

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



**A THESIS SUBMITTED**

For the degree of  
**DOCTOR OF EDUCATION**

With the provisional title:

**The effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on  
learner academic performance in selected public schools  
in the Vhembe District**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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2020

## DECLARATION

I, **Ndinannyi Eunice Singo**, hereby declare that this thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education at the University of Zululand, Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

.....

**N.E. SINGO**

.....

**DATE**

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## **DEDICATION**

On a personal note, I dedicate this project to my husband, Mboniseni Samuel Munyai, for your simple spirited attitude towards my further education, your prayers, and words of encouragement. This research project would not have been a success without your support darling.

## **ABSTRACT**

Learner misconduct is one of the major issues that affect learner academic performance. Before the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the learners' discipline in class was largely controlled through corporal punishment and discrimination, particularly in the "Bantu Schools". This, however, is not the case in the democratic South Africa. The democratic dispensation enshrines human rights, equality and freedom for learners. The aim of the study was to find out how the abolition of corporal punishment has affected the learner performance in the Vhembe District's public schools. The study is positioned in the pragmatism paradigm. The mixed methods approach was used to investigate the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District. Simple random and purposive sampling procedures were used to select a sample for this study. Data was obtained through questionnaires and face-to-face interviews. The findings were analysed in order to address and help improve the discipline and conduct problems in secondary schools. An improved discipline system based on a positive and responsible learning approach is recommended.

**Keywords:** Corporal punishment, Learner performance, Discipline, Abolition, Learner misconduct.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>ACRWC</b>	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
<b>ATCP</b>	Alternatives to Corporal Punishment
<b>CRC</b>	Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>DAS</b>	Development Appraisal System
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>IQMS</b>	Integrated Quality Management Systems
<b>NDoE</b>	National Department of Education
<b>PM</b>	Performance Measurement
<b>SASA</b>	South African Schools Act
<b>SADTU</b>	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
<b>SAQI</b>	South African Quality Institute
<b>SDTs</b>	Staff Development Teams
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>SWPBS</b>	School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support
<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>WSE</b>	Whole School Evaluation

# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the 1990s, many South Africans experienced major social, economic and political changes as the country sought to establish a democratic nation. The abolition of corporal punishment is among some of the transformation in the education sector in all schools following the enactment of the South African Schools Act of 1996. This prohibition was recently challenged in the Constitutional Court. The challenge, however, was dismissed, making corporal punishment a serious offence in South Africa's schools. This implies that those who administer corporal punishment face the wrath of the law once caught. Thus, teachers and principals have the responsibility of identifying and implementing alternative disciplinary practices and procedures.

In South Africa, South African Schools' Act of 1996, banned corporal punishment, but there are still parents and teachers who desire the return of corporal punishment. Conservative social critics have attributed many of the failures of public schools to lax disciplinary practices applied there. Liberals usually fail to see any potential merits in this criticism and argue that public schools failure were the results of too authoritarian and rigid disciplinary practices that produced learner alienation (Borg & Gall, 2013:55). A survey of 1, 000 parents in England and Wales in 2000, found that 51% thought that corporal punishment should be reintroduced in schools. In Canada a 1990 study of the perceptions of school authorities (teachers, principals, superintendents, Department of education officials and school board trustees) regarding the rights of learners and parents reported that 79% said corporal can be justified. Based on what these scholars are saying, ill- discipline in schools seems to be a major concern not only for South Africa but for other countries.

The abolition of corporal punishment has had a negative impact on school discipline, although, some teachers still prefer to use corporal punishment even though it has been abolished. The majority of teachers have been trained on alternatives to corporal punishment, but they are not equipped with skills to manage discipline in the classroom, and hence poor discipline in our schools. This negatively impact on learner performance.

Misconduct among learners is a serious issue that affects the learners' academic performance. This may be attributed to the abolition of corporal punishment in schools. In the face of this, new disciplinary methods to improve the learners' academic performance are called for. Misconduct negatively impacts on the learners' performance. That is why the abolition of corporal punishment was met with mixed feelings by both the teachers and parents. This has also affected the culture of teaching and learning at school. That is, teachers experience daily problems in disciplining learners in the classroom as there are no alternatives provided by the Department of Education to corporal punishment. This study sought to determine the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on the learners' academic performance in the Vhembe District's public schools.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The learners' academic performance in secondary schools is unsatisfactory due to the abolition of corporal punishment. Learners affected by corporal punishment may achieve minimal academic achievements and higher levels of aggression. These are also prone to criminal behaviour, depression and anxiety. Corporal punishment reduces the learners' capacity to pay attention, and it undermines their self-confidence and causes the general dislike of schooling among the learners. Corporal punishment proved to be an in-effective option to ensuring the learners' value systems change for the better, and that they refrain from misbehaving in class. Instead, corporal punishment demonstrated how dangerous, detrimental and damaging to the learners' learning capabilities it could be. This was epitomised by the learners' damaged ear drums, eyes, brain haemorrhage, amputation, paralysed

limbs and in some extreme cases, death. There are recorded cases to such effects from different provincial departments of education, in both recent and past years.

Parents shift the blame on teachers, accusing them of not putting more effort to develop the learners' academic performance. This has resulted with the latter suffering from emotional stress. Lack of emotional intelligence manifests itself during the teaching and learning activities when teachers become short-tempered and then use vulgar language, and corporally punishment in dealing with the supposedly wayward learners. Consequently, the affected learners perform poorly in class.

### **1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study was to find out the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on the learners' academic performance in the Vhembe District.

### **1.4 STUDY OBJECTIVES**

The following constitute this study's objectives.

- i. To determine the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment in public schools in the Vhembe District.
- ii. To establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in the Vhembe District.
- iii. To identify the common types of alternative disciplinary methods used by the teachers in public schools of the Vhembe District.
- iv. To develop intervention strategies to assist parents and teachers in dealing with the learner indiscipline in the Vhembe District's public schools.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study answered the following research questions.

- i. What are the effects of the abolition of the corporal punishment on the learners' academic performance in the Vhembe District's public school?
- ii. Is there a relationship between learner indiscipline and the academic performance of learners in selected public schools in the Vhembe district?
- iii. What are the common types of alternative discipline methods used by the teachers in the Vhembe District's public schools?
- iv. How can parents and teachers work together in dealing with the learner indiscipline in the Vhembe District's public schools?

## **1.6 CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE**

The researcher will attend conferences to present papers based on the collected data. Articles harvested from the study will be submitted to accredited journals for publication. This study established, for both parents and teachers, possible strategies for working together as they support their children's education. The findings would be distributed to the Vhembe District Office and the Department of Education's Head Office. This would also help both parents and teachers to use various strategies in the education of their children and learners. As a result learners would be holistically developed.

## **1.7 METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The methodology and the research design are fully discussed in Chapter four. Here, they are briefly discussed as a preamble. The methodology is discussed in terms of the population, sampling procedures and data analysis.

### **1.7.1 Research Design**

This study used the pragmatist paradigm. The mixed methods approach was used to collect data through questionnaires and interviews. The study was largely quantitative in nature.

### **1.7.2 Research Methodology**

The researcher employed the mixed methodology.

### **1.7.3 Population and Sampling Procedure**

The researcher used a non-probability sampling technique, particularly the purposive sampling method. The population in this study comprised of five secondary schools' principals and teachers. This researcher used simple random sampling to select the schools for the quantitative approach. A total of 120 teachers responded to the questionnaires that were distributed to the randomised schools. A purposive sampling procedure was used in the qualitative aspect of the study. Here, five principals and five HODs participated in the interview questions.

### **1.7.4 Data Collection Methods**

In this study, a questionnaire and interview schedule were used. A five- gradient Likert Scale was used for the structured questionnaires while the interview schedule with open-ended questions was used to collect data from the principals. The questionnaire and the interview schedule are in annexure B.

### **1.7.5 Data Collection Procedure**

To professionally distribute questionnaires, I asked for permission to do from the school authorities. The request was directed at the Department of Education, Vhembe District. When permission was granted, I made sure that all the participants signed the consent form before completing the questionnaires, and also provided them with the participation sheet that indicated that they participated voluntarily. I then distributed the questionnaires to all the selected secondary schools. I did the same when collecting them back.

## **1.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

The thorough analysis of the interview data was done using the content analysis technique, which, according to Creswell (2013), is compiling themes based on the words used in the answers of the respondents. The field notes were studied by the researcher simultaneously with the interview transcripts. For the proper data analysis, the data were translated into specific categories. Several authors documented different steps on how to process and analyse qualitative data. Quantitative studies emphasise the application of numerical measures to arrive at specific findings. The obtained information from questionnaires were coded for every question and then entered into a Microsoft Excel spread sheet in words and numbers. The statistical software SPSS version 25 was used to analyse the generated data.

## **1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

This research dealt primarily with secondary schools under the Vhembe District. The Vhembe District is located in the rural parts of the Limpopo Province, South Africa. This study focused on the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District. It fixated on the total spectrum of corporal punishment in the Vhembe District. This study was conducted between February 2018 and December 2019.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Justice in terms of ethics was considered during the registration of this thesis. Ethical considerations commenced long before the participants were recruited.

- “Autonomy: This researcher respected the autonomy, rights and dignity of her participants by not writing their names in the study.
- Beneficence: This research would make a positive contribution towards the welfare of children at school in South Africa and beyond.
- Non-maleficence: No harm was caused during and after this study to the participants

- **Justice:** This study's benefits and risks were fairly distributed among people.

The above-mentioned considerations are in line with the permission granted for this study by the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education. (cf. Annexure D).

## 1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The most recurring terms that follow were used in this study are:

**Poor performance:** Refers to all scores which are below 50%, as benchmarked by all South African universities before 2008 as the mark that should be obtained by a learner. Marks from 40-49% produce an 'S' symbol and thus learners who obtain this symbol do not qualify for university entrance.

**Public Schools:** These are administered locally, provincially and nationally (Thornberg, 2008). They are schools built by the government and sometimes by local communities. Many of these schools are named after the local chief, and the government declared them 'no-fee schools'. That is, parents are exempted from paying school fees. These are schools whose administrative responsibility lies with the community that governs them through the School Governing Body (SGB).

**Punishment:** It is defined as an action (penalty) that is imposed on a person for showing improper conduct or for breaking a rule (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2006). Punishment is controlling behaviour through negative means.

**Corporal punishment:** Straus (2000:110) defined corporal punishment "as the use of physical power to intentionally cause a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behaviour". Straus further indicated that "this includes spanking on the buttocks and slapping a child's hand for touching a forbidden or dangerous object". It is also a deliberate infliction of physical punishment. The use of physical force intended to cause some degree of pain or

discomfort for correction, control and changing behaviour in the belief of educating students.

**School discipline:** School discipline can be described “as all the strategies that can be used to coordinate, regulate and organise individuals and their activities in school” (Thornberg, 2008:37). Put in place for the provision of procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which teaching and learning can take place. This definition is comprehensive and is a helpful starting point to understand school discipline as it includes all activities used to maintain discipline, from harsh and coercive to nurturing and liberating.

**Discipline:** The practice pertaining to teaching or training a person to submit to rules or a code of behaviour in both short and long terms (UNESCO, 2009). “Discipline creates order, discipline guarantees fairness, discipline safeguards the learner, discipline subscribes to the spiritual development of a learner, discipline can be prospective and discipline is directed primarily at improvement, not vengeance”, (Oosthuizen, Roos, Smit & Rossouw 2009:154).

**Academic Achievement:** Academic achievement in education refers “to any of the several titles conferred by colleges and universities to indicate the extent of academic achievement”, (Salo, 2008:495). For the purpose of this study, academic achievement refers to a certificate that learners receive when they complete their Grade 12. When learners perform academically well, it shows their satisfactory understanding of events. It is expected of them to be exemplary to other learners in the community where they live.

## **1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

The structure of this study is indicated below. It consists of six Chapters.

Chapter one outlines the background of the study, problem statement, aim and its objectives, research questions, its contribution to the body of knowledge, ethical considerations and the definition of terms.

The second Chapter reviewed related literature on the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in public schools.

In the third Chapter, this study's theoretical foundation is provided and fully discussed. This is done in the context of the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools.

The following Chapter is that of the study's methodology, its research design and the inherent methods of data collection and analysis.

For the fifth Chapter, data is presented, interpreted and analysed.

The concluding Chapter contains the study findings, conclusion and its recommendations. Also provided here are the suggestions and issues that can inform further research in future.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter introduced this study and provided its background. This Chapter reviews literature related to the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance public schools. It is necessary to establish what other scholars say about the topic under study. Mouton (2008:87) contends that one should start with a review of the existing scholarship or available body of knowledge to see how other scholars investigated the research problem one is interested in. The main concepts are discussed in relation to the available literature.

South Africa passed several laws that make corporal punishment illegal. This means that this country's legislation prohibit corporal punishment in schools. Salo (2008:495) pointed out that the South African law has, therefore, created a new legal context. It is, therefore, important for principals and teachers to know the law relating to the school discipline and punishment. It is equally imperative for them to be familiar with legal concepts, principles and procedures so that they effectively build and maintain effective schools. In light of this, it seems as if "punishment has been replaced by praise and reward", (Malakulunthu, 2011:20). Since the banning of corporal punishment in schools under the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996), the lack of discipline and safety in schools has become one of the major challenges in South Africa. The South African Constitution (Section 12) states that "everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way", (Republic of South Africa, 1996a:12).

## **2.2 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

The National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996) also stipulates that no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject learners to physical abuse at any educational institution (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996b:3). The South African Schools Act (SASA) (No. 84 of 1996) states that (1) “no person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner; (2) any person who contravenes subsection 1 is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault”, (Republic of South Africa, 1996c). Maphosa & Shumba (2010:387), however, argue that it has become increasingly difficult for teachers to ensure discipline in schools.

According to the Schools Act, 54, the disciplinary power is vested in the parents as the primary educators of children and the significant stakeholders with authority over them. Similarly, teachers are regarded as *loco parentis*. Teachers as loco parents are mandated to discipline learners at school. Disciplinary measures originated from the South African common law, primarily from the *loco parentis* principle and the legislation considerably provide for disciplinary powers. The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa 1996c: S 3(4) (n) requires the minister to put forward a relevant policy with regard to disciplining and controlling learners on the grounds where teachers are not permitted to do so learners. The Gazette, Guidelines of Governing Bodies (Republic of South Africa, 1998b) also mentions the teachers’ disciplinary powers.

### **2.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa**

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) is the supreme law of the Republic. Any law or conduct that is inconsistent with it is invalid, and obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled, according to Section 2 of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). The Constitution states that “everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person which includes the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” (Republic of South Africa, 1996a:12). Based on this extract, positive discipline should be emphasised. The Constitution also states

that “everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected”, (Republic of South Africa, 1996a:10). By applying corporal punishment, teachers violate the learners’ rights since it is against the notion that ‘it is crucial that every child be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation’, (Republic of South Africa, 1996a:28).

### **2.2.2 The South African School Amendment Act, 2002, 2005 and 2007**

The South African Schools Amendments Act (2002, 2005 and 2007) “amended Sections 8 and 9 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 to reinforce measures and procedures to control school indiscipline”. The South African Schools Amendment Acts, 2002, 2005 and 2007 (RSA, 2002:4) requires that the SGBs ensure that learners are accompanied by parents or a guardian during disciplinary proceedings, unless good cause is shown by the school governing body for the continuation of the proceedings in the absence of the parent or the person designated by the parent. This means that an accused learner should not appear before the tribunal without a parent or guardian as was the case before the amendment of the Act.

The South African Schools Amendments Act (RSA, 2005) also requires the SGBs to suspend a learner who is alleged to have committed a serious misconduct only after a fair hearing as a correctional measure rather than those punitive measures. The South African Schools Amendments Act of 2006 (RSA, 2006:6) further stipulates that the Code of Conduct for learners should provide for the supportive measure of structures for counselling a learner involved in disciplinary proceedings. The South African Schools Amendments Act of 2007 (RSA 2007:4) provides the measures to prohibit any dangerous objects and illegal drugs during school activities or on school premises.

The South African Schools Amendments Act (RSA, 2002, 2005 and 2007) provide the principals and teachers with authority to allow certain instruments, equipment and any other material into the classroom and the school, only if those objects are intended for learning and teaching purposes”. If a learner is caught carrying any

unauthorised objects to school or within school premises, that learner is charged with misconduct. The prohibition of learners from carrying objects that are classified as dangerous increases the safety of others and prevents premeditated stabbings. The South African Schools Amendments Act (RSA, 2002, 2007) intended to clarify and strengthen the provisions of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) with regard to ensuring and maintaining sound disciplinary measures at school. The South African Schools Amendments Act (RSA, 2002, 2005 and 2007) further creates a safe and conducive environment for a positive culture of teaching and learning at school.

### **2.2.3 International Laws and Treaties Applied in South Africa**

The South African courts receive their mandates from Section 39 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 (RSA, 1996, 43s) that “for interpreting the Bill of Rights, they should consider international laws, including those that are not binding on the Republic of South Africa”. South Africa is mandated by the international treaties and laws in terms of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28 and 29). South Africa adopted it in 1989, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (1990) to which South Africa became party in 1996, generally mandated the South African government that children obtain a meaningful education at school to ensure that they are safe.

WaKivulu & Wandai (2009) reported that the Organisation of African Unity’s Charter of the Child binds its member countries to the same measures, and they should take steps to ensure that a child who is subjected to school of parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and respect for his/her inherent dignity. The first binding instrument by the Convention of the Rights of the Child is the first legal international instrument to accommodate the full range of human rights such as civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights (Reyneke, 2013:207). There was a dire need by world leaders in the 1980s to make sure that children less than 18 years were fully protected since they were vulnerable to all sorts of abuse and thus needed special care. World leaders made sure that countries report at the United Nations Committee

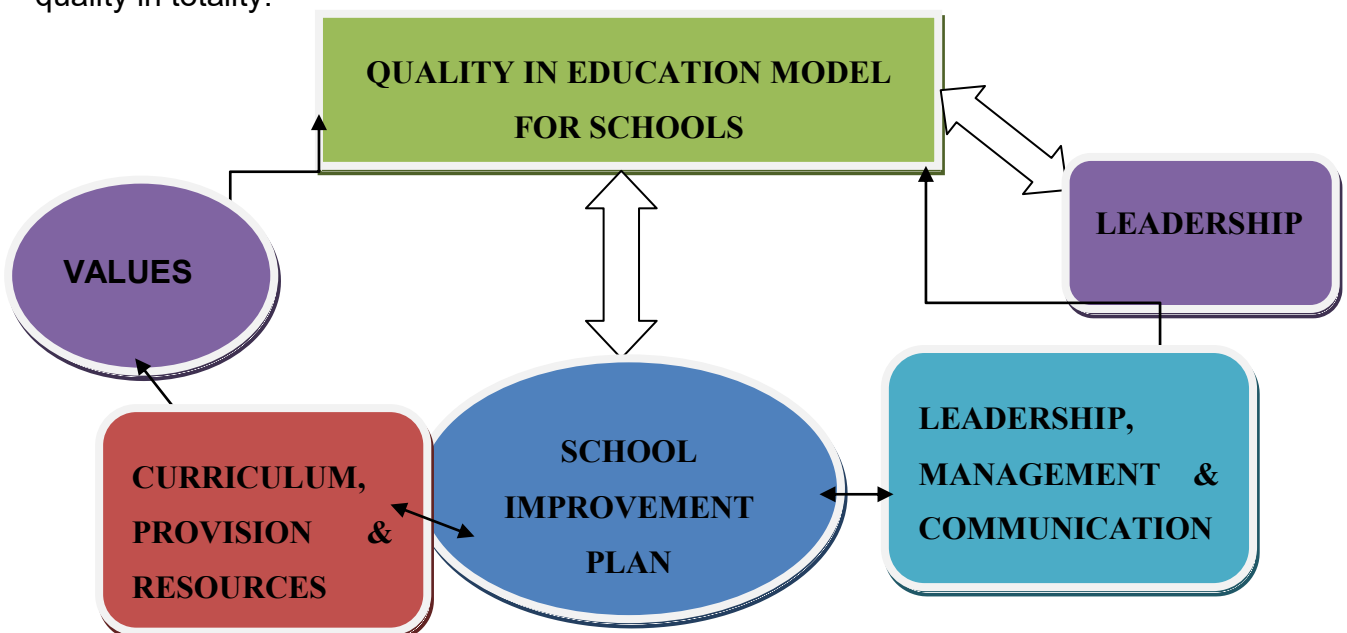
on the progress in matters pertaining to the development of the rights of the children. The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an internationally recognised agreement between nations, established around a comprehensive set of goals for individual nations to achieve on behalf of their children. In general, the Convention calls for the protection of children through:

Freedom from violence, abuse, hazardous employment, exploitation, abduction or sale, adequate nutrition, free compulsory primary education, adequate health care, equal treatment regardless of gender, race or cultural background, the right to express opinions and freedom of thought in matters affecting them and a safe exposure/access to leisure, play, culture and art.

It is, therefore, essential that the needs of vulnerable children are taken into account by meeting all the goals outlined by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child as the promotion of secure environment remains crucial.

### 2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this investigation is centred on the first three pillars of Quality in Education Model (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010:240) in **Figure 2.1** below, with the addition of two pillars by this researcher. The quality in education model for schools is both common and relevant to all schools and should be accommodated to achieve quality in totality.



### **2.3.1 Values**

Rizvi and Lingard (2010:240) stated that quality education is solely dependent upon the values the school has, and that the fundamental values are needed for a school to produce quality education such as honesty, integrity, respect, openness, teamwork and trust. A school filled with values would not practice nepotism. For example, they would always follow the recruitment procedure in appointing staff members.

### **2.3.1 Leadership**

For the school to produce good results, the teacher must also be a leader, administrator and manager, and hence authority and responsibility should be spread throughout the school (Russo, 2015:34). It is essential that principals and teachers are leaders in their schools to provide quality education. However, the SMT should not have its jurisdiction in the principal's office only. Besides possessing the teaching skills, teachers are expected to inculcate and set an example to their learners. The recognition of leadership roles is very crucial in instances where corporal punishment has been abolished as sound leadership gives the school's stakeholders the space to use their initiatives with the vision of the school in mind (Russo, 2015:34). Compassion, equality, honesty, peace and respect are important values that schools should reflect more often.

### **2.3.2 School improvement plan**

Developed schools are likely to abandon corporal punishment. Within the Provincial Departments of Education, schools may be expected to have school improvement plans which may need the annual revision and updates that may cover the following areas:

- For the basic functionality of the school: teachers need to ensure that the school functions effectively on a day-to-day basis, with high percentage attendance by both learners and teachers, and that class and teacher timetables are in place including a

sound financial management plan. Learner achievement: The intention of this element is to ensure that learners achieve their full potential in all subjects, including a high participation in extra-curricular activities.

- School safety, security and discipline: Ensuring that learners are safe and secure at school, as well as the availability of a disciplinary code which outlines the responsibilities and rights of everyone are essential for all schools.
- School infrastructure: Buildings should be well-maintained and sufficient for the needs of the learners.
- Parents and community: A good relationship between the parents and the school is indispensable for quality education (Russo, 2015). The school should, therefore, interact with the wider community and support partnerships with other organisations.

### **2.3.3 Leadership, Management and Communication**

The teamwork of important stakeholders like parents, teachers and learners should be in place for the welfare of the schools. Parents, teachers and learners should be well-informed about the progress of the school through a participative style of communication between and cross the different stakeholders (Smith, 2013:53)

### **2.3.4 Curriculum, Provisioning and Resources**

The Curriculum Policy Document should be prominent, sufficient, human and physical to make teaching possible. The “conceptual framework guides the researcher in the process of conveying research questions in determining whether schools, in particular learners, value discipline as an integral part for academic performance” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010:240). The importance of this issue is articulated by the comment made by Smith (2013:54) that “this factor is clearly reflected in all questions under parental involvement, discipline and in most questions under the academic performance of learners” and “the parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of the level of discipline in their schools as well as its effect on academic performance of learners are also highlighted” (Smith, 2013:54).

Weeks (2013:332) indicated that the framework also captures the challenges that teachers face on a day to day basis as they strive to balance imparting skills on

learners with upholding discipline in classrooms. In order to extract the effect of the relationship between the homes and school environment as well as the community, this researcher used this framework, to solve the problem of poor performance by learners in the selected Vhembe schools (Okeke, 2014:1). To obtain information from the participants, the interview question: *“How does discipline affect the learners’ academic performance?”* and its probing ones were used.

## **2.4 THE EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Woods (2005:92) observe that South Africa today, over two decades, is still overwhelmed by the after-effects of the civil disobediences linked with the political struggle from 1976 -1993. The fact is that “the learner discipline has to start at home” (Ndamani, 2008:177). Corporal punishment was a form of corrective measures, but teachers tended to use excessive physical force, resulting with some learners getting serious injuries. “The [indiscipline] situation is so serious that many teachers in schools believe that only the use of corporal punishment can enforce discipline, thus it should be reinstated” (Rohman, 2013:80). “The abolition of corporal punishment has weakened the teachers grip the learner behaviour control”, (Ezekiel, 2013:2). “When the application of corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools, many school principals and teachers found it more difficult to manage discipline”, (Porteus, Vally & Ruth, 2011:9).

“Many school principals and teachers disagreed with the abolition of corporal punishment”, (Porteus et al., 2011:9) and, they believe that as professionals, they need to provide proper guidance through corporal punishment based on the Biblical quote; “You spare the rod, you spoil the child”. The abolishment of corporal punishment has encouraged learners to disrespect both principals and teachers. “Many South African schools now experience increased incidents of ill-discipline and uncertainty about the disciplinary measures to use to maintain discipline”, (Mouton, 2015:143). Teachers “now teach in fear because learners intentionally misbehave due to misguided beliefs that their constitutional rights prohibit teachers from taking any disciplinary measure against them”, (Noguera, 2008:5). The “misinterpretation

of the constitution in this regard has led to the escalation of bad behaviour among learners, rendering schools ungovernable (Reyneke & Pretorius, 2017:113). Noguera (2008) believes that the abolition of corporal punishment has led to learners deliberately misbehaving, well aware that nothing would be done to them. Furthermore, the abolition of corporal punishment in schools left a gap in learner discipline, and this has contributed to all kinds of disciplinary problems at schools (Mabitla, 2006). Thus, the power to maintain discipline has significantly diminished at school (Magwa & Ngara, 2014).

Many teachers support the abolition of disciplining learners corporally, though (Magwa & Ngara, 2014). Strict corporal punishment badly affects the learners' academic performance and produces low self-esteem and anti-social behaviours (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013: 961). The Human Science Research Council Report on school discipline found that most teachers equated ill-discipline with corporal punishment and they believed that it was the parents' responsibility to teach children obedience, responsibility, respect, self-control and discipline (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013).

Corporal punishment may be harmful to learners. For example, it indirectly informs the child that the only way to settle conflicts is through violence and inflicting pain on someone. "Children exposed to such forms of behaviour control tend to adopt it as well. Also, children may fail to develop trust and secure relationship with their teachers", (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:964).

"Corporal punishment physiologically damages the children's lives, given that they are mentally harassed. The outcomes are that they develop the sense of helplessness, worthlessness, depression, inhibition, aggression, shame, self-doubt, guilt, social withdrawal, feeling of inferiority, rigidity, low self-esteem, stress and heightened anxiety which may reduce self-confidence", (Kromberg, 2015:565). In addition, corporal punishment is a factor that contributes to the delinquent behaviour problems and antisocial behaviours such as cheating, lying and bullying (Kromberg, 2015). Fiske (2010) asserted that the administration of corporal punishment on children makes them develop traumatic disorders in the learning environment, and

this result in aggressive behaviour, avoidance behaviours, change in personality, fearful reaction, somatic complaints, withdrawal, memory loss and concentration disorders, dependency and regression and sleep disorders for some learners.

“Physical punishment may interfere with learning procedures, and this may lead to psychological damages such as depression, inhibition, rigidity, heightened anxiety and suicidal thoughts”, (Lau, Wong & Dudovits, 2018:136). This can make learners to further lose interest in learning, and also to fear and hate the subject or teacher. “Children lose interest and develop a negative attitude towards school and learning”, (Lau, Wong & Dudovits, 2018:136).

There are those schools known for their teachers who still use corporal punishment. This tarnishes the image of those schools. When a child is injured from corporal punishment at school, that school should be held responsible and hence made to pay for that child’s medical treatment” (Cooper, 2013:347). A practical example of learner indiscipline was “a case between the family of a murdered learner and the MEC for Education (2010(4) 150) in the Western Cape’s Division of the High Court”, (Bryde, 2012:277). Indiscipline cases in South African schools, which impact negatively on the teaching and learning, are very high.

Bryde (2012) noted that the magnitude of the reported cases of learner indiscipline warrant the use of different kinds of punishment-based disciplinary measures, and the question still remains on the usefulness of such measures in curbing future occurrences. Punishments such as “suspensions and expulsions will eliminate misbehaviour”, (Lau *et al.*, 2018:132). However, before suspension and expulsion can be effected, self-esteem and problem-solving skills should be developed in an attempt to change the learners’ behaviour, encouraging them to change their attitudes (Berg, 2015:185). It was established that suspensions and expulsions have the following negative outcomes (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018a:34):

- Higher rates of misbehaviour.
- Alienation of learners.
- A correlation with lower academic achievement.

- Learner drop out.
- A failure to reduce misbehaviour.

Owing to the challenges faced by teachers when implementing alternative strategies for school discipline, discipline in many schools in the country has not improved. This study intends to suggest some guidelines which will enable teachers to have a better understanding of behaviour and attitude of learners, so that the teacher can be in a better position to deal with ill-discipline at school (Source).

Prior research shows that cases of learner indiscipline are on the increase in South African schools (Alternatives to Corporal Punishment, 2001). There are claims that teachers generally feel disempowered in their ability to maintain discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. After the banning of corporal punishment under the South Africa Schools Act (84 of 1996), the lack of discipline and safety in schools became a serious challenge. It has become increasingly difficult for teachers to ensure discipline in schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010: 387). Learners literally take advantage of teachers because they are fully aware that whatever punishment is given, it would not equal the corporal punishment one (Engelbrencht, 2011:151).

The study by Maphosa and Shumba (2010:390) revealed that learners now have neither fear nor respect for teachers and behave as they please. This behaviour, these two authors maintain, is a recipe for chaos in schools, forcing them to conclude that “learners in South African schools are out of control because they are well aware that no matter how bad and unbecoming their actions are, they will never face the severe consequences of corporal punishment”, (Engelbrecht, 2011: 153). The alternative methods of disciplining learners at the teachers’ disposal are compulsory. That is, even those who previously relied on corporal punishment now have to come up with alternative methods of dealing with unruly behaviour at school (Naong, 2007). The lack of discipline has become endemic in schools, especially in secondary schools. Some of the serious problems experienced by teachers are learners who do not have problems in exchanging harsh words with teachers.

This behaviour results in teachers becoming helpless and disempowered. This leads to poor teaching and learning. “The thrust on children’s rights and the subsequent abolition of corporal punishment has developed behaviour of licentiousness among learners as they no longer respect their teachers”, (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:388).

The abolition of corporal punishment has negatively impacted on school discipline. Arum and Passage (2012) confirmed that learners, due to the abolition of corporal punishment, do not respect teachers anymore as they bring dangerous weapons to school, their means of defence in case anyone touches them. “Teachers in South Africa generally work in fear and are demoralised” (Arum & Passage, 2012:58). In addition, the “culture of learning is lost because of gangsterism, teenage pregnancy, hooliganism and abhorrent graffiti, and the learners’ lack of dedication to their work (Algozzine, Wang & Violette, 2011:3). This has contributed to the teachers’ resignations, their dismissals and the high learner-dropout rate.

## **2.5 ASPECTS CONTRIBUTING TO THE LACK OF DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **2.5.1 Home Background**

Both parents’ roles are vital in maintaining discipline at home. Okeke (2014:1) asserted that children from incomplete families are likely to become involved in crime and other risky behaviours. Reyneke (2015:57) suggested that youth who come from single-headed households, ruptured family ties and families without a father figure are more at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour than those from families with both parents. Black (2016:29) noted that learners from single-parent families who often live in conditions of economic hardship are likely to develop behavioural patterns that show their vulnerability to the effects of stress and are often depressed.

Also, children who live with both parents are not always safe. For instance, children who are treated harshly or rejected by both parents may rebel against authority at school or may project anger and resentment at any figure exercising authority at school”, (Black, 2016:31). Ahmad (2011:64) added that children from homes where

there is tension and fighting between the parents show anxiety and do not concentrate in class, and hence face challenges in their everyday life (Arnold, 2015:3).

“The children’s exposure to levels of frustration and increased aggression give rise to problems within the education system” (The Department of Education White Paper 6, 2011). Weeks (2012:332) believes that children should be educated and guided to act in a socially acceptable way in order that they benefit from opportunities that make them develop self-actualisation through creativity. It is, therefore, a must that “the atmosphere at home should be such that children can develop a sense of trust and high self-esteem, a feeling of independence and self-actualisation (McKinney, Brown & Malkin, 2018:301).

Mthanti and Mncube (2014:71) asserted that the negative influence of the home background is worse in cases where families live in informal settlements. “The schools situated in poor communities have learners who are exposed to models of disruptive behaviour and the lack of interest in scholastic achievement”, (Van Wyk, 2013:198). “It is common that social problems from either home or the community often promote the disregard for law, respect, honesty and fairness”, (Van Wyk, 2013:198). “These are connected with fostering a poor school environment in which anti-social behaviour prevails”, (Van Wyk, 2013:198). “Contexts outside the school interact and shape the individual’s anti-social behaviour and these are regarded as the sources of school violence and misbehaviour”, (Stopper, 2013:77).

### **2.5.2 The Role of Parents**

Parents have to mould their children’s characters. “Parents neglect their children, and the observation of the former exchanging words with the latter are examples of the anger the children have developed”, (WaKivulu & Wanda, 2009:5). “Neglect or the lack of supervision are some of the strongest predictors of the development of misbehaviour and violence, thus parents must develop a child’s social skills, attitudes and abilities by determining with whom he/she should or should not have social contract with”, (Weeks, 2012:335).

“Parents who embrace free enterprise behaviour out of obliviousness teach wilderness, indiscipline and hostile social conduct to their children”, (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013: 111). Woods (2005:92) acknowledged that the more negative the enthusiastic self-idea of the learner is, the more forceful the learner is. This is in line with the view that “the absence of parental supervision, association and support in the learner’s scholastic endeavours results in indiscipline” (Hung, 2007:195). Furthermore, parents who set no unmistakable and steady cut off points, desires and qualities with the learner pass on a negative mental self-view to the learner”, (McKinney, Brown & Malkin, 2018:290). The direct result of this may be that “working parents have no time to check their children’s learning”, (Yariv, 2012:74).

Wright and Keetly (2013) claimed that the learner comes to class with a negative state of mind about tutoring, a restricted collection of helpful conduct aptitudes and a preference to utilise coercive strategies to control others. Tihapi (2011:75) agreed that the learner with little structure, direction and adjusted teaching at home will battle to identify with the school system. Guardians may be excessively occupied with individual activities such that they have little time to regulate their youngsters’ conduct and exercises (Tihapi, 2011). Also, some are not worried about their youngsters’ scholarly work and conduct (Russo, Beckmann & Jansen, 2012).

At the point when guardians open their children to withdrawn practices, the latter are powerless against being fed wrong conduct traits from those who exploit them (Sprick, 2013). Also, Magwa and Ngara (2014) call attention to the fact that the absence of parental help hinders the authorisation of the school to teach. Schools restrain parental inclusion to raising support, deliberate get-togethers and introductions (Magwa & Ngara, 2014). Similarly, Karande and Kulkarni (2013:963) indicated that without the parents’ dynamic interest and support at school, there develops a disturbing circumstance of the absence of the learner train in state schools. Magwa and Ngara (2014:88) stated that when there is an inconsistency between values instructed at school and those supported at home, disciplinary issues emerge. In this regard, guardians should take up their essential and community duty to train their kids (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 2016).

(Specify) There ought to be an arrangement, not the reason for the issue of the learners' absence from the school's teaching and learning activities (Karande & Kulkani, 2013). Reyneke and Pretorius (2017:112) assert that by becoming involved with children, parents needed to ensure that the values, direction and the character of the community are established and maintained in schools. "The Department of Education (2013) believes that learning occurs when all stakeholders, including parents, are continuously involved in setting the limits, encouraging the desired behaviours and making meaningful decisions about managing children". Okeke (2014:01) found that "parental involvement is related with the children's positive experiences in the school environment". Karande & Kulkarni (2013: 963) explained that the morality of learners is the product of effective cognitive and social powers that lead to a growing moral consciousness.

### **2.5.3 Poverty**

Poverty is a condition that incapacitates its victims such that they cannot fully participate in a range of activities as human-beings due to the lack of economic resources (Mthanti & Mncube, 2014:71). Mthanti and Mncube (2014:71) further indicated that children from poor family backgrounds are vulnerable to violence and many anti-social behavioural trends, and are, consequently, more exposed to anxiety, lack of support and supervision". In addition, "poor parents are more concerned with basics such as food, shelter and employment, and less concerned with issues related to their children's schooling" (Mthanti & Mncube, 2014:75).

"Adverse home conditions may result in a child bringing anxieties about the family situation into the school, and this may lead to the lack of concentration or difficulty in learning, as well as to disciplinary problems", (Burton, 2008c:15). The lack of proper care such as to develop the child's body or to provide hygienic conditions and healthy surroundings may promote misbehaviour by learners (Bilatyi, 2012). The family's financial status may affect the guardians' child-rearing styles, which may impact on the children's conduct. Bilatyi (2012) said that the few learners' destitution and the high financial status of the group of different learners may motivate the

former to burglarise others with the specific goal of meeting their day-to-day needs. Burton (2008c) agreed that the more prominent the monetary disparity and social separation among learners at schools is, the more teaching challenges occur.

#### **2.5.4 Media**

Media may have a positive or negative influence on learners. “It is via the media that the youth encounter examples of ill-disciplined people whom they perceive to be role models”, (Bilatyi, 2012:77). “Seeing dangerous weapons and actions such as gunfire in American schools did not only lead to the media reports giving the public the impression that all is not well in the American schools, but also promoted the similar shootings among the learners at school”, (Allen, 2010:17). “The Federal government’s funding for more police officials in schools and the broadening of parameters for school expulsions and suspensions were led by negative media coverage of the shootings in American schools”, (Fields, 2015:73).

#### **2.5.5 Ineffective Parental Discipline**

Some parents are excessively busy, making it impossible for them to effectively take part in their children’s school activities. On account of their actions and different duties, parents cannot teach their children in light of the fact that the former do not perceive and acknowledge their power or they move their parental obligations to as far as their children’s conduct at school is concerned. Allen (2010:17) asserted that “most parents are never worried about the good and scholarly exhibitions of their children because they do not have time”.

This is in line with Mugabe and Maposa (2013:111) added that “few parents do as such out of numbness and that is why such parental teachings are inadequate”. It was revealed that the guardians make up for the absence of adoration towards their children by giving them cash. Arum and Passage (2012) asserts that child who sees their folks as chilly and far off will probably show an absence of teaching, particularly hostility, than learners who see their associations with their folks as warm and

defensive. In instances, where parents genuinely fail to restrain youngsters, children search for friendship and love elsewhere.

### **2.5.6 Economic factors affecting single-parent families**

“One in three American babies in 2001 was born to a single mother due to women giving birth out of wedlock”, (Arum & Passage, 2012:56). In many cases, the salary of single women is barely above poverty level, so the role of single parents, the only caregivers for those children, becomes an economic and emotional stress. “A study by social services indicates that the number of fatherless children has reached 17 million and this absence of fathers produces profound problems for schools”, (Ahmad, 2011:64). “Learners from these homes have been found to be both less productive in schools and responsible for the increase of criminal behaviour in schools, and the Department of Social Services in Connecticut showed the statistics of these children as follows,

- Five times more likely to live in poverty.
- More likely to bring drugs and weapons to school.
- Twice more likely to commit a crime.
- Twice more likely to drop out of school.
- Twice more likely to end up in jail.
- Four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioural problems”, (Herald, 2006:6).

A child’s association with different peers increases his likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviour (Arnold, 2015:3). There is the fear that if the child does not follow the bad behaviour of the peers, they may be rejected by the group (Black, 2016: 29). The friends’ influence may be a critical element of the learners’ conduct. A great deal of pressure seems to be prevalent on young people to follow their friends and to win their approval and the problem may be that bad friends are involved in bad behaviour, implying that the school has a number of learners who misbehave, and who have the potential to make the school environment hardly conducive for the inculcation of true discipline in learners (Arnold, 2015:3).

“A child’s association with different peers increases the likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviour” (Arnold, 2015:3). Peer pressure may, therefore, be a crucial aspect of behaviour. “There is a great deal of pressure on young people to follow their friends and to win their approval. The problem may be that bad friends are involved in bad behaviour, implying that the school has a number of learners who misbehave, and who have the potential to make the school environment hardly conducive for the inculcation of good moral values to learners”, (Black, 2016:36).

### **2.5.7 Vandalism**

“Vandalism is described as the purposeful damaging, violation, defacement or destruction of public or private property by persons who are not the direct owners of that property”, (Black, 2016:29). Vandalism may occur in schools as follows:

- Vindictive children who harbour revenge against teachers or other members of staff.
- Malevolent children who enjoy causing problems.
- Learners driven by ideologies or those who wish to draw attention to a specific problem or issue.
- Bored children who commit vandalism in search of excitement.
- Frustrated children filled with anger, and thus feel that the school and community are hostile to them (Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2008:71).

“School vandalism is mostly committed by the school’s own learners, where they break windows and cause damage to classrooms, furniture and books as well as sports apparatus and fields”, (Weeks, 2010:332).

## **2.6 FACTORS WITHIN THE LEARNERS' ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.6.1 Peer influence**

“When learners find themselves in a large group of people, their natural inclination may be to follow the herd and behave in a way in which they might not have behaved had they have been on their own”, (Lau, Wong & Dudovits, 2018:1136). Due to peer pressure, learners sometimes destroy their schools to such an extent that teaching and learning collapse, and everyone become exposed to health risks (Bilton & Sivasubramaniam, 2009:315). “Learners’ intellectual abilities and differences in personality should not be ignored at schools as this may lead to vandalism or learner misconduct”, (Ryneke, 2015:57).

A relationship exists between the size of the school and vandalism. If the school is small, there are little incidents of vandalism since it is easier to exercise control and discipline, but very big schools have more incidents of vandalism (Black, 2016:31). In schools, there is a relationship between vandalism and academic failure, as well as between vandalism and the lack of discipline (Hung, 2007:195). A conducive learning environment and security should be established. Vandalism negatively influences the learning environment and results in huge financial losses for both the Department of Basic Education and parents (Ezekiel, 2016:2). It leads to a feeling of powerlessness, uncertainty and fear among both teachers and learners in education (Ezekiel, 2016:1-2). The school programme also suffers since it is often interrupted to repair the vandalised structures (Hung, 2007:195).

## **2.7 FACTORS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM**

### **2.7.1 Poor Classroom Management Skills**

The concept classroom management means “establishing and maintaining a routine in the classroom that allows teaching and learning to proceed effectively. This could be done by means of classroom rules that set the limits on the learners’ behaviour. As such, they become aware of the conditions required for success, and issues to be

addressed as classroom rules such as talking without permission, disruptive behaviour, refusing to do school work, insults, and ill-discipline” (Edwards, 2008:3)

Cloete and Wissink (2012) revealed that novice teachers find classroom control the most demanding aspect of their new profession. These teachers do not apply any theory when punishing offenders or any democratic forms of enforcing discipline. They apply their prerogatives when disciplining learners (Cloete & Wissink, 2012). If teachers fail to gain control over learners, this becomes one of the principal causes of violence and disruptive behaviour in many schools (Egenberg & Mc Cooney, 2018:195). It is, therefore important to effectively manage classrooms to avoid the misunderstandings about bad behaviour and certain measures of punishment (Maphumulo & Vakalisa, 2008:339).

The learners’ backgrounds may also complicate learning environment. African learners may present a mixture of African and Western cultures, with some learners being more African in their behaviour while others being more Western (Du Preez & Roux, 2010:13). Diversity of backgrounds may solicit a great variety of management techniques and strategies to accommodate these differences and this heterogeneous situation, especially among learners means that teachers would have to understand the ethnic setting in which the school is located as these learners may bring to class different historical backgrounds, religious beliefs, and day-to-day living patterns (Du Preez & Roux, 2010:13)

### **2.7.2 Poor Lesson Presentation**

Poor lesson presentations sometimes demotivate learners, but perfect ones encourage learners as teaching and learning becomes effective when learners take in and use the information to build on and extend their understanding of their world. Also, the valuable learning experience allows children to integrate new experiences with familiar ones by constructing and refining knowledge schemes (Ezekiel, 2013:1-2). Many of the discipline-related problems rotate around poor lesson presentations and the teachers’ failure to keep learners busy (Ahmad, 2011:64). Inappropriate

curriculum, which fails to accommodate the learners' needs, may also promote poor learner involvement in lesson presentations (Bezuidenhout, 2013:67).

“The school-related factors are capable of influencing the learners' responsibility in the classroom, and the teachers' disciplinary strategies are, among others, the most important factors that ensure that learners behave responsibly in the classroom”, (Bezuidenhout, 2013:69). “Without satisfactory levels of learner responsibility, the best planned and potentially most engaging lesson may fail to have the desired impact and thus fail to promote effective learning”, (Bilton & Sivasubramaniam, 2009:301).

### **2.7.3 Inadequate Materials**

Adell (2010:91) asserted that the state of schools in previously disadvantaged areas in South Africa is still unacceptable as these still do not have basic facilities such as running water, toilets and chairs for learners to use in the class. These schools also experience serious shortage of textbooks, teaching and learning materials, laboratory and library materials, and the practical work equipments. Learners in such schools may lack pride in schooling, and thus misbehave, leading to low morale and poor commitment (Bear, 2012:174).

### **2.7.4 Overcrowding**

Generally, South Africa's primary schools have larger class sizes when compared to similar schools in countries with similar economic status such as Brazil, Mexico and Chile (Bear, 2012:174). The majority of learners are taught in classes where there are more than 41 learners in the classroom when compared to learners in these three countries (Brophy, 2014:24-28). In this regard, many primary schools have background noise that potentially interferes with lesson presentations and understanding, and consequently, learners may misbehave due to these distractions (Simba, Ogak & Kabuka, 2016:164).

In addition, overcrowding also means competing for the inadequate space, resources and facilities (Bilatyi, 2012:77). It is possible that learners may fight or clash over scarce resources, with the risk of such clashes becoming frequent and planned. This may manifest in behaviours related to gangsterism, bullying and harassment of smaller and weaker learners (Engenberg & McConney, 2018:195).

### **2.7.5 Academic Failure**

Learners who fail to acquire basic academic skills in early grades are mostly at risk of being mocked by peers, thereby losing the sense of personal worth and dignity, and this demonstrates a variety of behavioural problems (Bilatyi, 2012:77). In most cases, such learners see themselves as losers and may, therefore, develop wrong tendencies that may disrupt other learners' schooling. This in turn creates the opportunity for negative peer associations, suspensions, expulsions and drop outs (Lacoe & Steinberg, 2018a:34). Due to academic failure, "learners lose hope and become helpless. This is regarded as an important factor in predicting future criminal behaviour and is a strong link between academic failure and criminal behaviour (Castejon, Perez & Gilar, 2016:50). "Low educational levels are associated with high crime levels, particularly violent crime that is dominant in developing countries", (Van Dyk, 2010:36).

### **2.7.6 Irrelevant Curriculum**

It must be noted that irrelevant curriculum may have challenges. The curriculum is one of the main concepts that will have to be considered when searching for ways to minimise ill-discipline and manage discipline effectively (Reyneke & Pretorius, 2017:112). Schools and how they offer the curriculum helps determine whether learners respond in desirable or undesirable ways. The reason for the pupils' misbehaviour may have much (if not more), to do with their experience at school than those experiences they encounter at home (De Vos, 2010:244). The view that violence is higher in schools where the curriculum and instruction are not aligned with the interests and needs of the learners promotes ill-discipline in the school. It is a way of providing a narrow, rigid curriculum that stresses content and neglects

feelings and emotions (Ezekiel, 2016:1-2). “An identification of the curriculum which matches the learners’ present and future needs is likely to impact positively on the learners’ behaviour (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:961). Lindsay and Hart (2007:485) asserted that the learning content should be embedded in the context of the children’s culture and life world in order to be meaningful to them. Learners who find the curriculum pointless and meaningless, and not targeted at an appropriate level, distance themselves from the task of learning and may, as a consequence, display various forms of unacceptable behaviour such as not paying attention in class, not completing their homework, not preparing for test and in certain circumstances, even truancy” (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013).

## **2.8 FACTORS RELATED TO THE TEACHER**

### **2.8.1 Demotivated Teachers**

Motivation amongst teachers is crucial. For instance, the issues related to salary, conditions of service and their rights play an important role in their motivation and job satisfaction (Mabitla, 2006:19). The purpose of joining unions is to ensure that these issues, which affect the teachers’ welfare, are adequately taken care. Any perceptions by teachers that their welfare is not seriously considered leads to poor teaching, high rate of absenteeism and low morale among them (Mkhize, 2002:122). Poor teaching, high absenteeism and low morale among teachers have negative effects on the learners’ education of learners and may contribute to mischievous behaviour among learners (Matsoga, 2013:18). Uncertainty and confusion among learners are a result of the teachers’ negative self-confidence.

The teachers’ negative perceptions have a profound impact on the learners’ behaviour and identities, and learners may develop negative feelings, the lack of interests in academic matters and may establish closer ties with other troubled learners (Mkhize, 2002:122). Morrel (2003:292) observed that learners with verbally hostile teachers are likely to react likewise to their peers. Morrel (2003:292) further noted that the contention that children develop behavioural habits through observational learning is not farfetched.

### **2.8.2 School Organisation**

If teachers understand the learning material properly, and are well prepared to teach in each lesson, then they are organised (DoE, 2016). To be unprepared and unsure of what to teach and how to teach it is an invitation of disorder and disruptions. That is, school organisation requires that lessons should be carefully planned, teaching materials should be well prepared and ready to use, and learners be actively involved in lessons (Netshitaname & Van Vollenhoven, 2013:313).

It is important for both learners and teachers to observe time in order to obtain good organisation and orderliness, and to avoid rush and stampede because being late may be associated with bottlenecks in narrow corridors or stairs, pushing and jostling, and simple disorder (Mkhize, 2002:122). Late coming may lead to lessons starting late, learners fighting and exhibiting problematic behaviour, damaging of school equipment and property, and a generally negative learner atmosphere (Mkhize, 2002:122).

### **2.8.3 Abuse of Power**

The teacher's authority and her relationship with learners appear to be an integral feature in the management of discipline in public schools (Fraser & Walberg, 2005:103). Mwamwenda (2008:275) added that teachers should be aware of the need for a positive learning environment. Due to the lack of trust, the teachers are in a position of power instead of authority (Matsoga, 2013:18). The teacher's authority implies that the learner is not viewed as a partner in the education process, but at the mercy of the teacher. This view tends to make learners stubborn and vengeful (Mabitla, 2006:19). According to Saiduddin (2011), the teacher-learner relationship is an example of an influential relationship in which the teachers may constantly modify the behaviour of their learners. Authority appropriately applied may be described as an invitation for learners to develop their potential and become responsible adults (Matsoga, 2013:18).

## **2.9 COMMON TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINE METHODS USED BY THE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Children come from different backgrounds, thus teaching them self-discipline is a demanding task. It is a process that requires a strong heart, self-control, thoughtful attention, cooperation and a good understanding of the child. Teachers and psychologists argue that children can develop skills, knowledge and attitudes through other means than corporal punishment (Saiduddin, 2011). Emphasis on the effective results should be on guidance and counselling techniques, and hence the training for teachers and parents is needed in this aspect. Praising the child's good behaviour, being compassionate and showing respect significantly reduces disciplinary problems (Kromberg, 2015:565). The alternative methods of disciplining a child are more beneficial and less detrimental to her development than corporal punishment. Alternative forms of disciplining children do not necessarily require the investment of a significant amount of additional funds (Saiduddin, 2011).

### **2.9.1 No Solution to Corporal Punishment**

South Africa expressed its commitment to prohibit corporal punishment at home and other settings during the Universal Periodic Review of South Africa in 2012. The Department of Social Development supported the proposals to include the prohibition in the review of the Children's Act. In 2014 the department issued a media statement reaffirming its commitment to prohibit corporal punishment (Ryneke, 2018:114). The solution to the problems experienced at school is not clearly articulated in literature. What is clear is that since the abolition of corporal punishment in 1996, there is still no remarkable change in the learner behaviour, and corporal punishment is still largely used in schools, sometimes resulting in the hospitalisation of learners (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:387).

The escalation of learner indiscipline cases in schools suggests a failure by teachers to institute adequate alternative disciplinary measures after corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:387). Looking at studies dating back to 2002, corporal punishment is still used at school. The

implication is that alternatives to corporal punishment do not seem to work. This raises an important question; are alternatives to corporal punishment appropriate to instil discipline at school?

### **2.9.2 Alleged Learner Misconduct**

“Allegations of serious misconduct against particular learners should be presented to the principal in writing for consideration. After careful considerations, the principal should communicate the alleged misconduct brought against the learner to the School Governing Body and inform both the learner and his/her parents of the alleged misconduct (Reyneke & Pretorius, 2017:112). The principle that a person is innocent until proven guilty should be maintained throughout the investigation. The alleged offender should be given the opportunity to request for the support of his/her parents when making a statement in case she self-incriminates herself (Department of Education, 2001:27)

### **2.9.3 Dealing with Poor Discipline at Home**

“Parents have a role to play in dealing with discipline, and are expected to teach their children values such as mutual respect, patience, sympathy and empathy”, (Lake, 2014:4). “By planning for discipline both before and after it is administered, parents are more likely to meet the goal of correcting behaviour”, (DeWet, 2007: 309). “It should also be noted that the youth become exceptionally vulnerable to dangerous influence from peer and the media”, (Fiske, 2010:12). There is a need for parents to assist their children overcome this problem. Generally, poorly equipped parents may fail to reinforce the good intentions of behavioural interventions at domestic level where programme outcomes are dependent on understanding, support and meaningful interactions from all sides. Thus, parents often require skills training on parenting and on ways in which they may relate and react to their children (Edwards, 2008:3).

### **2.9.4 Dealing with Poor Discipline at School**

It should be noted that children spend large parts of their day at school where they are supposed to learn effectively and, develop intellectually and emotionally under minimal environmental constraints (Cohen, 2011:209). In disadvantaged communities, it is not always the case where social problems from home and communities often disrupt this positive process, and are connected with fostering a poor school environment in which anti-social behaviour prevails (Chadsey & McVittie, 2015: 1).

The source of school violence and misbehaviour may, therefore, lie in contexts outside the school, which interact and transact with each other over time to shape the individual anti-social behaviour (Black, 2016:33). “The purpose of discipline is to develop and entrench desirable social habits in learners, as well as to foster sound judgment and morals onto the learners so as to enable them to maintain self-discipline throughout their lives”, ( Bezuidenhout & Joubert, 2008:71).

### **2.9.5 The Abolition of Corporal Punishment and School Discipline**

“After the abolition of corporal punishment in schools under the South African Schools Act (84 of 1996), the lack of discipline and wellbeing became a real difficulty in South Africa” (Reyneke, 2018:117). It has become progressively troublesome for teachers to guarantee learning in schools because of the forbidding of corporal punishment (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010).

Teachers who before depended on corporal punishment, currently need to create other strategies for adapting to discipline issues (Adell, 2010). Teachers feel ‘weakened’ as a result of the abolition of corporal punishment. “Testing optional conduct in schools and classrooms is one of the major issues experienced by teachers”, (Algozzine *et al.*, 2011:3). Learners testing different conducts make teachers feel vulnerable and impaired, and this prompts ineffective teaching and learning. Additionally, it is realised that from the time the learners became aware that corporal punishment had been abolished, they saw an opportunity to increase their disruptiveness (Ahmed, 2011). The abolition of corporal punishment negatively affected school discipline. Matoti (2010) affirmed that learners do not regard

teachers, and they carry perilous weapons to class, jeopardising everyone's lives. In addition, teachers in South Africa are for the most part troubled, depressed and exhausted (Black, 2016). Due to the lack of discipline, ambiguous strategies and the learners' salacity, the schools constantly encounter accompanying difficulties such as gangsterism, youth pregnancies, vandalism and the detestable spray paintings. The lack of responsibility by learners reflects the dysfunctionality of numerous rural schools, that is, the expulsion of learners and the high learner drop-out rates are some of the consequences of ill-discipline (Black, 2016).

### **2.9.6 Consultation in Setting Rules**

Ainsworth (2012:247) postulated that to foster the success of disciplinary rules at school, the rules should be formulated by all stakeholders who include parents, teachers, learners and community members. The school rules should reflect the shared expectancy and an obligation to appropriately address the actual discipline problems at school. "To acknowledge the schools' disciplinary rules, the code of conduct should be outlined together with the project values that should be exemplified by learners", (Arum & Passage, 2012:56). "It is also the responsibility of all members of the community to acknowledge the 'ownership' of the learners' code of conduct", (Bear, 2012:174).

"The code of conduct where all stakeholders took part is likely to be more effective than the one imposed on learners by the principal and the SGB)" (Menstry & Khumalo, 2012:97). "The learners' participation in the development of the code of conduct reflects the democratic school processes", (Reyneke, 2013:206). The learner participation in setting discipline rules that directly affect them, makes them responsible for their behaviour, and hence they become part of the solution rather than the problem (Reyneke, 2013:206). Menstry and Khumalo (2012) showed the importance of the stakeholders' involvement in managing the disruptive behaviour at school. They added that the SGBs should consult with learners, parents and teachers before adopting any code of conduct.

### **2.9.7 Clearly Formulated Rules**

“The schools’ disciplinary rules are legal, and they should be straightforward, clear, and unambiguous so that the learners understand what is expected of them”, (Ezekiel, 2016:1-2). “Establishing and implementing an effective set of discipline rules makes the atmosphere conducive for teaching and learning at school”, (Reyneke & Pretorius, 2017:112). The following are the guidelines for the development of the code of conduct according to (Bray, 2005:133).

- Rules should be short, simply worded and to the point.
- Rules must be positively worded, for example, ‘raise your hand’ rather than negatively worded as ‘do not shout out answers’. Learners may see a negative statement as an invitation to challenge the rule.
- The wording of the rules must be clear and unambiguous so that there is no room for misunderstanding.
- The rules must be appropriate to the developmental level of the learners. For example, rules that are applicable in Grade 8, (the 13 to 14 year-old learners), differ from those for Grade 12 learners (between 18 and 19 years of age).
- Each rule should address a single issue.
- A rule should not contain jargon, slang or abbreviations.
- A code of conduct must be user-friendly.

### **2.9.8 Appropriate Punishment**

“The teachers have the ability and skills to decide which form of punishment is suitable to curb a particular form of misbehaviour”, (Engelbrecht, 2006:246). Segalo and Rambuda (2018:1) maintain that it is important for teachers to select the form of punishment that fits a particular misdemeanour in order to avoid injustices. A teacher must not lose sight of the fact that the function of punishment is to correct a learner’s wrongdoing and not to antagonise or humiliate the learner (Engelbrecht, 2006:251).

When punishment is necessary, it must be meted out fairly and in proportion to the transgression for which it is given and must not be seen by learners as a display of

power by a teacher. An appropriate punishment for learners depends on the age and developmental level of the learner and works best when it is age-appropriate (Gootman, 2011:33). A young learner may not understand a long lecture about the consequences of their actions, but will respond to a firm 'no' (Engelbrecht, 2006:246).

### **2.9.9 Accessibility of Discipline Rules**

“Having disciplinary rules for the classroom, playground and school excursions displayed on notice boards where they can easily be consult makes learners understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them at all times”, (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:387). Rules should be displayed on strategic places such as notice boards, corridors, classrooms and in bathrooms. “Learners should read disciplinary rules on a daily basis”, (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:961).

“It is advisable not to have many rules. A copy of the code of conduct of a school must be sent to the relevant authorities. Teachers and parents should also receive the copies”, (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:79). In this regard, there is a need for each learner to be issued with a copy of the rules as well”, (Magwa & Ngara, 2014).

### **2.9.10 Record-keeping**

To protect teachers and learners for a safer learning environment is the legal responsibility of the schools. If the misbehaviour of a learner threatens the health or safety of teachers and other learners, causes the destruction of school property or the general disruption of good order, the school has the power to punish the learner (Matsoga, 2013:18). “Learner disciplinary procedures are covered in the South African Schools Act (No. 48 of 1996, Republic of South Africa, 1996c:16). It stipulates that the accurate records of misdemeanours and disciplinary actions must be kept. Mugabe & Maposa, (2013) indicated that it is important to document the incidents of the learners' misbehaviours.

It is also important to have a track record of the learner's misbehaviours. "Usually, a satisfactory job is done by the schools in responding to the minor violations of the disciplinary rules such as the disrespect of authority, late coming and truancy", (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013:112). However, in more serious disciplinary cases, a complete record of the learner's misbehaviour might be needed where witnesses are called and lawyers are present (Morrel, 2011:27). "The purpose of recordkeeping is to protect learners from unreasonable punishment, and the well-kept record provides information on the behavioural history of "difficult" learners", (Farrant, 2001:226).

### **2.9.11 Indiscipline Problems in South Africa**

Morrel (2011:29) described ill-discipline problems in South African Schools as a disproportionate and intractable part of every teacher's experience of teaching. "Teachers in South Africa increasingly become distressed about the disciplinary problems in schools", (Marais & Meier, 2010:380). It has been suggested that teachers link the growing problems of indiscipline in schools to the abolition of corporal punishment (Morrel, 2011:27). There is evidence that corporal punishment perpetuates negative emotions, contrary to the prescription of the South African Constitution. However, little is known about the impact of these other methods in promoting desirable changes in behaviour (Morrel, 2011:30). This study sought to establish the procedures of the disciplinary practices in schools.

### **2.9.12 Dealing with Indiscipline**

Discipline in schools would be accomplished through the proper application of the code of conduct. The principal of a school cannot promote discipline alone, but through the involvement of all stakeholders. The school management team (SMT), teachers and the disciplinary committee are primarily responsible for carrying out the prevention, action and resolving the code of conduct (Porteus *et al.*, 2011:45). "The principal functions in two capacities: as a member of the school governing body and as a departmental employee" (Porteus *et al.*, 2011:45-58).

## **2.10 LEARNER INDISCIPLINE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

### **2.10.1 Education Policy**

Policy is defined as “a statement of intent which specifies the basic principles to be pursued in attaining specific goals”, (Ramsey, 2011:33). It is designed to steer actions and behaviour, guide institutions and professionals and ensures that power is exercised legitimately through various institutional norms and practices. Policies are normative, and either articulate or presuppose certain values, and direct people towards actions authoritatively. The legitimacy is thus derived from an authority such as the school system (Rogers, 2012:53).

Public policies in education originate from the national government and its agencies. They are designed to deliver educational provisions in the most effective, efficient and equitable manner. Thus, education is seen as the best economic policy, which is necessary to ensure the competitiveness of the national economy in the context of globalisation. This implies that education is regarded as the producer of the necessary human capital (Ramsey, 2011:33). “The commercialisation of the education policy serves as a reliable comparative measure of educational outcomes. This enables the nation to see its position within a global field of comparison: to give it a measure of its potential global economic competitiveness. The interactive aspect of the education policy includes its intimate relationship with the economic policy and the global field of performance”, (Rogers, 2012:65).

Smith (2013:53) contends that the effectiveness and efficiency of the current education policy is due to the increase of violence in schools. As a result, the educators have questioned the government policies and interventions that have already been made since schools still face disciplinary problems. The school policy, according to the South African Schools Act, Section 8(1) and 8(2), the Department of Basic Education has entrusted the SGB with the duty of adopting a code of conduct for learners through a consultative process with parents and teachers (Menstry & Khumalo, 2012:97).

The code of conduct for learners is to establish a disciplined environment that is conducive to the effective teaching and learning. The main focus is on positive discipline, self-discipline and establishing the standard behaviour that is recognised and accepted by civil society (Menstry & Khumalo (2012:97).

Smith (2013:59) reported that the SGBs are insufficiently trained to execute their duties despite the promise by the Department of Basic Education to provide them with introductory training. Yet, the only training that was conducted by the department focused mainly on explaining the basic functions of the SGBs.

“A conflict occurred between the SGB of Vryburg High School and the Department of Education because the former suspended a Grade 9 learner on a charge of assault with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm (the learner stabbed another learner with a pair of scissors during a class break)”, (Wagstaff, Combs & Jarvis, 2007:21). “The High Court declared the proceedings of the disciplinary hearing null and void due to the lack of fairness since the learners’ parents were not invited to the hearing and the disciplinary committee did not apply the rules of natural justice”, (Yariv 2012:74).

One of the challenges facing the South African schools are due to the SGBs’ failure to fulfil their duties as specified in the South African Schools Act 8(1) and 8(2). In instances where the Department of Basic Education fails to induct the SGB members, schools are unlikely to execute their duties properly, and hence that leads to the learners’ poor academic performance in most public secondary schools.

### **2.10.2 School Attendance**

“Schools are faced with enormous learner dropouts in all grades, coupled with high failure rates”, (Yariv, 2012:88). “Learners who exhibit poor attendance frequently display poor social skills and emotional functioning, and hence perform poorly at school” (Zabel & Zabel, 2014:51). In addition, the absentees are unable to become part of the school’s social structures, thus become bored and dislike school.

The curriculum introduced by the Department of Education seems to be unchallenging to learners. They feel isolated by the schools' courses and that leads their lack of interest in schooling. Zabel and Zabel (2014:51) argued that learners who do not fit in the school system and are confused about who to turn to for help exhibit poor attendance, which eventually leads to poor academic performance. Woods (2009) maintained that those learners who lack the sense of belonging at school yield poor results and are likely to drop out.

### **2.10.3 Safety in Schools**

All teachers are solely obliged to educate learners under a safe environment (South African Constitution (Act No, 24 (a) of 1998). However, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU)'s report of 2007 based on the safety in schools indicated that teachers and learners from various areas in South Africa experience violent attacks on their way to and from school. Besides, learners are enticed to alcohol and drugs, and these hamper their development and erode the moral fibre of society. Such acts deprive learners of reaching their full academic potential.

Kader Asmal (Department of Education, 2000:20) argued that such challenging environments cause stress to both teachers and learners. Schools can be the exemplary models of virtue and character when teachers implement the curriculum in a sensitive and caring manner. As the learner self-discipline is central, however, teachers have the responsibility of teaching learners as it is important for the latter's academic performance.

Bilatyi (2012:77) asserted that the increased teacher autonomy, cultural diversity and changes in the national curriculum result in more dilemmas for schools. Lindsay and Hart (2017:485) concluded that challenges facing the teachers' empowerment include the creation of a new culture where teachers and learners collaborate with each other to improve the social justice and change society through better education. "Teachers are unable to accomplish their tasks successfully unless social rules provide the framework in which their orders are obeyed and at least some of their pronouncements are regarded as binding. Teachers should have strong content-

based knowledge of their subjects. However, their training does not provide them with a theoretical understanding of the nature of legitimate authority. As a result, they are hesitant to control the classroom situation based on explicit rules (Bilatyi, 2012:77).

“Schools are the controlling places for learners and do not include the learners’ voices in the drawing up of the classroom rules”, (Ryneke, 2013:206). In other words, teachers decide the rules, routine and procedures without involving learners. Lake (2004:4) warned that controlling learners hinders the development of their self-esteem and self-identity, and reinforces the powerlessness they feel in adult environments. This limits their growth towards equality. As a result, the process of controlling learners oppresses them. This leads to the increased anti-social and violent behaviours in schools, resulting in their poor academic performance.

Cloete and Wissink (2012:30) observed that teachers can be firm disciplinarians while minimising the learners’ hostility by being sympathetic, non-hostile and by clarifying the learners’ responsibilities. Teachers must model the socially-acceptable behaviour they expect from learners, which means that such behaviours include being on time for lessons and being respectful and fair. “It is vital that teachers demonstrate that they believe all learners can learn and behave appropriately, and that they are committed to helping them as required by the education policy” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010:240).

#### **2.10.4 Learners’ Academic Performance**

“The contextual influence of the learners’ academic performance is the amount of support learners receive at home. The more support and help learners receive at home, the greater the likelihood they stand to attain high academic performance”, (Ezekiel, 2016:1-2). “If parents assist their children with homework and supplement what they have learnt at school, coupled with a home background which provides books, newspapers and learning gadgets, the learners’ academic performance is likely to be enhanced”, (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014:577). “Teachers receive minimal support from parents, and this contributes to the lack of learner discipline at school.

The parents' failure to fully support their children with homework have a detrimental effects towards the improved academic performance", (Thlapi, 2011:75).

In addition, "some parents do not understand their role in the education of their children and because of that the failure rate in rural areas outweighs the successes in urban areas", (Gilman & Anderman, 2014:375). "The learners' home background is not encouraging at all in that they lack even the most basic requirements such as paper. Generally, African parents do not support their children either because they are not interested in helping them or due to the lack of knowledge", (Gilman & Anderman, 2014:379). .

"The quality of primary schools differs. That is, some are well equipped and have qualified teachers, while others are not so fortunate" (Gilman & Anderman, 2014:382). "The measures used in most rural schools to assess learners are incomplete since they focus on single measure of output and ignore the learning that affects the competitive variables such as quality, delivery or the introduction of new products while telling little about the sources of learning or the levers of change" (Hung, 2007:195). Gilman and Anderman (2014:375) assert that the processes that yield good results should be used through surveys and the direct observations of behaviour within the organisation instead of measuring academic results only.

"Managers and policy makers should be aware of the fact that assessment may be narrow due to the range of topics taught by classroom teachers. The effectiveness of the assessment to improve the learners' academic performance depends to a large extent on the type of information that is reported. However, assessments that promote critical thinking or problem-solving skills are more useful to teachers and administrators than those that supply general information", (Gilman & Anderman, 2014:390). In addition, the assessment programme managers should understand that the usefulness of the assessment programmes is undermined by the overcrowded classrooms, poor quality teaching, inadequate resources, language problems and other factors beyond the control of the assessment authorities (Hung, 2007:195).

Tests in multicultural schools are culturally-biased because of the language barrier or the lack of familiarity with the learning content (Kromberg, 2015:565). Although the criteria used for testing in South African schools is claimed to be applicable to all learners regardless of race, the educational experiences of black learners place them at a great disadvantage (Singh, Mbokoti & Msila, 2004:301). "If a public examination is included at the end of the year, the failure rate would be high" (Kromberg, 2015:565). Public examinations are designed to show how well learners have done in relation to their peers, not whether they have mastered a particular body of knowledge or not (Lake, 2014:4). "Policy makers should be aware that assessment does not stand alone, it must be developed concurrently with the improvement in curriculum and teacher training", (Lake, 2014:4).

The Department of Basic Education (2010) confirmed that it would deal with the learners' underperformance by ensuring that its two most important duties are implemented. These are:

- To ensure the realisation of every child's potential.
- To provide the teachers with the correct environment to improve teaching and learning.

"The excellent academic achievement is possible if teachers were equipped and well developed for the task at hand", (Lake, 2014:4). "The SMT should thus take cognisance of the fact that they have to manage the IQMS programme in order to meet that end, and successful leadership is invariably linked to school effectiveness", (Matsoga, 2013:18). "Focus on improving the learners' academic performance through the development of teachers. This should include the improvement of their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Thus, implementing rewards and incentives for teachers would also improve the team spirit and motivate them to achieve the objective of improving the learners' academic performance. The SMT has to fulfil the task of empowering teachers with the objective of improving the learners' academic performance", (Lake, 2014:4).

## **2.10.5 Punishment and School Discipline**

Behaviour is not something that can change instantly. Moyo, Khewu and Bayanga (2013:14) asserted that an individual needs to adjust her/himself to the desired behaviour. In that case, for learners to develop a desired behaviour a number of strategies need to be applied including guiding a learner, counseling, given some directives and sometimes, where necessary, punishment can be applied". "Learners who show the highest frequency of behavioural problems not only maintain their problems throughout the entire time they are in school, but are also those who receive the most discipline and have academic and behavioural deficits", (Matsoga, 2013:18).

It has also been observed that the most severely disciplined children often have grades that are well below average and are the most likely to be involved in gangs. This confirms "the idea that punishment alone is not effective in ameliorating the most severe offenses and does little to re-educate those who most frequently display problem behaviours", (Mwamwenda, 2008:275). Although punishment has had some success in temporarily removing problem behaviours, they have more often caused more harm than the bad behaviour they try to reduce. Punishment does not guarantee that a child knows the appropriate behaviour to display in a particular situation (Vital & Jansen, 2015: 133).

In order to most effectively deal with problem behaviour, children need to be taught how to act, rather than simply confirming and pointing out that they are behaving badly and punishing them for doing so (Reyneke, 2013:236).

## **2.11 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES TO ASSIST PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN DEALING WITH LEARNER DISCIPLINE**

### **2.11.1 The Positive Behaviour Support Approach**

The "School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) Approach establishes the social, cultural and individualized behavioural support needed for schools to become

effective learning environments for all learners”, (Mwamwenda, 2008:275). SWPBS has its primary aim which is “to decrease problem behaviour in schools and classrooms, and to develop integrated systems of support for learners and adults at school, classroom and individual learner levels”, (Nyberg, 2010:577).

“SWPBS is based on the hypothesis that when the faculty and staff members actively teach using modelling and role playing, and rewarding positive behaviours related to compliance with adult requests, academic effort and safe behaviour, the proportion of learners with mild and serious behaviour problems will be reduced and the school’s overall climate will improve” (Nyberg, 2010: 577).

### **2.11.2 Zero Tolerance**

Contrary to the above view, “the Zero Tolerance approach, clearly spells out the offences and actions labelled as disruptive, violent and unacceptable. In addition, this approach has fidelity, integrity and encourages behaviours as outlined for learners”, (Nyberg, 2010:577). Curran (2019: 319) indicated that the swift and certain punishment of Zero tolerance has a deterrent effect upon learners, thus improving their overall behaviour and discipline. The idea of Zero tolerance to chaotic behaviour was created to meet the dangers of drug use as an enforcement strategy to keep citizens safe”. The American Law Enforcement Agencies adopted the concept of ‘zero tolerance’, implying that no matter the nature, severity and consequences of drug-related crime, no crime was acceptable”, (Curran, 2019:319). In fact, the zero tolerance concepts seem to describe the ATCP as viewed by this study.

The philosophy behind the zero tolerance is that teachers cannot conduct lessons and learners cannot learn in a threatening and disruptive environment (Curran, 2016:647). This approach mandates the application of predetermined consequences to particular offences, first as a deterrent measure as well as the mitigatory punitive action against the offending individuals (Porteus *et al.*, 2011:9). In view of this, this approach seems to share similar traits with the corporal punishment. However, the researcher could arrive at one conclusion that these two appear to be reactive rather

than proactive, thus falling short of providing sound discipline in schools. In contrast, with the ATCP, the learners' rights appear to be at the forefront, the teachers' safety and security are not prioritised, and hence the need for alternatives (Porteus *et al.*, 2011:9).

### **2.11.3 Parental Involvement**

Parents, teachers, learners and the community should take responsibility for discipline at school (Ramsey, 2011:33). "It should be a priority for schools to involve parents, and this must be regarded as the first priority in the education of their children", (Ramsey, 2011:33). "To show their serious involvement, parents should sign a contract or agreement with the school", (Russo, 2015:33). It is required that schools should develop with parents a written plan that includes the shared responsibility for high performance (Russo, 2015:33).

As important partners, parents should set the principles in the upbringing of their children (Sprague, 2014). The learners who come from poorly-disciplined families cause the most problems at schools, and because of that parents need to take responsibility for their children's conduct (Tlhapi, 2011:75). "Section 8 of the South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996 provides formal powers to parents and it makes them meaningful partners in school governance" (Tlhapi, 2011:75).

### **2.11.4 Assertive Discipline**

Sprague (2014:7) proposed the positive discipline which is structured, systematic and aimed at assisting teachers in running an organised classroom discipline plan. Sprague (2014:7) observed that many teachers were unable to control the undesirable discipline problems in the classroom situation because they lack training in behaviour management. This view is consistent with the aspirations of the study and would certainly be incorporated as an alternative. According to Zabel and Zabel (2014:51), assertive discipline has evolved from the authoritarian approach to a more democratic and cooperative one.

A teacher notices good learners through the way they behave. These work hard and the teacher should provide a list of rules for the classroom, and each time the rule is broken a consequence follows and if the misbehaviour continues, the consequence gets more severe (Yariv, 2012:74). The learners should be rewarded for behaving properly.

#### **2.11.5 Code of Conduct**

Yariv (2012) claims that the code of conduct deals with the kinds of behaviour that teachers seek to maintain. According to the South African Schools Act (1996) Section 8 (1)), a Code of Conduct is a written statement of rules and principles concerning discipline in schools. "It explains the kind of behaviour teachers expect from learners and the standard of behaviour a school has to maintain. The Code of Conduct as drawn up by individual schools must not contradict the Provincial or National Code of Conduct, as covered in the constitution of the country and the Schools Act", (The Department of Education, 2000:20).

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84, Section 8 (1) of 1996 stipulates that the SGB should draft a Code of Conduct to deal with disciplinary issues in the school. This equips the learners with the knowledge of what is expected of them and the consequences of disobeying the Code of Conduct. SASA requires a Code of Conduct to be available in schools in order to maintain a disciplined and focused learning environment.

The disciplinary code must provide for the rules and a due process to be followed in the case of disciplinary proceedings. It means that an allegation of misconduct must be properly investigated and dealt with in a fair and reasonable manner, respecting the rights of all those involved in the process (Ramsey, 2011:33). "Section 8 (3) of the South African Schools Act of 1996 stipulates that the Minister may, after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers, determine the guidelines for consideration by the governing body", (Squelch 2000:18). Section 8 (1) of SASA further stipulates that the Code of Conduct can be adopted after consultation with parents, teachers and learners (Ramsey, 2011:33).

### **2.11.6 Reviewing of Rules**

Teachers and learners sometimes are unsure about the manner in which the code of conduct for learners in their school was developed because it happened before they came to the school (Adell, 2010:91). This emphasises the importance of regularly reviewing the content of the code of conduct. The process of reviewing a code of conduct should be part of a continuous cycle arising from its use and the change of circumstance the code affects (Allen, 2010:17). The aim of the review is to look at how a particular aspect in the code works and the information that can be used to strengthen the feature that is not operating well.

The review of the code of conduct should evaluate how well each aspect works and, explore and generate options for improvement if necessary (Bear 2012:8). The review and revising of the rules must also be a participatory process, similar to the original drafting of the code of conduct in which all the school's stakeholders are involved (Russo, 2015:34).

### **2.11.7 Setting Rules**

All aspects of discipline in schools depend on rules (Clement & Sova, 2012). It means that for the learners to obey rules, rules should stand out, be achievable and be subject to the school policy. Clement and Sova (2012) contend that discussions in classrooms are helpful in preventing disciplinary problems.

For instance, cooperative learning can be achieved through group discussions, which are democratic and imperative, by providing a conducive atmosphere in which learners can learn how to interact with each other. Each class member must be encouraged to know his/her role, how to perform it and to strive for common goals. Cooperative learning gives learners the chance to learn and to accept responsibility and even to understand the consequences (Edwards, 2008). Similarly, the Department of Education (2014) has a collection of notions on how to make schools effective as alternatives to corporal punishment.

### **2.11.8 The Humanistic Discipline Approach**

The difference between authoritative and humanistic approaches to discipline is huge because in terms of authoritative approach, the learners' views and interests are not considered. Learners are not involved in matters that directly affect them, that is, in the drafting and adoption of the code of conduct for learners (Fiske, 2010:97). "Self-empowerment and self-actualisation are the key elements of participatory decision-making based on the humanistic approach. These could lead to:-

- the development of human values;
- a growth in self- awareness and understanding of others;
- active learner involvement;
- an emphasis on the whole person as a composite of cognitive and emotional behaviour;
- self-empowerment and self-actualisation (Fiske, 2010:97).

Additionally, the importance of teachers and parents in helping learners is emphasised in the humanistic approach as it is a sensitive way to enhance good practices and change in behaviour (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:961). The corrections for wrong doing by the learners should be done immediately and not later. Teachers should preach morals and practices and establish interpersonal relationships with learners so that it becomes easy to guide and advice learners who get off track (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:965). Through the humanistic discipline approach, the school environment should be a place where learners appreciate other learners, teachers appreciate learners and learners appreciate teachers (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:967).

A behavioural approach describes the problem of behaviour and the alternative behaviours that should replace it (Mabitla, 2006:18). Teachers should clearly explain to learners from the onset the conduct that is anticipated by encouraging them to obey classroom rules and the code of conduct. The behavioural approach attempts to use consequences systematically to influence behaviours (Mabitla, 2006).

### 2.11.9 Time Out

Noguera (2008:5) contended that 'time out' is another way of correcting the learners' misbehaviour and it should be used with purpose of denying the misbehaving learner the opportunity to earn positive reinforcement. There is a certain criterion that the learner should fulfil before she/he can communicate with the teacher. These are the criteria:

- Daily reports- This is a system where learners are given the opportunity to reflect on their bad behavioural patterns. They are then given a chance to improve (Department of Education, 2010).

Based on the above, Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2011) stated that the following are alternatives to corporal punishment.

- Model good behaviour. The teacher has the responsibility of being a living example of the kind of behaviour that is expected. Children learn from role models.
- Models. Porteus *et al.* (2011) advanced that if the adults display violence, frustrations and intolerance, learners are more likely to copy such behaviour. In an educational context, this implies that the teachers should have compassion, patience and understanding.
- Learning material and methodology. When teaching and learning is taking place, the learning material in the classroom should be managed and structured in such a way that learners are equipped with skills such as conflict resolution, problem solving, and tolerance, anti-racism and gender sensitivity. The methodology should make provision for the skills to be practiced in particular areas in which learners understand the importance of working together. They should be willing to compromise in group situation (Department of Education, 2000).
- Porteus *et al.* (2011) said that teachers should encourage learners to solve their own problems, as learners could often provide answers that would result in an acceptable compromise.

- Promoting positive discipline. Schools should not always have counter ill-disciplinary strategies, but rather they should also promote positive behaviour.

Porteus *et al.* (2011:5) added the following key issues to promote positive discipline.

- Children's motivation. Teachers are advised to adopt an encouraging and positive approach that would arouse the learner's abilities to learn. Praising children when they obey instructions and positive reinforcement when children do well encourage them to learn self-discipline (Edwards & Watts, 2009).
- Rewards instead of punishment. The Department of Education (2000) suggested that good behaviour should be rewarded as opposed to focusing on what learners do wrong, and applying punishment.

Edwards and Watts (2009:) suggested that teachers should deviate from using punishment for issues such as the failure to answer questions or not to have done homework, late coming, bullying and theft, but rather should view these in the light of problems that are related to human relationships, abuse and neglect. On the issue of discipline versus punishment, Fiske (2010) conceded that of late, some schools have adopted the moral education and pastoral programme to inculcate good values, and they also conduct parental workshops.

Teachers realise that teaching a sense of loyalty to school and raising the learners' self-esteem are more constructive approaches to reducing disciplinary problems (Fiske, 2010). When punishment is applied, it is important for teachers to note the theory from where it is applied (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011). If the teacher uses the retributive theory of punishment, he/she has to know that it is premised on the need to punish offenders because they deserve to be punished (Engelbrecht, 2011:51).

The retributive theory of punishment posit that when a child breaks rules, he/she has to be punished. The suffering of the child who commits an offence is seen as good in itself, and this type of punishment does not consider the benefits as derived from punishment. This view emanates from the need for revenge, and such punishments

are often harsh and inhumane (Reyneke & Pretorius, (2017:112). In addition, the utilitarian theory of punishment is underpinned by punishing offenders in order to discourage future wrongdoing (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:961). The theory has consequences in itself. It recognises that punishment has effects or results for both the perpetrator and the environment in which he/she lives. The theory contends that the total good produced by the punishment should exceed the total evil (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:961). The utilitarian rationale for punishment is also premised on the need to rehabilitate offenders, and the rehabilitation is used to prevent future crime by giving offenders the ability to make it within the confines of the law (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:963).

The denunciation is the third major rationale for punishment. Under the denunciation theory, punishment should be an expression of societal condemnation (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:79). In the context of the classroom, the punishment of this nature shows the learner who breaks rules that the whole class condemns him/her. The effective disciplinary methods should be participatory in nature, where teachers and learners are partners (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:79).

This assists in teaching learners self-discipline, contrary to externally driven disciplinary requirements whose results could be ephemeral or counterproductive, which is good because learners learn to accept and comply with school rules (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:185).

The above is a negative effect of 'top-down' management styles. Learners may feel issues are imposed on them and in turn would naturally resist them, and the disciplinary situations may get out of hand (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:193). This is to say that those that are in power simply cascade rules in their capacity as governors and the powerless are at the receiving end and have no say other than to comply with the rules. The effectiveness of any given disciplinary measure could, therefore, be assessed by the extent to which it enables the fulfillment of the following parameters; the ability to deter offenders, teaching of self-discipline and behaviour accountability (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:79). It is also measured by its ability to teach conflict handling strategies, the ability to help the offender understand the

offence committed, teaching responsible behaviour and helping to teach the offender to consider the rights and feelings of others (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:79). An effective disciplinary measure should also have the ability to involve learners in its formulation and implementation, should be commensurate with the offence committed and should be implemented soon after an offence is committed (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:88). This study examined the alternatives to the ATCP since the latter does not seem to achieve the purpose for which it was intended (The Department of Education, 2000:20). The task faced by all the stakeholders is to advocate for the disciplinary approaches that could achieve the intended goals of developing self-discipline and responsible behaviour in learners as compared to the punitive and reactive methods that may achieve undesired results (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:185).

According to Maphosa and Mammen (2011:193), corporal punishment and verbal reprimands were rated as effective while demotions, manual tasks, sending learners out of classroom, kneeling on the floor, menial tasks, denial of privileges, not marking the learners' work, verbal insults and ignoring were seemingly all considered ineffective". In as far as minor forms of indiscipline are concerned, the respondents deemed them as ineffective in frightening the offenders, teaching self-discipline, teaching behaviour accountability, helping the offenders understand disciplinary problem, avoiding resentment and ensuring future cooperation (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:190). Also observed is that the respondents rated the guidance and counselling, talking to learners, the use of stress and anger management techniques, detention and referral to psychologists, suspension and community service as effective (Maphosa a& Mammen, 2011:191).

Chasing learners out of the class and denying them privileges, for example, were rated as very ineffective (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:185). Maphosa and Mammen (2011) showed that some learners actually enjoyed being chased out of class and had the audacity to commit further acts of indiscipline while on punishment (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:192). The learner respondents valued corporal punishment as an effective disciplinary measure, yet this seemed to contradict the

findings from literature that suggested the problems associated with the use of corporal punishment in schools (Mugabe & Maposa, 2013:111).

#### **2.11.10 The Implementation of Integrated Quality Management Systems**

The Department of Education came up with a number of initiatives to improve the academic performance of learners in all schools. One of such initiatives is the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS)" (Ahmad, 2011:64). The collective agreement number 8 (2003) reveals that the IQMS is a school improvement instrument that integrates three related programmes;

- Development Appraisal System (DAS).
- Whole School Evaluation (WSE).
- Performance Measurement (PM).

The IQMS is there to improve quality public education and the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers in some schools do not understand the IQMS instrument, and hence its implementation is stressful to them (Arnold, 2015:33). When stress and pressure mount, people yell and overreact cynically, critically or silently about challenges encountered (Arnold, 2015:33).

Some schools face challenges in the advocacy and training programmes because the IQMS were not operational. The Department of Education (2000:20) stipulated that the duties of the Staff Development Teams (SDTs) and the Development Support Groups (DSG) are that teachers should be trained in order to provide support to others. This implies that teachers were not developed according to the expectations of the DoE, and hence the continued lack of discipline in secondary schools and the resultant poor academic performance by the learners persist (Department of Education, 2000:20).

Teachers are at the heart of the curriculum delivery (The South Africa Yearbook, 2012/2013). The Department of Education (2000:20) argued that a long-term capacity building required the quality training of assessment experts through new

degree programmes in measurement, as well as the development of the on-going research enterprise aimed at updating and renewing the programme. As such, training teachers to effectively implement the IQMS is a long term enterprise. The IQMS involves advocacy and training, and through these, teachers work together and address challenges. For those whose IQMS is not in place, some teachers feel that its implementation is an additional burden to the already overloaded workload (Department of Education, 2000:20). Schools are required to establish the SDTs to initiate the appraisal process, facilitate appraisal training and on-going support and, prepare and monitor the management plan for appraisal (Department of Education, 2000:20).

Bilatyi (2012:77) suggested that the DoE should organise the retraining programmes for SMTs to empower them in conducting the IQMS workshops with teachers in their respective schools. Again, the DoE must counter the tendency to reduce the IQMS implementation to a mere opportunity for salary and Grade progression, and align it to the development and production of self-reliant schools (Bilatyi, 2012:77). The aim of the implementation of the IQMS is to transform schools into self-reliant organisations that facilitate learner academic excellence that is enabled by the persistent teacher development programmes (Bilatyi, 2012:77). Teachers, therefore, should realise that professional and personal developments are more beneficial than the material gain of salary and grade progression. Bilatyi (2012:77) stressed the importance of empowering teachers to ensure the effectiveness of the school system. This could be done by allowing them to contribute towards the development of the school and by participating in decision-making processes. According to Bilatyi (2012:77), the quality of teaching and learning can be drastically improved by organising regular workshops to discuss and plan for the improvement of the learners' academic performance. Empowered teachers are highly motivated to do their best at work for quality results.

## **2.12 DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS IN SCHOOLS**

Discipline in schools is the readiness or ability of learners to respect authority and to obey school rules and regulations so as to maintain a high standard of behaviour necessary for the smooth running of the teaching and learning process (Mkhize, 2002:122). Disruptive behaviour is simply the behaviour which is not acceptable and is attributable to disciplinary problems being treated with respect (Burnett, 2008:309).

### **2.12.1 Vandalism**

Mabitla (2006:19) defines school vandalism as the purposeful damaging, violation, defacement, or destruction of school property by, among others, vindictive, bored, malevolent, frustrated, or ideology-driven learners. Mabitla (2006:19) stated that it is evident that vandals primarily break windows, draw graffiti, damage furniture and books in classrooms, and ruin bathroom equipment. Learners sometimes deface and destroy their own schools to such an extent that it causes the collapse of teaching and learning (Magwa & Ngara, 2014:79). Teaching and learning may fall apart as the school programmes are often interrupted in order to repair vandalised structures (Mabitla, 2016). “More than 52% of the acts of vandalism in a school are committed by boys (Fiske, 2010:19). The respondents (teachers) reported the following types of vandalism at their schools (Fiske, 2010:19):

- Vandalising bathrooms and/or toilets used by learners (25%).
- Breaking classroom windows (21%).
- Breaking inside/outside doors (22%).
- Graffiti on desks (20%).
- Outdoor vandalism (e.g. uprooting plants) (16%).
- Vandalising bathrooms and/or toilets of staff members (17%).
- Scratching of teachers’ cars or punching the tyres.

Poverty and unemployment are the most common causes of learner vandalism in rural schools (Mabelane, 2000:51). A connection was established between vandalism and poverty, unemployment, sub-standard living conditions, single-mother families, large families, and drug and alcohol abuse (DeWet, 2004:206). The

Department of Education (2014) admitted that there are no specific factors identified as the primary motive for vandalism and why schools are vandalised.

Vandals broke into their own and neighbouring schools and vandalised and stole some of the school equipment and furniture, which were then sold (DeWet, 2004:207). Learner vandals steal in order to obtain money for drugs or alcohol because the stolen items have been traced to taverns. The Department of Education (2014) found that schools damaged by vandals are situated mostly in the low socio-economic areas (rural areas), and have inadequate buildings, and they do with damaged equipment.

### **2.12.2 Manual Work**

Manual work is physical work, which includes tasks that are basic and not degrading. Manual work includes tasks such as slashing grass, cleaning bathrooms, and uprooting tree stumps. These are used to manage the learner behaviour problems (Cohen, 2011:139). Brynard and Hanekom (2006:2370) believe that careful planning and the implementation of strategies and in-service training contribute to the successfully managing and modifying the learner behaviour to ensure discipline in schools. A document analysis guide established that learners who were late at school would either be asked to go to their parents or water flowerbeds. Similarly, Maphosa (2011:88) established that manual labour was found to be the most common disciplinary measure used in dealing with major forms of indiscipline in schools.

### **2.12.3 Disrespect towards Teachers**

The most commonly reported problem is the learners' disrespectful behaviour towards teachers that manifests itself in numerous forms (Algozzine, Wang & Violette (2011:3). The following are some of the less ways learners flout the teachers' authority (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:185).

- swearing at teachers

- repeating what teachers say
- mocking teachers
- using foul language
- ignoring teachers' instructions
- verbal confrontation
- refusal to do assigned work
- wearing wrong school uniform

In rural high schools, the most serious behavioural problems are the lack of respect for authority, low self-esteem and the lack of responsibility (Maphosa & Shumba (2010:44). Additionally, challenges are in senior grades where boys are more rude and disrespectful towards their teachers than girls in the same grades (Algozzine *et al.*, 2011:10). Teachers in rural high schools acknowledged that they have serious problems disciplining learners and feel disempowered to deal with the learners' disrespectful and disruptive behaviour in class (Ainsworth, 2012:247). Learners do not show respect for those in authority, and it is difficult to discipline those who seem to rebel against authority (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:105).

Learners have lost respect for teachers and for the disciplinary rules of the school (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:61). Learners become angry and use abusive language when teachers reprimand them about work not done. This problem may be regarded as the disobedience phase when the adolescent (high school learner) strives for freedom and independence (Lemmer, 2002:99). The high school learners develop arrogance towards the teachers and parents' authority, and this is exacerbated by the overemphasis on the children's rights (Ryneke, 2018:117). In addition, when parents fail to instil respect for the figures of authority in their children at home, the child brings a disrespectful attitude to school (Reyneke, 2015:57).

#### **2.12.4 Disruptive Behaviour**

Disruptive behaviour by learners in class can simply be described as inappropriate behaviour (Burton & Leoschut, 2012b). The most common day-to-day disruptive

behaviours that pose a challenge to teachers are as follows (Levin & Nalon, 2009:44),

- Verbal interruptions such as learners talking out of turn, calling out, name-calling, back chatting, and humming.
- Off-task behaviours such as daydreaming, fidgeting, doodling, tardiness and inattention.
- Physical movement that whether intended or not, is bound to disrupt, for example, wandering around in class to visit other learners, passing notes or throwing objects.
- Showing disrespect through verbal aggression, teasing, refusal to follow instructions and neglecting academic work.

Forms of disruptive behaviour exist to some extent in all classrooms, including rural high schools. They are called 'surface behaviours' because they are usually not caused by more deep-seated problems, but are part of the normal development behaviour of the learners (Edwards & Watts, 2009:93). "Conflict degenerating into physical violence is by far the most challenging misbehaviour teachers have to deal with in class", (Gaza, 2012:147). Peers who do not fight at school are afraid to be called names such as weaklings, so, fighting is reputed among learners, especially boys, as the best way of resolving conflict situations (Kromberg, 2015:565). Disruptive behaviour during class was reported more frequently by teachers in rural high schools (21%) than by teachers (17%) in urban schools (Kromberg, 2015:570).

### **2.12.5 Stealing**

Stealing refers to theft and is a common tendency in schools and is a daily irritation to teachers (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 2016:538). It should be noted that learners steal each other's lunch boxes, tuck shop money, stationery, clothes and cell phones. Common targets for theft among high school learners are clothing items and food. In addition, learners who are victimised through theft at school become emotionally and physically unstable, and find it difficult to concentrate in class (Morrel, 2011:27). Teachers also experience the negative consequences of theft

when they are required to resolve theft issues during class time. “Coping with learners who display unacceptable behaviour such as stealing require extra time, energy and patience from a teacher who could have used that time for teaching”, (Nunan, 2010:71). Teachers are also victims of theft. It was found that teachers reported handbags and jewellery as the most frequently stolen items, followed by outerwear such as jackets and coats, and cell-phones, money and bank cards (Nunan, 2010:71). The majority of teachers feel that theft by learners is disruptive and that controlling learners who have serious or persistent behaviour problems was the main cause of low morale and stress among them (Porteus *et al.*, 2011:45).

Stealing appears to be fairly common among adolescents (high school learners) and can be associated with a range of potentially addictive and anti-social behaviours (Smith, 2013). There is a significant relationship between stealing and measures of adverse functioning such as poor performance at school, smoking, drug abuse and heavy alcohol use” (Smith, 2013:53). Stealing by high school learners forms part of a larger constellation of addictive behaviours that include smoking, alcohol and drug use (Russo, Beckmann & Jansen, 2005:216). Weeks (2013:342) cited 18 reasons for stealing, and the reasons with the highest frequency were - for the excitement of it, to get something for nothing, to see if one can get away with it, friends are doing it, do not have money to buy the item, or to sell the item for money.

### **2.12.6 Bullying**

Another serious form of disruptive behaviour that negatively affects both emotional and physical states of learners in school is bullying. Weeks (2013) described bullying as intentional and hurtful words or acts, or other behaviour repeatedly instituted upon a child or children by another child or children. Yariv (2012:74) defined bullying as the repeated oppression, either psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful one”. They further point out that bullying exists in classrooms and playgrounds of all schools around the world, and it is viewed as the wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put the victim under stress (Yariv, 2012:332).

Bullying in high school is a serious problem, especially on the playground, where it takes the form of name-calling, teasing, taunting, mocking, as well as intimidation (Zabel & Zabel, 2014:88). The following are types of bullying:

- Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, pushing and shoving.
- Verbal bullying such as name-calling, insulting and teasing.
- Emotional abuse, for example, terrorising, humiliating and corrupting.
- Sexual abuse that includes touching, harassing and rape (Kruger & Steinman, 2003:36).

The study showed that learners reported that they were frequently called names such as - stupid, dumb, skinny and fat or retarded by other learners in the classroom and the playground. They also felt ashamed and humiliated by the experience of being called those names (Sprick, 2013:56). Boys are mostly involved in physical bullying, while girls are involved in verbal bullying (Sprick, 2013:156).

### **2.12.7 Temporary Withdrawal from Class**

There is a need for a special training programme regarding the management of classroom disruptive behaviour. This is needed to equip teachers with the modern techniques of conducting and managing disruptive behaviour properly. When a learner is sent outside or to another classroom for a specific time, makes that learner feel isolated and may stop them from misbehaving. Temporary withdrawal from class means that learners with behaviour problems are sent out of class temporarily (Pienaar, 2013:261).

### **2.12.8 Withdrawal of Privileges**

The withdrawal of privileges means depriving one of an intentional award as a symbolic approval of the desirable behaviour (Pienaar, 2013:261). Maphosa (2011:88) established that the withdrawal of privileges such as demotion was commonly used in managing major forms of learner behaviour problems. Nevertheless, the method did not appear to effect behaviour change uniformly

among learners, since those who were not in learner leadership would not suffer demotion even if they committed the same offence as those in leadership. Mayo, Khewu and Bayanga (2013:14) concurred that rewards were used in managing the learner discipline in schools, and further stated that the effectiveness of each method depends on the traditions of schools and their environments.

### **2.13 SUMMARY**

Corporal punishment and the use of other punitive measures are often regarded as synonymous with 'good discipline (Mwamwenda, 2008:275). In South Africa, laws were put in place to outlaw the use of corporal punishment in schools and regard it as an infringement of the children's rights and thus all stakeholders in education had to abide by them (Mabitla, 2006:18). It has emerged that most teachers were not impressed with this abolishment, but they fear its use in schools because of its legal implications.

This Chapter discussed the meaning of corporal punishment in South African schools. Sourcing from both local and international literature, it also discussed the legal implications of the use of corporal punishment in schools by highlighting the important legislation against its use. Positive disciplinary practices that may be employed in the absence of corporal punishment were also discussed. In the same vein, the crucial role played by teachers in a post-corporal punishment era was also highlighted.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The theoretical framework is an interchangeable term. A framework is a group of related ideas that provide guidance for a research project or business endeavour, that is, a collection of interrelated concepts like a theory - but not necessarily so well worked out (Maxwell, 2005:33). The theoretical framework guided this researcher in determining what aspects could be measured and what statistical relationships should be looked for. It explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main issues to be studied as well as the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationships between them. It is like a search by a microscopic lens that researchers use to conduct research.

This is the lens through which the researcher evaluates the research problem and research questions. It is an idea, philosophy or principles. A framework is an outline or a structure or a background. It is the structure that can hold or support a theory of in a research study. The presentation of a theory explains a particular problem. In view of the above descriptions, this research study is underpinned by the following theories.

#### **3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study's is anchored by the theory of parental-teacher involvement advocated by Epstein (1991:261) and Long (1986). The involvement by parents has to do with the parent's participation in one or more of the school's activities, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, volunteering for school activities, helping children with homework and motivating the child to greater academic improvement. This study is also underpinned by the Attribution Theory.

### **3.2.1 The Attribution Theory**

The attribution theory posit that people make sense of their surroundings by what they consider is the cause and effect of a phenomenon (Weiner, 1986:45). It is suggested that individuals make their behaviour or experience, try to figure out what causes it, and then shape their future behaviour accordingly. If a customer, for example, has a bad experience with a locally-made product and good experience with an imported one, he or she may conclude that the bad product is so because it is locally made.

For a person to understand the causes of human behaviour or someone, the attribution theory is the solution. The basis of the Attribution Theory is that people are inquisitive to understand the reasons for the actions they and others take. They want to attribute causes to behaviours they see rather than assuming that these behaviours are random. This allows people to have the feelings of control over their behaviours and their environments. Fritz Heider (1896–1988) first developed the Attribution Theory in his 1958 book entitled "*The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*". Heider proposed that what people perceive and believe about is what they saw. This dictates how they would act, even if their beliefs about what they perceived were invalid.

### **3.2.2 Knowledge or Truth: The Attribution Theory**

According to the attribution theorists, knowledge is about perception or observation. Further, attribution theorists believe that knowledge is a judgment, thus to regulate deliberateness, the individual must believe that the behaviour was internally performed. According to the attribution theorists, knowledge is attributed, and thus the person must be sure if he or she believes the other individual was compelled to carry out the behaviour.

### **3.2.3 The Theory's Weaknesses**

Although the Attribution Theory is grounded on strong Heuristic Value, it becomes applicable to many different situations and can be perceived in many different ways. But, it has some weakness. The perception of an event differs for an individual and the observer. The other weakness is that feedback could influence how a person perceives the cause of an incident. Bias and social consensus can change perception. Low achievers avoid success-related tasks because they tend to doubt their ability and assume success is related to luck or to "who you know" or to other factors beyond their control. The attribution theory does not make the low achievers feel responsible, and it does not increase their pride and confidence.

### **3.2.4 Justification of the Theory**

#### **a) Parental involvement and the Attribution Theory**

The Attribution Theory may be useful not only in explaining the lack or low rates of parental participation in the Vhembe District Schools, but also in generating solutions to the problems (Weiners, 1986:45). The theory may be applied in the context of motivation and academic achievement. It can be applied to elucidate other people's conduct and in accounting for the position of parental involvement in schools. The theory can be utilised in accounting for the behaviour of the SMTs, teachers and parents.

#### **b) Attribution Theory: Motivation and Academic Achievement**

In terms of the Attribution Theory, the learners, teachers and parents' attributes manifest success and failure to different aspects. In other words, they give a different reason why learners may perform well or badly. The Attribution Theory is associated with the achievement tasks that require ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. However, success attracts attributions of high ability, much effort, easy tasks or luck (Haack 2007: 47). There are three-stage processes under attribution. These are;

- The person must perceive or observe the behaviour.
- The person must believe that the behaviour was intentionally performed.
- The person must determine if they believe the other person was forced to perform the behaviour (in which case the cause is attributed to the situation) or not (in which case the cause is attribution to the other person) (Weiner, 1980: 45).

Failure on the other hand attracts attributions of low ability, little effort and arduous task (Haack, 2007:47).

### **3.2.5 Attributions about Other People's Behaviour**

Simmering (2011:1) asserted that people make causal attributions in regard to other people's behaviour. Such attributions result from what the observer (of someone's behaviour) knows about the other person's behaviour, what the observer believes about the causes of behaviour, and the reason the observer wants to explain the other person's behaviour (Kelley & Michela 1980:457). What people perceived and believed about what they saw dictates how they would act, even if their beliefs about what they perceived were invalid (Simmering, 2011:1). In addition, people have a tendency to use internal attributions to explain the negative behaviour of others and external attributions to explain their negative behaviour (Simmering, 2011:1). Undue estimation regarding the influence of internal attributions on people and understanding the influence of external attributions is referred to as an 'essential attribution mistake' which materialises due to:

- the observer not having the same information relating to the observed behaviour as those being observed would have;
- the observer and the observed focusing on different aspects;
- the observer expecting others to behave as they would in a given situation;

The manner in which people create attributions regarding other people's conduct, and how this could be mistaken, carries significant results for elaborations regarding the absence of parental involvement in their children's school life.

### **3.2.6 The Application of Attribution Theory to Parental Involvement**

The Attribution Theory is indispensable not only in elaborating the position of parental participation, but also in producing the mechanisms to develop it. This is mainly because the attributions made by parents and teachers about the parental involvement tend to influence their actual behaviour of being involved or of initiating involvement activities (Simmering, 2011:1).

Parents and teachers provide internal and external attributions regarding the parental involvement activities. This theory predicts that school heads, teachers and parents are susceptible to the fundamental attributions of error. When teachers attribute low parental involvement to aspects that are internal to parents, they are inclined to conclude that they are unable to deal with the situation and that it is entirely up to the parents to redeem the situation. Likewise, when parents attribute low parental involvement to reasons that are external to them, they may believe that they (parents) are impotent to improve parental involvement and that the responsibility to resolve the problem resides in other people such as teachers, or even the government (Simmering, 2011:1).

In view of the aforementioned, it is likely that the attributions held by the parents and teachers could cause conflict between them, resulting in low levels of parental involvement. The beliefs held by teachers and parents translate into actions that can either enhance or inhibit the parental involvement (Haack (2007:47).

The various attributions created by parents and teachers for not participating in the parental involvement activities may result in misunderstandings between parents and teachers to the disadvantage of parental involvement. Other teachers believe that uneducated and under paid parents have little educational aspirations for their children, and lack the pre-requisite skills to help their children (McKinney *et al.*, 2018:290).

### **3.3 SUMMARY**

Theories discipline helps us improve our understanding of the possible explanations behind the learners' non-attendance at school. This adds sensible and notional cognisance regarding multiple effects. The researcher has the ability to pick the most reasonable approaches to manage the topic and provide a vital separation from a one-dimensional position. Different theories and the explanations of the abolition of corporal punishment has affected the learners' performance at school.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding Chapter reviewed the theoretical framework on the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance. This Chapter discusses the research design and the process of investigation based on the research methodology (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:3). The research methodology and its inherent research design were used to collect data from the respondents. The Chapter also outlines this study's population, the sampling procedure and the data collection methods. A mixed methods approach was adopted here. The triangulation of data sources was used to assess the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District (Cresswell, Plano, Gutman & Hanson, 2003:209).

#### **4.2 THE PRAGMATIC PARADIGM**

This study adopted the Pragmatic Paradigm. Pragmatism is seen as the paradigm that provides the underlying philosophical framework for mixed-methods research (Creswell & Clark, 2007:3). The pragmatic paradigm provides the researcher with the opportunity to use multiple methods, different worldviews and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis. Pragmatism has often been identified in literature as the appropriate paradigm for conducting mixed-methods research (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:4). It implies that the overall approach to research is that of mixing data collection methods and data analysis procedures within the research process (Creswell, 2011:12).

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2007:14) illustrated that pragmatism is a paradigm which combines and merges elements from both positivism and interpretivism in a

single study. The pragmatic paradigm was the most suitable here as it allowed this researcher to triangulate data. Pragmatism considers “what works” to answer the research questions, rather than making a choice between the positivist/post positivist or constructivist paradigms (Antwi & Hamza, 2015:88). For the purpose of this study, the pragmatic paradigm was suitable as it allowed this researcher to triangulate data, address the research questions more comprehensively than when using either the quantitative or qualitative methods alone.

Biesta (2010:95) asserted that pragmatism is outcome-oriented and interested in determining the meaning of issues or focusing on the product of the research as driven by the anticipated consequences and the combined elements of the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. It is characterised by an emphasis on communication and shared meaning-making in order to create practical solutions to social problems. It places primary importance on the research question and provides a middle position both methodologically and philosophically by offering a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions (Antwi & Hamza, 2015: 88). Pragmatism also helps shed light on how research approaches can be mixed fruitfully. When the research approaches are mixed, they offer the best opportunities for answering significant research questions. The researcher saw pragmatism as the most relevant paradigm in this study as it enhanced the integrity of the results and enabled an in-depth understanding of the problem under investigation.

### **4.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodologies refer to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie a particular study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:108). In this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed. The mixed-methodology is the combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to complement each other. In this way, no particular approach was given more preference. Both methods contributed equally to the final results of this study. The qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were used simultaneously during data collection. The arguments were informed by the effects of the abolition of

corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District.

#### **4.3.1 Quantitative Aspect of the Mixed Methodology**

Quantitative studies emphasise the use of numerical measures to arrive at specific findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:143). "Data collection in quantitative research is accumulated by means of inanimate instruments such as scales, tests, surveys, questionnaires and computers (Mouton, 2009:73). Through statistics, the researcher is able to conceptualise what otherwise might be incomprehensible, hence the advantages of this study. The data gathered from questionnaires were presented in tabular form. This was done so that the statistics would speak more clearly (De Vos, 2010:244). The quantitative method uses numbers as its basis for making generalisations about a phenomenon. The quantitative researchers collect data in the form of numbers and use statistical types of data analysis (Antwi, & Hamza, 2015:88). The survey method was used in this study in the form of closed-ended self-designed questionnaire to collect primary data from the respondents.

#### **4.3.2 Qualitative Aspect of the Mixed Methodology**

Neumann (2010:240) defined the qualitative research as a multi-perspective approach that makes sense of interpreting or reconstruction of interaction in terms of meanings that the subjects attach to it. This approach deals with the data that are principally verbal. It is the approach in which the procedures are not as strictly formalised as in the quantitative research (Cresswell, 2011:12). The qualitative research is concerned with the clarifications of social phenomena. Based on the qualitative research methodology, the researcher designed and compiled the semi-structured interview questions to collect data from parents and teachers using the open-ended questions (De Vos, 2010:244)).

### **4.3.3 Application of the QUAN-QUAL**

Creswell and Clark (2007:3) explained that the application of the QUAN-QUAL approach produces a variety of information from multiple perspectives on the same issue. In so doing, it enriches the understanding of the deeper and varied dimensions of a given phenomenon. It also increases the honesty, persuasiveness and quality of the findings by countering any concern that a study's results are simply the product of working in a singular fashion (Ponce & Pagan-Maldonado, 2015:117). Leedy and Ormrod (2012) defined the term triangulation as the convergence of quantitative and qualitative results. Leedy and Ormrod's (2012) concept of triangulation involves combining data sources to study the same social phenomenon. For triangulation to occur, it implies describing a social phenomenon from different perspectives with each perspective testing and adding data so that each can make up for the methodological blind spot of the other to provide a fuller picture of the phenomenon being studied (Cresswell *et al.*, 2003:209).

The justification for adopting the quantitative approach in this study was to enable data to be gathered using methods such as the survey questionnaire where statistical methods were generated and the research questions tested empirically to assess the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District (Cooper, Porter, & Endacott, 2011:120). The qualitative approach was adopted to obtain in-depth information and ascertain the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District utilising methods such as the focus group discussions and interviews. Thus, meaning was drawn through the understanding and interpretation of the perceptions of the respondents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013:32).

## **4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Creswell (2013:20) defined research design as steps in the research process that enable the collection and analysis of data. McMillan and Schumacher (2013:67) see the research design as a set of decisions regarding what topic is to be studied

among what population with what research methods for what purpose. This study followed the case study research design. The case study research design was followed because it enabled this researcher to visit the cases (the Mvudi and Luvuvhu Circuits in order to interact with this study's units of analysis (teachers, HoDs and Principals). (A pragmatic paradigm is regarded as "a mixed-method which combines the quantitative and qualitative approaches and gives the researcher an understanding regarding the topic of the study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009:4).

#### **4.5 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Kumar (2011:13) defines a population as the group upon which the researcher is interested in making inferences and a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are presented (Creswell, 2013:20). Schools were selected from rural-based circuits in Vhembe District. This study's population was composed of teachers and parents whose children attended five schools that were selected for this research.

#### **4.6 SAMPLE AND THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Tashakkori and Newman (2010:514) contend that the nature of the sampling procedure used in a particular study is usually described by one or more adjectives, such as random and purposive sampling. This section describes the techniques used to select this study's sample. Kumar (2011:13); Leedy and Ormrod (2012:12) referred to a sample as a sub-set or sub-segment of the population that is taken to be the representation of the population. Motseke (2000:105) further mentioned that the aim of sampling is to produce the representative selection of the population elements. A sample can be viewed as a sub-set of the measurements drawn from a population in which researchers are interested. The researchers study the sample in an effort to understand the population from which it was drawn, and as a means for helping them explain some facet of the population (Biesta, 2010:95). The sample was selected to improve the applicability of the findings to the wider population so that the generalisation could be made. Thus, the sampled units of analysis in this study were parents, teachers, HoDs and principals.

The simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in different contexts for the selection of this study's population sample (Mouton, & Marais, 2012:279). Furthermore, purposive sampling was employed to select the schools. In purposive sampling, the sample is purposely pre-specified from a group that the researcher is concerned with, thus giving the researcher the information of interest. This was used because the schools were pre-specified based on their socio-economic backgrounds (Saps Ford & Jupp, 1996:25).

The aim of sampling was to save time and effort, but also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status. By using simple random sampling, every individual in the study population had an equal and independent chance of being selected as part of the sample. Random sampling was applied to both teachers and parents. The selection of the sample was done randomly using the questionnaire that was distributed to the schools' SMTs. The quantitative sample had 120 participants from the 30 schools found in these two circuits. This number was arrived at in that this researcher distributed questionnaires to all the schools in these two circuits and only 120 teachers bothered to return them. The returned questionnaires represented this study's population sample in this aspect of the mixed methods approach.

For the qualitative aspect, the non-probability purposive sampling was used to select this study's sample. This researcher used purposive sampling because it helps gather data on specific descriptors. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the HODs and principals. These came to 10 participants. That is, five schools were purposefully picked by this researcher as they are close to where I reside. This minimised the travel expenses as these were easily accessible. Then I purposefully picked one principal and one HoD from each school for interviews, obtaining the sample size of ten respondents.

According to Wimmer and Domminick (1988:68), determining an adequate sample size is one of the most controversial aspects of sampling. There is no fixed number or percentage of subjects that determine the size of an adequate sample, but it may

depend upon the nature and the population of interest or data gathered and analysed (Ary, Sorensen & Walker, 2013:19). Every fourth school was selected until a total of 30 schools was reached. An attempt was made to administer the questionnaire to 120 secondary school teachers for the purpose of quantitative research.

## **4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Leedy and Ormrod (2012:102) stated that data collection is not just a process of data collection, it is also a process of gathering information in unique ways related to the purpose of the study. The methods were used to collect data that would help describe the findings and to confirm the credibility of the interpretations. Interviews and questionnaires enable researchers to receive information from people and convert them into data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013:32).

### **4.7.1 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire contains written questions that must be answered by the research participants (De Vos, 2010:9). As this researcher desired to collect comprehensive information on the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District, a Likert-type questionnaire was developed to collect such data (Nkunda, 2012:2). The questionnaire was made up of 11 close-ended items for both the teachers and parents. According to Creswell (2013:20), the close-ended questions are quick to compile and straightforward to code, and they do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are. The five-point Likert-type scale ranged from "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Uncertain" (U), "Disagree" (D) to "Strongly Disagree" (SD). According to Neumann (2016:44), the Likert scale is one of the most widely used techniques to measure attitudes. The questionnaire was distributed personally to the teachers of the selected schools on the appointed dates. This researcher discussed the questions with the informants and later distributed them. This approach was adopted here because it helped determine the respondents' values views, attitudes and experiences.

The items in the questionnaire were based on the research questions. The first question one sought to find out what school-related factors contribute to learner academic achievement in the Vhembe District; the second question looked at external factors that influence the academic achievement of learners. The third one considered whether there are mechanisms in monitoring the students' performance in the Vhembe District. It had three items raised to solicit the respondents' views and opinions.

#### **4.7.2 Interviews**

According to Cresswell (2013:22), interviews are a favoured method in studies and are a primary source of in-depth information in the case. Interviewing is one of the most common methods of data collection used by researchers to inform them about social life. Interviewing could thus be regarded as the universal mode of systemic inquiry (Neumann, 2010:249). Additionally, the technique of individual face-to-face interviewing treats the interview as a pipeline for extracting and transmitting information from the interviewee to the interviewer (Creswell, 2013:28).

An individual interview was used to strengthen the clause of confidentiality and assist this researcher to understand the closed worlds of the participants, the factors affecting the learners' academic performance at home and at school, and the teachers, principals and the circuit managers' comments and opinions regarding the learners' academic performance (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013:67). However, learning about the aforementioned 'closed worlds' depends on the ability of the interviewer to maximise the flow of valid and reliable information while reducing the distortions in the interviewee's recollection of events (McMillan & Schumacher, 2013:67). The open-ended interviews enable an interviewer to obtain an inside view of the social phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:43). This kind of interview confirms not what is already known, but also provides the reasons for the answers. Often, interviewees may more easily discuss sensitive issues. The advantage of using interviews is that interviewers do not have to be particularly

skilled in the art of interviewing” (Cohen *et al.*, 2000:43). The researcher conducted interviews with the five principals, and five HoDs of the schools sampled.

## **4.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

De Vos (2010:134) pointed out that the term ‘analysis’ basically means the resolution of a complex whole into parts. It involves reducing to manageable proportions the wealth of data that one has collected or is available. Data can be analysed systematically, searching and arranging the interview transcription, field notes and other materials that may be accumulated to increase the researcher’s own understanding of them and to enable one to present what one has discovered (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009:7).

### **4.8.1 Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data**

The interview data were analysed using content analysis. Data were compared and themes arrived at. This was after data were transcribed. This was done to look for “themes and similar ideas or responses to the questions posed to the respondents, of which the respondents’ information or speeches were translated into specific categories for the purposes of analysis. Steps on how to process and analyse qualitative data are documented and these made it easy for this researcher to code data during analysis (Creswell, 2013:20).

The data were transcribed, coded and then themes were looked for in the coded data. All the data that were transcribed needed to be read and re-read for the researcher to become familiar with them. Notes were made to capture the recurring concepts, common themes, events and other patterns in the data (De Vos, 2010:134). These were then labelled and referred to as ‘open coding’. The coded data were then sorted and categorised.

#### **4.8.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Quantitative Data**

Quantitative studies emphasise the use of numerical measures to arrive at specific findings. The information from the questionnaires was first coded for each and every question and then entered into the Microsoft Excel spread sheet in words and numbers as suggested by Wiersma (2000:337). The statistical software SPSS version 25 was used to analyse the generated data. Statistics were based on percentages and frequencies. Data from questionnaires were analysed by means of tables and figures. The percentage of the total sample responding to each question was given. Data collected was presented according to the responses and/or the views of the respondents. Numerical scores were assigned to them to indicate a possible relationship between the respondents' responses, and then frequency lists were drawn. The two outside categories were combined in the analysis, for instance, the researcher combined "strongly agree" and "agree" and also "strongly disagree and disagree" to project a unique response. In addition, themes, patterns and behaviour were used.

#### **4.9 VALIDITY**

Validity refers to the extent to which inferences made based on numerical scores are appropriate, meaningful and useful to the sample (Mouton & Marais, 2012:279). Smith (1998:94) refers to validity as the extent to which the interpretation of test scores is appropriate in light of the existing evidence and theory. An important part of this definition is the idea that validity is not a characteristic of tests themselves, but rather of the way test scores are interpreted. Since validity is about the accuracy of the research tools, this study piloted the research instruments in order to determine the level of language, understanding and errors in the tool. Furthermore, the researcher approached the staff of the University of Zululand with regard to the questionnaire and interview questions development. The services of the University of Zululand's statistician was also sourced. He helped interpret data.

#### **4.10 RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY**

Reliability refers to the extent to which the tool consistently measures what it is supposed to measure (Mason, 2002:187). A test is reliable to the degree that it measures accurately and consistently, yielding comparable results when administered a number of times (Creswell, 2010:550). In statistics, reliability is the consistency of a set of measurements of a measuring instrument. The reliability of a construct determines whether the measurements of the same construct give, or are likely to give, the same values (Norman, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:284). Like validity, reliability is a desirable quality. In this study, reliability was enhanced by consulting the Department of Statistics at the University of Zululand for questionnaire and research questions analysis as well as piloting the study before the empirical process. In this study, a consistent combination of data gathering tools, various literature sources and data analysis techniques were used to enhance the reliability of the measurements.

#### **4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Rubin and Rubin (2008:89) stated that ethical consideration should include non-maleficence (the researcher must do no harm to the participants) and privacy and anonymity (the identity of the participants must not be revealed in any way)". Mouton and Marais (2012:279) emphasised the importance of studying ethics in research in order to determine the ethical principles underlying the protection of human rights. McMillan and Schumacher (2013:27) explained how institutions such as universities are required to have a review board that evaluates the research proposals of the students and staff members. This is done to ensure that the research is ethically sound before the researchers are permitted to commence research. After the permission to do this study was obtained, this researcher began recruiting the participants. Leedy and Ormrod (2012:143) contend that ethical issues in research fall into one of the four categories. Those which the researcher considered while conducting the study are as follows:

#### **4.11.1 Protection from Harm**

The researcher should not expose the research participants to unnecessary physical or psychological harm. The participants should not risk losing life or limb, nor should they be subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment or loss of self-esteem (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:143). In cases where the nature of study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort, the participants should know this ahead of time, and any necessary debriefing or counselling should follow immediately after participation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:143).

#### **4.11.2 Informed consent**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2012:143), when people are intentionally recruited for participation in a research study, they should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating. Furthermore, they should be told that, if they agree to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Any participation in a study should be strictly voluntary (Rubin & Rubin, 2008:89). Not all information provided was recorded to avoid the adverse effects of disclosure. Consent for participation in research was freely given and the respondents were informed in due course. Also,

- Consent was given without direct/indirect coercion or undue inducement.
- Prospective participants were informed of the details of the intended research.
- Prospective participants understood that information.
- The researcher answered any question about the research and their participation.
- Consent was given before the research commenced.

### **4.11.3 Right of Privacy**

Any research study involving human beings should respect the participants' right to privacy" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012:102). "Under no circumstances should a researcher's report, either oral or written, be presented in such a way that others become aware of how a particular participant responded or behaved (Arend, Maw, de Swardt, Dennis & Donald (2013:157). In general, a researcher must keep the nature and quality of the participants' performance strictly confidential. The objective of this study was explained verbally, and the participants were assured that the information obtained during the interviews would be kept confidential.

### **4.11.4 Confidentiality**

The forth ethical consideration which was recognised in this study was confidentiality, which is an important aspect in a research study. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) explained confidentiality as ensuring that identifying information that could be used to link the respondents to their responses is kept private from the public. No information regarding any participant should be divulged to the public or any other unauthorised personnel. In this study, confidentiality was provided for the participants by making sure that no participant's name was written on the responses. Instead, pseudonyms were used. The participant's information was also protected, and hence their information was safely kept so that no one would access it without the participant's permission.

## **4.12 SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed the research methodology for this study. The researcher concluded that the population and sampling procedures, as well as research instruments, data collection techniques, and data analysis, were appropriate for this study. The population and sampling procedures indicated all the respondents involved in this study and how they were selected to form a sample. The questionnaires and interviews were used as the data collection techniques in this study. The next Chapter presents, interprets, and analyses the data collected.

## CHAPTER 5

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

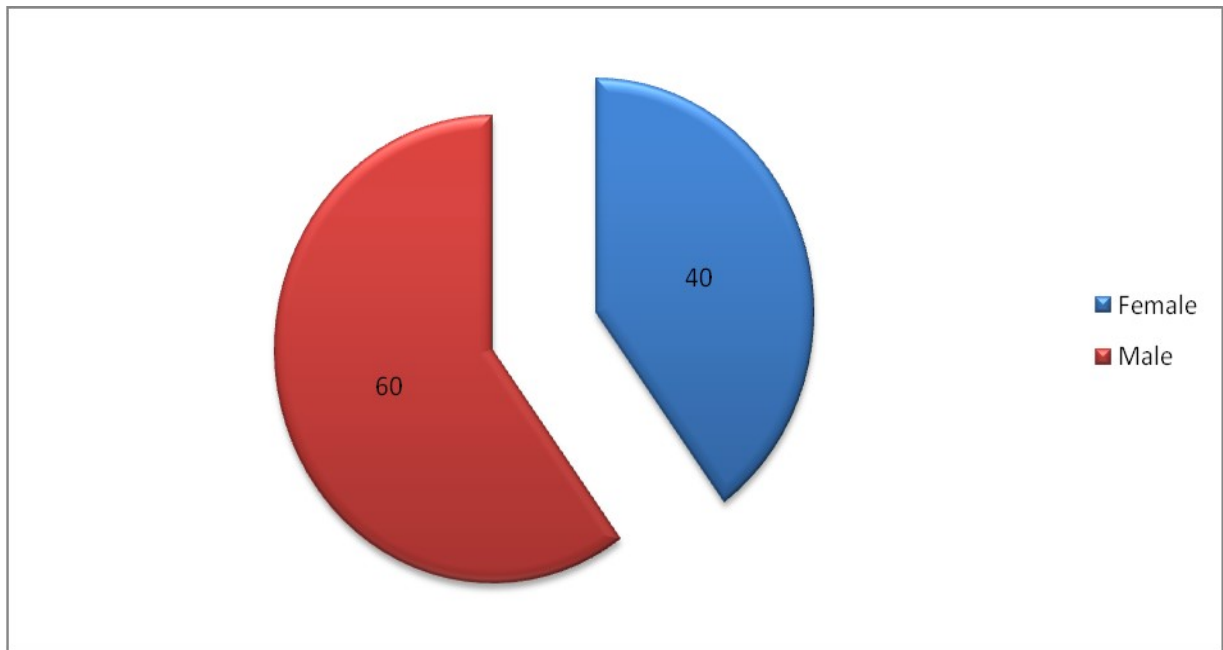
Chapter five begins with an explanation of how the data in the survey was collected and analysed. The “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” number of responses for each question were added together. Similarly, the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” were added together. The total average of all the responses in the survey for the disagreeing and agreeing number of responses were calculated. The resulting averages were then taken as a standard response, against which, all the survey responses (for all question responses and sub-category averages) were displayed for comparison purposes (Nkunda, 2012:2).

The interpretation and discussion of the results were informed by tables, which clearly display the survey data that were analysed within each sub-category. Specific explanations with regards to the validity test were given. For the analysis’ sake, all questionnaires and the interview responses were found to be reliable. The Chapter concludes with a summary of all the discussions regarding the retention issues in tabular form, indicating which of the responses reflected are below the average (Creswell, 2010:550). The analysis of data obtained from individual interviews was done through identifying common themes from the respondents’ description of their experiences. Irrelevant information was separated from the relevant one. The research results were presented and interpreted. A Likert questionnaire was used in the collection of the quantitative data. The identification of themes or concepts and sorting them was crucial here.

## 5.2 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

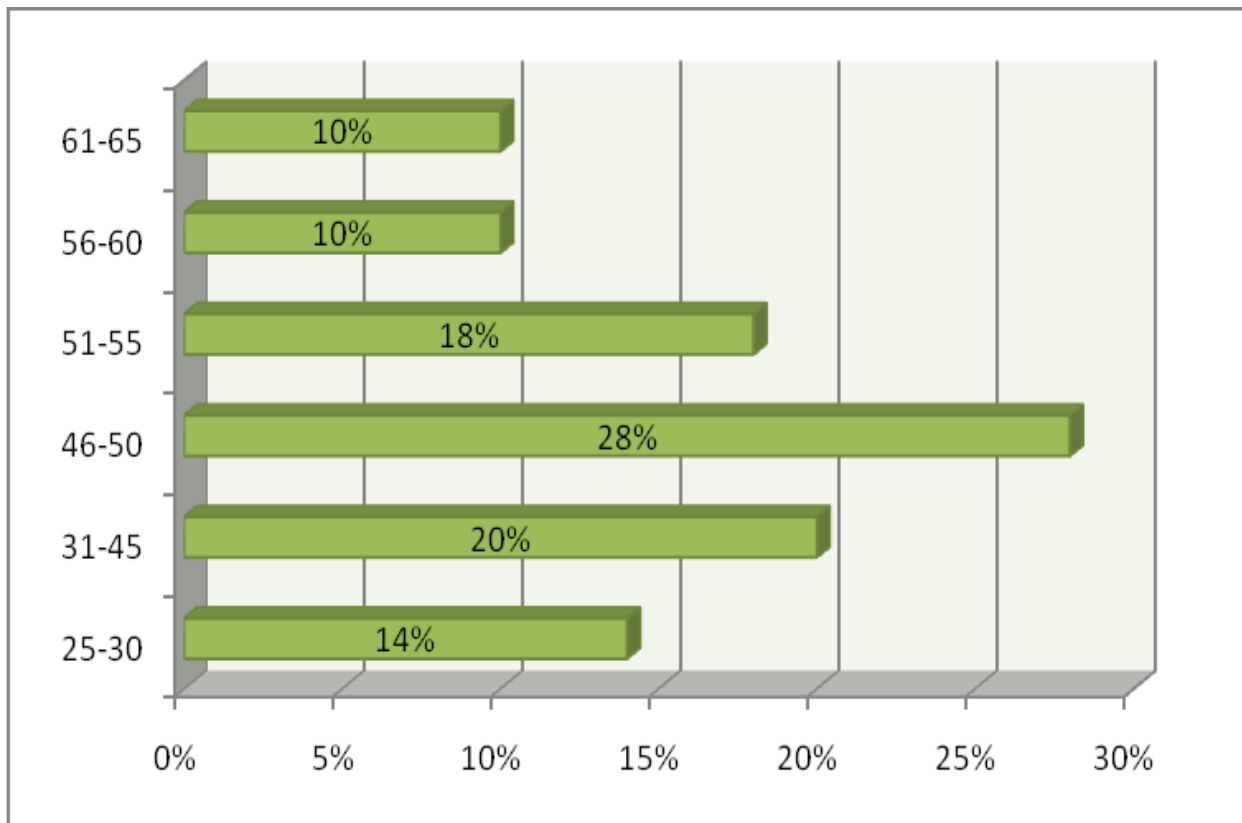
The biographical information outlines the type of people who participated in the research, which can be used to determine and influence the participants' premises.

**Figure 5.1: Respondents' Sex (add age of the figure)**



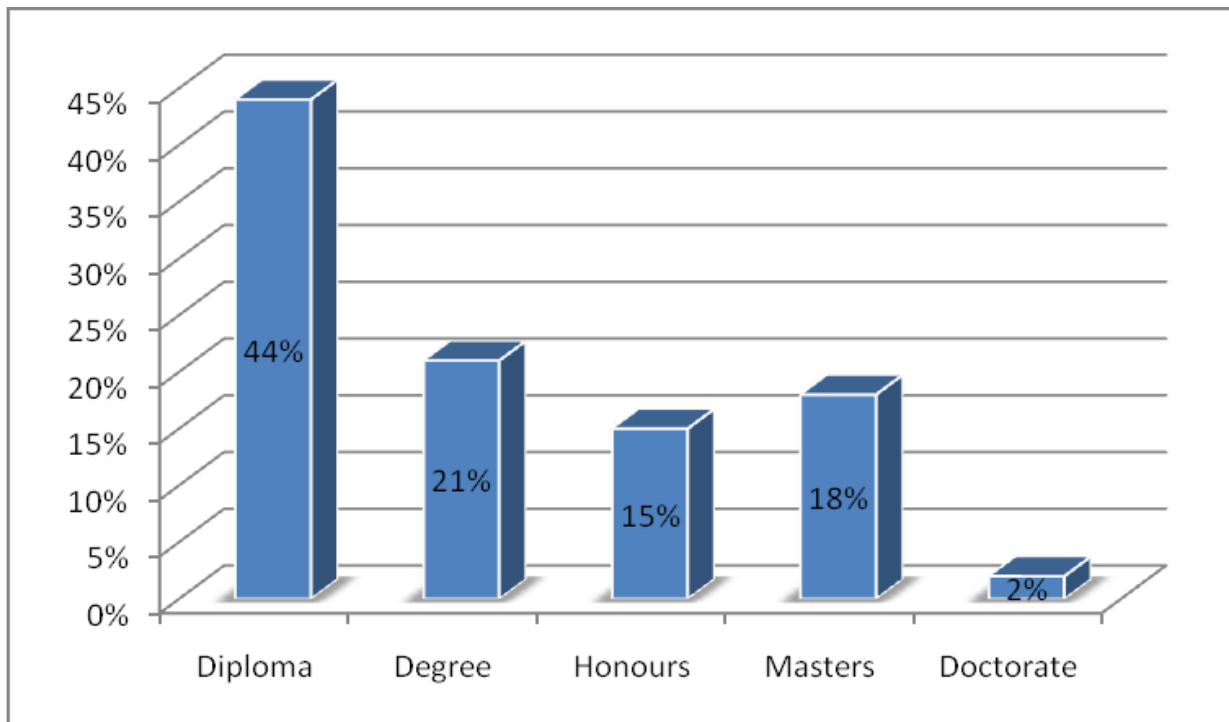
**Figure 5.1** indicates the questionnaires which were returned. That is, 72 male respondents (60% of the total) returned the questionnaires and 48 females (constituting 40%) did likewise. The probing of gender in research is important as it ensures that the views and perceptions that are obtained for the study are not gender-biased. It also ensures that the opinions and perceptions of both sexes are also factored in the study's conclusion. This brings the completeness of the views and perceptions of the structured questionnaire.

**Figure 5.2: Respondents age distribution**



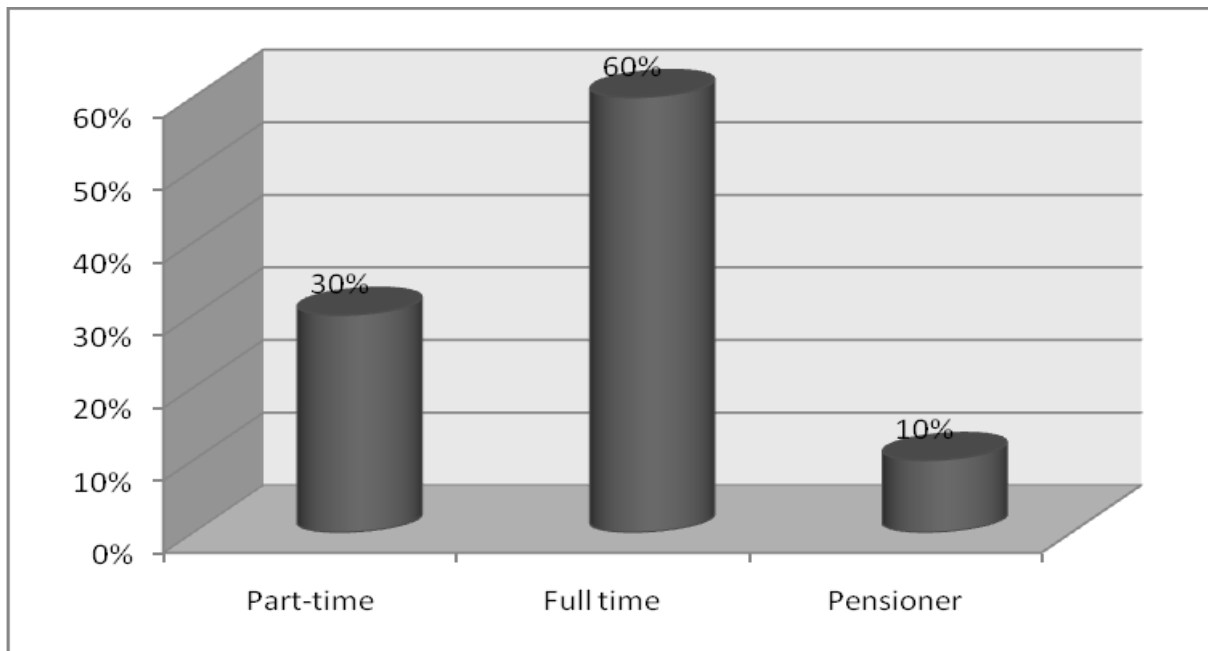
The figure above shows that 16 respondents (14% of the total sample) fall in the 25 - 30 age range, while 20% fall between the 31 - 45 age group. **Figure 5.2** also reveals that 33 respondents (28% of the total sample) are in the 46 - 50 age group, and 28% are within the 51 - 55 age range. Only 10% of the sample was in the 61 - 65 age brackets. The respondents of various ages were well represented in this study. The results revealed that the majority (28%) of the respondents were between 46 - 50 years old.

**Figure 5.3: The Respondents' Qualifications (N=120)**



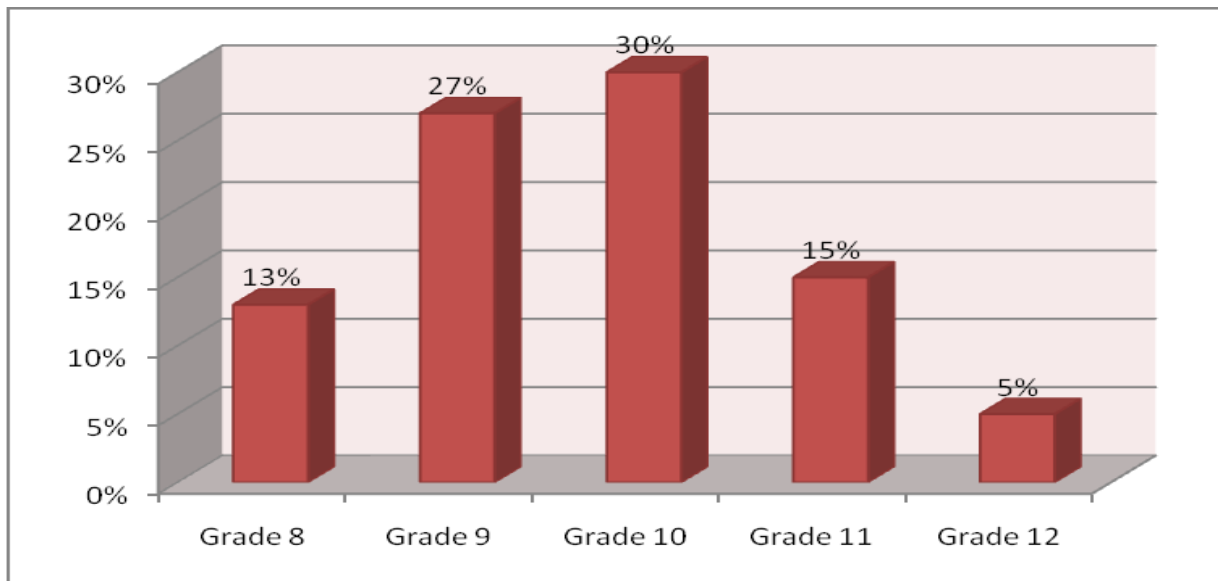
The respondents' responses in **Figure 5.3** reveal that 44% have a Diploma in Teaching and 21% have a Bachelor's degree. Those with an Honours degree constituted 15% of the study sample, while the Master's degree holders were 18% of the sample. This shows that the majority of the respondents are qualified teachers. Also, all the respondents indicated that they attended tertiary institutions to acquire their qualifications.

**Figure 5.4: Respondents' Employment status (N=120)**



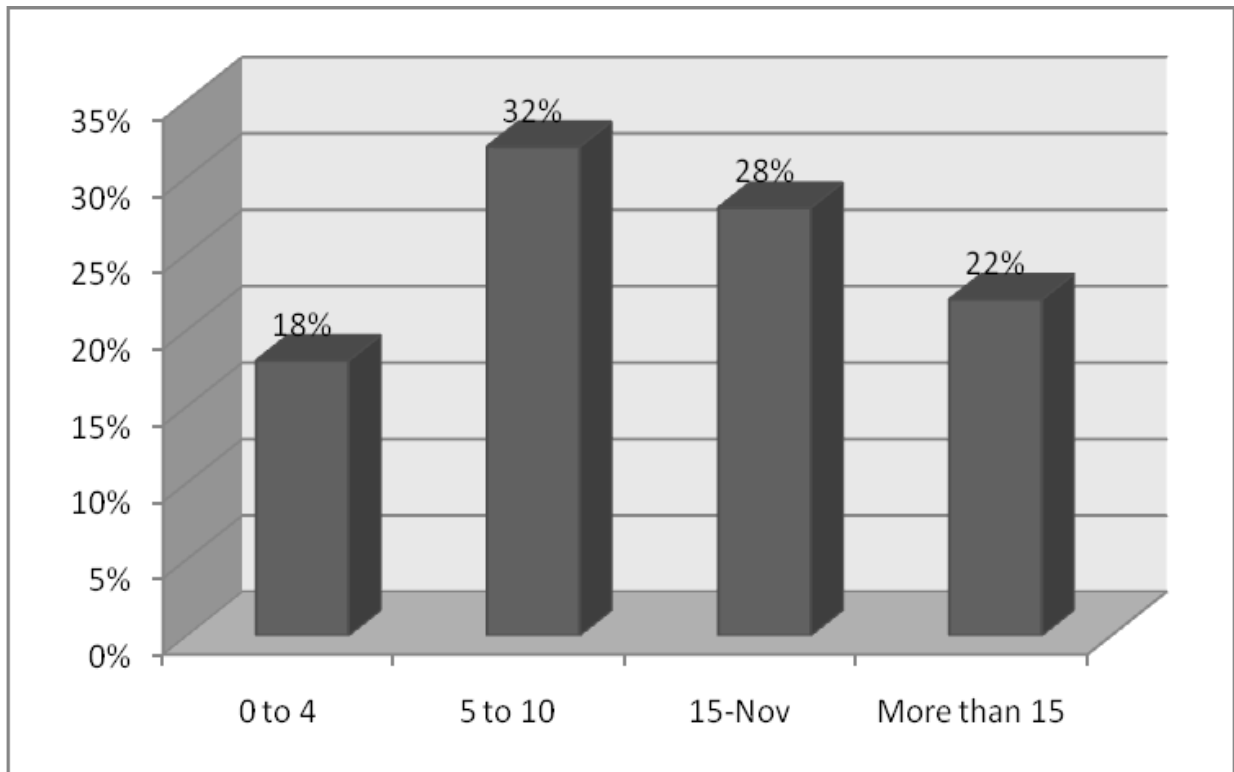
Concerning their appointment status, the majority of the respondents (60%) were permanently employed, and 30% of them were part-time employees. In addition, pensioners constituted 10% of the respondents as shown in **Figure 5.4**.

**Figure 5.5: Grades being taught (N=120)**



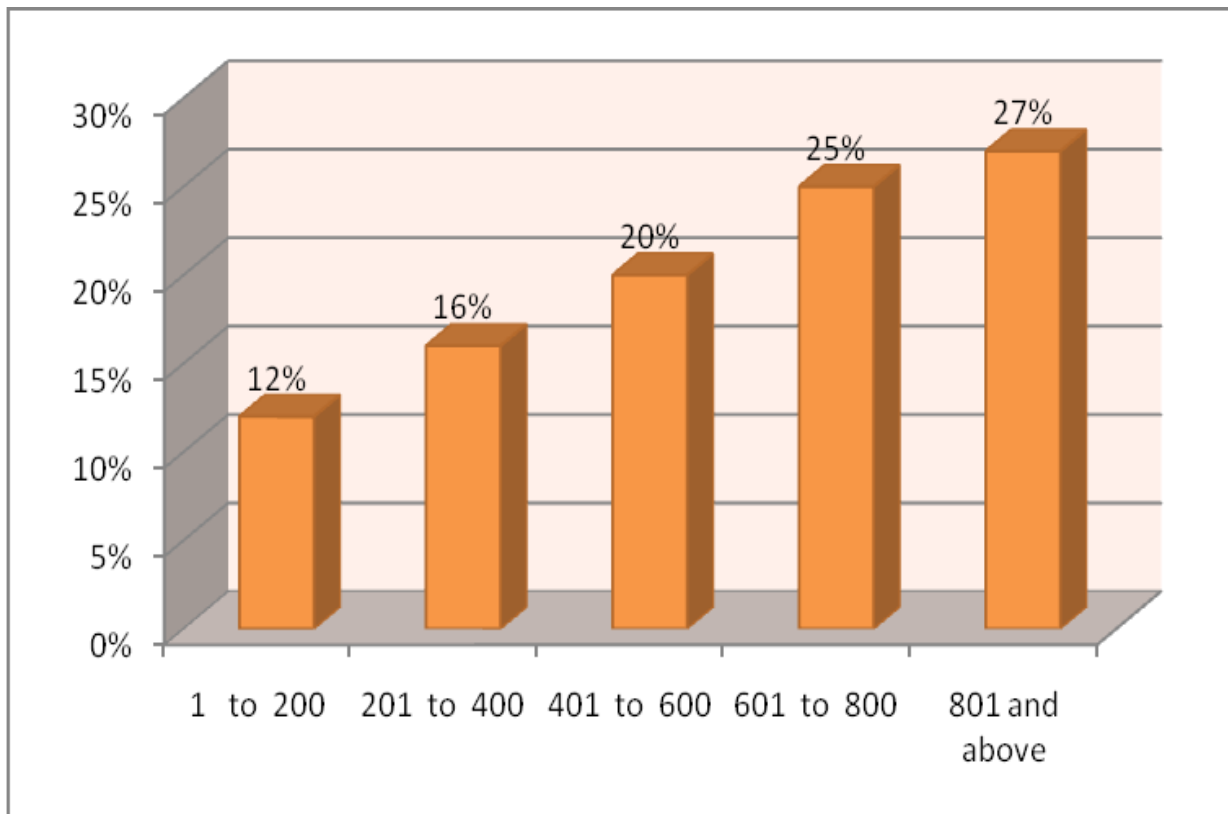
**Figure 5.5** shows the grades currently taught by the respondents in percentages. The teachers who teach Grade 8 make 13%, while 27% of them teach Mathematics (Maths) in Grade 9. Those who teach Grade 10 Maths is 30% of the sample and 15% teach Grade 11. The highest percentage of the respondents teaches Grade 10 Maths. This could have been necessitated by high volumes of learners in that grade.

**Figure 5.6: Number of Years Teaching (N=120)**



Most teachers (32%) have between 5 and 10 years of teaching experience. This is followed by 28% with 15 years of teaching Maths. About 22% of the respondents had between 0 – 4 years of teaching experience. This means that if inexperienced teachers were made to teach lower grades, learners would most probably perform poorly. This is not surprising as learners have difficulty with subjects such as Life and Natural Sciences and Mathematics in the secondary schools. But, again, a teacher has to start somewhere for her/him to have experience.

**Figure 5.7: Schools' Enrolment (N=120)**

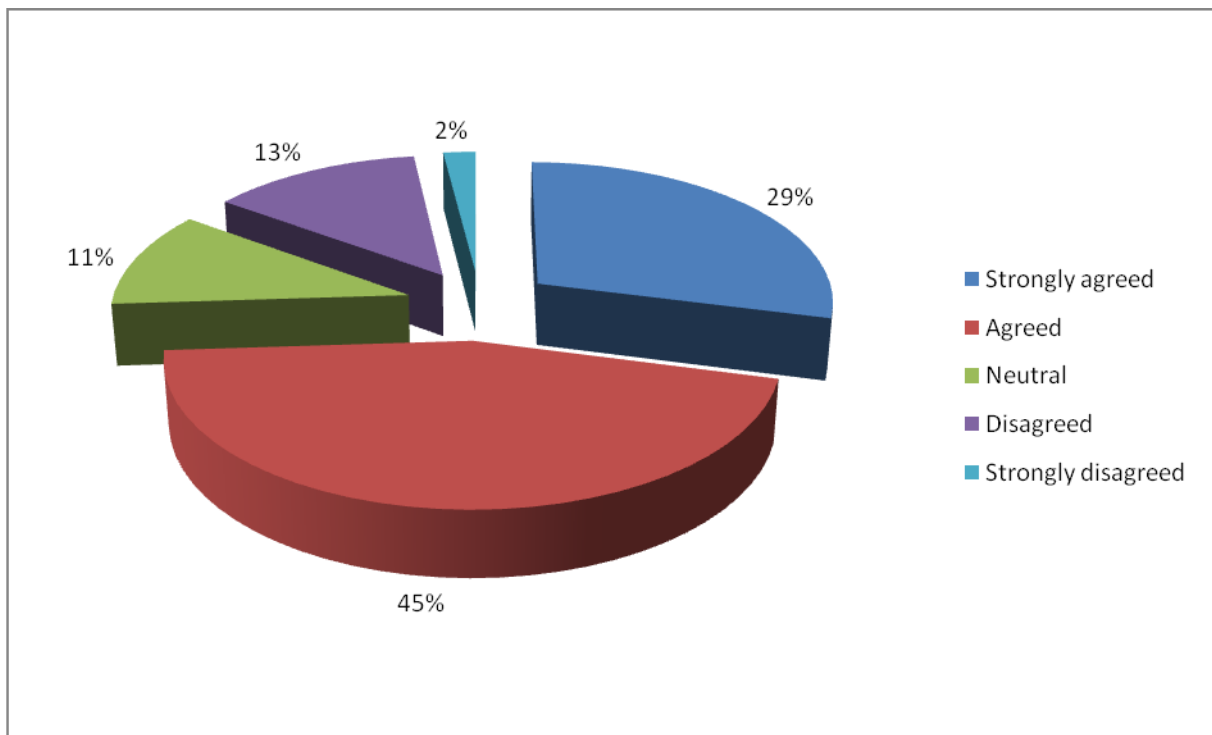


According to **Figure 5.7**, enrolment ranged from 1 to above 801. In view of the above graph, schools with 801 or more learners were 27%, while those with 1 to 200 learners were 12%. Those with the enrolment of between 601 and 800 were 25%, and schools with 400 learners made up 16% of the total sample. The 401 – 600 learner enrolment was found in 20% of the schools. The implication here is that teachers largely teach large classes due to huge enrolments in the Vhembe District's rural schools.

### **5.3 PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT**

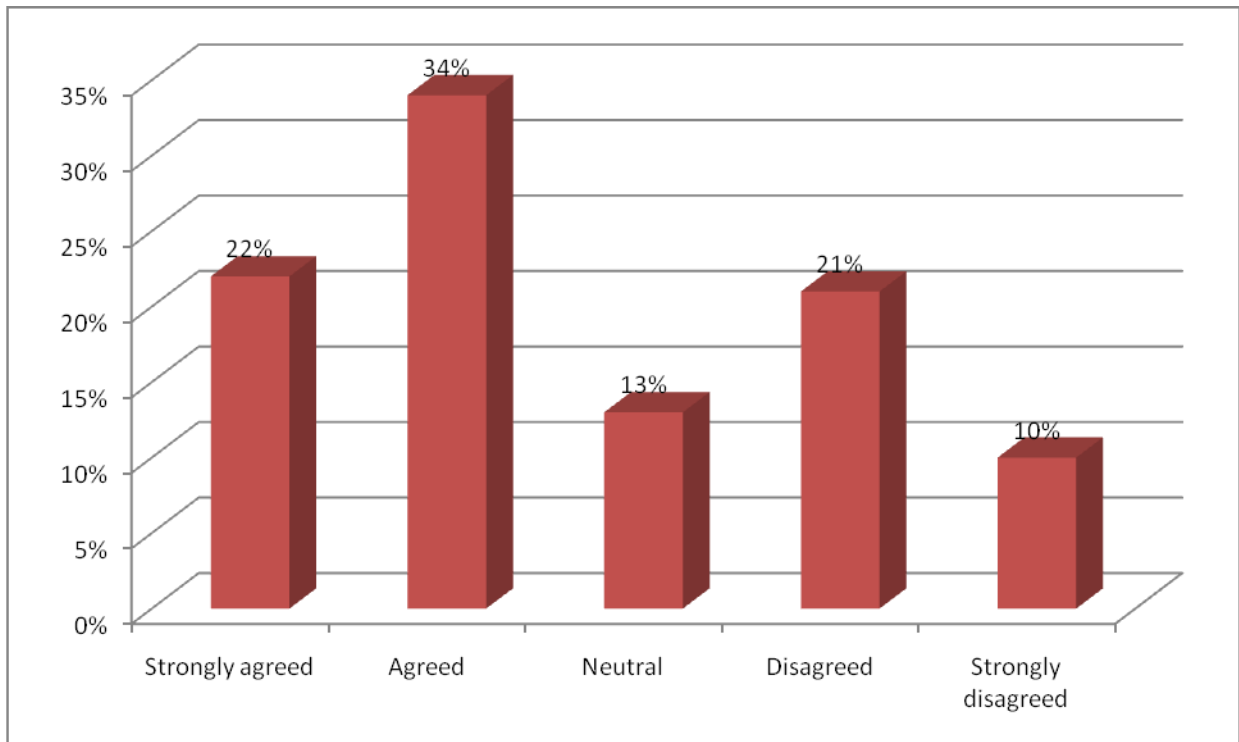
The SPSS version 25.0, a computer-based programme for analysing data was used to analyse data here. The statistical analysis is based on the parents' perceptions with regard to the abolition of corporal punishment in public schools in the Vhembe District.

**Figure 5.8: Parents' roles towards learners (N=120)**



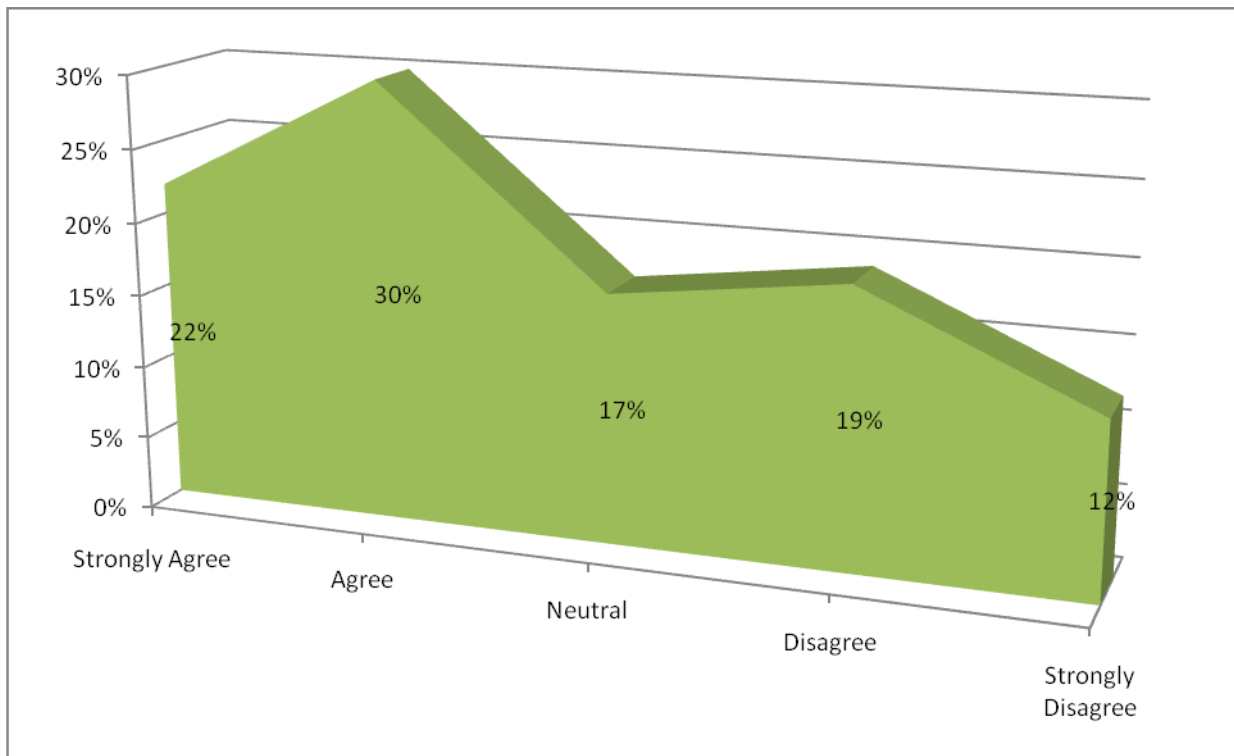
**Figure 5.8** indicates that 89 respondents (constituting 74% of the total sample), agreed with the statement that teachers will be very happy to spend their careers in one school, while 13 respondents (11%) were neutral. This was not supported by all as 18 respondents (constituting 15% of the total sample) disagreed with the statement that parents have a tendency of shifting their responsibilities of instilling good morals to their children to teachers. The results are also supported by Canter and Canter (2011) who stated that teachers tend to unnecessarily blame parents for neglecting their children's moral upbringing.

**Figure 5.9: Single parents' quality time with their children impacts on their academic performance (N=120)**



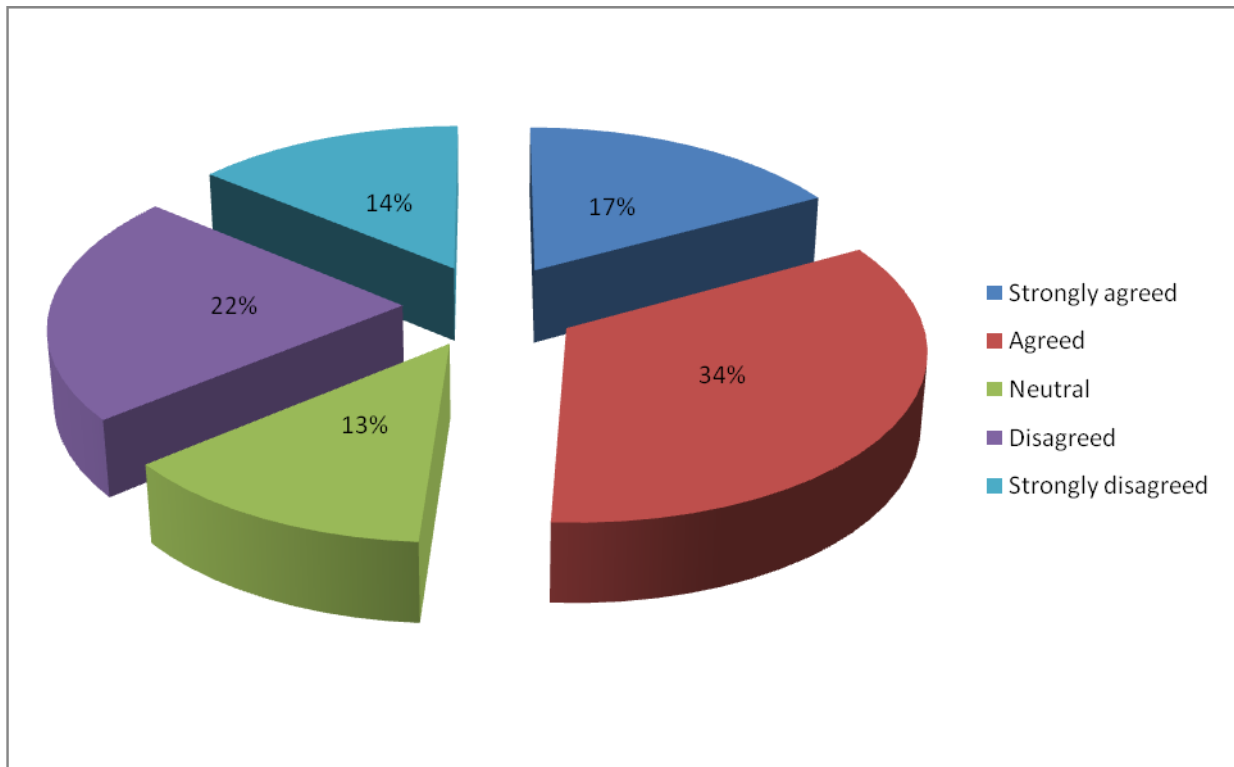
The above figure indicates that 67 of the respondents (56% of the total sample) agreed that the single parents' lack of time with their children has an impact on their academic performance. Not all agreed, however, as 37 respondents (constituting 31% of the total sample) disagreed, while 16 respondents (13%) decided to be neutral. The majority of the respondents, therefore, agreed that the single parents' failure to have quality time with their children has a negative impact on their academic performance. This is in line with Chadsey and McVittie (2015:1) who observed that the lack of time for single parents to spend with their children has an impact on their academic performance.

**Figure 5.10: Alternatives to corporal punishment are ineffective (N=120)**



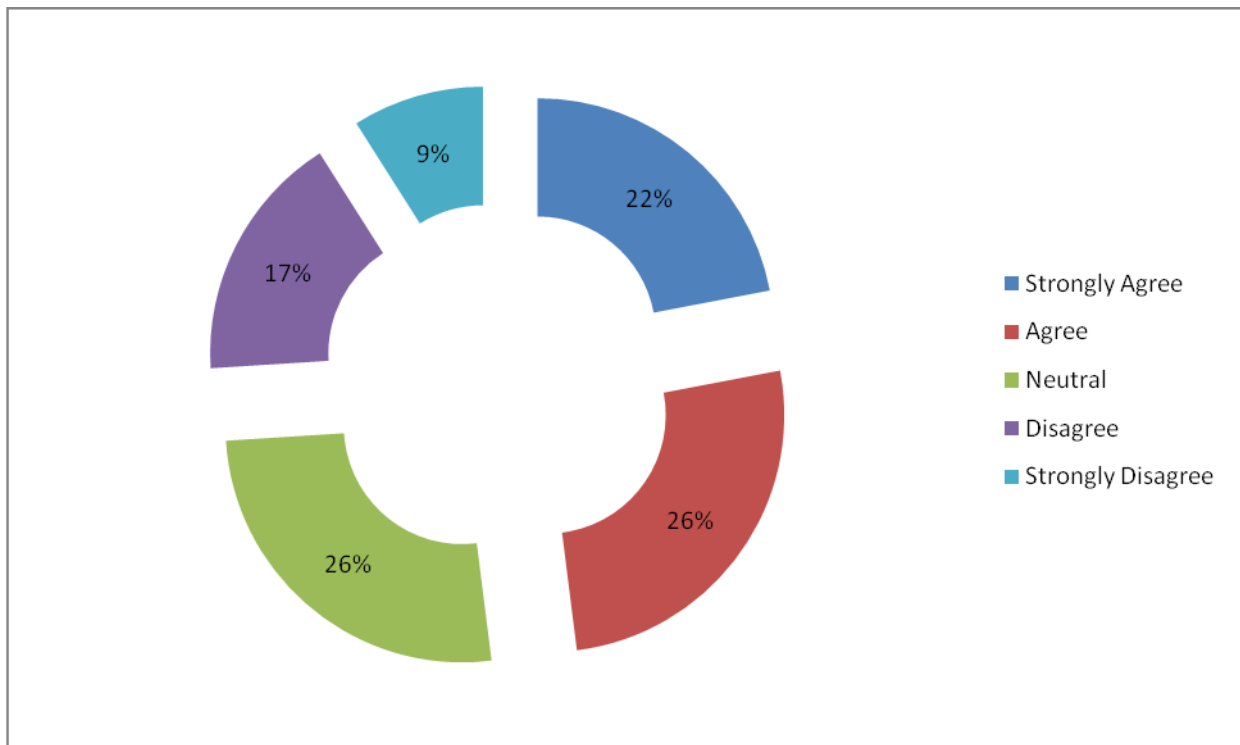
**Figure 5.10** shows that 20 of the sampled respondents (17%) were neutral. This may be that these respondents did not notice this question, or were uncomfortable to answer it. It may also be that they were unsure if the alternatives to corporal punishment are effective or not. **Figure 5.10** also indicates that 62 respondents (52%) concurred with the statement, while over 31% disagreed with it. It is more likely that the alternatives to corporal punishment are not effective at all. The implication is that new alternatives to corporal punishment are necessary to replace the ineffective ones. Ezekiel (2016:1-2) agreed, stating that alternative methods to corporal punishment are not effective at all, and hence the need for new ones.

**Figure 5.11: Both parents and teachers need to teach learners good morals (N=120)**



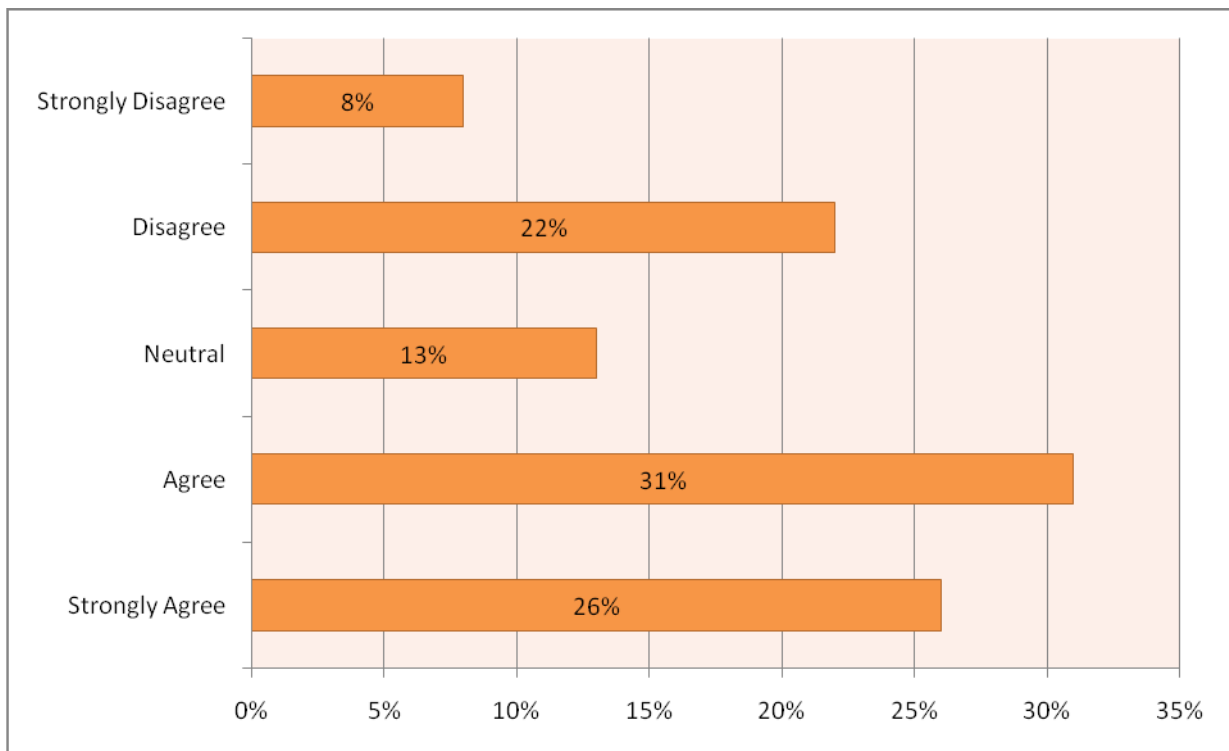
In **Figure 5.11**, 62 respondents (51%) agreed that both the parents and teachers should teach learners good morals. However, 42 respondents (making 36% of the total sample) disagreed with the statement. On the other hand, 16% of the respondents decided to be neutral. This could have been the result of little knowledge and misinformation regarding the question. The results imply that parents and teachers should teach learners appropriate behaviour. Mabitla (2006:18) also revealed that parents and teachers should properly teach learners if they are to improve on their behaviour, and hence exhibit good morals at school.

**Figure 5.12: Teachers need to be role models to learners (N=120)**



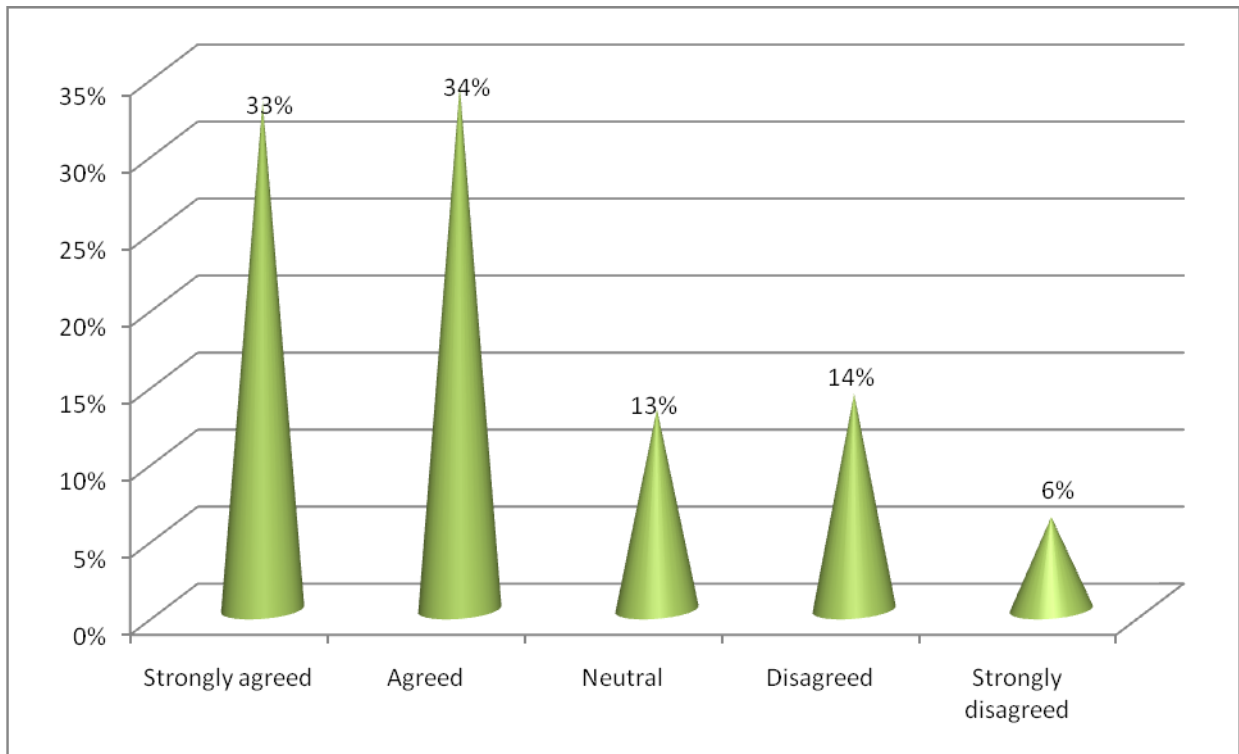
As revealed in **Figure 5.12** above, 31 respondents (who constitute 26% of the total sample), did not answer the question and remained neutral. Probably, they did not see this question, or were not comfortable in answering it. Another possibility is that they were not sure if teachers have to be role models to learners. **Figure 5.12** also indicates that 58 of the respondents (48%) agreed with the statement, while 26% disagreed with it. The majority of the respondents agreed with the statement in the final analysis. It is imperative to note that the majority of the sample were conversant with this statement. Given that 48% of the respondents are in agreement with this statement, one would conclude that teachers should exhibit proper morals in society if they are to good role models to learners. This dovetails with Mazmanian and Sabatier's (2016:538) position that teachers should model the socially acceptable behaviour they expect from learners as well.

**Figure 5.13: Teachers are disempowered to deal with learner absenteeism and direct blame to parents (N=120)**



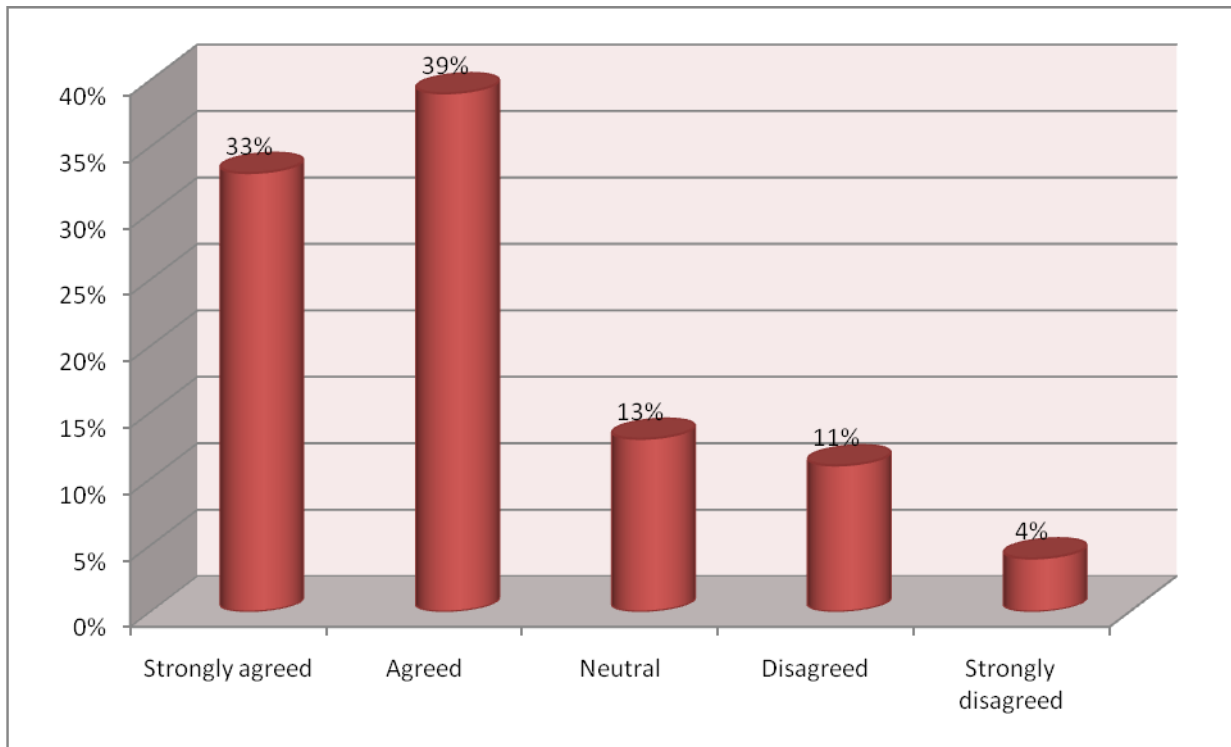
**Figure 5.13** depicts that 16 respondents (13% of the total sample) did not respond, and hence neutral. It is either that they may not have seen the question or were skeptical whether and did not comfortable in answering it. About 68 respondents (57%) of the total sample agreed, while 13% disagreed. This suggests that 30% of the respondents are not aware that teachers feel disempowered to deal with the learners' absenteeism, and hence they blame parents for that. Since 57% of the respondents agreed, the implication is that teachers should not see the problem of absenteeism as a parental issue. They should look at from a wider perspective, that is, in terms of social, economic, religious and physical contexts. This would enable them to holistically seek for the collective corrective remedial measures.

**Figure 5.14: If corporal punishment is administered positively, it can make learners more responsible (N=120)**



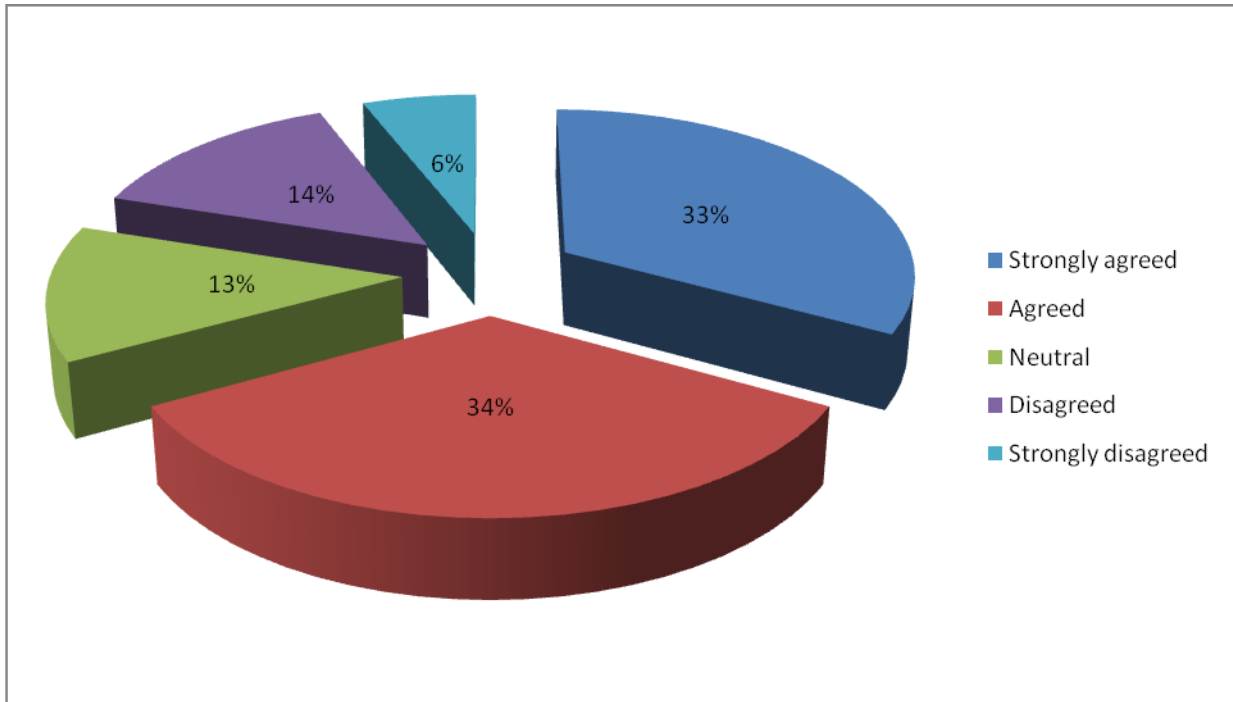
According to **Figure 5.14**, 80 respondents (67%) agreed that if corporal punishment is positively administered, it could enforce rules and encourage learners to be more responsible at school. About 16 respondents (13%) remained neutral, and this could be due to little information about the issue. On the other hand, 24 respondents (constituting 20% of the sample) strongly disagreed that if corporal punishment is administered positively it can make learners more responsible at school. Since 67% of the respondents agreed, the implication could be that if corporal punishment is properly administered, learners could be more responsible with their school work.

**Figure 5.15: There is a need for parents to motivate their children to be positive at all times (N=120)**



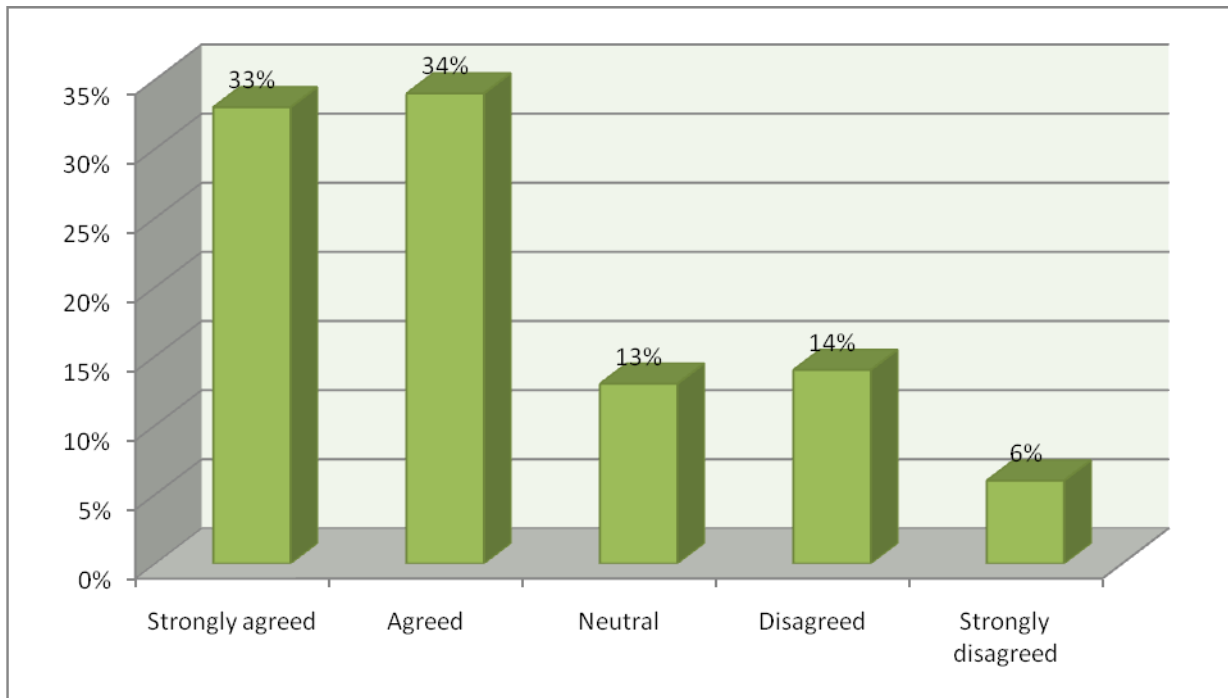
According to **Figure 5.15**, 86 respondents (72% of the sample) strongly agreed that parents should be stimulated to motivate their children to be always constructive, and 16 respondents (13%) were neutral. This notion is not well supported by other respondents as 18 of them (15%), disagreed. This clearly demonstrates the lack of knowledge in this respect in as far as the population sample is concerned. As 72% of the respondents agreed with this statement, this implies that people should be knowledgeable about issues that affect their children both at home and at school. Mugabe and Maposa (2013:111) supported this finding by revealing that parents should be encouraged to help their children to remain positive at all times.

**Figure 5.16: The learners' disrespect of teachers is a serious disciplinary problem (N=120)**



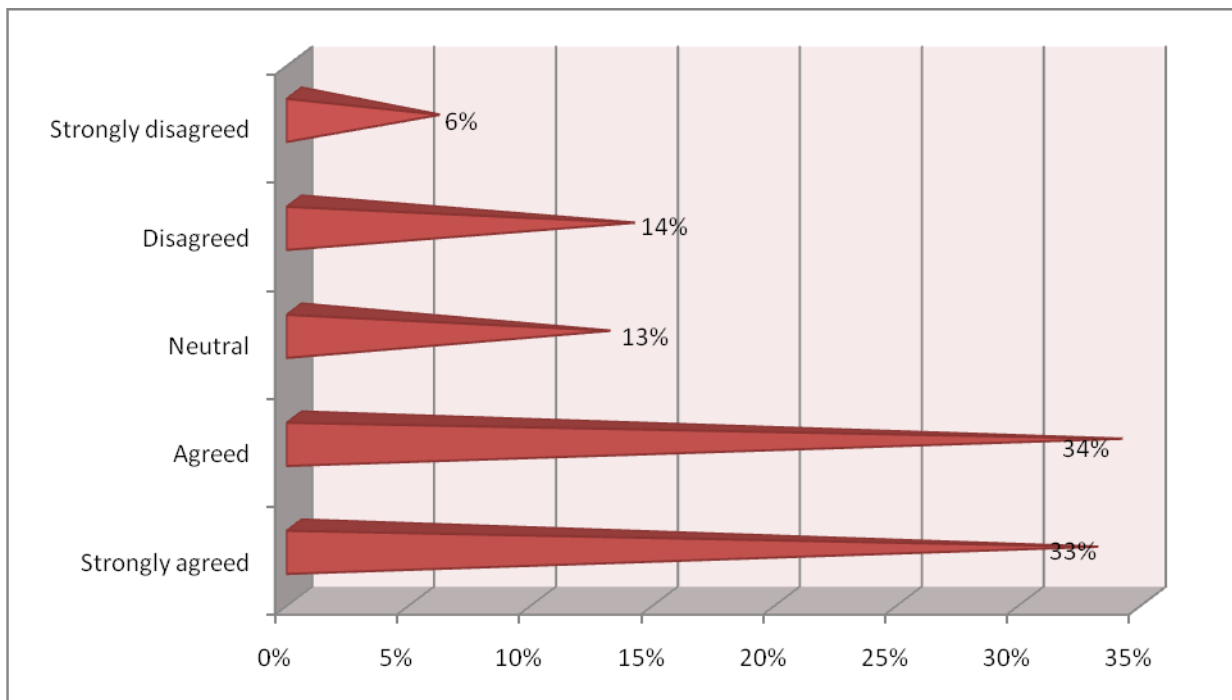
**Figure 5.16** indicates that 80 respondents (67% of the total sample) agreed that one of the disciplinary problems at school is the learners' disrespect of teachers, while 16 of them (13%) remained neutral. Their neutrality was probably due to the lack of understanding of the question. Roughly 24 respondents (20%) disagreed with the statement. About 67% of the respondents (the majority) agreed with the statement. The results are speak to Mouton's (2015) position that one of the disciplinary problems at school is that learners disrespect teachers.

**Figure 5.17: The absence of corporal punishment influences learners to abuse their rights (N=120)**



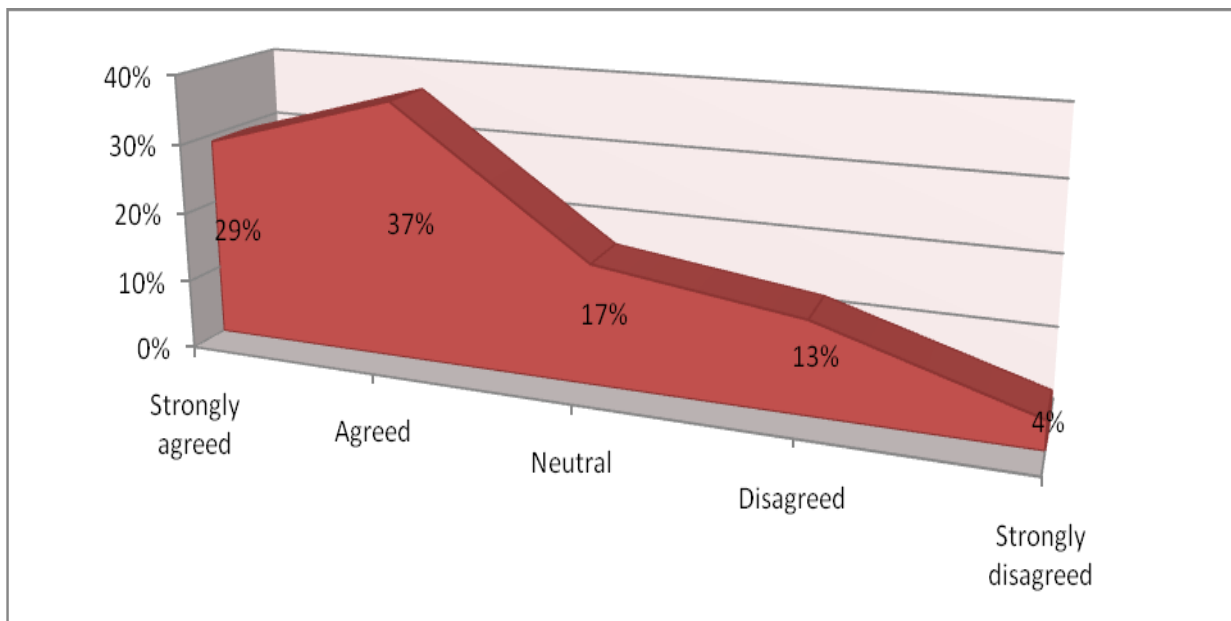
**Figure 5.17** above shows that 24 respondents who constituted 20% of the entire sample disagreed that learners were currently abusing their rights as they are aware that corporal punishment was abolished. **Figure 5.17** also indicates that 80 respondents (67%) agreed that learners abuse their rights due to the absence of corporal punishment. However, 16 respondents (13%) were neutral as they did not answer the question. Thus, 67% of the respondents agreed, implying that learners abuse their rights because they know that corporal punishment was abolished. Russo (2015:54) is also in agreement as he stated that learners opt to abuse their rights as they know that nothing would be done to them in the absence of corporal punishment.

**Figure 5.18: Teachers communicate with parents regarding their children’s disciplinary problems at school (N=120)**



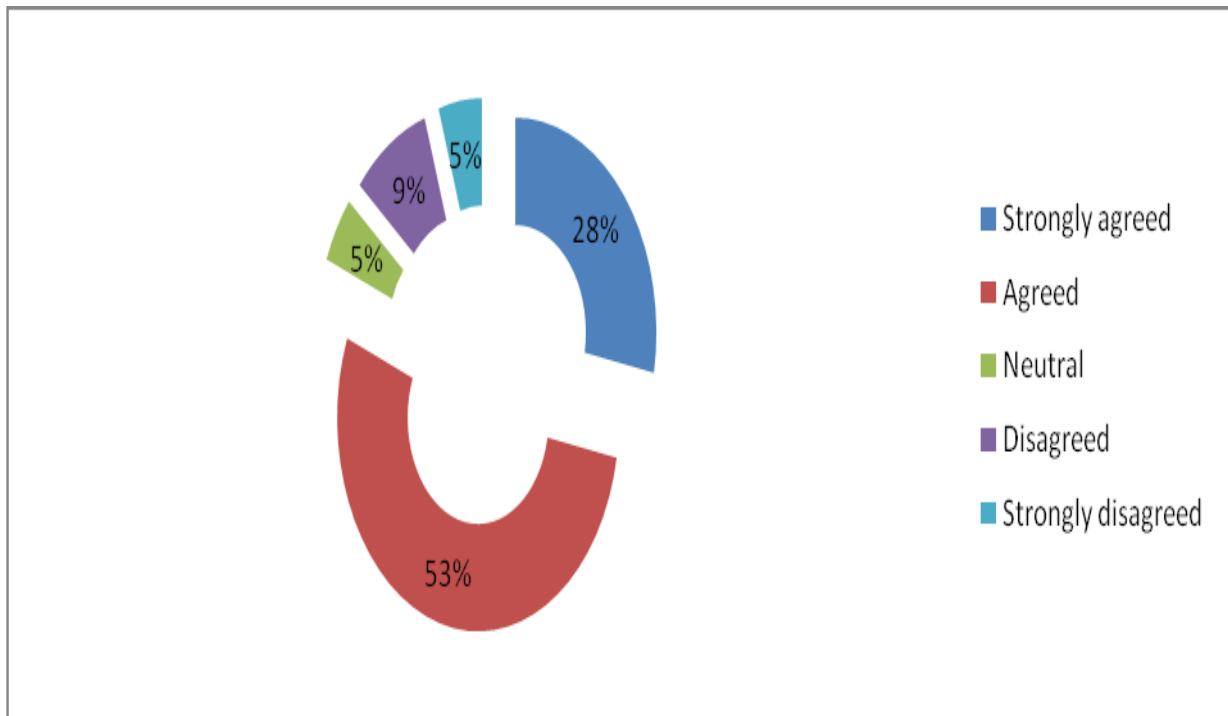
In **Figure 5.18**, 80 respondents (who constituted 67% of the sample) agreed that teachers communicate with parents regarding their children’s disciplinary issues. About 16 respondents (13%) were neutral due to misconceptions. There were 24 respondents (20%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. This means that 67% were the majority who agreed with this statement. This was also supported by Van der Westhuizen and Maree (2009:37) who revealed that teachers liaise with the parents about the progress of their children at school in matters regarding disciplinary problems.

**Figure 5.19: There is a need for teacher training programmes that include modules related to learner behaviour problems and management of discipline (N=120)**



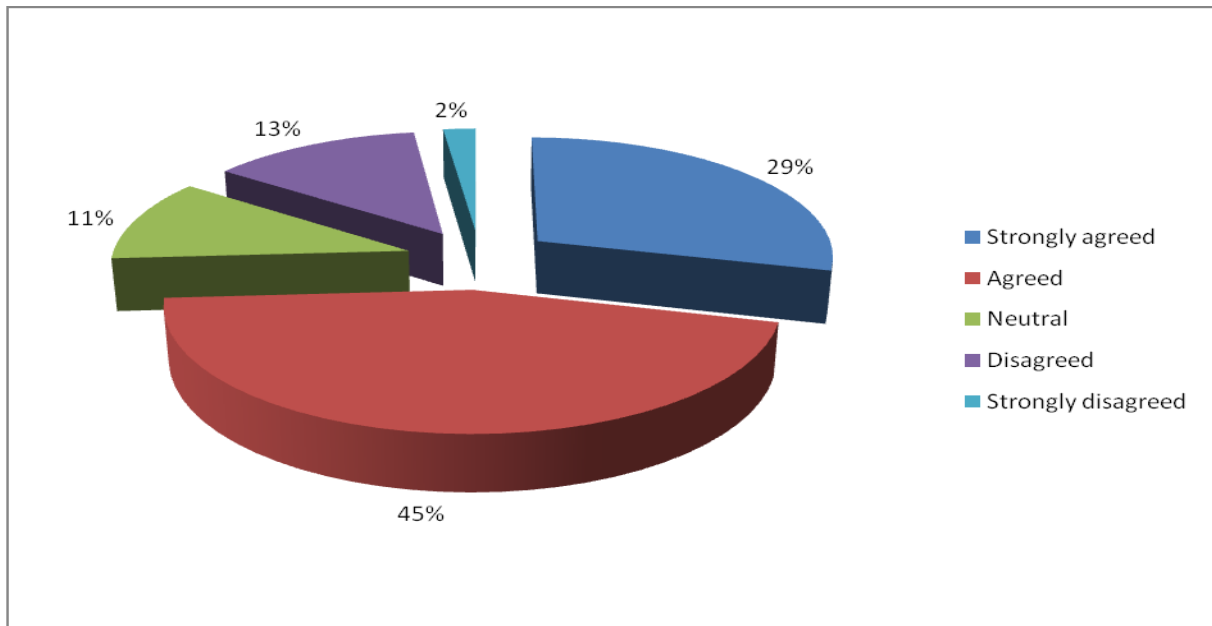
In **Figure 5.19** above, 79 respondents (66%) of the entire sample agreed that programmes for training teachers should accommodate issues that affect learners at school and how to manage them. This was not supported by 20 respondents (17%) who disagreed with the said statement. The neutrals were 20 (17%). Weeks (2013:332) also revealed that the teacher training programmes should include modules that contain learner behaviour problems and discipline management.

**Figure 5.20: The desired behaviour should be the one the teacher should focus on instead of avoiding it (N=120)**



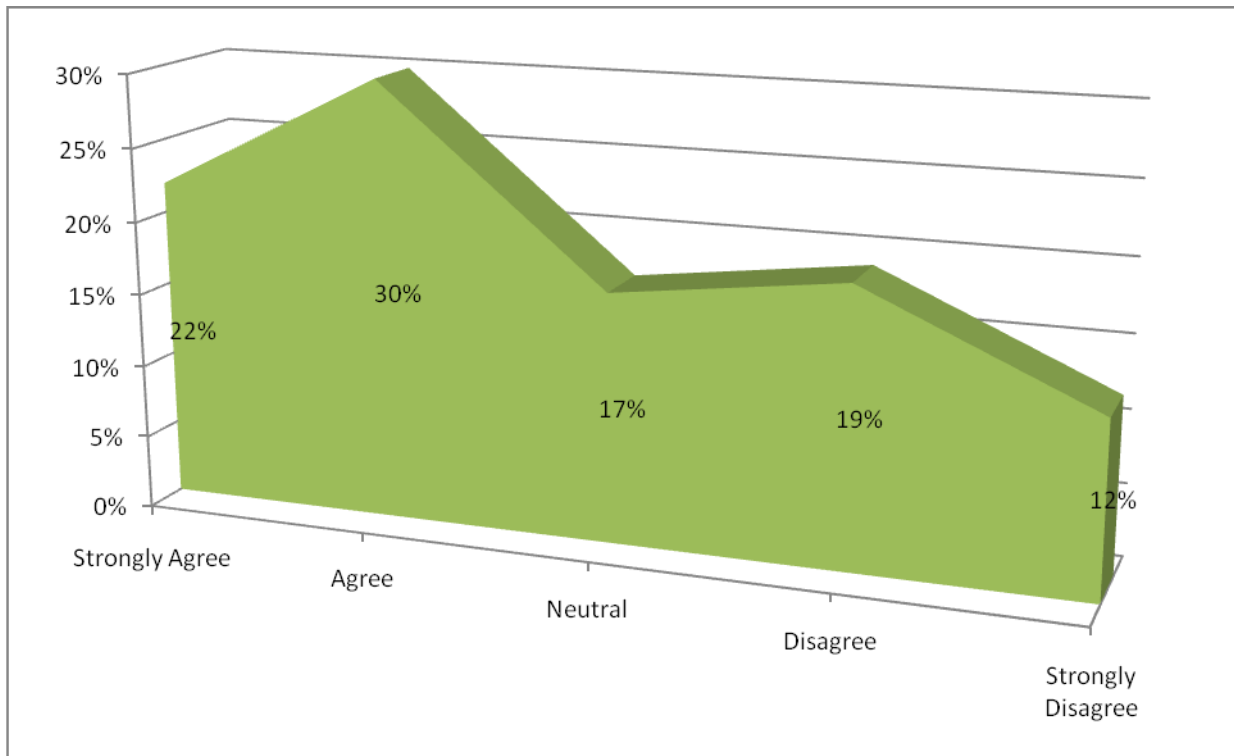
In **Figure 5.20**, 97 respondents who constitute 81% of the whole sample agreed that parents and teachers should focus on the desired behaviour rather than avoid it, while 6 respondents (5%) were neutral. Only 17 of the respondents (14% of the sample) disagreed. Thus 81% of the respondents agreed with Rohman (2013:80) that parents and teachers should also focus on the desired behaviour instead of playing the blame game while children future is at stake.

**Figure 5.21: Administering Corporal punishment yields negative behaviour towards children (N=20)**



**Figure 5.21** reveals that 89 respondents (74% of the sample), agreed that administering corporal punishment yields negative behaviour, and 13 respondents (11%) remained neutral. About 18 respondents (15% of the sample) disagreed. This means that those who agreed are in the majority. This also fits in well with Smith's (2013:59) claims that corporal punishment teaches children nothing positive, nothing about the way adults want them to behave.

**Figure 5.22: Not all parents are conversant with the roles they should play at school (N=120)**

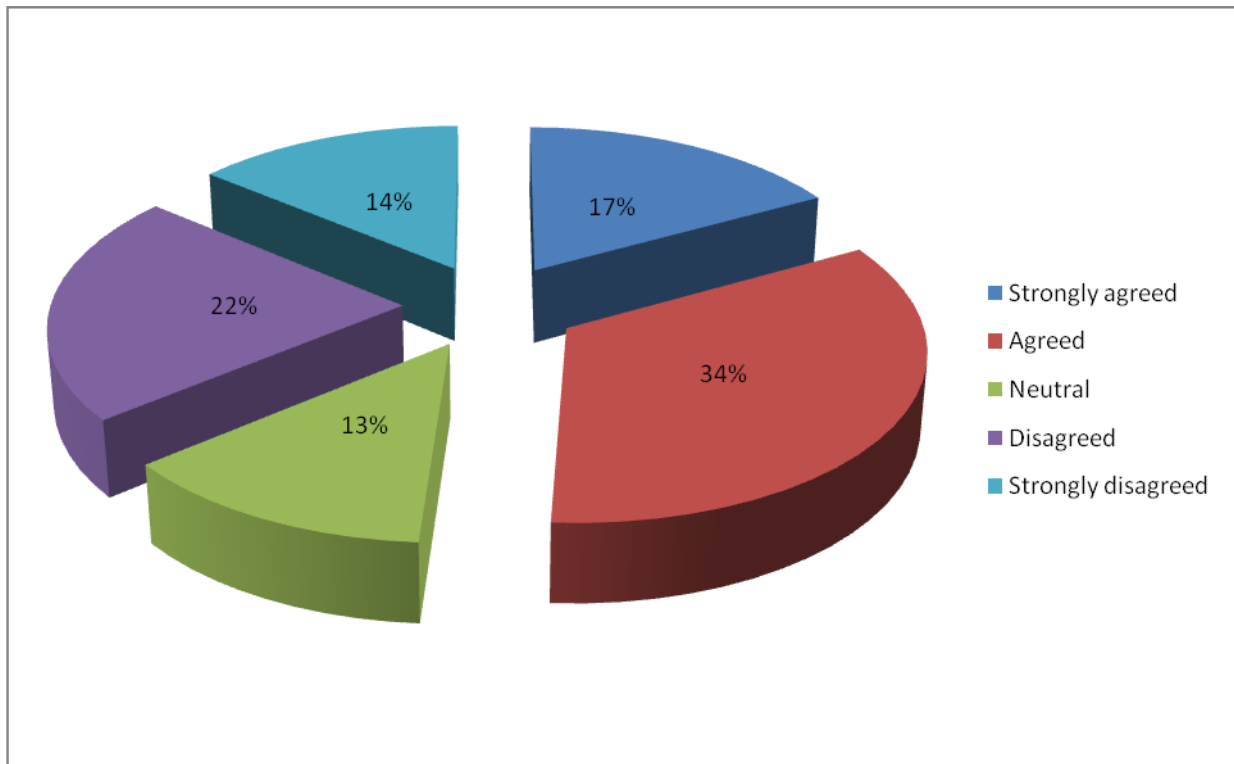


Based on **Figure 5.22**, 20 respondents who constitute 17% of the study sample remained neutral. This could have been necessitated by the fact that parents were not conversant with the roles they should play at school. **Figure 5.22** further reveals that 62 respondents (constituting 52%) agreed, and 31% disagreed. It is fascinating to discover that such a large number of the sample is aware of this issue. The implication is that parents are not conversant with the roles they should play at school.

## 5.4 LEARNER INDISCIPLINE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL

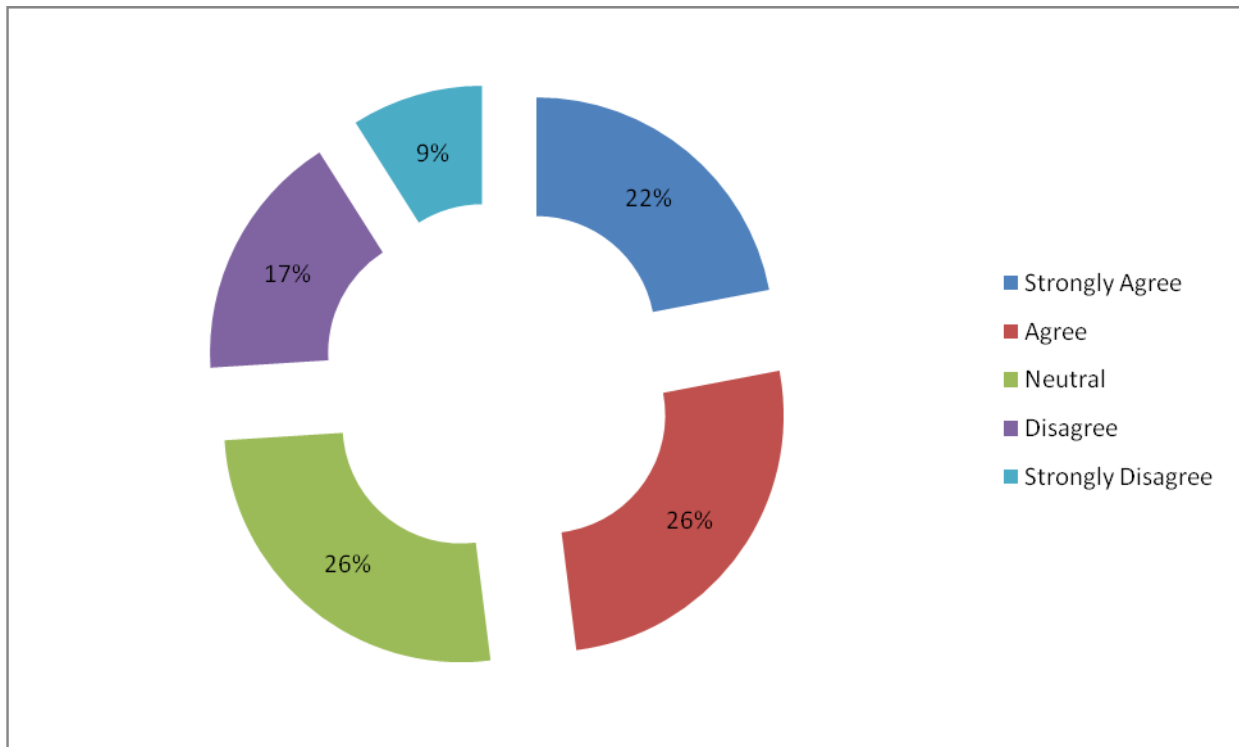
The figures below present the results on the learner indiscipline against the academic performance in selected public secondary schools in the Vhembe District.

**Figure 5.23: The relationship between poor academic performance and violent behaviour at school (N=120)**



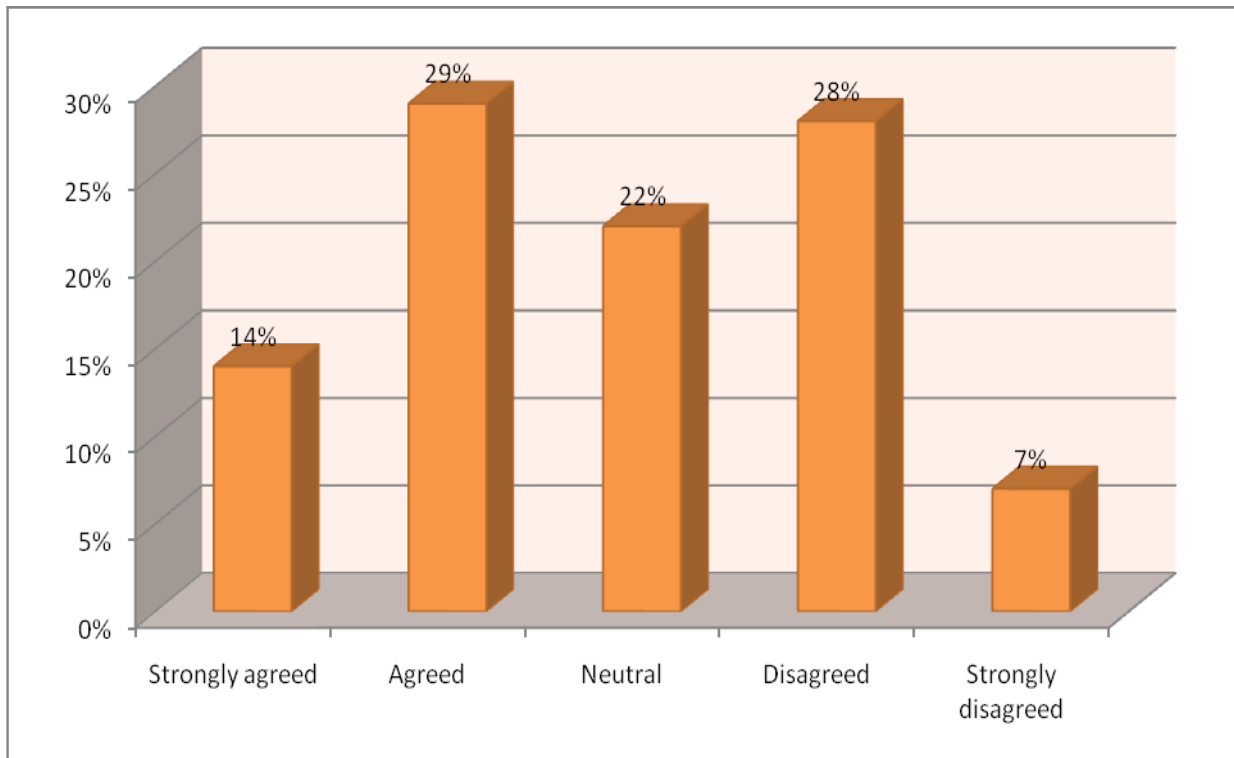
According to the above figure, 62 respondents (51% of the sample) agreed that there is a relationship between the poor academic performance and the violent learner behaviour at school. However, 43 respondents (36%) disagreed, while 16% were neutral. This could have been necessitated by the lack of knowledge and misconceptions about the whole issue. The results are supported by Netshitaname and Van Vollenhoven (2013:313) who revealed that violent behaviours in schools have the consequence of poor academic performance by learners.

**Figure 5.24: The impact of poor class attendance on poor academic performance (N=120)**



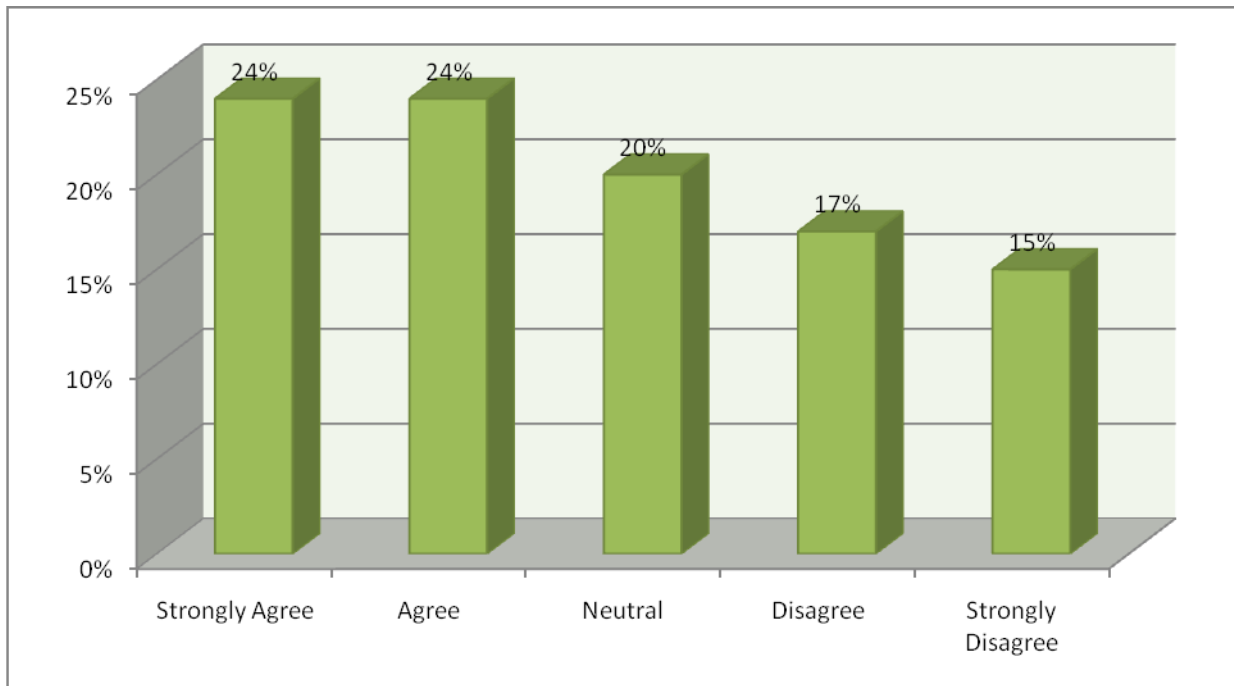
The results in **Figure 5.24** indicate that 31 respondents (26% of the sample) were neutral. The respondents may either have not noticed this question or were not free to answer it, or unsure of it. **Figure 5.24** also shows that 58 respondents (48%) agreed, and just over 26% disagreed. The implication here is that the poor class attendance always results in the learners' poor academic performance.

**Figure 5.25: The learners' respect of teachers is dependent on effective discipline (N=120)**



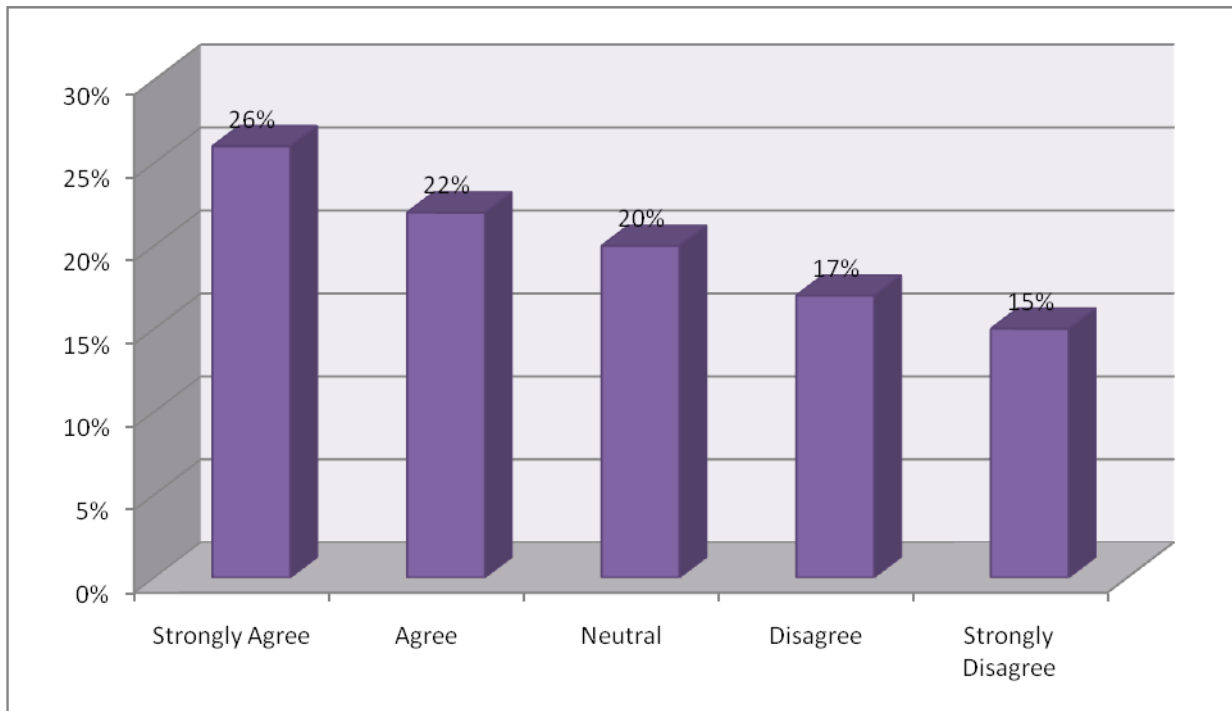
**Figure 5.25** shows that 52 respondents (43% of the sample) agreed with this statement. But, 42 of them (35%) disagreed, while 26 respondents (22%) remained neutral probably due to the lack of information. Mabitla (2006:18) also concurred by stating that the effective discipline in school is essential for learners if they are to respect teachers.

**Figure 5.26: Learner self-discipline and uninterrupted teaching improve academic performance (N=120)**



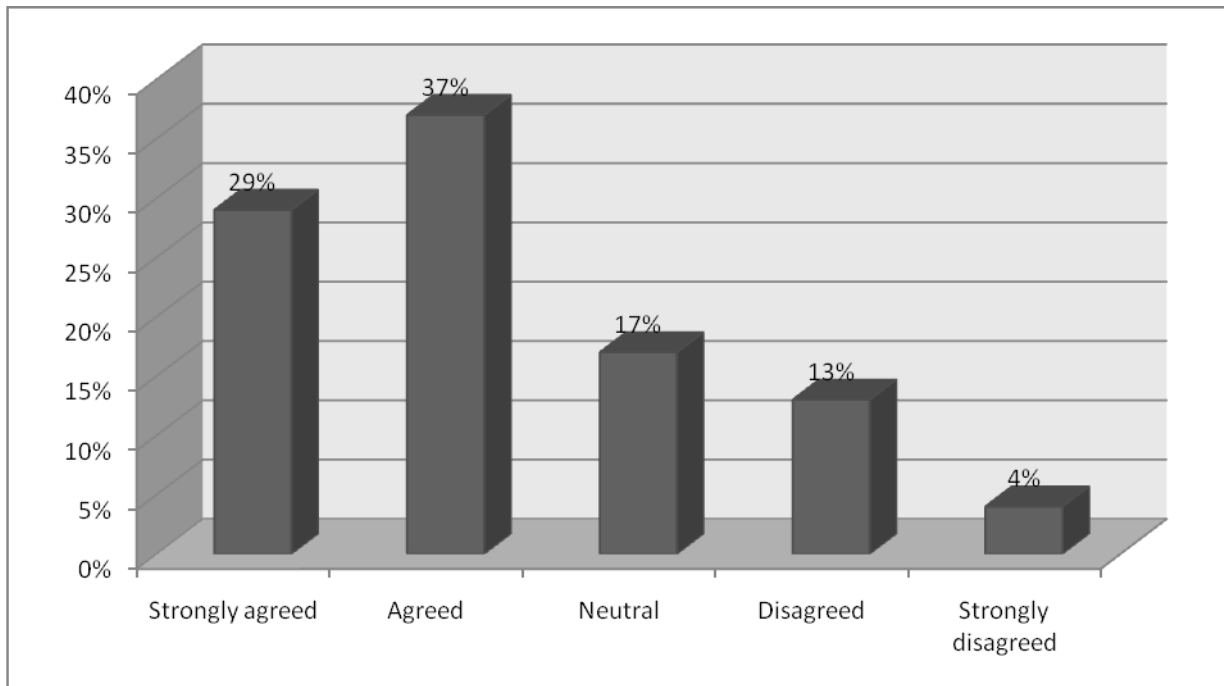
Information in **Figure 5.26** reveals that 24 of the respondents who constitute 20% were neutral. This was necessitated by the lack of knowledge on their part. About 48% of the respondents agreed, and 32% percent disagreed. It is presumed that 32% of the respondents were very sceptical of the idea that the learner self-discipline and uninterrupted teaching improve academic performance.

**Figure 5.27: Regular school attendance improves learner academic performance (N=120)**



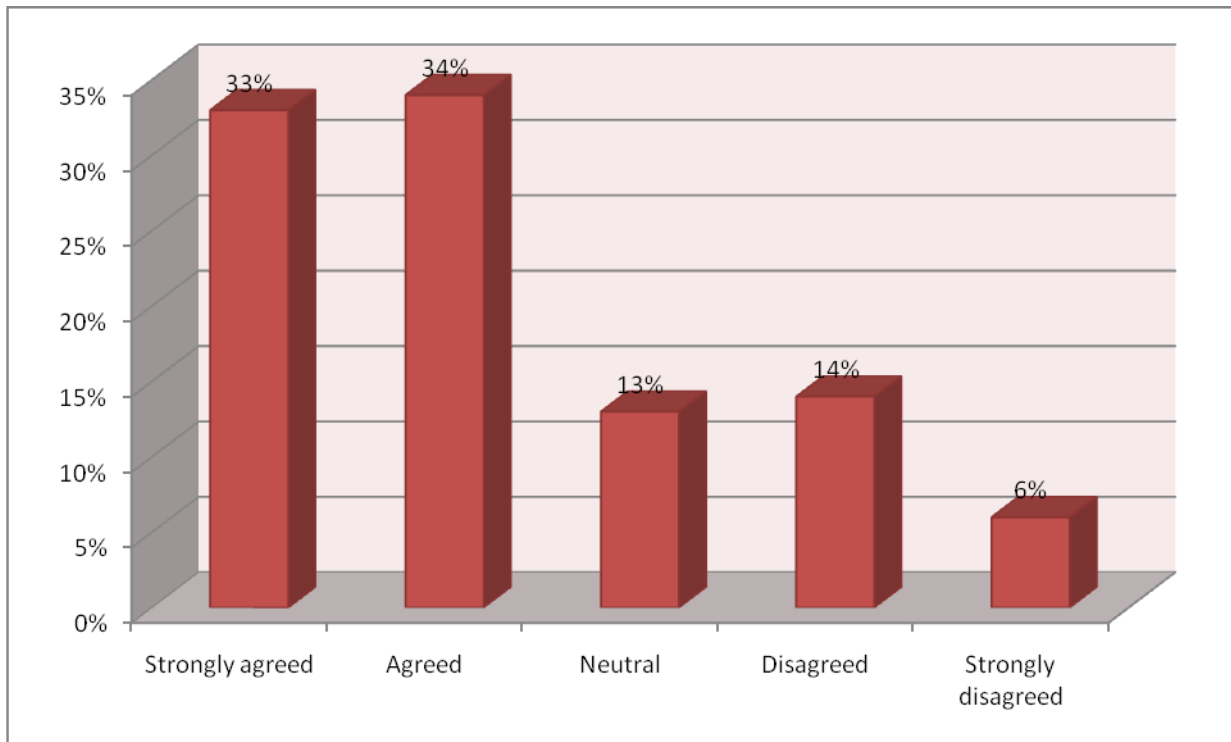
If learners are self-disciplined, the academic performance is likely to improve due to uninterrupted teaching and learning. **Figure 5.27** above shows that 58 respondents (48%) agreed that the learners' academic achievement would improve as they would be at school regularly. However, 24 respondents (20%) were neutral. This could be probably due to their lack of understanding of the question. About 38 respondents (32% of the sample) disagreed that the academic performance improves if learners regularly attend school. The above statistics reveal that the majority of the respondents agreed that with this statement. Gilman and Anderman (2014:375) pointed out that the learners' academic performance improves because they attended school regularly.

**Figure 5.28: The learners' internalised self-discipline is dependent on the school's effective discipline (N=120)**



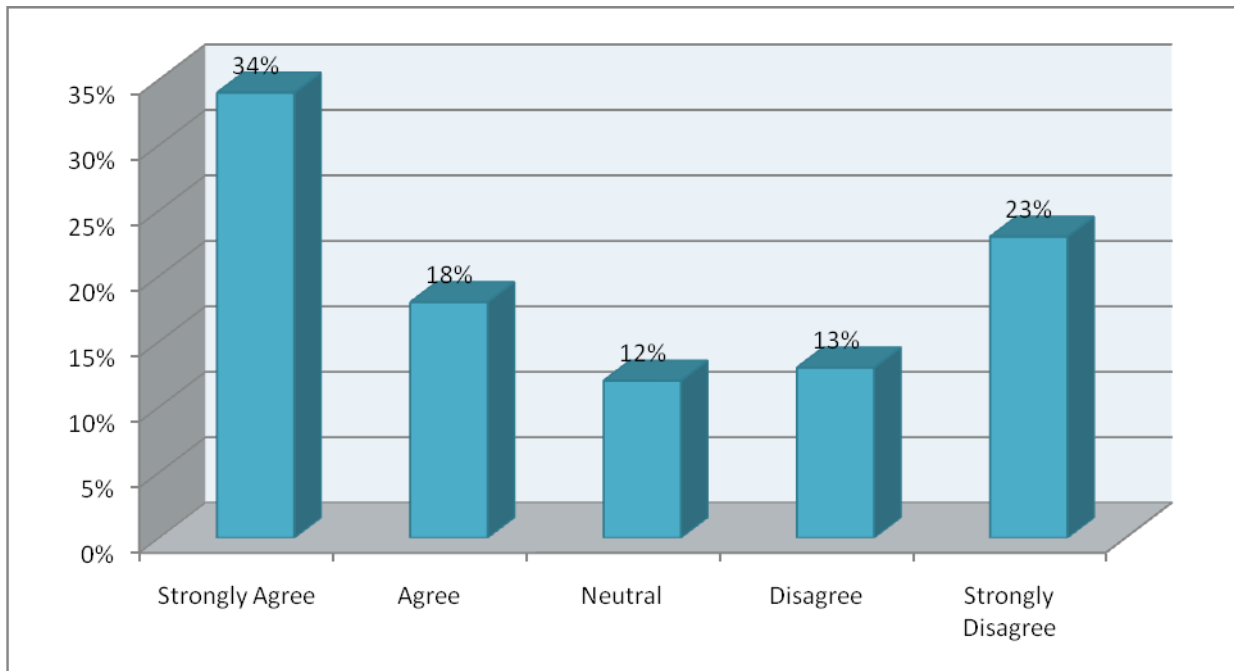
**Figure 5.28** shows that 79 respondents who constitute 66% of the sample agreed that if discipline is effective at school, the learners would internalise self-discipline. On the other hand, 20 respondents (17%) disagreed. Also, other 20 respondents (17%) were neutral. As 66% of the respondents agreed, the implication here is that if discipline is effective at school, it helps learners internalise self-discipline. This also got favour from Edwards and Watts (2009) who said school discipline help produce self-disciplined learners.

**Figure 5.29: Lack of control of certain learners by teachers leads to poor performance (N=120)**



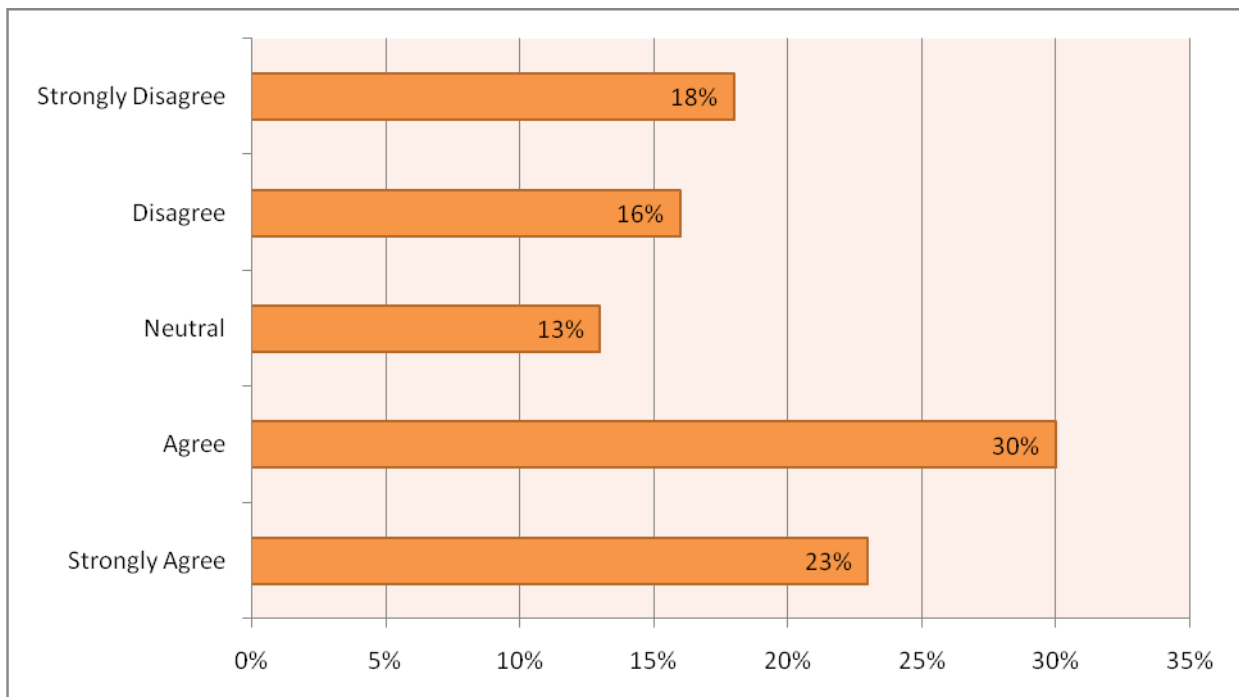
**Figure 5.29** reveals that 80 respondents (67% of the sample) agreed that the lack of control of certain learners by teachers results in poor academic performance, while 16 respondents (13%) remained neutral as they did not respond. On the other hand, 24 respondents who constituted 20% of the entire sample disagreed that the lack of control of certain learners by teachers leads to poor academic performance. The 67% who agreed with this statement are in the majority. The results are in tandem with Edwards and Watts' (2009) view that teachers do not have any control over certain learners, and this result in poor academic performance.

**5.30: Prior to the abolition of corporal punishment, learners obeyed the school rules and that improved academic performance (N=120)**



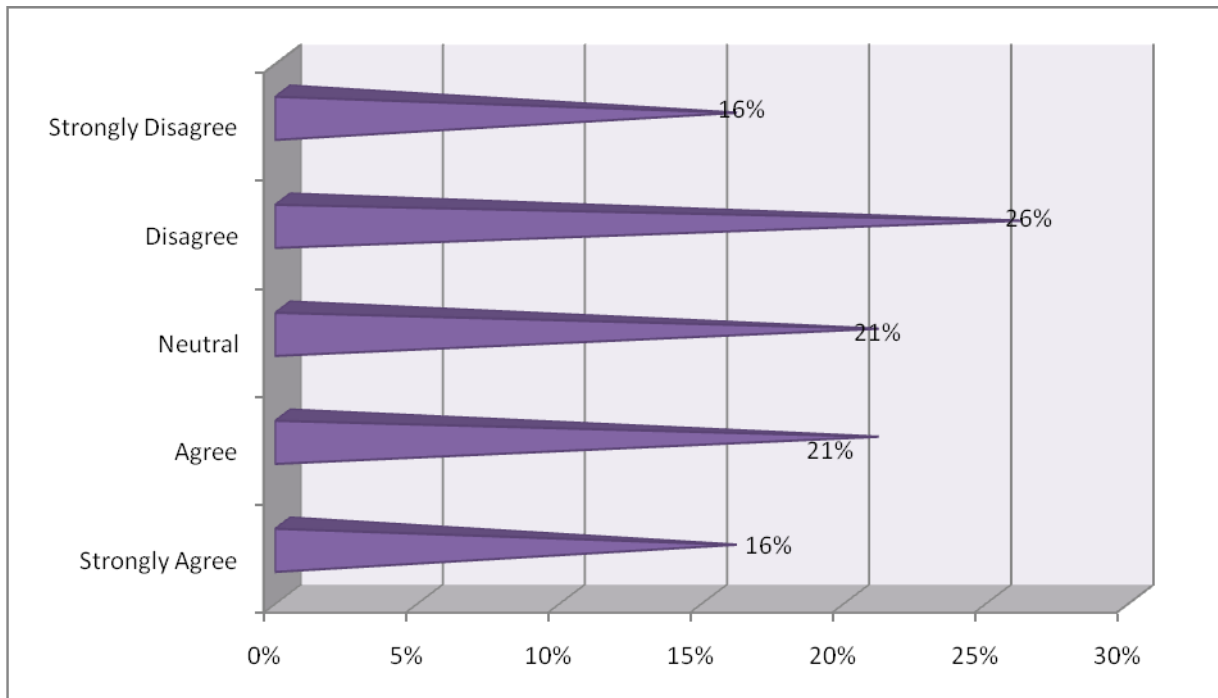
**Figure 5.30** reveals that 62 of the respondents (52% of the sample) agreed that before corporal punishment was outlawed, learners obeyed the school rules, and this impacted positively on their academic performance. But, 14 respondents (12%) were neutral and this could be due to their lack of understanding of the question. About 43 respondents (36%) disagreed with this statement. The majority of the respondents supported this idea, and Cohen (2011) is also in support as he revealed that before corporal punishment was removed, learners followed the school rules, and that a positive impact on their academic performance.

**Figure 5.31: Alternatives discipline measures are beneficial rather than detrimental to learner development compared to corporal punishment (N=120)**



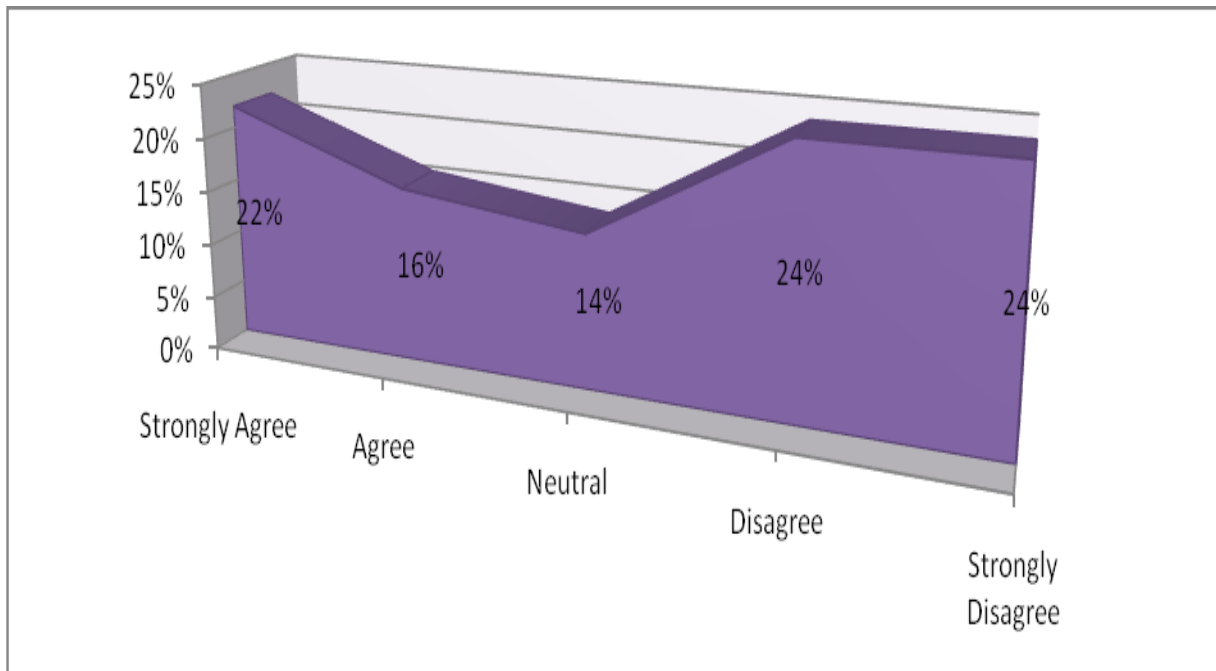
According to **Figure 5.31**, 64 respondents (53%) agreed that the alternative disciplinary measures are beneficial rather than detrimental to learner development compared to corporal punishment. The 16 respondents were neutral, while 41 respondents (34%) disagreed. The majority of the respondents (53%) agreed that alternatives disciplinary measures are beneficial rather than detrimental to the learners' development when compared to corporal punishment. Canter and Canter (2011:6) pointed out that alternative methods of discipline are more beneficial and less detrimental to a child's development than corporal punishment.

**Figure 5.32: Praise, compassionate and respect to learners minimise disciplinary problems (N=120)**



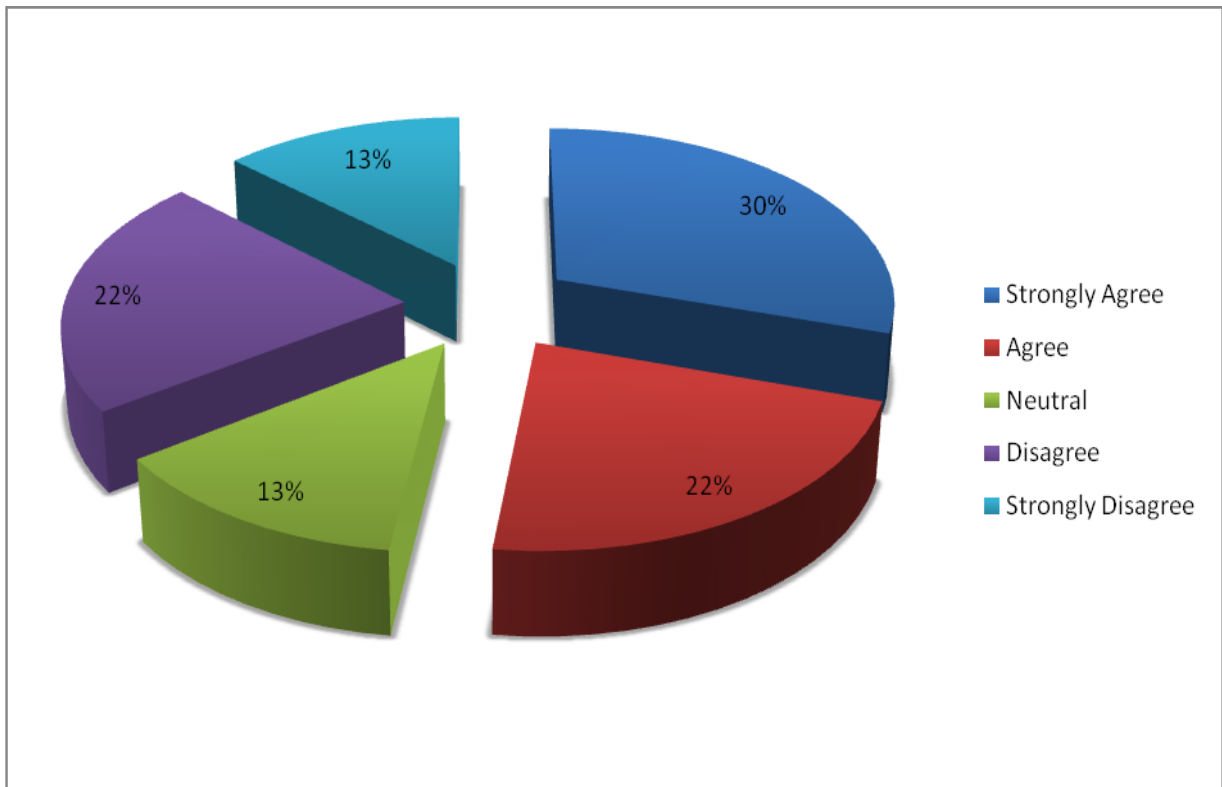
**Figure 5.32** reveals that 94 respondents who make up 37% of the sample agreed that praising the child's good behaviour, compassionate and respecting them significantly reduce disciplinary problems. Roughly 25 respondents were neutral, probably due to lack of information; while 50 respondents (42%) disagreed that praising, compassionate and showing respect to learners significantly reduce disciplinary problems. The majority of respondents (42%), thus disagreed that praising the child's good behaviour, being compassionate and showing respect significantly reduce disciplinary problems. Chadsey and McVittie (2015:1) concluded that professionally praising the child's good behaviour, being compassionate and showing respect significantly reduce disciplinary problems at school.

**Figure 5.33: Learners should be familiar with the kind of behaviour that is acceptable or unacceptable to their parents (N=120)**



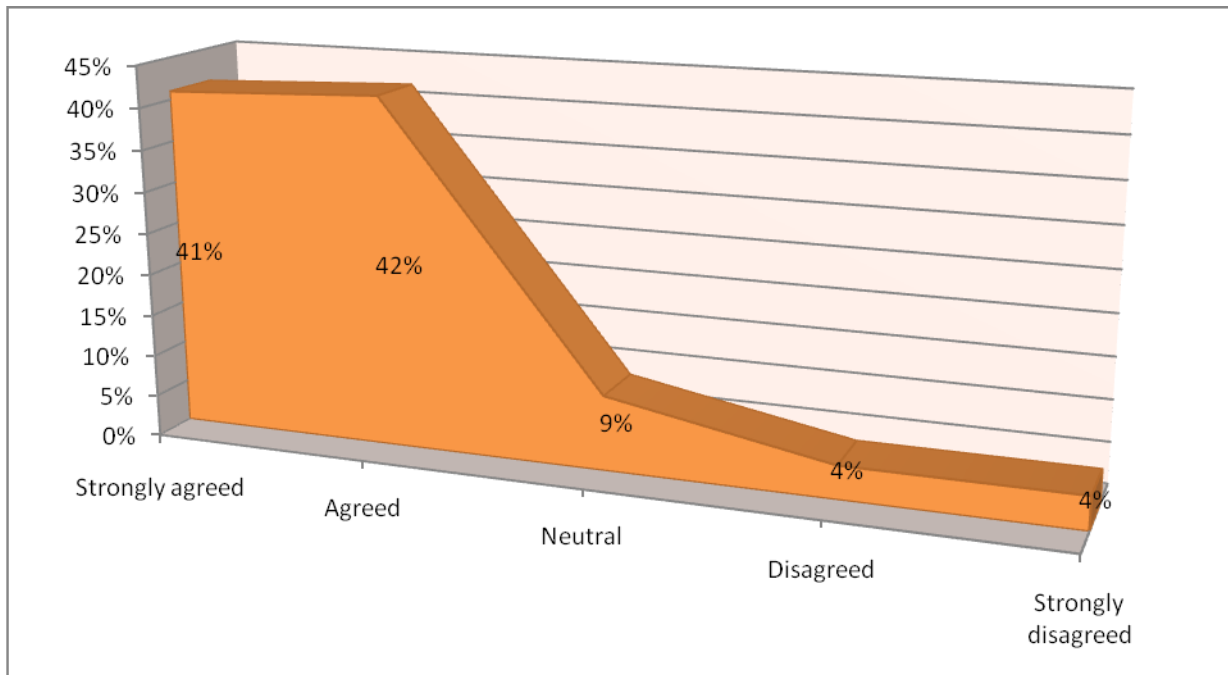
**Figure 5.33** indicates that 46 of the respondents (38% of the sample), agreed that learners should be made familiar with the kind of behaviour that is acceptable or unacceptable to their parents. About 17 of them (14%) were neutral, while 57 respondents (48%) disagreed. The majority of the respondents disagreed with this statement. This implies that staff development activities should focus on teaching and learning at school.

**Figure 5.34: Rules should be consistently set by teachers, parents and others (N=120)**



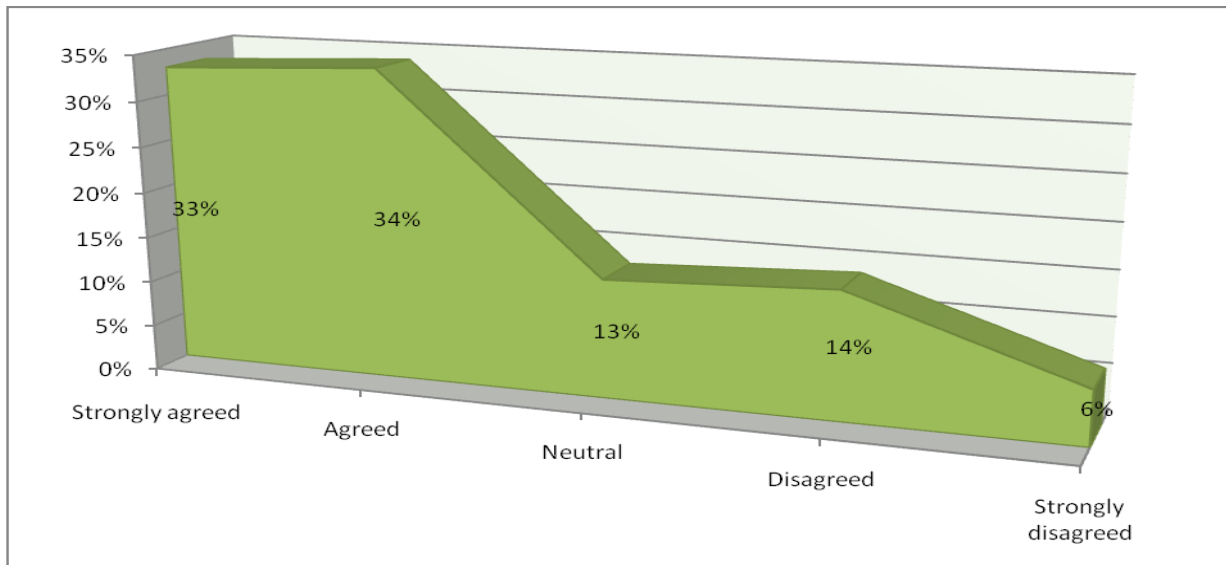
According to **Figure 5.34** above, the respondents totalling 16 (about 13%) were neutral. This could have been necessitated by their lack of knowledge on the matter. However, 62 respondents (52%) agreed, and 36% disagreed here. This suggests that 36% of the respondents are not aware that there are some gaps that need to be addressed with regard to the parents, teachers and other care givers setting clear and consistent rules at school. Russo (2015:33) asserted that parents, teachers and other care givers should set clear and consistent rules for school children.

**Figure 5.35: The amount of support received at home determines the learner academic performance (N=120)**



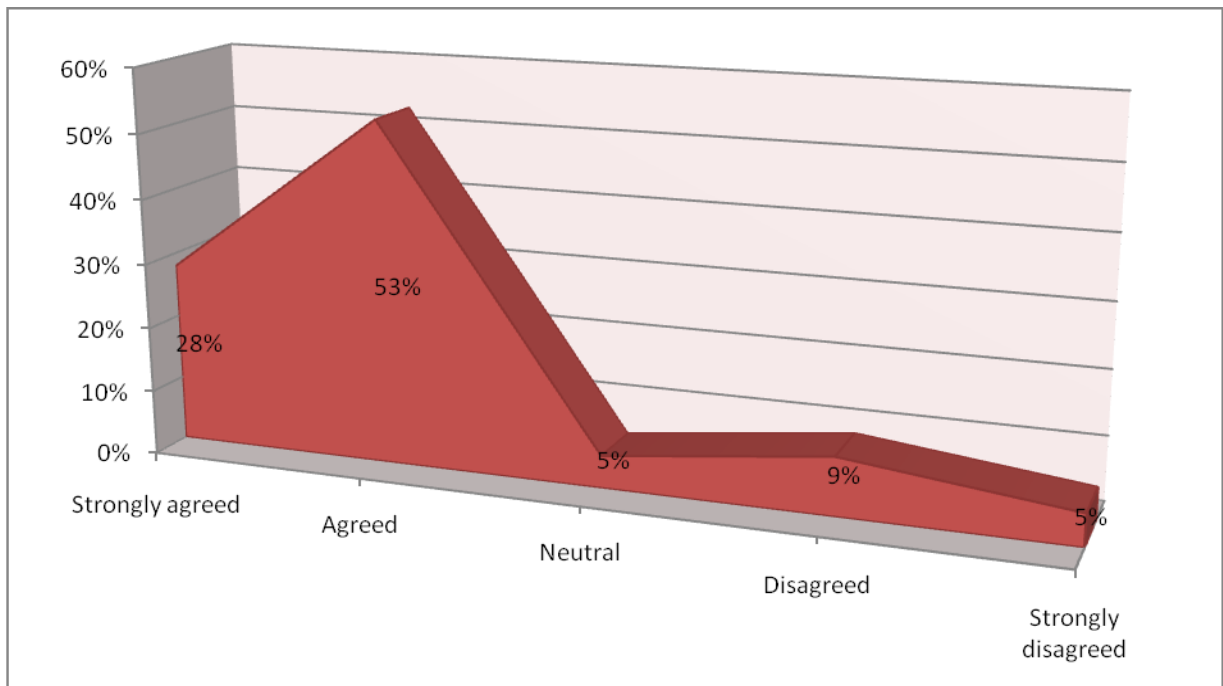
According to Figure 5.35, 100 respondents who constitute 83% of the sample agreed that the amount of support received at home determines the learners' academic performance. But, 11 respondents (9%) did not respond to the question. In addition, 9 respondents (8%) disagreed. Mugabe and Maposa (2013:111) indicated that the learners' academic performance is dependent on the amount of support children receive at home.

**Figure 5.36: Poor academic performance and ill-discipline is also determined by minimal support teachers get from parents (N=120)**



**Figure 5.36** reveals that 80 respondents (67% of the sample) agreed that poor academic performance and ill-discipline are also determined by the minimal support teachers receive from parents. Only 16 respondents (13%) did not answer the question, probably due to misconceptions or confusion. Furthermore, 24 respondents (20%) disagreed. Porteus, Vally and Ruth (2011:9) pointed out that teachers receive minimal support from parents and this contributes to the lack of learner discipline and poor academic performance in rural-based schools.

**Figure 5.37: The learners' academic performance is dependent on regular school attendance and parents monitoring assignments (N=120)**



From **Figure 5.37**, one notes that 75 respondents (73% of the sample) agreed that the academic performance is dependent on regular school attendance and parents monitoring their children's assignments, while 5% remained neutral. This was not supported by all the respondents as 24 of them (20%) disagreed with it. Porteus *et al.* (2011:9) pointed out that the impact of parents ensuring that learners complete assignments and attend school regularly is essential for academic success.

## 5.5 THE COMMON TYPES OF ALTERNATIVE DISCIPLINARY METHODS USED BY THE TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

In the tables below, data were discussed and interpreted. The data are about the common types of alternative disciplinary methods used by teachers in the Vhembe District's public schools.

**Table 5.1:** Disciplinary Committee dealing with learner misconducts to (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	30	25
Agree	38	32
Neutral	17	14
Disagree	21	18
Strongly disagree	14	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.1** shows that 38 respondents (57%) strongly agreed that schools have disciplinary committees to deal with learner misconduct as outlined in the SASA. The notion is not supported by all though as 35 respondents (29%) strongly disagreed that schools have disciplinary committees that deal with learner misconduct. Also, 17 respondents (14%) remained neutral. The implication here is that schools have disciplinary committees that deal with learner misconduct.

**Table 5.2:** Remedial actions are not defined as alternatives to corporal punishment (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly agree</b>	47	39
<b>Agree</b>	53	44
<b>Neutral</b>	10	9
<b>Disagree</b>	5	4
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

As pointed out previously, schools have disciplinary committees that deal with learner misconduct as outlined in the SASA. In support of this idea, **Table 5.2** reveals that 100 of the respondents (83% of the sample) strongly agreed that remedial actions are not defined as alternatives to corporal punishment. Nevertheless, it is not all agreed as 10 respondents (9%) strongly disagreed. On the other hand, other 10 respondents (9%) were neutral, demonstrating the clear misconceptions by a certain group of the respondents. As 83% of the respondents agreed, this could imply that remedial actions are not defined in alternatives to corporal punishment.

**Table 5.3:** Some alternatives to corporal punishment are effective while others are ineffective (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly agree</b>	42	35
<b>Agree</b>	46	38
<b>Neutral</b>	15	13
<b>Disagree</b>	12	10
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.3** indicates that 15 respondents (13% of the sample) did not answer the question. The respondents may not have deliberately ignored this question, but were uncomfortable in answering it. About 88 respondents (73%) strongly agreed. In contrast, 17 respondents who constitute 14% of the sample disagreed. This suggests that 15 respondents who constitute 13% of the sample are not aware that some alternatives to corporal punishment are effective while others are not. This result agrees with Ahmad (2011) observation that certain forms of alternative disciplinary measures are effective while others are just bad. Since 73% of the respondents agreed, the implication is that some alternatives to corporal punishment are effective while others are not.

**Table 5.4:** There are effective and ineffective disciplinary measures (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	33	28
Agree	52	43
Neutral	12	10
Disagree	18	15
Strongly disagree	5	4
Total	120	100

According to **Table 5.4**, 85 respondents who constitute 71% of the sample agreed that there are some disciplinary measures which are effective, and those that are not. But, not everyone felt that way as 23 respondents (19%) strongly disagreed, while 12 of them (10%) were neutral. This could have been caused by misconceptions. As 71% of the respondents agreed with this statement, the implication is that teachers are not consistent when disciplining learners. As noted by Arum and Passage (2012), some disciplinary measures are not effective, while some are perfect.

**Table 5.5:** Teachers are not well conversant with alternatives to corporal punishment (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	27	23
Agree	53	44
Neutral	17	14
Disagree	18	15
Strongly disagree	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to **Table 5.5**, 80 respondents (67%) strongly agreed that teachers are not well conversant with the alternatives to corporal punishment. It is worth noting that this is not supported by all as 23 respondents (19%) strongly disagreed. Also, 17 respondents (14%) remained neutral. The implication here is that teachers are not conversant with alternatives to corporal punishment that are provided to them.

**Table 5.6:** During enrolment, patents/ guardians need to sign a form with the school rules (N=120)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	44	37
<b>Agree</b>	50	42
<b>Neutral</b>	9	7
<b>Disagree</b>	11	9
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In **Table 5.6**, 94 respondents (79% of the sample) agreed that during enrolment, parents/guardians need to sign a form with the school rules. About 9 respondents (8%) were neutral, while 17 of them (13%) disagreed with the statement. The implication, in this case, is that during enrolment patents/guardians should sign forms that have school rules.

**Table 5.7:** Every classroom must display rules for discipline's sake (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	29	24
Agree	68	57
Neutral	6	5
Disagree	15	13
Strongly disagree	2	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.7** shows that 97 respondents (81.1% of the sample) strongly agreed that every classroom must display rules for discipline control. The idea though did not get favour from 18 respondents (15%) who strongly disagreed with it, while 6 respondents (5.1%) remained neutral. This is supported by Burmaster (2011) who asserted that the fact that every classroom must display rules for discipline means that discipline in schools is getting out of hand.

**Table 5.8:** Alternatives to corporal punishment must be known by learners (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	29
Agree	59	50
Neutral	8	6
Disagree	12	10
Strongly disagree	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.8** reveals that 94 respondents who constitute 79% of the sample strongly agreed that alternatives to corporal punishment must be known by learners. This did not go down well with 18 respondents (15%) strongly disagreed that alternatives to corporal punishment must be known by learners. About 8 respondents (6%) were neutral. This could be probably influenced by their lack of knowledge on the matter.

**Table 5.9:** Schools have a code of conduct for alternatives to corporal punishment (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	34	28
<b>Agree</b>	16	13
<b>Neutral</b>	19	16
<b>Disagree</b>	26	22
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	25	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to **Table 5.9**, 19 respondents constituting 16% of the sample did not answer the question due to uncertainty as they completed the questionnaire. But, 41% indicated that they strongly agreed, while 43% disagreed. This suggests that the majority of the respondents are unaware that schools have a code of conduct for alternatives to corporal punishment. Castejon, Perez and Gilar (2016:50) revealed that schools must have a code of conduct for alternatives to corporal punishment.

**Table 5.10:** Manual work such as picking papers and cleaning classrooms as alternatives to corporal punishment (N=120).

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	28	23
<b>Agree</b>	36	30
<b>Neutral</b>	24	20
<b>Disagree</b>	19	16
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	13	11
Total	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5.10** indicates that 24 respondents (20% of the sample) did not respond to this question. It is either that they did not recognise it or they were uncomfortable with it. Nearly 53% percent of the sample agreed with the statement, and over 27% disagreed with it. This suggests that 24 respondents are not aware whether learners prefer manual work as alternatives to corporal punishment or not. Given the educational demographic of this sample, this response is quite worrying. Castejon *et al.* (2016:50) added that learners enjoy manual work such as picking up papers and cleaning classrooms, to them, it does not seem like punishment. The majority of the respondents (53%), are aware that learners prefer and enjoy manual work as alternatives to corporal punishment.

**Table 5.11:** Learners categorically reject to be expelled from class when they disrupt lessons (N=120).

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	40	33
Agreed	41	34
Neutral	15	13
Disagreed	17	14
Strongly disagreed	7	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

**According to Table 5.11**, 80 respondents who constitute 67% of the sample agreed that they categorically reject to be expelled from class when they disrupt lessons, while 16 respondents (13%) were neutral. Furthermore, 24 respondents who constitute 20% of the entire sample strongly disagreed. About 67% of the respondents agreed with this statement. Reyneke (2015:57) noted that learners refuse to be removed from class when they disrupt lessons.

**Table 5.12:** Teaching learners self-discipline is too demanding (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	17
Agree	22	18
Neutral	26	22
Disagree	32	26
Strongly Disagree	20	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5.12** reveals that 42 respondents constituting 35% of the sample agreed that teaching learners self-discipline is too demanding. However, 52 respondents (42%) strongly disagreed. 26 respondents constituting (22%) remained neutral. As 42% of the respondents disagreed, the implication is that teaching learners self-discipline is too demanding.

**Table 5.13:** Application of alternatives to corporal punishment need effective training of teachers, parents and others (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly agree</b>	27	23
<b>Agree</b>	46	38
<b>Neutral</b>	18	15
<b>Disagree</b>	20	16
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	9	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to **Table 5.13**, 73 of the respondents (61% of the sample) strongly agreed that teachers, parents and other care givers need to be trained to enable them to effectively apply alternatives to corporal punishment, while 18 respondents (15%) were neutral. This notion, however, was not supported by all as 29 respondents (24%) strongly disagreed with it. This is a clear indication of the lack of knowledge by a certain group of the respondents. Generally, the majority of the respondents (60.8%) strongly agreed with this statement. In view of the foregoing, the implication is that teachers, parents and other care givers need to be trained to enable them to effectively apply alternatives to corporal punishment.

**Table 5.14:** Learner involvement in setting the rules is important (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	44	37
Agree	56	48
Neutral	9	7
Disagree	8	6
Strongly disagree	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.14** reflects that 100 respondents (85% of the sample) agreed that involving learners in setting the rules is important as it makes them know the rights and wrongs in class. They would know the sanctions or punishment that go with breaking those rules. **Table 5.14** also reveals that 9 respondents (7%) remained neutral regarding this statement, probably due to lack of information. In addition, 11 respondents disagreed with the statement. In view of the above, it seems as if the majority of the respondents want rules to be designed with the children for effective discipline.

**Table 5.15:** Teachers and parents should demonstrate interests in learners' activities (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly agree</b>	33	28
<b>Agree</b>	44	37
<b>Neutral</b>	14	11
<b>Disagree</b>	21	17
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	8	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to **Table 5.15**, 77 respondents (65%) agreed that teachers and parents should demonstrate their interests in the learners' activities. The table further shows that 14 respondents (11%) were neutral in this respect, while 29 of them (24%) disagreed with the statement. This result is also supported by the Department of Education (2014) as it mandated teachers and parents to demonstrate their interests in the learners' activities. This implies that the majority of those in education want teachers and parents to demonstrate their interests in the learners' activities.

**Table 5.16:** Rules pertaining to discipline need to be displayed in each classroom (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	43	35
Agree	39	33
Neutral	15	12
Disagree	17	14
Strongly disagree	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to **Table 5.16**, 82 respondents who constitute 68% of the sample agreed that rules pertaining to discipline should be displayed in each classroom. The table also reveals that 15 respondents (12%) remained neutral with regard to answering the question probably due to misinformation. About 23 respondents (19%) disagreed with the idea that rules pertaining to discipline should be displayed in each classroom. The implication is that most of those in education want to have the rules displayed in all functional classrooms.

**Table 5.17:** Provision of appropriate and engaging extra-curricular activities could be the best alternative method (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	35	29
Agree	35	29
Neutral	3	2
Disagree	15	13
Strongly disagree	32	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to **Table 5.17**, 70 respondents who constitute 58% of the total sample stated that providing appropriate and engaging extra-curricular activities is the best alternative method. **Table 5.17** also reveals that 3 respondents (2%) did not respond to the statement probably because of misconception. In contrast, 47 respondents (39%) disagreed that engaging extra-curricular activities could be the best alternative method to corporal punishment. What the foregoing implies is that the majority of those in education believe that the provision of appropriate and engaging extra-curricular activities could be the best alternative method in this respect.

**Table 5.18:** There should be emphasis towards the guidance and counselling of learners (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	32	26
Agree	61	51
Neutral	6	5
Disagree	15	13
Strongly disagree	6	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 5.18** reveals that 93 respondents (77% of the sample) agreed that there should be emphasis towards the guidance and counselling of learners. The table also shows that 6 respondents (5%) were neutral with regard to this statement, while 21 of them (18%) disagreed that there should be emphasis on the guidance and counselling of learners. This suggests that the large number of those in education want guidance and counselling to be emphasised at school. This is supported by Ezekiel (2016:2) who maintained that guidance and counselling should be emphasised at school.

**Table 5.19:** There should be a need for parents, teachers and other care givers to give clear directions, one at a time for the children to follow (N=120)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Strongly agree</b>	27	23
<b>Agree</b>	58	48
<b>Neutral</b>	12	10
<b>Disagree</b>	14	11
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	9	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to **Table 5.19**, 85 respondents who constitute 70% of the sample agreed that the parents, teachers and other care givers should give clear direction, one at a time to children to follow. The table also shows that 12 respondents (10%) of the sample remained uncertain regarding the statement. This is in contrast with 23 respondents (19%) who disagreed with this statement. This implies that most of those in education want parents, teachers and other care givers to give clear directions, one at a time for the children to follow.

## **5.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS**

This data collection procedure started with the researcher introducing herself and providing a thorough explanation of the purpose of the meeting and the ethical principles followed, such as voluntary participation. The researcher then requested the participants' consent to participate in the study and for interviews to be recorded or written, where she promised the participants confidentiality and anonymity. A face-to-face semi-structured interview was held with each of the ten selected respondents. Interview data were collected from principals, HoDs and the members of SMTs.

### **Question 1: To what extent does discipline influence effective academic performance of learners at your school?**

Participant-1 said,

The academic performance of a school rests on its general discipline. There is no teacher who can produce better result if that school is not disciplined. The discipline in our school can therefore be rated between 70 and 80%, and hence the outcome of teaching is at a higher level compared with other schools in our circuit.

Participant-1 also revealed that,

Ever since corporal punishment was abolished, our learners have not been doing their school work. The school introduced morning and afternoon studies in an attempt to improve its academic performance, but only a few of them attend these studies. Most of our learners do not care about education. Some of them are over aged, so they simply come to school to spend their time and to disturb teaching and learning and then go home. Most of our learners come from families where most members dropped out of school and are jobless, and hence they resort to crime to earn their living. This has extended to our school where most of our learners have been convicted of crime.

Participant 2 indicated that,

We managed to enforce discipline in our school by solving problems as they develop to avoid having multiple cases that might negatively affect our school. This is confirmed by the outcomes of our teaching and learning that are good.

In response to the same question, Participant 3 pointed out that,

Since the emphasis on age that learners at schools should be eighteen years or younger, we have started to see the trend in discipline beginning to change for the better. We no longer find situations that are too hard to handle.

Participant 4 responded thus,

Our learners are disciplined in terms of respect and wearing the school uniform. Furthermore, they do not disrupt lessons since we no-longer have over aged learners. But, the discipline that they have does not enhance their academic performance because it is worse.

Participant 5 disclosed that they were faced with discipline challenges in their schools where he mentioned different kinds of behaviours such as learners being disruptive and impeding the effective teaching and learning in their schools.

Participant 6's position regarding this question was to the effect that,

Despite the fact that learners are barred from bringing cell phones to the school premises, their cell phones ring during lessons. Some of the learners even go to the extent of answering and reading messages from their cell phones while we teach, and hence their academic performance is not as good as it should be.

Participant 7 said that these learners do not write class activities and assignments, yet they have to write a lot of work where they practice what they have learnt in their classes in order to prepare themselves for tests and examinations.

Participant 8's response revealed that,

Most learners used to bunk their assignments and copy other learners' work and presented it to the teachers as theirs, yet well aware that they copied from friends. They well know that they would not be punished due to the absence of disciplinary policies in their schools.

Participant 7 and 8 also responded to the effect that their school used to admit learners who had been expelled from other schools due to lack of discipline. This was for the sake of improving the enrolment of their school. As a result, they were faced with formidable disciplinary problems.

They added that,

Most of these learners present other learners' reports as their own when applying for admission to the school, and at the end of June or July they change their fake names to their rightful ones. This contributes to the poor academic performance at the schools. The Department of Basic Education declared our schools dysfunctional due to the Grade 12 pass rate which has been persistently less than 40% for the past three years.

Participant 9 said that,

Always when it is my period to go to class, I always stress and think about a strategy that could be effective in making the learners sit down and remain quiet so that I could teach effectively because we spend about ten minutes trying to make them listen in order to start teaching.

Participant 10 agreed that,

The behaviour of learners in their school was not acceptable both in and outside the classroom because some used to eat all types of snacks during

lessons. Moreover, they always wait for teachers to tell them to go into their classrooms despite the bell ringing to mark the beginning of lessons.

Participant 10 also revealed that,

Our learners sometimes use vulgar words when speaking to us teachers. Parents have been called to come and intervene in disciplining their children. However, we discovered that some parents are scared of disciplining their own children, and hence disciplining learners in the school is a major challenge. This challenge is worse in Grades 11 and 12 since they are not scared of any disciplinary measures besides corporal punishment, which we are not allowed to use. However, our learners resemble the community where they come from. This area is rough, the rate of crime is very high, and most people excessively use drugs and alcohol.

**Question 2: How far do you deal with situations where learners challenge your authority in the classroom?**

Participant 1 responded thus,

I am assisted by my classroom rules as a subject teacher. I and my learners drafted the classroom rules based on the code of conduct for learners in which we indicated that any learner who makes noise and undermines my authority will leave my class with immediate effect. I expel those who undermine my authority there and then.

Participant 2's response went thus,

We do have learners who disrupt lessons here. We have, for instance, suspended one learner in Grade 12 twice this year by using the code of conduct for learners. This boy was always bullying and arguing with all teachers who went to teach in his class. He was making sure that the argument lasts for the whole period for each teacher. The boy was given two warnings, after the two warnings his parent was invited to a disciplinary hearing, which also approved and signed documents that legitimate the

suspension of his son from school. The boy was initially suspended for a week. The second suspension lasted for two weeks. The boy is a bully. He has gone to the extent of intimidating certain teachers and has proved that he is not afraid of anyone in the school.

Participant 3 indicated that ever since they became very strict and involved parents in disciplining learners, they have seen a trend in the school where learners dislike to having their parents involved in matters concerning their ill-discipline. Thus, they have changed their behaviour for the better.

Participant 4 said that,

Realising that corporal punishment is abolished in schools, we then resorted to some measures that we hoped would be effective so that the learners could fear. Involving parents in some situations helps us a lot to improve the learners' discipline and their academic performance as well.

Participant 5 responded to the question in the following manner;

I involve parents in disciplining learners by inviting them to participate in the disciplinary hearing of their children as the main measure of maintaining discipline in the school. I warn them for minor cases. If they persist, I then refer them to the HOD. If they do not repent, I then refer them to the school disciplinary committee who will invite their parents to a disciplinary hearing. Learners who steal, smoke dagga, and victimise other learners are expelled from this school.

In his response, Participant 6 pointed out that through the use of the school policy, some learners are expelled from their school while others are suspended.

Participant 7 brought to this researcher's attention the fact that,

Prior to referring the learners to the HOD or Principal, I send the learners who disrupt teaching and learning out of my class and then discuss with them a solution to the problem they had caused after the period. If the learners fail to

admit their transgression and humble themselves, I normally do not sign their books until they decide to humble themselves and apologise. I judge each case based on its merit.

In her response, Participant 8 acknowledged that,

Late coming is minimal in my school. Learners who come to school late are given extra work such as picking up papers in the school yard or cleaning a certain part of the school. Such punishment enables the learners to be in class when the lessons begin. In that way, the academic performance of the learners is not affected, and the rate of late coming has dropped drastically.

Participant 9 said in response to this question,

I personally tackle the learners who challenge my authority one on one and try to speak over with him, with the aim of making the learner understand how life operates, the origin of authority and the order in which it operates. I ensure that the learner admits that he has a problem and that his problem affects other learners including me as a teacher. I always involve the learner when dealing with the problem that he caused to ensure that he is able to solve what he caused for himself.

Participant 10's position regarding this question was that,

I tell them that I am in authority here, and hence they are to do what I instruct them to do, academically so. None of them deviate from my instructions. I further tell them that if they do not want to heed my instructions, then they may excuse me. I even tell them that I act in *loco parentis*. They listen to me and do what I instruct them to do. This has improved their academic performance. The learners enjoy doing my subject.

### **Question 3: How do they deal with late comers?**

Participants 1 and 2 agreed that,

The SMTs record the names of late comers on the late comers' register and involve them in the school projects after school. These projects include watering of ornamental trees in the school premises and cleaning part of the school yard. The only disadvantage of these extra-curricular activities on the side of the SMT is that they have to spend extra time after school supervising the learners. This is not a positive trait because it moves them away from their personal commitments. This method has reduced the rate of late coming in the school because learners do not want to remain at school after hours.

Participant 3 specified that,

One day the principal punished late comers by instructing them to clean the school premises, and one learner started crying. When I intervened, the learner said that so and so does not punish them when they come late. To me, this meant that the learners were purposely coming to school late knowing very well that they would not be punished. The learner told me that her problem was that she could not wake up on time in the morning because it was cold. I then reprimanded her for disrespecting our Principal.

Participant 4 indicated that,

We used to punish the late comers in the morning during lessons and this disadvantaged them as they were unable to participate in the morning activities that included tests because they used to refuse serving their punishment after school. This affected their continuous assessment marks (CASS) and made their academic performance worse.

Participant 5 said that their learners used to come late in large numbers. He then decided to be in charge of controlling late comers. A learner who comes late three times a week was sent home to call his/her parents for a disciplinary hearing. This assisted in decreasing the rate of late coming.

Participant 6 pointed out that,

Our SMT members punished late comers by locking the gate, thus locking the late comers out. They gave them work to do before going to their classes. This hampered the academic performance of the said learners as they remained outside for approximately one and a half hours while others in the classroom. Some teachers hailed this kind of a disciplinary measure for reducing the rate of late coming in their schools despite its negative effect on the late comers' academic performance.

Participant 7 observed that,

Some learners enjoyed coming to school late. Late coming is a very serious problem in this school, quite a number of learners come late. We have resorted to many strategies like closing them out, and then allow them to come in during short break at 0900. This did deter some learners from coming late. Also, we resorted to the use of a register for late comers where we checked for the recurrence of this for three consecutive days. We then invited parents to attend their disciplinary hearings. To some extent that helped those learners who had a conscious to refrain from coming late, but there were those who had no conscious at all and these never changed.

Participant 8 responded thus,

*The school was dominated by learners who came from far away, but the frequent late comers were the local ones, especially those who stayed close to school. It was difficult for them to tell whether it was the attitude of the community towards the school or that learners were controlling their families. We have seventeen year olds whose parents were invited to the school on several occasions to attend the disciplinary hearing. They told us that they always wake them up on time to prepare for school. Even today that learner came to school late. The learner will be late for school even tomorrow. Late coming hampers the learners' academic performance because they miss lessons. Consequently, most of the frequent late comers fail.*

Participant 9 asserted that their school introduced morning and afternoon studies, but most of the Grade 12s do not attend them because they arrive at school late in the morning and then dodge the afternoon studies.

Participant 10 said that,

If a Grade 12 learner comes to school late and runs away from studies that has serious consequences at the end of the day. No matter how hard we try to bring this one to order, they still deviate. The academic performance of our school is worse. As a result, the Department of Basic Education has declared our school dysfunctional because of the academic performance at the Grade 12 level. They have been constantly below 40% for three consecutive years.

#### **Question 4: How does that affect their academic performance?**

Participants 1 and 2 disclosed that late coming was minimal in their schools. They further indicated that learners who came to school late were given extra work to do.

Participant 3 agreed that the rate of late coming is high in their school and that the late comers usually miss the first period every day.

Participants 4 and 5 said that a quarter of the school come late every day and misses the first period. Worse of all, they sometimes bunk Maths lessons when their homework or assignments are not done.

Participants 6 and 7 acknowledged that when the Principal is not around, some learners move around the classrooms disrupting teachers and learners during classes. This persistently increases the failure rate at their school.

Participants 8, 9 and 10 had similar views here. These were to the effect that,

Learners come late to school daily. Addressing this issue is a challenge because some of them are parent learners, and hence they tell us that 'My

child is sick, I had to take him to the clinic first before coming to school or I had to take my child to a nearby relative that is why I am late'. Late coming directly affects the learners' academic performance because if she/he misses the first two periods daily, this means that they would have lost ten out of thirty hours per week. Each period is allocated one hour and late coming, therefore, hampers their academic performance.

**Question 5: To what extent does the learners' absenteeism affect academic performance?**

Participants 1, 2 and 3 agreed that absenteeism was minimal in their school, and that most learners who were frequently absent from school were parent learners, especially girls and those who were unwell.

Participants 4, 5 and 6 replied that they control absenteeism by requiring sick notes from learners who were sick, and that it is the responsibility of the SMT to deal with learners who were absent from school without valid reasons.

Participants 7, 8, 9 and 10 indicated that there was a high rate of absenteeism in their schools. They also said that most learners dodge classes after having the day's meal. Their parents are frequently invited to attend the disciplinary hearings, but that does not deter learners from absenting themselves from school and dodging lessons. A major challenge is that some of the learners bring along bogus parents, and the problem with bogus parents is that they resolve the challenge only for a day and never make a follow up to ensure that the learners stick to the resolutions that were reached during the disciplinary hearing.

**Question 6 was a probe to identify the academic performance of learners, and also to find out if discipline influences the academic performance of learners.**

Participant 1 disclosed that their schools had a problem of poor discipline.

Participant 2 responded thus,

Ever since the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools, we have not yet established a disciplinary measure that would be effective to all the learners. Moreover, most learners in our school are not motivated to learn. As a result, the majority of them do not do their assignments because they are not scared of any disciplinary measure.

Participant 3 explained the following scenario,

In 2018, learners in this school expelled the Principal because he used to discipline them. The learners accompanied him up until the main road which is roughly 2 km away from the school while chanting slogans. Since that day, the learners' behaviour is really uncontrollable. We are also scared of disciplining them as teachers because we know that they can expel us or even do something worse to us. Currently, the learners have challenged our deputy principal for disciplining them.

Participant 4 said the following in response to the question,

Some of our learners are criminals because some of them attend court hearings, others were sued and bailed out. Most of the school properties were stolen by learners from this school. The community members know the culprits, but have decided to conceal the information in an attempt to save their lives.

Participant 5 provided the following response,

Some of the learners are addicted to alcohol and abuse drugs. As a result, they come to school drunk and unprepared for tests and examinations. Our learners are not disciplined. Some of them go to taverns at night and then come to write examination on the following morning while they are still drunk.

For Participant 6, the issue was,

When a person does not perform well in class, that person performs well somewhere. Thus, most of our learners bunk classes and go to the toilet to

smoke drugs and stay there for the whole day. After school, they join other learners and go home as if they had learnt something.

Participant 7 stated that their concern about the classroom conditions that were allocated to the Senior Phase are dilapidated. These conditions de-motivate learners.

Participant 8 said the following,

Most learners in this school have language barriers because they cannot read with understanding. They also have poor memory retention due to the lack of understanding of the language of instruction. This hampers them from transferring information into their long-term memory.

Participant 9 mentioned that,

Most of our Grade 12 learners fail to understand questions during their examinations. As a result, they write what they think is the answer to the question. Most of our learners have limited English vocabulary. For example, we have a few learners in Grade 12 who have serious learning barriers. They do not understand a single sentence in English. Our learners are not prepared to go all out to read books, newspapers and listen to English News on television in order to enrich their vocabulary.

Participant 10 stated that,

Most of the learners that we receive from other schools cannot write legibly nor can they read well. As a language teacher, I have discovered that these learners fail even to punctuate a simple short passage. For example, if I have teach them how to punctuate sentences, they will still have difficulties punctuating sentences, even at Grade 12. They actually perform badly in all languages. This calls for us to restart teaching them the language basics to enable them to read and write correctly. However, the time to do that is insufficient because we have a lot of work, and hence they fail hopelessly.

**Question 7: How do you address the challenge of the learners' poor academic performance?**

All Participants agreed that they were already addressing the said challenges using the following techniques:

- i. Learners attend the morning and afternoon studies scheduled for spring, summer and autumn. They only attend afternoon studies in winter.
- ii. Saturday lessons are arranged for all the subjects that the Grade 12 learners fail in all schools. These are Maths, Physical Sciences, Geography, History, Agriculture and Accounting. They outsource teachers from other schools to teach these subjects at a special fee paid by the SGB.
- iii. All the schools arranged for night studies to commence during the fourth term, specifically for the Grade 12 learners.
- iv. Winter classes were scheduled for all schools in the Vhembe District during the winter vacation. Here, teachers with necessary expertise are outsourced to teach the at-risk subjects at a specific fee per hour. This arrangement was made by the Department of Basic Education. The centres for winter schools were, therefore, arranged by the Provincial Department of Basic Education together with the school Principals.

All Participants agreed that the following techniques assisted them to obtain the best pass rate in the district:

- a) Schools are assisted by the Non-Government Organisation (NGO) called Panreach in teaching Maths and Physical Science every afternoon on weekdays as well as on Saturdays and holidays.
- b) Learners in all schools attend morning studies for one hour before the school starts, and afternoon studies for two hours when the day's

lessons had ceased. Some teachers offer remedial work to the learners during the afternoon studies to either catch up with their work or to assist learners who lag behind.

- c) The SGBs motivate teachers who offer extra classes on Saturdays and Sundays by remunerating them with R300 for every two hours per day.
- d) The HODs support all the teachers in their departments by checking their work and assisting them where necessary. They also encourage them to prepare their lessons on time in order to start teaching when their periods commence.
- e) Both schools trained their Grade 12 learners to attend overnight studies and supervise themselves on weekends under the surveillance of the schools' security guards.
- f) Teachers in all schools work together as a team. They share certain sections of work and Chapters of the same subject.
- g) Learners who fail to meet the minimum requirements to progress to the next grades are made to repeat the grade they have failed.
- h) Teachers taught the same group of learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12. This motivates them to try and exceed the previous pass percentage of the teachers who were teaching the same subject in the previous year throughout the grades.

**Question 9: Which are the real causes of ineffective discipline in secondary schools?**

This study shows that the abolition of corporal punishment was haphazardly done.

Participant 1 argued that in as far as the issue of discipline is concerned in schools, corporal punishment was abolished before the government made a thorough research about what must be done replace it.

Participant 2 also indicated that the abolition of corporal punishment without putting alternative ways in place is one of the contributing factors to disciplinary problems.

Participant 3 added that,

After the government abolished corporal punishment, there is nothing they did to help schools deal with wayward learners in the absence of corporal punishment. They left that issue in the hands of the schools. They are the ones who abolished corporal punishment; they should be the ones to come up with mechanisms to deal with that indiscipline at school.

Participant 4 highlighted that they always say (government) use the alternative means, do not use corporal punishment. That's the statement they use. They never came up to say do ABC.

Participant 5 believes that they perform badly due to social problems.

Participant 6 added that some underperform because they are not cooperative.

Participant 8 argued that they are disruptive and do not concentrate in class. They repeat the questions instead of answering them.

Participant 9 concurred as she stated that, "Most of the learners are not well prepared for secondary education. You find that some of them cannot even write or read, so they become bored in class.

Participant 10 indicated: *"They perform poorly! Most of them are poor! They really perform below par. They don't perform as expected"*.

**Question 10: What roles do various structures bring in managing discipline within the school?**

Participant 1 stated that they encourage teachers to use the democratic forms of discipline as alternatives to corporal punishment.

Participant 2 mentioned that teachers model good behaviour and this indirectly persuades learners to be well-behaved as well.

Participant 3 added that,

I think the most critical issue is to maintain discipline among the staff because ill-discipline within the staff creates a loophole. For instance, if we are not punctual as teachers, it will be difficult for us to tell the learners to be punctual because they will not take us seriously. So, as teachers, we must model the behaviour we want our learners to exhibit.

Participant 4 pointed out that the grade teachers' talk to their learners on discipline before they even commit an offence.

Participant 5 declared that the school identifies problematic learners with the assistance of class teachers. They arrange mentoring and monitor them. The number of problematic learners decreases through mentorship.

Participant 6 indicated that,

We sometimes read the Code of Conduct at assembly to remind them about the school rules and regulations. We always make use of the class teachers to discuss ground rules with the learners at the beginning of the year. We always remind them of the Code of Conduct during the assembly, maybe once a week. We think talking to these learners about the Code of Conduct always helps them remember what is wrong.

Participant 7 said, "We invite the parents to school to discuss the behaviour of the learner in his/her presence (learner)".

Participants 8, 9 and 10 also indicated that the parents' conference is arranged with the parents concerned to discuss the behaviours of their children with teachers.

## **5.7 SUMMARY**

This Chapter analysed and interpreted data from the respective respondents who were involved in the study. The Chapter also provided the results and the findings of the empirical investigations as presented by the respondents in their direct, unaltered words. Furthermore, it discussed the research findings to address the aim of this study. Many schools in South Africa are plagued by disciplinary problems. The most commonly reported disciplinary problem is the disrespect of teachers. Learners call teachers foul names or swear at them, in addition to making indecent gestures when teachers give them instructions. Other frequent discipline problems are late coming, playing truant, absconding, disruption of lessons and misbehaviour at school functions or during school excursions.

Only few a learners are disciplined, and hence the academic performance of most learners in these schools suffers. Additionally, there are reported problems of fighting, bullying, assault, vandalism, theft, extortion, use of alcohol and drugs, carrying of dangerous weapons and sexual misconduct. The effect of these is poor results. It is imperative for schools to revise their school improvement plan, focusing on their basic functionality, learner achievement as well as the availability of a disciplinary code of conduct that outlines the responsibilities and rights of everyone at school. The final Chapter outlines the summary and concludes this study. Its recommendations and limitations are also provided.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The penultimate Chapter analysed and interpreted data, and discussed its findings. Data collected through interviews and observations were comprehensively discussed. This Chapter summarises the main findings of this empirical investigation. This is followed the conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for further research. Based on the data analysed, conclusions are drawn. The general objectives of the study were to find out how the abolition of corporal punishment affect learner performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District. The following were this study's research objectives:

- To determine the effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on public schools in the Vhembe District.
- To establish the relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District.
- To identify the common types of alternative discipline methods used by the teachers in public schools in the Vhembe District.
- To develop an intervention strategy to assist parents and teachers in dealing with learner discipline in the Vhembe District's public schools.

#### **6.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This study's empirical findings are based on an extensive review and evaluation of literature. These are dealt with in the subsections that follow below.

### **6.2.1 Learners' Academic Performance**

Allen (2010:15) asserted that factors known to influence the learners' academic performance comprise of school resources and the teachers' characteristics. That is, the teachers' qualifications, experience and competencies play a very critical role in shaping the process of teaching and learning. The relationship between learners and teachers is the primary way of transferring knowledge and skills. This study found that all teachers in the Vhembe District were qualified, with the least qualified holding a Diploma in Education. This means that learners in the Vhembe District are under properly qualified individuals given that those with the highest qualification are Master's holders. In view of this finding, one would conclude that learners are taught by teachers with the proper understanding of the subject content they teach.

Also, this study found that teachers give enough work to their learners in an attempt to improve their academic performance. However, this is contrary to the Department of Education's (2000:20) observations that about 40% of the country's youth do not complete high school and of those who do, many cannot proceed with their studies because of the poor quality of their academic achievements. This shows that such learners are poorly taught, yet we have highly qualified teachers in our education system. But, this finding validate Canter and Canter's (2011:6) argument that the learners' desire to learn had been persistently decreasing due to the absence of mechanism to motivate the learners to learn. This is to say that in as much as these teachers are highly qualified; they however lack necessary skills to motivate their learners in order to take their work seriously.

Thus, this study gives light on the poor quality of the learners' academic performance by stating that learners see schooling as less relevant when they see no connection between the school curricula and their cultural backgrounds. They see no connection between their academic work in schools and their future economic prospects. The empirical findings confirmed the view that most community members do not learn beyond secondary school but leave school to earn a living. In other words, it is the teachers' duty to help learners associate education with future successes in that through it, one is assured of employment, notwithstanding the slow economic growth

at times. The majority of learners believe that they do not need education to earn a living, though (Russo, 2015:34).

The empirical findings further revealed that some learners from schools which obtain poor academic performance in Grade 12 in 2018 had language problems. This means that some learners cannot read and comprehend any item written in English. As a result of their failure to comprehend what they read, such learners resort to bullying, truancy, absenteeism and thuggery. Still, the onus remains with the school to try and come up with comprehensive programmes that would help their learners learn and master English. Such noted failures by the schools in the Vhembe District to teach English effectively is an indication that teachers themselves are not serious with their work. They are short-changing the learners in this respect.

Their failure to do so creates a vicious cycle as English is the medium of instruction in most government schools in the Vhembe District. This means that all subjects that are taught in this language suffer as a result. Given the difficulties learners go through in class due to their lack of understanding English, one would conclude that this is one of the factors that leads to disciplinary problems in schools around the Vhembe District. In other words, learners find it a torture being bombarded, on a daily basis, with what they do not understand, and hence their rebellious tendencies. For instance, one respondent revealed that learners struggle to understand physical science because the physical science teacher teaches them in English, and hence the learners rely on their friends to interpret lessons for them (Kromberg, 2015:565).

Further indications from the findings are that learners do not have interest in reading books, newspapers and listening to English programmes on television to improve their vocabulary. Some learners do not have problems like sharing their work among other learners. They freely exchange books amongst their friends behind their teacher's back and submitted them as though they were their own work. This suggests that most learners from the schools that had low pass rates in 2018 were not disciplined (Kromberg, 2015:565). Language problems emerged as a result of their lack of enthusiasm to do their school work such as reading books in preparation for tests and examinations (Kromberg, 2015:565).

## **6.2.2 Discipline in Schools**

This study proved that disciplinary problems indicate a decline in the academic performance of learners, which in turn leads to greater problems concerning discipline. This was confirmed through the interviews where learners from schools that have poor pass rates clearly stated that they retaliate when teachers discipline them (Russo, Beckmann & Jansen, 2012:1). This study validates the findings of an empirical study related to school academic discipline which found that most learners no longer nurture the culture of respect and trust of their teachers. As a result, some teachers are threatened, sworn at, ignored and abused on daily bases. Consequently, learners who misbehave tend to perform poorly at school as they frequently absent themselves (Weeks, 2012:12).

This study discovered that the learners' conduct is one of the issues that disturb the learners' academic performance in South African schools. This study's findings show that learner indiscipline that led to learner underachievement in Grade 12's final examinations in 2018 included frequent class disruptions by learners, lack of respect for teachers (perpetuated by the absence of the code of conduct for learners), and the demotivated learners. As a result, they resorted to plagiarism whenever a task was given to them to finish at home (Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014:289).

The findings of Health Impact Assessment (HIA), when revealing the expulsion approach that was mostly used by teachers led to the increased misbehaviour, repeated expulsions and increased violence. The example given by the teachers in the empirical findings were about a learner who was suspended from school due to disrupting teaching and learning. Initially, the learner was suspended for a week. The second suspension lasted for two weeks and that suspension did not deter, but worsened the learner's misbehaviour to the extent of intimidating certain teachers at school (Lancoe & Steinberg, 2018a:34).

The Human Partners (HPI) underlined that school disciplinary policy creates a safe, positive and healthy school environment and the empirical findings revealed that all

schools that participated in the study regarded parents as the main measure for disciplining learners. However, prior to the parental involvement, most teachers used an exclusionary disciplinary approach by expelling learners from their classes (Lancoe & Steinberg, 2018a:34).

According to the Health Impact Assessment (HPA) findings, the consequence of an exclusionary disciplinary approach is lower educational attainment, including lower academic performance, negative attitudes about school, feeling of isolation, less participation in extracurricular activities and lower attendance rates. Karande and Kulkarni (2013:961) asserted that a policy is designed to steer actions and behaviour, which guide institutions and professionalism in certain direction and to ensure that power is exercised legitimately through various institutional norms, practices and policies. The empirical findings revealed that schools, especially those which obtained a low percentage pass rate in Grade 12 in 2018 did not have policies that determined disciplinary mechanisms that would frighten all learners from disrupting and impeding the effective teaching and learning process. As a result, serious offences were referred to the HODs who would then involve the disciplinary committee and invite the learners' parents to intervene in disciplining them (Karande & Kulkarni, 2013:961).

### **6.2.3 The Causative factors of behaviour problems in schools**

“Physical impairment, brain dysfunction and barriers to learning are intrinsic factors that affect learner behaviour, as certain impairments make it difficult for learners to grasp social rules. Other intrinsic factors to be considered are personal, temperament, as well as developmental levels and the basic needs as suggested by the theories of Erikson and Maslow (Chadsey & McVittie, 2015:1).

In addition, “intrinsic factors influence and are influenced by the environment in which the individual functions. The study included the extrinsic factors such as home environment, school environment, the community and society in which one functions, and the influence of peers as each of these environments plays a role in the development of one's identity and, as such will influence social norms” (Maphosa,

2011:14). The home environment is the primary socialising domain as children get older. The influence of peers becomes more prominent and the teacher-learner relationship may influence the learner's school experience and affect his/her perceptions. The world around learners and the community in which one lives has an impact on his/her social development through social interaction with those who are similar. Children learn acceptable behaviour from others (Chadsey & McVittie, 2015).

#### **6.2.4 Alternatives used to Improve Learners' Academic Performance**

“For catch-up programmes learners very often attended the morning, afternoon and Saturday classes. Lessons are scheduled for all schools in the Vhembe District during the winter vacation, where expert teachers are engaged to teach the risk subjects. This arrangement is organised by the Limpopo Department of Basic Education in collaboration with the school principals, and hence the Department of Basic Education remunerated the outsourced teachers. Eventually, all the schools participate in this programme (Department of Education (2000:20).

#### **6.2.5 School Attendance**

In accordance with the empirical findings, absenteeism is a serious problem in most secondary schools that obtained low pass rates. This study found that the following were the reasons for the learners' absenteeism from school:

- Clinic visits because of illness.
- Pregnant learners' frequent absence from school due to medical checkups.
- Some learners were orphans who lacked proper parental guidance and thus did not regularly attend school.
- Orphaned learners headed their families and were sometimes absent due to either taking care of their sick siblings, attending to family issues or were raising funds to support their siblings.
- Some learners had only one uniform. As a result, they occasionally washed it during the week to keep it clean. Sometimes it would not dry in time for school and therefore they would go the next day.

- Some learners were affected by their parents' economic status. For example, they sometimes missed school in order to do piece jobs to supplement the household income.

Ezekiel, (2016:1-2) asserted that the current generation of youths is more sophisticated in their understanding of the socio-economic factors, health and development than the previous generations because in many cases, they had no choice, but to look after their siblings because their parents had HIV/AIDS. In other words, learners perform poorly in their academics because they have more responsibilities at home.

Ezekiel (2016:1-2) elaborated by arguing that research has proved that learners who helped out in their homes for one hour or less achieve higher pass rate than those who work for two or more hours. The reason for the correlation between modest amount of chores and high achievement was due to the fact that learners from wealthy families are not required to do as much work around the house as less-advantaged ones.

#### **6.2.6 Assessment tasks**

The empirical findings highlighted that teachers give tasks to learners according to the prescribed policy documents and subject assessment. Other teachers go an extra mile by doubling the test expected by the department and even double the number of tasks that are prescribed in their assessment policy. Tests are given to learners at the end of every month and examinations at the end of every term. In subjects like Maths, learners write class activities and assignments daily (Department of Education, 2000:20).

This study revealed that schools repeatedly defy and rebel against such policies, as learners produce poor academic performances, resulting in teacher migration due to disciplinary problems. This is supported by the empirical findings that learners from the selected schools sometimes refuse to write assignments by telling the teachers

that they had a lot of work. Teachers said that such learners are the ones who cause destructions in class such as making a lot of noise in their presence to avoid learning, and sometimes run out of the classroom to the toilet to avoid instruction (Reyneke, 2015:57).

### **6.2.7 Dealing with Learners who underperform**

The empirical findings revealed that the entire group of respondents supported the learners by correcting written tasks and giving study guidance. Four participants re-test learners with the same test they failed before. All other participants stated that they discuss the causes of poor attainment with the learners concerned and devise strategies for improvement. When the learners show no interest in improvement, the teachers invite their parents to join in discussing strategies to help improve the academic performance of their children. Other teachers highlighted that they were unable to assist learners who underperformed due to overcrowding and they have many classes to teach, and that learners were not disciplined (Simba, Ogak & Kabuka, 2016:164). Teachers fear that learners would purposely avoid writing a test so that they could write a retest in order to obtain a total mark after having memorised answers to the questions set for the tests. As corporal punishment was outlawed, teachers rely on parents to discipline their children (Simba, Ogak & Kabuka, 2016:164).

Five participants stated that they motivate their learners by actively involving them throughout their lessons and questioning them as much as possible to keep them focused during lesson presentations as a way of effecting learning. Others give extra work to learners and monitor them to ensure that they do it.

On the one hand, eight respondents stated that they organise afternoon and Saturday lessons. These lessons are however not taught by the subject teacher, but by another teacher to try and prevent the possibility of learners failing because they do not understand the approach used by the subject teacher. Other teachers indicated that they outsource teachers from other schools with the necessary

expertise to offer Saturday lessons at a certain fee paid by the SGB. Outsourcing is intended to bring different approaches in the learning process.

Eight respondents interviewed indicated that they were motivated by their schools to encourage learners to learn and improve their academic performance by announcing the names of the top ten learners in the morning assembly at the beginning of every quarter. They reprimand all the Grade 12 learners who neglect their school work, including those who underperform. Three respondents indicated that they lack the mechanism to deal with underperforming learners as they promoted themselves to the grades in which they are.

### **6.2.8 Approaches to Maintaining Discipline in Secondary Schools**

Previously, traditional methods of disciplining learners followed a zero-tolerance strategy. Since the abolition of corporal punishment in 1997, there has been a shift where learners are guided to constructive behaviour. The constructive approach works on the principle of respect. It requires the development of good relationship between a teacher and the learner. The other one is the Adlerian approach which attempts to understand the context of poor behaviour in order to be proactive. It helps to meet the need fulfilled by inappropriate behaviour, in a more appropriate way.

The learner-centred approach helps learners to take ownership of their environment by learning to self-regulate and being aware of applicable boundaries and expectations. In the behavioural theory, behaviour follows a pattern of track record and consequences. As such, a combination of these approaches may uproot many of the disciplinary problems experienced in secondary schools as they cater for a greater number of learners' needs (Gilman & Anderman, 2014: 375)

### **6.2.9 The effects of Poor Discipline in a Secondary Schools**

The outcomes of poor discipline have far-reaching results for all learners, not only those who misbehave as indiscipline affects the whole school's morality. The effects

of indiscipline can be seen in the academic, emotional and social fields (Gilman and Anderman, 2014:379). It must be noted, however, that an increase in indiscipline in schools often corresponds with poor academic competence because learners who are not disciplined are less likely to succeed academically as they have constant distractions and negative peer influence (Gilman and Anderman, 2014:379).

Adolescents struggle for independence and the establishment of their identity. For instance, a labelled learner regards the label as status, leading to greater experimentation of undesirable behaviour. As they develop an identity, there is an increased risk of developing relationship problems, not only with authority figures, but also with peers (Ramsey, 2011:33).

#### **6.2.10 Importance of School Discipline**

In terms of the research conducted, school discipline is a form of discipline appropriate for highlighting rules and regulations for learners and ensuring order in schools. The effective and efficient management of discipline in schools leads to effective teaching and learning. This automatically results in anticipation of good learner achievement (Menstry & Khumalo, 2012:97). This study revealed that the lack of discipline has become one of the serious challenges in South Africa schools. Through this study, it has become obvious that poor discipline impacts negatively on the learners' academic performance. Managing discipline in schools is therefore of utmost importance to allow for the effective teaching and learning.

#### **6.2.11 Strategies used in Maintaining Discipline and their effectiveness**

Classrooms have learners from different backgrounds. These learners behave differently, and it thus stands to reason that various strategies will have to be used to maintain classroom discipline. There are many strategies, and such measures include reinforcing positive behaviour, tactical ignoring unwanted behaviour, verbal and non-verbal interventions, use of light humour to redirect focus, and reprimanding a learner for inappropriate behaviour. Others include revoking privileges, expulsion, and removal to alternative schools with specialised learning programmes, among

others (Bezuidenhout, 2013:69). There is no single strategy for every situation, and it is important, however, to ensure that the strategies used to discipline learners do not take away the positive relationship and environment that a teacher attempts to create (Bezuidenhout, 2013:69).

### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

This study sought to determine how the abolition corporal punishment has affected the learner performance in the Vhembe District's secondary schools. It was done through the use of the mixed methods approach. By adopting the case study research design, this study done in the schools where the phenomenon under study is prevalent. Thus, the use of corporal punishment, as the government argued for its abolishment, was seen as the abuse of children who in this case have no power or means to defend themselves.

Using information from the respondents, it is quite clear that even though the government meant well by abolishing corporal punishment, it created yet another serious problem that has far reaching consequences on the lives of those it meant to protect. That is, learners have become wild at school, disrespectful, violent and criminal minded to say the list. In other words, the government's outlawing corporal punishment has rendered schools ungovernable. Schools have become the breeding grounds for criminals, future thugs and hopeless generations to come. While it is plausible that the government intends to protect the vulnerable in society, it is this study's contention that before abruptly banning corporal punishment, more research should have been done to determine the long term effects of such a policy. As it stands, schools have no clue as to how they should control discipline in their own backyard.

Also sore here is the government's failure to provide alternatives to corporal punishment. Schools are ill-equipped to deal with the current waves of their learners' misbehaviours. This has negatively affected the schools' pass rates at Grade 12 level, year out year in. The issue is that due to the lack of discipline, learners do not regularly attend lessons, they bully each other, in the process disturbing those view

who have the zeal to learn. Thus, until the government fully involves itself with those who seek to find out the everlasting solutions to the learners' bad behaviours at school, schools would always produce poorly equipped learners academically.

#### **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Recommendations presented in this section are based on this study's findings.

Based on the findings, this researcher makes the following recommendations:

- This study suggests that teachers should be encouraged to avoid corporal punishment and focus on the democratic forms of disciplining learners. To attain these, teachers need training on emotional intelligence and education that emphasises alternative disciplinary tactics to corporal punishment.
- As teachers are not aware of the consequences of administering corporal punishment, this awareness must be brought among them relating it to the impact on the learners' academic performance and personal development.
- For learners to be polite and respectful of their teachers, they should be counseled through awareness programmes.
- Abolishing corporal punishment in schools by government is not enough as it is not only harmful to learners, but also violates the children's rights and there is need for legislation to be implemented to protect children from violence.
- Any teacher who is found to be having an affair with learners, drinking liquor and smoking cigarettes with them should face the consequences.
- Guidance of learners towards judging their own behaviour should be done by teachers.
- Teachers should build learners' commitment to their plans by giving them feedback timely.

- Safety in schools is a precondition for good discipline. Schools should be properly fenced. For the safety of everyone within the school premises, an electronic system should be installed to detect all unwanted materials. Disciplinary problems related to dangerous weapons, drugs, and alcohol should be taken serious and reported to the police.
- The SASA No. 84, Section 8 (1) of 1996 stipulates that education is a societal issue. Parents must be accommodated in the affairs of their learners at school as a way of fostering their passion to be involved in school matters. Parents should be given the opportunity to articulate their expectations and concerns over their children's education.

## **6.5 PROSPECT FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

In the process of carrying out this study, this researcher came to the understanding that there is a need for further research on issues not covered here. The empirical findings also demonstrated that school limits the IQMS to 1% salary increment, whose aim is to develop teachers. It is important that a research on teacher empowerment be introduced to deal with issues of teacher empowerment. According to the conceptual framework of this research, there is a need to draw a school improvement plan to improve both the teaching and learning at school. Consequently, this will improve learner academic performance. This suggests a more improved strategy which will empower teachers, and this needs to be researched further for the benefit of learners.

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## ANNEXURES

I am a Doctor of Education student enrolled at University of Zululand. I am involved in research that tries to answer some questions with regard to perceptions of parents on the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in Vhembe district. Please answer these questions as honestly as possible.

### ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE

#### SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (*Please complete all questions*)

##### 4.1 Gender of the respondents

Male	
Female	

##### 4.2 Age distribution of the respondents

18- 25 years	
26-30 years	
31-45 years	
46-50 years	
Over 51 years	

##### 4.3 Educational information of the respondents

Below matric	
Matric	
Diploma	
Degree	

##### 4.4 How many years of teaching you have altogether, including this year

0-4	
-----	--

5-10	
11-15	
More than 15	

**4.5 Employment status of the respondents**

Full time	
Part time	
Unemployed	
Pensioner	

**4.6 Indicate your overall performance average level**

Affluent	
Above average	
Average	
Below average	
Poor	

**4.7 Indicate the category of your school. Please tick the box that matches your**

Public	
Private	

**answer**

**4.8 What is the enrolment at your school?**

1 to 200	
201 to 400	
401 to 600	
601 to 800	
801 and above	

**Section B: The perceptions of parents on the abolition of corporal punishment in public schools in Vhembe District**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Roles of parents towards learners					
Quality time of parents with their children has an impact on the academic performance					
Parents are afraid of their children					
Alternatives to corporal punishment are ineffective					
Both parents and teachers need to teach learners good morals					
Teachers need to be role models of the society					
Teachers feel disempowered to deal with absenteeism of learners and direct all blame to parents					
If corporal punishment is administered, it assist encourage learners to be more responsible about their work					
There is a need for parents to motivate their children to be positive at all times					
Disrespect of teachers is a serious disciplinary problem by learners (e.g. swear at teachers)					
The absence of corporal punishment influence children to abuse their rights is abolished					
Teachers communicate with the parents regarding the progress of their children concerning, disciplinary problems					

There is a need for teacher-training programmes which include modules related to learner behaviour and management of discipline					
The desired behaviour should be the one the teachers must focus on instead of voiding it					
Corporal punishment yields negative behaviour towards children					
Not all parents are conversant with the roles they should play at school					

**Section C: The relationship between learner indiscipline and their academic performance in selected public schools of Vhembe District**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Relationship between poor academic performance and violent behaviours in schools					
The impact of poor class attendance towards poor social skills, emotional functioning and poor academic performance					
Respect by learners towards teachers is dependent upon effective discipline					
Learner self-disciplined and uninterrupted improves teaching performance					
Regular school attendance will improve learners academic performance					
Internalised self-discipline by learners is dependent upon effective discipline at school					

Lack of control of certain learners by teachers leads to in poor academic performance					
Prior to the abolition of corporal punishment learners abided by school rules and that improved academic performance					
Alternatives to discipline are more beneficial rather than detrimental to learner development than corporal punishment					
Praising, compassionate and respect to learners significantly minimises disciplinary problems					
Learners should know the kind of behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable to their parents					
Consistent rules should be set clear by teachers, parents, and other carers					
The amount of support received at home determines learner academic performance					
Poor academic performance and ill-discipline is also determined by minimal support teachers receive from parents					
Academic performance by learners is dependent upon regular school attendance and parents monitoring of assignments					

**Section C: The common types of alternative discipline methods used by the teachers in public schools of the Vhembe District**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Disciplinary committee at school dealing with learner that misconduct according to SASA					
Remedial actions are not defined in alternatives to corporal punishment					
Some alternatives to corporal punishment are effective while others are not					
There are effective and ineffective disciplinary measures					
Teachers are nor conversant with alternatives to corporal provided					
Every classroom must displayed rules for discipline					
Alternatives to corporal punishment must be known by learners					
Schools have a code of conduct for alternatives to corporal punishment					
Learners prefer manual work as alternatives to corporal punishment					
Learners categorically reject to be expelled from during class disruptions					
Teaching learners self-discipline is demanding					
Rules pertaining to discipline need to be displayed in each classroom					
Application of alternatives to corporal punishment need effective training of teachers,					

parents and other carers					
Learner involvement children in setting the rules is important because it ensures that they know what is right and what is wrong					
Parents and teachers should demonstrate interest in learners' activities					
Provision of appropriate and engaging extra-curricular activities could be the best alternative method					
There should be emphasis towards guidance and counselling towards learners					
There is a need for parents, teachers and other carers give clear directions, one at a time for the children to follow					

## ANNEXURE B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*The interviews for the research were formulated as follows*

Question 1: To what extent does discipline influence effective academic performance of learners of your school?

.....  
.....

Question 2: How far you deal with real situations where learners challenge your authority in the classroom?

.....  
.....

Question 3: To deal with late comers the teacher and School Management Team listed the measures.

.....  
.....

Question 4: To what extent does that affect learners' academic performance?

.....  
.....

Question 5: To what extent does learners' absenteeism affect academic performance?

.....  
.....

Question 6 was probed to identify the academic performance of learners, and also to find out if discipline influences the academic performance of learners in selected Vhembe secondary schools

.....  
.....

Question 7: How do you address the challenge of poor academic performance of learners?

.....  
.....

Question 9: Which are the real causes of ineffective discipline in secondary schools?

.....  
.....

Question 10: What roles do various structures bring in managing discipline within the school?

.....  
.....

## ANNEXURE C: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

### ANEXURE C: LETTER TO THE DISTRIC PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

P.O. Box 1233  
Thohoyandou  
0950  
16 July 2018

District Director: Vhembe  
Department of Education  
Thohoyandou  
0950

Dear Sir/Madam

#### PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

I **Ndinanyi Eunice Singo** of student number **201860903**, a Doctorate student at the University of Zululand and engaged in a research in Secondary schools under Luvuvhu and Mvudi Circuits. My research study is entitled: "**THE EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT**". Aim of the study is to explore the perceptions of parents and teachers on the abolition of corporal punishment and learner academic performance in selected public schools in Vhembe district. I therefore request permission to conduct this research. You are further assured that data collected during the investigation will be highly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of my research and will not disturb teaching and learning. For further information about this study, please contact my Supervisors: Prof. DR Nzima/ Prof. AP Kutame at this number: (035) 902 6751/ 072 056 3658

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours Faithfully



Ndinanyi Eunice Singo

# ANNEXURE D: PERMISSION GRANTED TO CONDUCT



LIMPOPO  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
VHEMBE EAST DISTRICT

CONFIDENTIAL

REF: 12/1/10/8

ENQ: MATIBE M.S

CONTACT NO: 082 300 4774

SINGO N.E  
P.O BOX 1233  
THOHOYANDOU  
0950

## PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

1. We acknowledge receipt of your request for permission to conduct research activities in Vhembe East District.
2. This letter serves to inform you that your request for permission to conduct research on the topic "*The effects of the abolition of corporal punishment on learner academic performance in selected public schools in the Vhembe District*" has been approved.
3. We appreciate your commitment to observe ethical consideration such as confidentiality.
4. Kindly inform the Luvuvhu and Mvudi circuit managers and principals of selected secondary schools prior to commencement of your research study.
5. Best wishes in your studies.

  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR

06/08/2019  
DATE

+

# ANNEXURE E: HDC'S REPORT

## ANNEXURE C (Faculty of Education)

### Doctoral Project

TITLE: THE EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT				
Name and Document	Risk Profile	Decision	Committee's comments	Person/s responsible
Singo NE	Medium risk  <u>Reason</u>  Data collection from people  <u>Special circumstances</u>  None	Approved	<u>The Committee:</u> a) Approved the request for ethical clearance.	Prof. DR Nzima

# ANNEXURE F: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)



**RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Website: <http://www.unizulu.ac.za>  
Private Bag X1001  
KwaDlangezwa 3886  
Tel: 035 902 6731  
Fax: 035 902 6222  
Email: DlaminiA@unizulu.ac.za


## ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGD 2018/237			
Project Title	THE EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF LEARNER ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT			
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	NE Singo			
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Prof DR Nzima	Prof AP Kutame		
Department	Social Science			
Faculty	Education			
Type of Risk	Med Risk- Data collection from people			
Nature of Project	Honours/4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Master's	Doctoral	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

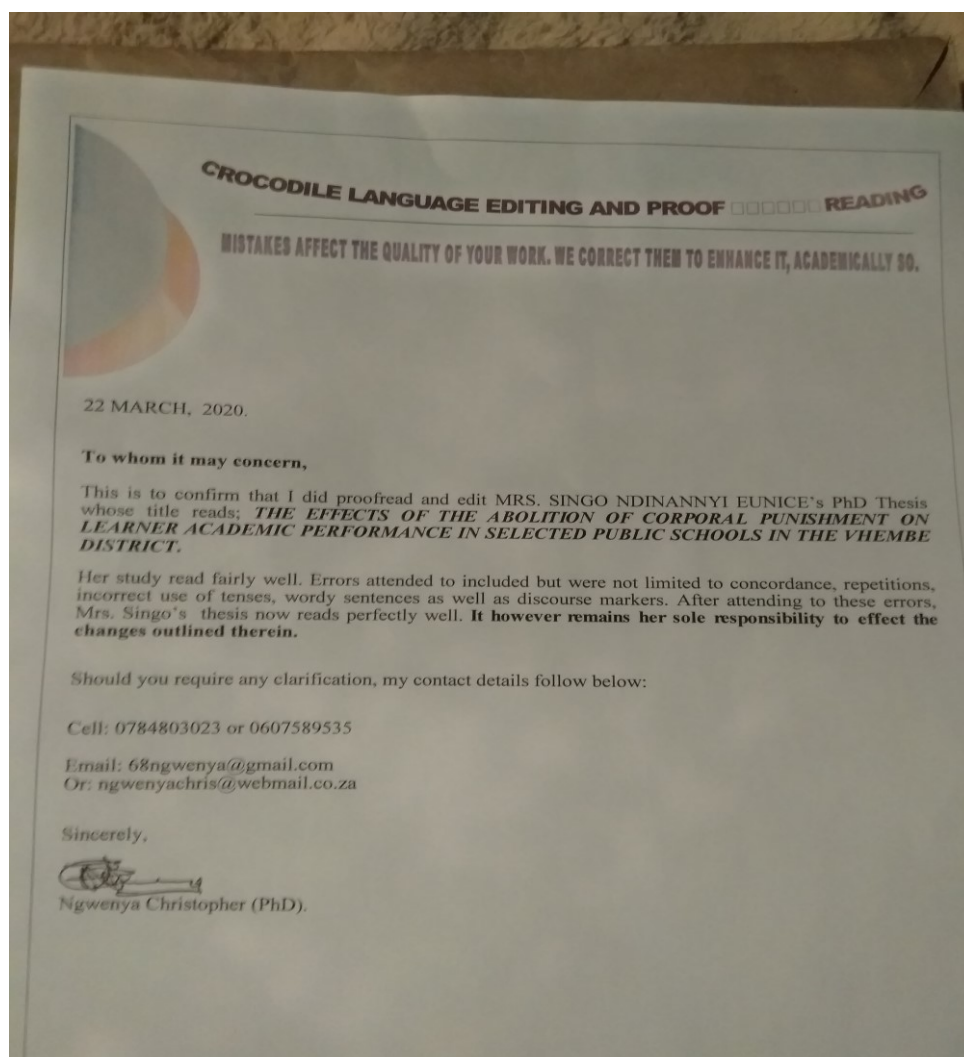
- Special conditions:
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
  - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-18 September 2019]
  - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
  - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.

  
Professor Gideon De Wet  
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation  
18 September 2018

**CHAIRPERSON**  
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH  
ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC)  
REG NO: UZREC 171110-30  
21-09-2018  
**RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE**

## ANNEXURE G: EDITOR'S REPORT



## ANNEXURE H: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Ndinannyi Eunice Singo. I am a researcher at University of Zululand, I would like to invite you to participate in this project; research topic is **“THE EFFECTS OF THE ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE VHEMBE DISTRICT”**.

*What will I have to do if I take part?*

If you agree to take part, we will ask you to answer some questions. There aren't any right or wrong answers; we just want to hear about your opinions. The discussion should take about an hour at the longest. Please note that some of the questions will relate to your personal history and experiences in the Department of Education.

*Do I have to take part?*

No, **taking part is voluntary**. If you do not want to take part, you do not have to give a reason, and no pressure will be put on you to try and change your mind. You can pull out of the discussion at any time. Please note: If you choose not to participate, or pull out during the discussion, this will **not** affect your current prison sentence or your chances of parole.

*If I agree to take part, what happens to what I say?*

All the information you give us **will be confidential** and used for purposes of this study only. The data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will be disposed of in a secure manner. The information will be used in a way that will not allow you to be identified individually. DoE authorities will not be able to link any information provided to you. **However, we must inform management if:**

- 1) You disclose details of any potential offence within this institution, which could lead to adjudication. So, you should not mention anybody's name during this discussion;
- 2) You disclose details of any offence for which you have not yet been arrested, charged or convicted;
- 3) Something you have said leads us to believe that either your health and safety, or the health and safety of others around you, is at immediate risk;
- 4) Something you have said leads us to believe that there is a threat to security.

**In these situations, we will inform a member of DoE staff, who may take the matter further.**

*What do I do now?*

Think about the information on this sheet, and ask me if you are not sure about anything. If you agree to take part, sign the consent form. The consent form will not be used to identify you. It will be filed separately from all other information. If, after the discussion, you want any more information about the study, tell your personal officer, who will contact me.

**If you feel upset after the discussion and need help dealing with your feelings, it is very important that you talk to someone right away.**

**The contact details for the person to talk to are:**

**Name of student: Ndinannyi Eunice Singo**

**Supervisors: Prof. DR Nzima/ Prof. AP Kutame at this number:  
(035) 902 6751/ 072 056 3658**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!**

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE**

