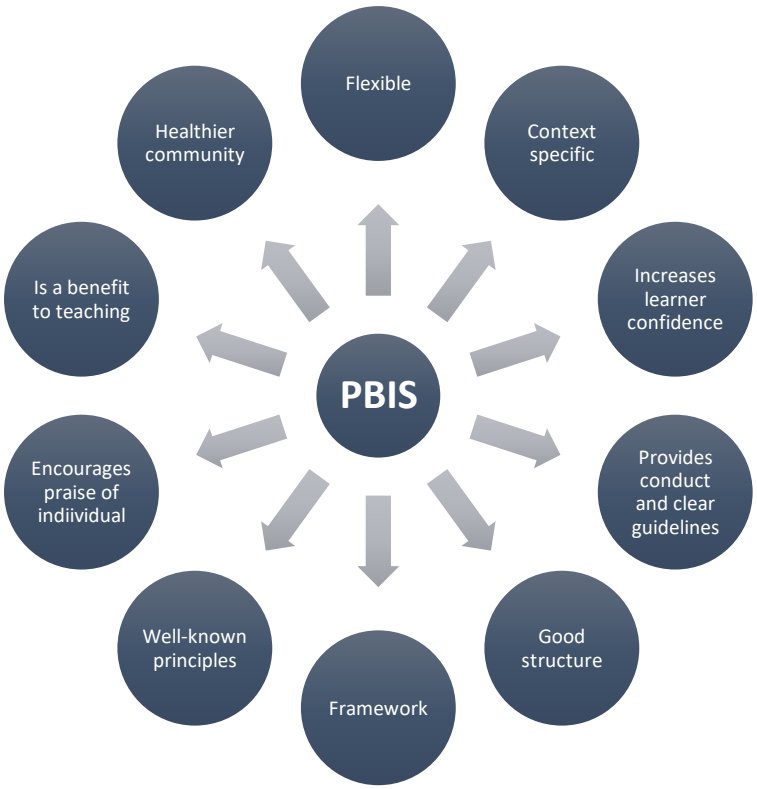


Figure 4.3: Visual summary of the characteristics of PBIS as shared by the research participants

One of the first characteristics that is highlighted as shared by the participants is that PBIS has a good structure with principles that are well known. This is illustrated in the following response from a participant: *"It really is a package. It packages principles teachers have always known…PBIS strategy is good, it has been valuable to our own school"* (P-3. Int., 958-959). Another aspect that the teachers at the school appreciated about PBIS is that: *"it's intentional, intentionally building relationships* (P-2. Int., 647 - 648).

These experiences of the system were shared by the other participants as well. They reflected on when PBIS was brought into the school: *"I was already sold because without even knowing about PBIS, is it what I've been using for many years now*" (P-4. Int., 1457-1458). The participant elaborated by saying: *"if you love a child, you treat them like a human being and you reward their good behaviour. They're more likely to not behave inappropriately or rude"* (P-4. Int., 1460-1463).

Prior to PBIS, there were many discipline challenges in the school and as a result, many of the teachers did feel a need for the implementation of the *system: "I think people now knew how to deal with certain situations"* (P-1. Int., 87-88). The participant went on to share her gratitude for the implementation of the system: *"I was so thankful that the school actually brought somebody in to help with the discipline. There were many teachers that felt very overwhelmed with the discipline because you couldn't even get your teaching things done because discipline was always an issue"* (P-1. Int., 108-112). Another participant too shared his gratitude*: "I think it's good that PBIS came to our school in our school because I had reached the stage then that the discipline was demanding too much"* (P-3. Int., 891-893).

At the core of being a full-service school and practising inclusivity is that every child should be acknowledged and seen; every child should learn in the manner that is fitting to them. Many of the participants shared their appreciation for the acknowledgement of the individual child since the implementation of PBIS: *"makes every child feel as though they are contributing to the school in some way or the other and make every child feel, like they're worth something"* (P-4. Int., 1559-1561). This view was shared by another participant in the following statement where she felt that previously those

children who were never acknowledged, now: *"suddenly achieve something by being kind to somebody and being noticed at that moment for doing something good and being praised for that, their whole confidence grew thinking I can actually do this, I can do well, I can behave better so I think their personality and their character also changed to a more positive a more confident child"* (P-1. Int., 180-183).

When having to describe PBIS, one of the participants shared the following: *"it's a framework. it's your business because it's your school. Yes. We need something that you're going to hang everything else on and I think they have that and even without them knowing it, they offer a lot of support like from other websites, you know that are overseas. It's helpful you can't you can't ignore that. So, for us, I think that's…It's a good structure."* (P-2. Int., 691-696).

4.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2: The Influence of PBIS

PBIS has been implemented in over 25 000 schools across the globe and these schools have shared its success. According to research, the sustained implementation of PBIS at these schools has resulted in a reduction of discipline problems and disrespect, it has altered the school climate and increased teacher motivation and efficacy. The following sub-theme centres around the influence that PBIS has had on the schools, as perceived by the participants.

According to two of the participants' responses, there was a definite need for PBIS to be implemented. This is shared in the following statement: *"At the time you know what we needed was convergence. A school community-wide standard of behaviour that I think the PBIS brought that to the fore."* (P-3. Int.,910-912). Another participant also shared how PBIS has influenced the classroom environment: *"Once this system was implemented, it brought a conduct that wasn't there before…It was noisy, busy and frustrating in the beginning but I feel that it's more calm now."* (P-1. Int., 86 -90).

The implementation of PBIS also seemed to have a clear influence on the learners in the classroom: *"It makes them also be more aware of what they are doing, how they are affecting the child next to them and how they are learning and interpreting the information that you give them"* (P-1. Int., 237-239). Another participant also appreciated how the learners' understanding and their identification with positive values had increased: *"The language is beginning to become a part of what and who*

they are. Yes. And even if you don't tell them, it's a value even if they don't know what a value is you know, you are teaching them that whatever they do is attached to something, you know…so that's a good thing ... there's an awareness around the values" (P-2. Int., 709-718).

Another participant also shared how PBIS has influenced her teaching style and her presentation of classroom lessons: *"The specific programme was good; to inspire learners to be better people, like your teaching style has changed, their confidence has changed, ya the way you present lessons to make it more fun."* (P-1. Int.,217 – 218). She went on to say that overall: *"There is an impact on teaching as a whole* (P-1. Int., 267-268),

Even though the transition was a difficult one, the participants shared their optimism over the progress that the school has made: *"It's hard in the beginning to get it started but once it's going it becomes part of who you are and liable for"* (P-1. Int., 355-357). Another participant also shared the following statement in reflection of the progress made with discipline*: "We are in transition, I think. I think we've achieved a lot of success in terms of changing how some people think, you know to building relationships to nurturing a safe environment"* (P-2. Int., 561-563).

The participant went on to share that in the school there is *"a lot of thinking around building relationships, creating trust, you know, promoting the values that we've brought in … Many of them are choosing to build relationships to nurture the child . . . There are fluctuations, but I think we've marked out the part we'd like to travel on and we're getting there, for us now, it's just a journey"* (P-2. Int., 572-579).

Another participant shared that what he had found valuable was that: *"misbehaviour is a learnt well I can't say it's a skill, a learnt practice, behaviour can be unlearnt and positive behaviour be taught and learnt in its place and practised by our learners. Of course, that has taken time but we have made some progress which is most encouraging"* (P-3. Int., 927-930).

The participants' experience of PBIS has allowed them to gain insight into the characteristics of PBIS. They have found that PBIS has good structure and good underlying principles which they have been incorporated without being cognisant of it. The participants valued the aspect that PBIS is inclusive and intentional in building

relationships with learners. It has been described as a framework upon which you can hang other strategies and approaches. PBIS has had a significant influence on the classroom where participants have seen it encourage good conduct and a whole school approach to managing behaviour. They have seen learners start to internalise the importance of value-driven behaviour and an increased self-awareness.

4.3.3 Theme 3: The Future of PBIS

This theme involves responses from the participants where they shared their perceptions of the future use of PBIS within their own school as well as in other schools in the community and country. The following sub-themes emerged *including PBIS within the South African context, factors that facilitate PBIS* and *barriers and obstacles to PBIS.*

Table 4.4: The inclusion and exclusion criteria of Theme 3: The participants' experience of PBIS

Subtheme	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
PBIS Within the South African context	Any references that include descriptions, understandings and thoughts on PBIS being practised and implemented in a South African context	Any references or descriptions that do not include PBIS being practised and implemented in a South African context
Factors that facilitate PBIS	Any reference that includes factors that facilitate the success of PBIS at the school	Any references to other factors that facilitate the implementation of PBIS at the school.
Barriers to the implementation of PBIS	Any reference to barriers to the implementation of PBIS at the school	Any reference that excludes barriers to implementation of PBIS at the school.

4.3.3.1 PBIS within the South African context

PBIS has been implemented in thousands of schools across the globe and has only recently gained attention in South Africa. In 2013, Professor Khalil Osiris began introducing PBIS Africa to the cohort of Vuleka schools in Johannesburg (Osiris, 2013). PBIS Africa is a private company that utilises the internationally well-known PBIS principles and modifies them to an African context (Osiris, 2013). In a presentation on positive discipline held by the Department of Education in 2018, research on PBIS as a global approach and its benefits were shared (DBE, 2018). A study was later conducted by Dwarika (2019) in which PBIS was introduced to 144 fourth year foundation phase in-service teachers in Limpopo. The fourth years were taught the principles of PBIS and tasked with implementing them in their classroom strategies when interacting with students. The participants in this study have been implementing PBIS in a South African context, hence this subtheme emerged as a result of their responses relating to this.

When asked about PBIS and its possible future use within the school and other schools, all the participants answered rather positively but also made valuable contributions and insights. It would appear that PBIS and its use will continue to be a part of the school: *"When you meet with the parents that come in that're new to the school, when we explain to them what the school is all about, we definitely refer to the PBIS values always"* (P-1. Int., 333-337). This participant went on to share that she would feel *"so proud if we can promote this to the other schools"* (P-1. Int., 348).

While the participants believed that it should stay, there was a concern for taking a system from one context and duplicating it to fit another: *"There's a lot that's good about it, but I think there's always the danger of taking and importing a system in its entirety and using it within your context"* (P-2. Int., 639-641). The participant elaborated on this by sharing that even with the values the school would probably want to: *"be caring" you know. . .So I would say PBIS yes some of it but some of it we definitely going to throw some out. Yeah, so you take the good and what doesn't work for us we'll just not use it and find something that we can use" (*P-2. Int., 679-681).

The participant went on to share: *"There's nothing harmful about it. It's better than what most schools have at the moment. So, I think in principle the PBIS strategy is good, it has been valuable to our own school and would be helpful to any school that*

would want to engage with the possibility of integrating PBIS at their school" (P-2. Int., 958 961). There was however emphasis placed on the importance of contextualising PBIS: *"I think that it needs a team and South African educators who have experience, personal experience of PBIS in South Africa, in the South African context, I think that would be invaluable"* (P-2. Int.,1202-1204)

Another participant continued to share the importance of contextualising PBIS: *"You can't expect to take the same programme the way that we use it at our school and implement it exactly the same way at your school, it's not going to work. You need to use what you have access to and you need to know your children and know the kind of parents that you are dealing with, so you need to actually adapt this to fit your specific need."* (305-310).

4.3.3.2 Factors that facilitate PBIS

For PBIS to work efficiently and possibly be implemented in other schools, it is imperative that other schools are aware of the factors that would aid its facilitation. This subtheme emerged as a result of participants sharing the factors they have seen and believe to facilitate the PBIS system.

One of the key factors to the facilitation was buy-in from all stakeholders especially the staff members who have to implement PBIS. This was communicated in the following statement where a participant shared that as a school you need to ensure *"... Buy-in from all the teachers and all the stakeholders, the children, the parents"* (P-1. Int., 404-408). It also became clear in the interviews that PBIS is not just about simply engaging with a manual and practising, those who implement it have to understand it: *"But you mustn't go sell the product, you know people need to understand what it's about"* (P-2. Int., 789-790). Another participant also echoed the importance of the new teachers understanding PBIS and understanding the history of the school, their challenges and their achievements: *"Such a lot of new teachers coming in but they don't really understand what is happening and how far we've come and how we've built and I think they just pick up and carry on. I think they need to understand the history of it" (*P-1. Int., 424-427). You would also require someone to drive the implementation, who is responsible to keep the momentum going as well as to address concerns and ensure that the system was still effective as communicated in the following statement by a participant*: "I think that you need at least one person at the school that runs with it.*

So, if you have one person that's really passionate about changing the behaviour at the school. Their drive basically becomes part of implementing it" (P-1. Int., 365-367). This was further supported by another participant who said the following: *"…think the thing here is that with PBIS you need a champion, someone who can drive it"* (P-3. Int., 1065-1066).

Another important factor that was introduced was that of perseverance and flexibility within the school where PBIS is being implemented: *"I think so many people find it frustrating because you realise how much work and effort you have to put in to getting it started but there was always brainstorming. People always came up with ideas on how to do things and we tried a couple of things. The things that didn't work we changed"* (P-1. Int., 140-143). The participant also shared the importance of using technology to benefit your implementation and the sustenance of what you implement: *"Like I said in the beginning also, technology has really changed so many things. You really have to keep up with your game, you have to keep evolving with the technology so I think it was inspiring in the beginning and frustrating along the way. There was good and bad, up and down"* (P-1. Int.,144-149).

There was also an emphasis placed on the educator taking responsibility to teach the expected behaviour: *"You reteach expected positive behaviour"* (P-1. Int.,392).The participant elaborated on the process of implementation and on the importance of modelling expected behaviour: *"You need to understand that it does take a lot of group work and it is a big process but the rewards are endless…You can't just expect them to know, you need to show"* (P-2. Int., 392-396)

4.3.3.3 Barriers to the implementation of PBIS

While there may be many positive aspects of PBIS, it is imperative that one is cognisant of any barriers that prevent growth and continued success in the implementation of the system. Participants shared what they perceived to act as these barriers or obstacles during the implementation as well as the continued process thereafter.

One of the most prominent barriers that emerged from the data was a lack of consistency from teachers in implementing PBIS: *"I think the inconsistency. If a teacher is not consistent, say for example your responsibility is when they let the bell*

ring in between when children change periods, you have to step outside to make sure that the values are being followed, and you slip up on that, children are going to take chances. It's very important to stick to the routine and know where you need to set boundaries as an educator and stick to that. The consistency is absolutely crucial in that sense. Everyone must stay consistent and stick to what you're supposed to do." (P-1. Int.,277-284).

The concern for consistency and having support and buy-in was shared by two other participants as well: *"I think barriers are when not everybody, when not all the teachers are on board, with the PBIS practice"* (P-3. Int., 1001-1003). The participant went on to comment on teacher engagement and follow through with PBIS being a concern: *"There are some teachers who don't seem to reinforce the core values of PBIS and who don't bother to use the Class dojo, to communicate with the parents about the positive behaviours as well as the misbehaviours of children"* (P-3. Int.,1005 – 1008).

One of reasons participants highlighted a lack of consistency or buy-in to the system from teachers was the fear of completing the curriculum*: "So some people are on board then you get, you know, people that are battling to change and that you know, it's again, it's a fear because the fear of the teachers is to complete the curriculum and what's standing between them and completing the curriculum is that child"* (P-2. Int., 564-568). Another reason presented by a participant was that teachers seem to give up when results from a particular system are not immediate: *"But there's still a lot of people that are battling with the follow through. You know, they give up too easily. So, they see it's not working. They tried for 15, 20 days and then they like, OK, this is not working. So, they give up quite quickly"* (P-4. Int., 1409-1413).

The last barrier that emerged from the responses and one that is important to mention, is that the schooling system itself was seen as a barrier to the implementation of systems*: "You know, the schooling system itself is a barrier. It really is if I look at our school system a lot of what we do is dependent on management to drive it to ensure its implementation. It's very difficult for teachers to become agents of change in a situation where the principal has all the control. And so, if you have a principal like ours that when the initiative is made, you know that supporting the people that are trying to make it work the chances of change are good … But taking it to a school where that principal is not interested and there is no support, it stops there, you know"*

(P-2. Int.,736-744) The participant went on to share*: "that would be one of the biggest challenges, the fact that it must have support from the top to be implemented down* (P-2. Int., 750-752).

In summary, it appears to be evident that participants do foresee a future for PBIS to be shared with other schools in the community. While it should not be duplicated from one context to another, it may still be utilised as a framework and it may provide guidance that many schools need. Buy-in and support from all stakeholders was seen as essential to making PBIS a success, as well as teamwork, flexibility and endurance. One of the biggest barriers to the system seemed to be teacher inconsistency and a lack of support from management.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 4, the results from the data generated were placed into emerging themes and their corresponding subthemes. Supporting evidence in the form of quotations from the data was incorporated to provide rich detail and insight into participants' responses.

In this chapter, the findings from Chapter 4 are used to provide answers to the primary research question as well as the secondary research questions that were introduced in Chapter 1. This will be followed by what I believe the contributions of this study to be as well as the challenges faced in this study and the recommendations for future research, for training and for practice.

5.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For this study, as previously indicated, the theoretical framework chosen was Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological model. The five levels present in this theory provide the framework in which I will share the findings of this study.

The first system, the *Microsystem* is the immediate environment that an individual exists in such as their family, school and peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 2000). This system is usually the one in which the child spends most of their time and therefore in this system the interactions should be aimed at being supportive and accepting. The children that have been exposed to the PBIS system spend most of their time both at school, as well as with their families. The *Mesosystem* exists between two or more *microsystems;* for example, the relationship between the school and the family (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2002). Experiences in one microsystem can influence the happenings of the next system (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Hence, from the responses the participants shared it was easy to see that when there is a lack of parental support or parental involvement, this makes it increasingly difficult for any discipline system to have lasting effect on a learner. The PBIS system makes allowance for connection within the various microsystems, as structure and routine provided at school can make

a meaningful impact in homes where parents are perhaps having difficulty due to the homes being single parent households or other difficult circumstances.

The *exosystem* is one that in which the learner is not directly involved but decisions made in these systems can have an effect on the child like the education system or the health care system (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Older discipline practices, such as corporal punishment, were endorsed by government and have had a range of effects on the education system today. Similarly, systems like PBIS that do promote positive interactions and intentional relationship building between teachers and learners can also be encouraged by the government and have a direct influence on learners.

The *macrosystem* refers to the social beliefs and attitudes inherent in the systems, as well as policies and approaches that are used within this system (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2002). If majority of society has been taught to behave appropriately out of fear, this leaves us with individuals that tend to be reckless and show very little regard for the law or consequences, which has a significant impact on the way learners view discipline, boundaries and expectations placed on them. Implementation of policies and approaches to foster positive discipline will similarly have an influence on learners and parents' view of discipline. Time is part of every single system and influences the individual throughout their lives.

5.3 ADDRESSING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three prominent themes and their sub-themes were identified to inform the findings of this study. Each of these themes and sub-themes made a significant contribution in answering the primary and secondary research questions. The secondary questions will be answered first, followed by a discussion of the findings related to the primary research question.

Secondary Question 1: What do teachers in a full-service school understand effective discipline to entail?

- Theme 1: The experience of discipline

Secondary Question 2 : To what extent do teachers at a full-service school believe PBIS to be an effective means to foster discipline in schools?

- Theme 2: Conceptualisation of PBIS
- Theme 3: The future of PBIS

5.3.1 Secondary Research Question 1: What do teachers in a full-service school understand effective discipline to entail?

According to the findings from this research study, discipline that is effective constitutes of a myriad of factors and it is a give and take process. It was believed by a participant, that for discipline to be effective it needs to involve a set routine and structure. This responsibility is placed with the teacher to set the routine and create an environment that is structured, from which discipline can be birthed. The participant communicated this in saying, *"routine is crucial"* (P-1. Int., 47). These findings are supported by the literature where routine that is well established is seen to "create classroom order and save valuable instructional time" (Rawlings Lester et al., 2017:368). The research further supports the findings in highlighting that routine in a classroom promotes safety and optimises learning and is taught and modelled by the teacher (Ellerbrook, 2016; Hare & Murawski, 2015; Rawlings Lester et al., 2017).

Central to effective discipline is two-way communication that is clear and specific. Through experience, two participants found that learners need to understand clearly what their teacher expects of them and the reasons for this expectation. This may make it easier for them to carry out the expected behaviour. Literature supports this view that communication of expected rules is necessary and it is recommended that rules are clear and specific (Alter & Haydon, 2017). Another recommendation from

literature around the communication of rules, is that rules may be better received if created collaboratively between teachers and learners (Jones & Jones, 2016). While this recommendation was not made by any of the participants in this study, it is a beneficial suggestion to discipline practices being implemented.

In order for the teachers to be able to facilitate this kind of discipline in a classroom, it was made clear by the participants that discipline and effective discipline needs to be taught to teachers and then they need to be mentored. Effective teacher training needs to take place and there needs to be enough familiarity with the process for teachers to feel comfortable with the discipline processes. In the literature surrounding learner discipline, ensuring that teachers are all following a school programme where there is continuity and consistency has been emphasised and including classroom and discipline management in pre-service teacher education has been made a priority (Cyril & Raj, 2017; Dwarika, 2019; Netshitangani, 2017). However, the participants in this study found the assistance of older teachers beneficial when dealing with discipline and found time and experience to be good teachers. This is an indication that mentoring other teachers through their discipline strategies may help foster healthy practices and boost teacher confidence.

Building intentional relationships was at the crux of what constituted effective discipline for the participants. Three of the participants believed that when there is a positive relationship between a learner and teacher, it would allow for a smoother discipline process that is more meaningful to the child. These participants also placed a large amount of the responsibility of fostering discipline on the teacher. This can be seen in the following statement that as a teacher, "*be respectful, you need to be fair, you need to be consistent"* (P-1. Int., 53 -54). This is supported by the literature surrounding positive student and teacher relationships. Agyekum (2019) reported on the importance of positive student teacher relationships and how this promotes positive outcomes in students.

The discipline administered also needs to relate directly to the expectation not met and participants found that it was more beneficial to teach a particular skill to learners to help them address the misbehaviour, instead of merely pointing out a misdemeanour: *"I found that it was actually better if you taught them a skill for them to learn how to deal with their anger and their frustrations"* (P-4, Int., 1338 – 1346). Kerr

and Nelson (2010) and Scott et al. (2011) both support the importance of consequences that are well matched to the behaviour not met.

The mindset of the teacher was mentioned by at least three of the participants, as they considered one's thoughts to be an integral aspect of encouraging a different way to discipline. These participants acknowledged that effective discipline involved understanding the child, having flexibility in one's approach and being able to reflect on how you as a teacher were disciplined and evaluating if this was healthy. The participants encouraged a change in *"your whole way of thinking"* (P-1. Int., 160 – 161). Literature has reported on the importance of a teacher's social emotional intelligence and metacognition involved in the discipline process. It recommends that effective discipline come as a result of planning, self-monitoring, evaluation and reflection (Motseke, 2020).

5.3.2 Secondary Research Question 2: To what extent do teachers at a full-service school believe PBIS to be an effective means to foster discipline in schools?

Participants in the study shared their gratitude for the introduction of PBIS to their school. Prior to its introduction, participants acknowledged the extent of frustration that managing discipline caused them. Discipline challenges left them feeling overwhelmed and disrupted instructional time which further exacerbated their stress. When PBIS was introduced, participants appreciated the structure and conduct that it brought into dealing with discipline challenges. It allowed for a convergence of methods and put a name to strategies that many teachers had been implementing. These findings are supported by research as it is well documented that the implementation of PBIS allows for a healthier school climate, reduction in office discipline referrals, suspensions and expulsions and promotes more prosocial interactions between students (Eiraldi et al., 2019; James et al, 2019; Noltemeyer, 2018).

The participants described PBIS as a framework that comprises good underlying principles, many principles that teachers have been incorporating throughout their teaching and the structure on which to hang all these strategies and principles. While the school still experiences challenges relating to learner discipline, they all acknowledge the level of progress that has been achieved and shared their pride

around this. Research supports this throughout the literature on PBIS as it is often described as a framework or as an approach that has been built on many well-known theories (Horner et al., 2017; Noltemeyer, 2018; Simonsen & Sugai, 2015).

Participants went on to share that there are many positive aspects about PBIS which they believe are good. They value the system's emphasis on intentionally building relationships with learners and nurturing these relationships. There has been evidence of how learners have adopted the language of the framework and have seen that their behaviours are tied to certain values. While there is sufficient research that supports PBIS and its promotion of prosocial interactions and healthier school climates, there is also research where participants have called for a more humanistic approach to PBIS (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Gomez, 2017; Kittleman et al., 2019).

Research highlights a flaw, not found in the findings of this study, being that PBIS has the danger of being prescriptive in its approach and rewards can become mere tokens (Bradshaw et al., 2013; Gomez, 2017). There is the concern that the focus is being placed on rewarding learners as opposed to getting to know learners (Gomez, 2017).

One of the key hindrances that appeared to be of great importance about PBIS is that one cannot take a system implemented in one context and simply replicate it in another (Bal et al., 2019). The system implemented has to suit the environment, the school, the educators and the learners. For the system to be effective, it has to be adapted to suit the needs of the school. PBIS was created in the United States of America and has been implemented across majority of its states (Bradshaw et al., 2013). While it has been implemented in other countries across the globe, the framework itself has not been modified to suit each context. For PBIS to be effective, it is necessary for the approach to encourage cultural diversity and to take into account the diverse needs of its students (Bal et al., 2019; Gadd & Butler, 2019). For each learner to benefit, it is necessary to take cultural background into consideration, account for one's own biases, understand the social, economic and political climate and identify culturally appropriate engagement and discipline strategies (Gomez, 2017).

The lack of cultural responsiveness in the PBIS framework has received recent attention. Initially the universal values were created to be culturally neutral, however over time researchers have found this to affect implementation fidelity. Since then, lists and rubrics were created to encourage cultural awareness. Bal (2018) saw these

documents to be ineffective and created the Culturally Responsive Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports that included the collaboration of students, teachers and families by creating learning labs.

In order to be able to achieve the desired outcome, adequate training is necessary from a team of South African educators that have insight and experience in the implementation of PBIS. While the educators found their training insightful and inspirational, they felt that the training received could have been more comprehensive and they would benefit as a school from training that is more practical. The training would need to assist them as a school with how to effectively manage learners with intense behavioural difficulties as the literature makes mention of. In order to benefit them as a school, the teachers have paired up with Helsinki Institute and some have qualified as Kids Skill Coaches to teach children specific skills that they may be lacking, as identified through their misbehaviour.

Buy-in during the implementation of an approach is essential (Tyre et al., 2018). When teachers, administrative staff and parents are all on board with what is being implemented, it makes the process that much easier. Participants throughout this study discussed the difficulty in getting everyone on board and focused on the same agenda. For PBIS or any other approach to be successful, people need to understand what it is about and understand its need. Participants found that having the correct perspective about discipline and having a healthy view of the learners was vital. Many referred to the difficult transition that some teachers may have had having to change their entire way of thinking and interacting with the learners. Only when this change is made and when they are able to see that to discipline is to teach, was it possible to make strides towards implementing PBIS. Understanding the perceptions of PBIS stakeholders has been the focus of research studies. They have noted that without taking the perceptions of staff into consideration and utilising this data, the PBIS administration team will have to deal with resistance and discontent. By taking the time to involve everyone, this allows for insight into professional development and for the sharing of ideas and suggestions. This study contributed to this recommendation by gaining an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of the participants.

Parental involvement is a clear contributing support factor to teachers when teaching and in discipline. Teachers in schools do rely on the support and communication of

parents. Therefore, it is going to be necessary for parents to come on board and be engaged in the framework and structures that the school adopts.

Encouraging teachers to become agents of change and endorsing the systems in which they believe will work is important. Many of the participants shared that teacher confidence really affects a system being implemented and teachers being able to do discipline well. Teacher confidence and teacher buy-in, as well as support from management will make the facilitation of not just PBIS but any programme more sustainable.

5.3.5 Answering the primary research question of this study

The primary research question that guided this study was: *How do teachers in a full-service school perceive the Positive Behaviour Supports and Interventions (PBIS) system?*

From the findings of this study, the teachers perceived Positive Behaviour Supports and Interventions as a good framework upon which they were able to hang other useful strategies when aiming to foster discipline. Prior to the introduction of PBIS in their school, there were some who had become overtly frustrated and overwhelmed by the demands that learner discipline was placing on them. With PBIS came a structure, a convergence and a conduct assisted them in dealing with discipline infringements.

Participants found PBIS to have beneficial principles that were worth applying but acknowledged that it took hard work, flexibility in their approach and perseverance. The framework did not come in and rectify challenges overnight but it proved to be a process in which teamwork was essential.

Some of the participants found that PBIS challenged them in and out of the classroom. It required a mind shift of their own practices and even their own thinking. Participants reported that PBIS took consistency and effort but it brought about an awareness of the individual. They found that it encouraged them to look at the needs of the individual and strategise on how to accommodate those needs.

While PBIS has definitely made an impact on the school and its learners, the school sees the benefit in being flexible with what they choose to implement and how they choose to do so. The participants highlighted the danger of taking an American-based

approach and simply expecting it to fit perfectly into a South African context. The participants believe that a South African PBIS team, who understands the unique nature of our context, would be invaluable in offering PBIS training and consultation. The participants would have appreciated more insight into dealing with more intense behavioural needs but have not incorporated another approach along with PBIS to best meet the needs of their students.

PBIS was recommended to other schools as it would offer a system and a process which is more than what many schools currently have in place. The participants placed emphasis on making sure that it suits each school and that the staff are able to tailor it to accommodate their context. Overall, PBIS has been a benefit to the school and it has allowed them to carve out the path they wish to charter and what they wish to communicate: "*Discipline is not punishment, discipline is teaching the behaviour you would like to see and it takes support for the child and it needs to be done, you know … So, it's a long process, but ultimately, we're looking at good citizenship"* (P-2, Int., 534-540).

5.4 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

Through this research study, it is hoped that some insight was able to be given into a system or framework of discipline, PBIS, where there was previously little known about it. With each participant sharing on the implementation of PBIS, it is hoped that this would make it easier for others to learn about the tenets of PBIS and what it entails and make an informed decision about the practices implemented at their school.

While PBIS may have been implemented in thousands of schools and its success rate is well documented, one cannot assume that it will be a perfect fit for a school in the South African context. From the perspectives of the participants, the importance of selecting approaches that are context specific was placed emphasis on. It was recommended that an approach be adjusted and tailored to suit the learners who hope to benefit from it. There was an encouragement from participants for schools to utilise their resources and begin with what they already possess.

From reading about the impact that PBIS has had with the other students, it is my hope that for teachers or others in other schools who have become despondent when it comes to the discipline challenge they face, they may know that others are walking

the same journey and that there is guidance and assistance. While the processes to create change may not come easy, there certainly are rewards. Through the participants' responses, it is my hope that teachers in the school are able to reflect on their journey and share in the progress that they, as a school, have made over the years.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

One of the most obvious limitations in this study is that the design of this study was a case study. There was a need to have an in-depth look into teachers' perceptions of PBIS; however, this meant that the number of participants in this study were limited to only four participants. While these participants all provided such rich and detailed data, they are not representative of the school. The participants in this study all shared a rather positive and progressive approach to discipline and it would have been insightful to have a participant share difficulties and struggles in implementing the system. Conducting the data collection whilst the country dealt with Covid-19 and was in lockdown level 3, meant having limited access to the participants resulting in interviews being done virtually. The lockdown level and its corresponding restrictions prevented member checking during the data collection and analysis.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In this section, I provide recommendations for future research:

- Research into how many other schools in South Africa have implemented PBIS and their perspectives on it.
- Research on a whole school level to find out what the rest of the staff and the school community have experienced through the implementation of PBIS.
- Research on the progress of this particular school, as they continue to use PBIS as a framework and build on it using other approaches
- Research on the school's use of training teachers to become kids' skills coaches and gain insight into their perceptions of it.
- Further training on the Tier II and Tier III interventions, for the school to be well prepared to deal effectively with behaviour challenges of a more severe nature.
- Further insight into the discourse of discipline in South African schools.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This research study aimed to gain insight into teachers' perceptions of positive behaviour interventions and supports (PBIS) as implemented in a full-service school in Gauteng. Prior to this study, there had been very little research on PBIS in the South African context. It was hoped that this study would shed light on this system and that this school, as well as others would be benefit through reflecting on their challenges and their achievements.

The participants in this study gave such rich detail and shared so many valuable thoughts, concepts and plans for the journey ahead. They showed their commitment to ensuring that all children have the assistance they need and their dedication to striving for a healthier community for all, with the use of PBIS as well as many other useful tools.

As a researcher and an educational psychologist in training, it is my hope that this study will contribute to the existing discussions and knowledge base on discipline practises in the country, as well as to PBIS as a global undertaking. I further hope that this study highlights the need for further research into how PBIS can possibly be used as a starting framework for schools who are having difficulty and where teachers are not able to teach effectively because of discipline challenges.

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Appendix A: Letter to the principal

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

The Principal:

Dear

REQUESTING YOUR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DISCOVERY PRIMARY FULL SERVICE SCHOOL

I hereby wish to apply for permission to conduct research at Discovery Primary Full Service School for the purposes of obtaining a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology at the University of the Pretoria. My research project will require the involvement of a total of six teachers, two in every phase, and it will explore teachers' perceptions of the PBIS system at a Full Service school. Although participation in the study will hold no direct benefits for the teachers involved, their contributions are hoped to shed light on the potential use of this system in developing pro-social and positive interactions with learners, their peers, teachers and the community at large.

The information obtained in the semi-structured interviews conducted with the six teachers will be treated confidentially and will be used solely for purposes of this research. If permission is granted for this research, the participants will be interviewed at the learning support centre at the school. Each interview will be completed within an hour and it will be arranged after school – on a suitable day as indicated by the teacher – so that the research will not interfere with student contact time or extra-curricular activities. The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed for analysis purposes.

The identity of the school and all participants will be protected and pseudonyms will be used during data collection and analysis. Only my supervisor and I will have access to biographical details and collected data, and after completion of the study, the material will be stored securely at UP's Education Department in accordance with policy requirements.

If you as the principal of Discovery Primary Full Service School agree to allow this study, please fill in the consent form provided. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via e-mail. I believe that the research findings will contribute significantly towards the schools management of learner discipline and aid in creating positive interactions, not only within the school but with the surrounding community as well.

Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Naresche Naidoo
Researcher
M.Ed. Honours in Educational Psychology
University of Pretoria
nareschenaidoo.edupsych@gmail.com

Prof. Motlalepule Ruth Mampane
Research supervisor
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Pretoria
ruth.mampane@up.ac.za

Room 4-1.7, Level 4, Building
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20
Hatfield 0028, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)12 420 1254
Fax +27 (0)12 4205678
Email name.surname@up.ac.za
www.up.ac.za

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

A. Good Afternoon. My name is _____. Given that you are familiar with the PBIS discipline approach and have implemented for a few years now, I thought that it would be valuable to interview you, so that you may share some of your perceptions and experiences about the PBIS system with me.

B. During this interview I will be asking you to share about your experience with discipline in education, paying particular attention to this after the implementation of the PBIS system.

C. I hope that this information with be a valuable contribution to the Department of Basic Education and to other schools when it comes to dealing with discipline effectively and trying to achieve more pro-social interactions with learners.

D. The interview should be between 40 and 60 minutes.

{Transition to questions}

II.

A. I am going to start by asking you to tell me more about your history as an educator
   i. How long have you been in the field of education?
   ii. How would you describe your experience in education thus far?

B. What has your experience with discipline in schools been like?
   i. Is your experience of discipline in schools the same from when you started or has it changed?
   ii. What has your experience of discipline been like in this school?

C. How would you describe the overall climate of the school? In this case climate refers to the overall safety and relationships between learners and teachers?

D. When the PBIS system was implemented in your school, did you understand the need for it?

E. How would you describe the PBIS training you have received?

F. Now that you have seen PBIS in practice, what are your perceptions of the system?

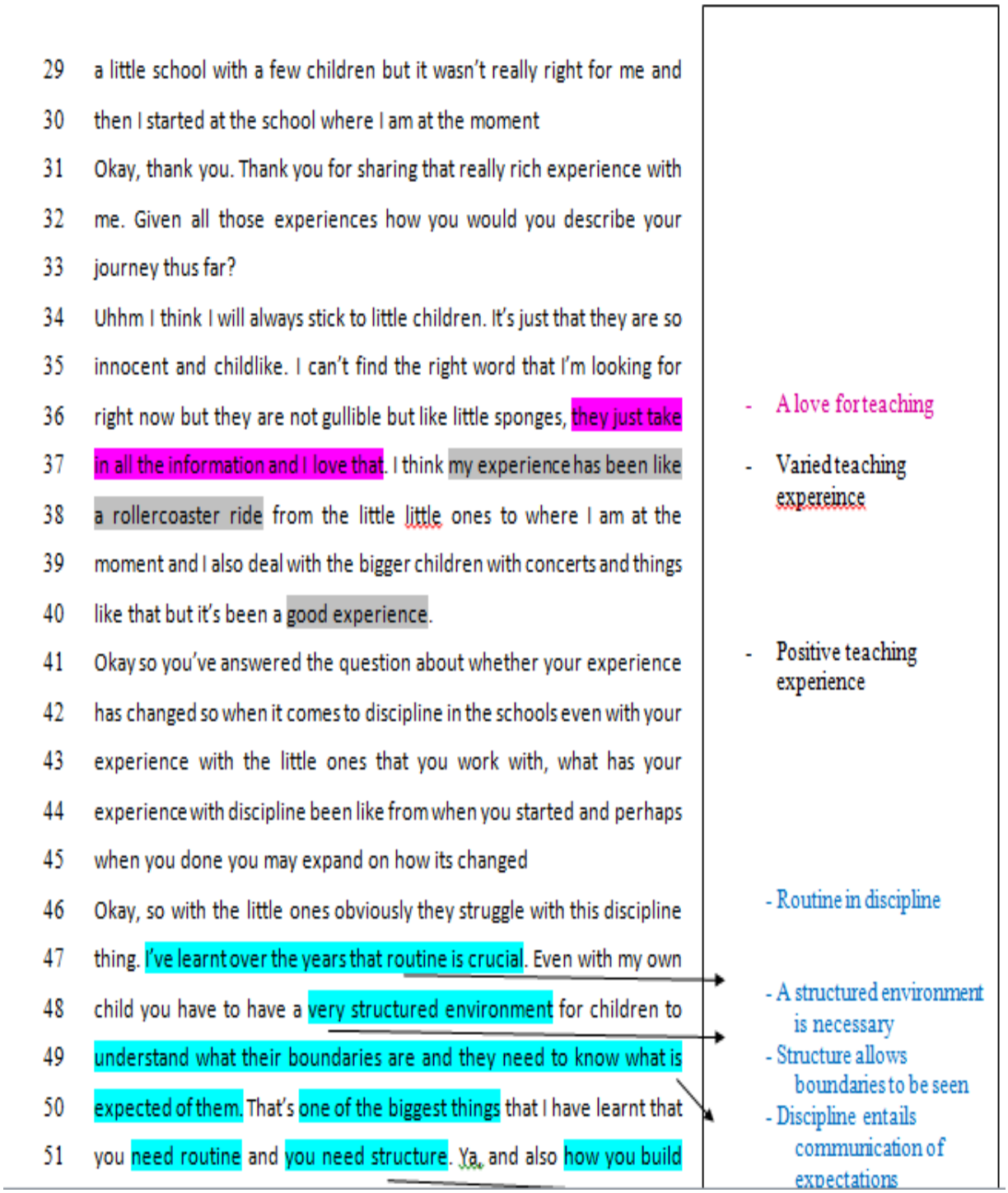
G. What preparation have you done to implement PBIS?

H. How would you describe the impact PBIS has had in your classroom?

I. How would you describe the impact PBIS has had on your school?

J. What are the barriers or obstacles that you feel hinder the implementation of PBIS?

Appendix C: Interview Transcript with Open coding



57	Thank you, thank you so much for sharing that. Those are great	
58	principles to incorporate into your teaching and with your kids. Would	
59	you say that this has changed from the beginning of your teaching, in any	
60	way, is there a greater need for the discipline or has it stayed the same?	- need for discipline remains the same
61	Well in some cases I think it stays the same. A child still needs the	
62	structure and routine and with that comes discipline and values. The way	- Structure and routine birth discipline
63	we present that has changed for me because in the beginning I was very	- Teachers need to feel confident to discipline
64	insecure and they (the kids) could pick up on that but later my	- Insecurity can be picked up by children
65	confidence grew as I tried and tested different ways of implementing the	- Experience in discipline is important
66	structure my confidence has grown, and ya, I don't know how to relay it	
67	to you now. . .	
68	No your explanation is perfect	
69	Okay, does it answer the question though?	
70	Yes yes it does	
71	It has changed though. With the technology and things that have	- Technology has influenced the way we discipline
72	changed and parents that become parents at a younger age, that has	- Family dynamics have influenced the quality of discipline
73	also really been a big influence in how the children are raised. I	- Discipline starts at home
74	sometimes feel that the uhhm like respecting your elders, how to treat	- Disruption at home can affect discipline
75	someone with respect, those core values are not really being taught	- Positive values are necessary in discipline
76	from home always and the way that you address your family when	- Consequences are necessary in discipline
77	you're having a fight, the kids pick up on that and I think probably why	
78	the discipline isn't always great is home stuff, so its different from when I	
79	started but there's definitely a need for positive values and uhh I cant	
80	remember the word now, consequences. They need to know if they do	

Appendix D: Open coding and emergent themes

Emergent themes		
1. Conceptualisation of discipline	**2.** Conceptualisation of PBIS	**3.** The future of PBIS
1.1 Factors that allow for effective discipline	2.1 Characteristics of PBIS	3.1 In the South African context
1.2 An evolution of discipline	2.2 The impact of PBIS in the school	3.2 Factors that facilitate PBIS
		3.3 Barriers and obstacles to PBIS
Coding for Participant 1		

- Routine in discipline is key
- A structured environment is necessary
- Structure allows boundaries to be seen
- Discipline entails communication of expectations
- Building relationships with learners is necessary in disciplining
- Teachers need to be respectful, fair and consistent
- Need for discipline remains for children
- Still a need for structure and routine
- Teachers need to feel confident to discipline
- Experience in discipline helps the teacher
- Family dynamics impact on discipline
- Core values being taught in families
- Respectful communication being shown in families
- Need for emphasis on positive values
- Knowing boundaries
- Knowing expectations
- Knowing consequences
- Unlearning of old ways to discipline
- Discourse on discipline has to change
- PBIS brought conduct where there wasn't before
- PBIS provided guidelines to deal with certain situations
- PBIS provided stability
- Need for PBIS
- PBIS allows for the child to be acknowledged

- PBIS allows for the child to be praised
- Acknowledgement of children causes an increase in confidence
- PBIS is adaptable
- PBIS is flexible
- PBIS inspires learners to be better
- PBIS becomes a part of daily living
- PBIS encourages a mind shift
- PBIS encourages teachers to change their teaching style to suit learners
- PBIS shows teachers that discipline should allow the child to see themselves as human
- PBIS can be customised to suit the context
- PBIS can be used for intense behavioural difficulties
-
-
- A lack of teacher buy-in.
- Teachers may not follow the procedure
- Teachers may not follow throw with consequences
- Teachers being inconsistent in following procedure
- Teachers may not stick to the routine
- Frustration from all the work that is needed
- Implementation is easier with parental support
- Correct timing of implementation and training for staff
- Staff buy-in for the PBIS system
- Staff motivation and inspiration
- PBIS implementation takes time and work
- School showed flexibility in implementing PBIS

- Evolving with technology and using it as a resource
- A mind shift for staff with how they view discipline
- The perspective of staff on discipline need to change for PBIS to work
- Unlearning is necessary
- Using various skills and resources to build on the PBIS
- Having a staff member who acts as the PBIS champion is helpful
- Understanding that PBIS has good and bad
- Collaboration between parents, learners and teachers
- PBIS champion who can run with it
- Teachers need to model the expected behaviour
- PBIS takes team collaboration
- PBIS has challenges and obstacles
- Buy-in is required from all stakeholders
- Progress should be tracked
- New staff should be taught to understand PBIS

Coding from Participant 2

- corporal punishment made children obey out of fear
- Discipline was confused with punishment
- The attitude of teachers is to still punish
- Punishment gave control
- Removal of corporal punishment left teachers feeling inadequate

-	Central to discipline was humiliation
-	Teachers still want to punish
-	Different ways to punish the child were introduced
-	punish rather than teach a behaviour
-	Discipline is confused with punishment
-	Discipline is teaching the behaviour you would like to see
-	Through discipline good citizenship is cultivated
-	Fear has been taught in schools
-	Society is driven by fear
-	Perpetuation of fear and punishment continues
-	Re-teaching on the discourse of discipline.
-	Significant change is going to take time
-	There is an improvement in building relationships
-	Improvement in nurturing a safe environment
-	Less punishment of children
-	Teachers are struggling to change
-	Teachers fear of an incomplete curriculum
-	Desire to promote positive values
-	New teachers are choosing to build nurturing relationships
-	School is influenced by home life
-	The intention for change has been made
-	Progress to discipline the intended way has been made
-	The way of discipline needed to change
-	Behaviour needed to be taught
-	There was a need to teach discipline in the school and community

-	Preparation for PBIS implementation was necessary
-	Trial and error was necessary
-	Reading and research was necessary
-	More Practical training and support in PBIS was needed
-	PBIS Training needs to be context specific
-	Good aspects of PBIS
-	Danger in not making it context specific
-	There's more that needs to be added to the PBIS
-	PBIS focuses on intentionally building relationships
-	PBIS focus on teaching the behaviour
-	Paperwork can be time consuming
-	In the states PBIS receives funding from government
-	PBIS does focus on extrinsic motivation
-	A move to intrinsic motivation is needed
-	Social and emotional learning is needed
-	Adding restorative practices in the school is necessary
-	The school is equipping teachers to teach kids skills
-	Adapt PBIS to work for your context
-	PBIS is framework
-	PBIS provides building blocks
-	PBIS has good structure
-	PBIS is missing some things that can be implemented
-	Behaviour expectations aren't being taught in line with the values
-	Values are becoming part of the language
-	Awareness around building positive values

	-	Kids Skills will be used in Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions
	-	Build emotional learning into our curriculum
	-	School system is a barrier
	-	Implementation of any system is dependent on management
	-	Teachers struggle to become agents of change
	-	Management holds the power