

**EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR  
AND ITS IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to determine the perceptions that Foundation Phase educators from schools in the Lower Umfolozi District held towards disruptive behaviour. It studied the perceptions of educators towards the characteristics of disruptive behaviour, as well as the extent that it existed in their classrooms and the impact that it had on teaching and learning. A survey questionnaire was distributed to educators from 26 schools and 92 questionnaires were returned. The researcher used SPSS to conduct data analysis.

Findings suggest that a majority of the educators experienced disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. They perceived similar behaviours to be disruptive, with many participants identifying 'shouting out', 'walking around the classroom', 'talking in class' and 'playful behaviour' as being disruptive. The results from the survey suggest that disruptive behaviour did affect their teaching, both in terms of educator motivation and the quality of teaching, as well as the learning of the students in terms of academic outcomes.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

As a Grade 1 educator, the researcher was able to observe children in a classroom setting and was particularly interested in those children who were easily distracted from tasks and/or fidgety, forgetful with regards to their belongings (often misplacing their stationery), and often had a disorderly work area. There were children in class who constantly interrupted the lesson by shouting out or getting up from their seat and walking around the classroom. This interfered with teaching, and assisting these children was time-consuming and detrimental to the learning potential of the other children in the class.

The researcher found the teaching environment to be very stressful as a result of the disruptive behaviour in class. It impacted on the emotional aspect of teaching as it tested her patience and altered her mood and motivation in the classroom, to the point where she felt like giving up on the learner(s) or walking out of the classroom in pure frustration. The researcher taught a class of 27 learners but many schools in South Africa have classes with 40 (or more) learners - one can imagine how disruptive classroom behaviour may affect these teachers and the teaching and learning occurring in these classrooms.

This research aimed to address to what extent (if any) disruptive behaviour is affecting the teaching and learning of educators and learners respectively. Due to the lack of research into the area of classroom behaviour in foundation phase classrooms (especially with regards to the South African context), this research has the potential to be used to encourage future research in terms of the causes of disruptive behaviour, and possible prevention or intervention strategies that can be implemented to assist learners, parents and educators in dealing with the situation.

The following chapter will highlight objectives of the research being undertaken and the motivation behind it. An introductory literature review will be included as well as

operational definitions of important terms. The research methodology will be mentioned briefly, as well as ethical considerations, and a plan for the study will be set out.

### **1.1 Motivation for the study**

There appears to be a lack of research in the Zululand area with regards to disruptive behaviour in the foundation phase classroom. This research provides insight as to whether disruptive behaviour is problematic and to what extent. It determines the impact disruptive behaviour may be having on teaching and learning. This will shed light on whether there is a need to provide educators, and possibly parents, with training on intervention strategies with regards to discipline that could assist in reducing disruptive behaviour, thereby creating a classroom where teaching and learning are not affected. Findings will be made available to the Department of Education as well as the University of Zululand, thereby increasing accessibility to interested parties. This research may encourage future research around the topic of disruptive behaviour in South Africa.

### **1.2 Literature Review**

In his article about teacher burnout, and the behaviour of students that contribute to this, Friedman (2001) discusses the reports of educators concerning factors that influence burnout. He found that disrespect towards educators, and/or other learners, was a major factor. This lack of respect included behaviours such as shouting out or talking at inappropriate times in the classroom, shouting at the educator or interrupting the lesson, leaving the class without permission, forgetting textbooks, and being untidy in the classroom (Friedman, 2001). Ellis and Tod (2009) refer to the Elton Report, written in Britain in 1989, which states that educators found disruptive classroom behaviour a problem as it occurred often and could be very trying. In fact, in a study conducted by Otero Lopez, Santiago, Godas, Castro, Villardefrances and Ponte (2008), it was found that the disruptive behaviour of students offered the main explanation for emotional exhaustion found in educators.

This disruptive behaviour may very well be affecting the outcomes of learning experienced by learners in our education settings. Bulotsky-Shearer, Fernandez, Dominguez and Rouse (2011) discovered that problem behaviour in structured learning activities affected academic outcomes of children, as well as the development of skills such as attention, persistence, and motivation amongst the children. In a survey conducted amongst middle school and high school students, educators, and parents across the United States of America, 85% of the educators and 73% of the parents felt that due to a few children causing disruption in the class, a majority of the learners' school experiences suffered (Public Agenda, 2004).

Further statistics from this study revealed that 77% of educators believe that if they did not spend so much time dealing with disruptive behaviour, they would be far more effective as educators (Public Agenda, 2004). Ellis and Tod (2009) noted that friction may develop between the educator and the learners in the class and between the disruptive learner and fellow learners in the class. Educators were required to spend more time on dealing with the disruptive behaviour and thus were not as focused on the other learners, who may have become resentful of the lack of attention given to them (Ellis & Tod, 2009).

Educators may have also battled in dealing with parents when it comes to classroom discipline. In the study conducted by Public Agenda (2004), 49% of the educators felt they had been accused of dealing with the discipline of a child in an unfair manner. The researcher has had similar experiences when teaching and found that some parents were not willing to accept that their child had misbehaved. In the study educators felt that many parents did not want to believe that their child was at fault. Of the parents sampled in the study, 30% felt their child had been unfairly disciplined (Public Agenda, 2004).

Schools may be concerned about disruptive behaviour in classrooms as it could result in lower academic outcomes for their learners. In countries that adopt a policy of inclusive education, such as South Africa, where pupils with learning and behaviour

problems are to be included in mainstream schools, educators need to be aware of the affect this may have on other learners. In his research, Bru (2009) found that disruptive learners seemed to show lower academic outcomes when compared with other learners. However, his findings also showed that there is no significant association between the inclusion of disruptive learners and a lower mean academic outcome by the rest of the class (Bru, 2009).

Bru (2009) believed that it may become important to introduce additional support, in the way of classroom assistants for example, in order to effectively include disruptive learners into mainstream schooling. Support also needs to be provided through channels such as the Heads of Departments and Principals. In the study conducted by Public Agenda (2004), 52% of the educators questioned felt that they did not receive enough support from their school or the parents.

Whilst some of the studies reviewed above were conducted in secondary schools, and whilst it is true that the disruptive behaviour may differ, it is this researcher's opinion that very similar effects occur in primary schools, including foundation phase. The researcher found that dealing with disruptive behaviour in the class was very time-consuming and emotionally draining. As an inexperienced educator, the researcher felt that she was ill-equipped to deal with the few children in the class that did not behave and, in fact 85% of the educators in the abovementioned study believed that new teachers would not have the skills in dealing with behaviour problems in the classroom. By preparing educators to deal with behaviour problems in the classroom (and possibly educating parents with regards to discipline strategies for their children) one can potentially prevent these young learners from developing into the high school learners that some of the above studies have concentrated on (Public Agenda, 2004).

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Disruptive Behaviour is a very broad term for describing a child's conduct in the classroom as it can incorporate many different behaviours. What constitutes as

disruptive behaviour may vary from individual to individual. In a classroom setting, one educator may perceive a fidgety learner as disruptive whereas, for another educator, this behaviour may not be perceived as interference at all. The effects that disruptive behaviour have on an individual may also vary; some educators may become very stressed and frustrated as a result of the behaviour, whereas other educators are able to deal with the behaviour and manage their reactions to it in a calm manner.

There appears to be a gap in research conducted with regards to disruptive behaviour in South Africa, and in particular Zululand. Research conducted by Bru (2009), Ellis and Tod (2009), and Public Agenda (2004) are internationally-based and the researcher was unable to find much relevant literature to the South African context with regards to disruptive behaviour. Research within the Zululand community will shed light as to whether some of the findings from the research mentioned above are applicable to educators from this area. This, in turn, will determine whether more research is needed in this area in order to provide solutions for educators and schools or improve on existing intervention strategies, so as to reduce the amount of disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

This research aimed to investigate educators' perceptions surrounding disruptive behaviour in their classrooms; what they believed constitutes disruptive behaviour and the extent to which it occurs. Educators were asked questions regarding how disruptive behaviour interfered with teaching; how it affected the educator emotionally and its effect on the educator's teaching competency. Through studying the educators' perceptions of disruptive behaviour their opinion on whether this behaviour disturbs other learners learning in the classroom, and whether it also affects the learning of those creating the disruption, can be determined. This behaviour is a problem in most schools so it is important to determine whether educators believe that it is negatively impacting on their ability and on the learning potential in the classroom. Parents and educators may need further training in order to efficiently deal with this behaviour, especially with the introduction of inclusive education which may bring further disruptive difficulties into the classroom.

The following questions have been posed by the researcher:

1. What behaviours constitute as disruptive to teaching and learning?
2. What, from the perception of educators, is the extent of disruptive behaviour in foundation phase classrooms amongst schools in the Empangeni area?
3. According to the educators, what is the effect of disruptive behaviour to the teaching and learning process?

#### **1.4 Aims of the study**

This research intended to determine educators' perceptions of disruptive behaviour and its impact in the classroom. The results of this research identify whether disruptive behaviour is encountered by educators in the Empangeni and surrounding area and whether this impacts on the teaching and learning in these classrooms. The outcomes suggest whether further research will be required to focus on intervention strategies.

The aims of the study are listed below:

1. To determine which behaviours, occurring in the classroom, educators feel are disruptive to teaching and learning.
2. To determine the proportion of children in foundation phase classrooms that educators perceive to behave in a disruptive manner.
3. To determine what educators feel the implications of disruptive behaviour have for the teaching and learning process.

The researcher formulated the following hypotheses:

1. There will be an agreement among educators that disruptive behaviours may include: shouting out and interrupting in class; getting out of seat and moving around the classroom; and misplacing belongings such as stationery.
2. There will be a proportion of children in each class showing disruptive behaviour.

3. Educators will agree that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on the teaching and learning process.

## **1.5 Operational definitions**

Operational definitions were provided in order to ensure that the participants have a similar understanding of the terminology used in the questionnaire. It also allowed the participants to have an understanding of how the researcher defined the particular terms (Jackson, 2009).

### **1.5.1 Disruptive behaviour**

Kaplan, Gheen and Midgley (2002) describe disruptive behaviour as including speaking out in class without permission, getting out of chairs, and disrespect. Learners who talk amongst themselves when they are supposed to be attending to a task or listening to their educator, learners who fidget and are easily distracted from their tasks, and learners who unnecessarily disturb others in the classroom may also be said to be exhibiting disruptive behaviour. As it includes many behaviours, the researcher has chosen a flexible approach to defining disruptive behaviour. These behaviours disturb teaching and learning in the classroom.

### **1.5.2 Foundation Phase**

By use of the term 'foundation phase' this research is referring to the Junior Primary grades that include grade 1, grade 2, and grade 3.

## **1.6 Research Methodology**

### **1.6.1 Research Design**

The researcher aimed to retrieve the educators' observations and perceptions of disruptive behaviour in their classrooms through the use of a survey questionnaire. Whilst the research is largely quantitative in nature, the questionnaire made use of a mixed-method approach, with both quantitative and qualitative questions being incorporated into the survey (Coolidge, 2013; Durrheim, 1999; McBride, 2010; Van Vuuren & Maree, 1999).

### **1.6.2 Research Instrument**

A survey questionnaire was used in order to retrieve data from the educators selected in the sample. Questions were adapted from research conducted by Public Agenda (2004) and Guardino and Fullerton (2010). These questionnaires were sent out to educators of Grades 1, 2, and 3 from various schools in the Empangeni and surrounding area. The questionnaires included closed-ended questions, in order to determine the extent of disruptive behaviour in the classroom, and open-ended questions, in order to gain further insight into the perspectives of educators on the nature of the behaviour and its effect on teaching practices (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

### **1.6.3 Sample**

The units of analysis were the children who are currently in Junior Primary (grade 1 – grade 3); however, the teachers filled out the questionnaires. A sample of 25 schools from the Empangeni and surrounding area (Lower Umfolozi Circuit) was selected in order to ensure that the research is more representative of the area's population, thus making it more generalizable. Systematic probability sampling was used in order to ensure that every school (and Junior Primary teacher within each school) in the

Empangeni area had an equal chance of being selected for the study. Though simple random sampling may also have achieved this, the researcher decided on systematic sampling as it ensured that schools from each ward within the Lower Umfolozi Circuit would be represented. This made the sample more representative for the Empangeni and surrounding areas. Once the schools had been selected, every educator from grade 1, 2, and 3 was asked to complete a questionnaire (Durrheim, 1999; Van Vuuren & Maree, 1999).

#### **1.6.4 Procedure**

The researcher obtained a list of schools that fell within the Lower Umfolozi Circuit Office. Schools were contacted by the researcher, who sought permission from the principal to meet with the Junior Primary staff to explain the study and distribute questionnaires. Educators were provided sufficient time to complete the questionnaires and returned them via a process that ensured complete autonomy and confidentiality.

#### **1.6.5 Data collection and analysis**

A survey questionnaire was distributed to the sample selected. Whilst mostly quantitative, the qualitative questions of the questionnaire gave educators the opportunity to expand on answers if they had wished to do so. All responses were analysed in order to gain more insight into the perceptions of the educators regarding disruptive behaviour (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999).

Quantitative information from the questionnaires that were collected were coded so that the data could be entered into SPSS. Frequency distributions, in the form of tables, bar graphs, and cross-tabs were generated in order to analyse the data collected (Tredoux & Smith, 1999). The qualitative aspects of the questionnaire were analysed using content analysis, where common responses were classified into categories. Through analysis of the educators expansions on various questions, any commonalities that exist in the perceptions held by the educators with regards to disruptive behaviour and its

effects on educators, learners, parents, and the school could be determined (Struwig & Stead, 2001; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999).

### **1.6.6 Validity and Reliability**

In order to determine whether similar results would be achieved should the questionnaire be distributed again under similar conditions, Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was used in order to check the reliability of the study. An operational definition of disruptive behaviour was provided in the letter of informed consent in order to increase interrater reliability (McBride, 2010; Durrheim, 1999; Kazdin, 2000).

The questionnaire was designed so that the answers obtained would assist the researcher in meeting the aims set for this research. It is important that the research methods assess what the research aimed to study, otherwise it would not be valid. Research such as that conducted by Public Agenda (2004) and Guardiano and Fullerton (2010) was used to inform the development of this questionnaire. This assisted in improving the construct validity of this research. The use of probability sampling encouraged this study to be representative and generalizable to the population of the Empangeni and surrounding area and, thus, external validity was assured (Durrheim, 1999; McBride, 2010).

### **1.7 Ethical considerations**

Permission for participation in the research was first obtained by the Department of Education and then by the respective principals and educators. All participants in this study were given the choice to participate and were given all the information necessary in order for them to make an informed and autonomous decision. Each questionnaire had a covering letter and consent form attached. The letter explained to the educators the nature of the research and the consent form contained a declaration for the educator to fill in agreeing to participate in the study and for the information they provided to be used for research.

All participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality as names were not recorded on the questionnaires and questionnaires were placed into envelopes for collection by the researcher. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were discussed so that participants would be comfortable with their participation in the research. The dissertation will be made available to the participants should they wish to read it (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999).

The research will not harm any individuals involved as it aimed to cast light on the extent and effect of disruptive behaviour in classrooms. The information obtained from this research can be used in formulating plans to alleviate disruptive behaviour in the classroom, thus the principles of non-maleficence and beneficence have been addressed (Allan, 2008).

## **1.8 Plan of the study**

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter outlines the motivation behind the research and the aims that the researcher wishes to achieve. A list of definitions are provided to explain certain terms and what they mean to the researcher for this particular study.

### **Chapter 2**

Literature is reviewed in order to provide a basis for the research to be conducted. Previous research is critically analysed so that gaps in the research and areas requiring further research are identified. Information from this literature is also useful in strengthening this research.

### **Chapter 3**

The research design and the methodology used in this research is discussed. The reasons why various methods and techniques were chosen and their value to the research are outlined.

## **Chapter 4**

The results from the data collected is analysed and interpreted by the researcher. This chapter examines the results from statistical analysis and discusses this with reference to various literature reviewed by the researcher.

## **Chapter 5**

The findings are discussed and conclusions drawn with respect to the aims of the research. Recommendations are made for educators and the Department of Education in order to assist with alleviating disruptive behaviour. Avenues for further research are given with regards to disruptive behaviour and education.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a brief overview of the research conducted. It has provided a basic understanding of the research objectives and the methodology that have been used in order for these objectives to be met. The following chapter will go into more detail with relevant literature and research into the field of disruptive behaviour. This literature will be used to inform the current research and will shed light on the results obtained.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature review**

The following chapter will review various literature with regards to disruptive behaviour and education. Research in this field will be discussed and will provide the reader with a foundation on which the current research is based. The literature reviewed will focus on the differing interpretations of disruptive behaviour, the extent that educators believe they experience this behaviour in their classroom, and the impact that they perceive that it has on teaching and learning.

Disruptive behaviour can become a serious problem in the classroom and its effects can be widespread. It may affect the educators and their teaching competency and it can directly and indirectly affect the learners in the class. Its effects may extend past the classroom environment into the atmosphere of the school. Parents of the learner who shows disruptive behaviour will need to become involved in dealing with the problem and parents of children who are in a class with a child who is disruptive may wish that interventions be put in place in order to deal with it.

Prinsloo (2005) believes that many learners in South Africa are disadvantaged because there seems to be a lack of respect towards authority and many educators become disempowered when learners participate in undisciplined behaviour. Teachers from all over South Africa reported that attention-seeking and disruptive behaviour were the most common difficulties that interfere with their classroom routine. This behaviour may be caused by factors out of the educator's control, such as having a learner with Autism in the classroom, or dealing with learners who come from an insecure family background that lacks supportive structures, and/or poverty (to name a few examples). Educators have control over their classrooms and lessons and this is where they can attempt to reduce disruptive behaviour, through planning lessons that are engaging, setting up good reward and consequence strategies to use with learners, and setting a positive example for their learners (Prinsloo, 2005). Whilst it is always a good idea to plan interactive lessons for learners, very few teachers and parents (26% and 32% respectively in a study conducted in America) believed that misbehaviour was a result of a boring lesson (Public Agenda, 2004).

Extra pressure is placed on the shoulders of the educator to resolve the problems arising out of disruptive behaviour. Many educators may not be equipped to handle these kinds of situations and burnout may be the end result for some. Support needs to be provided to these educators by means of training and effective discipline policies in schools.

There appears to be a lack of research in this area, especially in the South African context. The following discussion makes use of largely international literature. This suggests a need for South African research into the various areas of disruptive behaviour, possible causality, and the effects it has on various members/systems in society. The literature below will inform this research, which will hopefully open the door toward more research into this field.

## **2.1 Theoretical framework**

Vygostky believed that knowledge is constructed by the individual. Individuals made their own meanings from the world around them. A child would actively engage in the environment and interact socially in order to create knowledge. New knowledge would be constructed by an individual during participation in social activities. This information would then be internalized in the child and, once the concepts were taken on by the child, they would have developed to another level and would be ready to tackle something more challenging. One can imagine that disruptive behaviour may affect the abovementioned process of learning as it disturbs social participation and interaction in learning activities. This may result in hindering the learning of the child that is disruptive as well as the other children in the classroom (Mahn, 1999; Santrock, 2002).

Behaviour therapy stipulates that the environmental conditions that one existed in determined the actions, or behaviours, that one engaged in. BF Skinner, a chief proponent for the behavioural methodology, believed that too much attention had been given to the mind and the unconscious and that too little had been given to the effects of the environment. One could not observe the mind, whereas the environment could be observed and changes made in order to create change in the individual or, in the case of this research, the classroom. This approach can be used

to address disruptive behaviour in classrooms as the environment is assessed, goals are developed and changes are made in order to encourage behavioural change (Corey, 2005; Kuruvilla, 2010; Skinner, 1985). There are four main approaches to behavioural therapy; classical conditioning, operant conditioning, social learning theory, and cognitive behaviour therapy. Each of these will be discussed briefly below.

Classical conditioning involves learning through a pairing response. Pavlov discovered that, through pairing responses, one could encourage learning. This implied that a neutral stimulus (such as the bell in Pavlov's experiment) could produce the same response (saliva) as the original stimulus (food). Skinner criticised Pavlov saying that his approach could not be applied to all aspects of learned behaviour. He believed that saliva response is too simple in looking at learner behaviour and questioned whether the same effects would have occurred if the experiment involved tears, sweat or other glands. He did not discredit Pavlov for the work he did however he did work with a different approach to learning, namely operant conditioning (Corey, 2005; Santrock, 2002; Skinner, 1966).

In operant conditioning, learning occurs through consequences of actions. Skinner believed that individuals simply come to behave in certain ways as a result of the surrounding environment. Processes such as reinforcement and punishment play a role in encouraging learning and will ultimately determine the behaviour of an individual. Reinforcement involves a consequence to a given behaviour in order to encourage it. This can be done positively, by giving something to the individual (in the form of praise or a reward), or negatively, through the avoidance of something unpleasant (a reprimand). Punishment is a consequence that aims to decrease behaviour. Positive punishment is where an unpleasant stimulus occurs after behaviour (such as a hiding) whereas negative punishment is where something pleasant is taken away as a result of behaviour (favourite toy). These behavioural methods can be easily adapted into classroom scenarios in order to assist the teacher in dealing with disruptive behaviour (Corey, 2005; Skinner, 1985; Witkiewitz & Marlatt, 2011).

Bandura believed that people were capable of guiding their own behaviour and that learning occurred as a result of a combination of factors, including the environment, operant conditions such as reinforcement, and cognitive functions such as thought processes. Whilst Skinner neglected the importance of cognition in development, the social learning approach takes this into account, as well as the environment and behaviour. Bandura stressed the importance of observational learning, where an individual learns through modeling and imitation of others. Disruptive behaviour may interfere with these factors and therefore interfere with each child's learning potential (Corey, 2005; Santrock, 2002).

The cognitive behaviour therapy approach views the changing of an individual's cognitions as a means of making changes in the individual's life. This approach postulates that cognition has a role to play in individual's actions and behaviours. Experience plays a role in the development of thinking. Thoughts and perceptions influence emotions and behaviours. Functional behaviour occurs when emotions are appropriate and there is no suffering. Dysfunctional behaviour occurs with inappropriate emotions. This results in a lack of achievement of goals by the individual, in this case possible lack of progress in learning. Most people are able to change their thoughts as a result of being aware of them, as well as of their behaviours (Clark, 2010; Corey, 2005; DiGiuseppe & Bernard, 1990).

Where disruptive behaviour in the classroom is concerned, the pupils in the class need to be made aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour through reinforcement, praise and, where necessary, punishment. Through the implementation of behavioural modification strategies the teacher will be teaching these children to become more aware of their own behaviours as well as encouraging behavioural change. This may facilitate learning as a decrease in disruptive behaviour may result by using these strategies. The following section will deal with the aspect of disruptive behaviour in more detail.

## **2.2 Characteristics of disruptive behaviour**

Disruptive behaviour is a very broad term that encompasses many aspects of a child's behaviour. It is important to consider various definitions of disruptive

behaviour as each researcher may define it differently (Arbuckle & Little, 2004). This researcher found disruptive behaviour to include shouting out in class and/or talking out of turn and moving around the class without permission. These behaviours are also included in Guardino & Fullerton's (2010) definition of disruptive behaviour.

Research conducted by Public Agenda (2004) shows that some of the following behaviours were reported as being problematic for educators: speaking out, playing around, disrespect, cheating, tardiness, bullying, rowdiness, truancy, drugs, and physical fighting. Other problem behaviours included not paying attention, being uncooperative, and hyperactive behaviour (Shen, Zhang, Zhang, Caldarella, Richardson & Shatzer, 2009). Arbuckle and Little (2004) found that educators believed minor behavioural problems and recurrent misbehaviour to be challenging and were not as concerned about bigger behavioural issues or violent behaviour. The main concern of teachers that this study highlighted were distractibility, following classroom rules, and whether learners could focus on a task (Arbuckle & Little, 2004).

Shen *et al.* (2009) asked educators about their perceptions towards the behaviour problems experienced in their classrooms. Common categories of disruptive behaviour, as well as specific behaviours to each category, were gleaned from their research. The researchers found that talking out of turn was one of the more frequent problem behaviours appearing in their class and that it was difficult to deal with. Teachers believed non-attention through behaviours such as lack of focus on teaching and on learning activities was a problem in the classroom. Learners were found to laugh at other learners who were answering questions. Hyperactive learners created a challenge for the teacher as they would move around the classroom, couldn't stay in their seats, made disruptive noises, and they would fiddle with items at their desks. Educators were also challenged by children talking out of turn and interrupting their teacher or other learners, and learners being uncooperative and non-compliant in academic tasks (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Teachers struggled with learners who did not have appropriate stationery and did not persevere with classroom activities. Pushing, drawing on other learners' workbooks, taking things from others - basically interfering with the learning of other children -

were also mentioned as problem behaviours. Withdrawal by not speaking in class and being nervous, and emotional issues, such as crying and conflict situations, were also categories of problem behaviours mentioned by educators (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Disrespect and inattentiveness were behaviours found to have caused stress and burnout in teachers, disrespect being the highest contributor. Included under disrespect were behaviours such as shouting out and interruption, untidiness, tardiness, and not having the correct school supplies such as stationery and/or textbooks. Inattentiveness involved slow comprehension, incomplete school or homework, and lack of concentration in class (Friedman, 1995).

Herbert (1998, p. 105) defined disruptive behaviour as 'interference with another person so that he or she is prevented from continuing some ongoing activity or is caused displeasure'. Prinsloo (2005) believed that it is a behaviour that negatively affects learning. These definitions are very broad and are appropriate for this research as it aimed to investigate perceptions of the term disruptive behaviour so narrower definitions may limit the study.

### **2.3 The extent of disruptive behaviour in the classroom**

Whilst one may never be able to determine the exact amount of disruptive behaviour that occurs in every classroom, one can form an idea by viewing various research that has investigated disruptive behaviour in the classroom. There will be a variation between classrooms in levels of disruptive behaviour (Kaplan, Gheen & Midgley, 2002). In a study looking at teachers' perceptions of behaviour problems in China, the educators believed that 15.5% of their learners had behaviour problems. These teachers claimed to be spending around 14.5% of lesson time involved in discipline, and 44.6% of the respondents believed that too much of their time was spent dealing with behaviour problems (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

High levels of disruptive behaviour were found in a fourth grade classroom of 17 learners in research by Guardino and Fullerton (2010). This was conducted at a school in a low socioeconomic area. In another study, conducted by Public Agenda

(2004) 77% of the educators surveyed felt that if disruptive behaviour didn't take up so much of their time their teaching would be more effective. Of all the participants 69% believed that disruptive behaviour, such as 'talking out' or playful behaviour, is a 'very' or 'somewhat' serious problem.

Almost half of the parents (43%) believed that if the educator was not spending so much time dealing with discipline in the classroom, their child would be learning a lot more (Public Agenda, 2004). Findings from research done by Bru (2009) revealed that almost 80% of the learners who participated reported that they talked to classmates without permission. Disturbing other learners was something a third of the participants admitted to doing and a quarter of the learners disturbed teaching. Many of these students indicated that they would want less disruptive behaviour in their class (Bru, 2009).

Public Agenda (2004) found that behaviour problems were more serious in schools with a large population of learners from a disadvantaged background. The belief that discipline is one of the biggest problems at their school was supported by 42% of educators from rural schools, 25% from rural schools, and 26% from suburban schools. Shen *et al.* (2009) also found that less disruptive behaviour was reported by schools from urban areas. Educators from lower grade levels seemed to experience more disruptive behaviour than teachers from higher grades according to Shen *et al.* (2009). The teachers from the higher grades appeared to spend less time in dealing with disruptive behaviour and specified lower percentages of their class as behaving in a disruptive manner.

## **2.4 The effects of disruptive behaviour**

### **2.4.1 Impact on teaching**

In a study conducted by Public Agenda (2004) teachers and parents of intermediate and high school learners in America were asked numerous questions regarding discipline in schools. Of the educators surveyed, 77% felt that if disruptive behaviour did not take up so much of their time, their teaching would be more effective. In another study, 44.6% of the educators in the survey believed that too much of their

time was being spent in dealing with behaviour problems. These teachers claimed to be spending around 14.5% of lesson time involved in discipline (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Educators may become discouraged when they feel that they are not managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom. This may result in their losing motivation in their teaching and in creating lessons that are engaging. Learners may lose motivation and this reduces their ability to learn effectively and thus underachievement can occur. Underachievement can result in many negative consequences, including learners leaving school prematurely, undesirable social behaviour, and poverty (Prinsloo, 2005).

Kaplan *et al.* (2002) conducted research that investigated whether the classroom goal structure had any effect on disruptive behaviour. They categorized the teachers as either using performance-approach (where the learners were encouraged to do better than others), performance-avoidance (where learners would be motivated because they wanted to avoid being worse off than another), and mastery (where learners were encouraged to learn and understand and improve over their own past performance). The findings revealed that a classroom that was based on mastery goals is likely to show less disruptive behaviour than a classroom that was performance-based, thus showing that the classroom situation may influence a student with regards to exhibiting disruptive behaviour (Kaplan *et al.*, 2002).

Educators may find that behaviour modification strategies and training in self-management may not be sufficient interventions when trying to alleviate disruptive behaviour. Thus, rather than focusing on rules, consequences, and control, one may need to consider the classroom goal structure as another strategy in order to lessen the amount of disruption in the classroom (Kaplan *et al.*, 2002).

If an educator perceived that they were able to gain control through behaviours or action, then they would be more likely to repeat those behaviours and actions in order to maintain control. Perceived control (the belief an educator has about his/her own control over the class) plus an educator's orientation (what role they play in the classroom and their attitudes towards teaching and discipline) towards teaching

seemed to affect whether the educator makes use of authoritarian or non-authoritarian strategies (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004).

If a teacher believed that he or she did not have much control over his or her classroom and he or she had a protective orientation, the teacher tended to make use of authoritarian strategies in dealing with classroom behaviour. An educator with perception of high control in their class, and who had a humanistic approach to teaching, seemed to make use of non-authoritarian strategies. What Rydell and Henricsson also found is that educators did not have an extensive knowledge of intervention strategies to refer to when dealing with behaviour problems and suggest that more alternative interventions need to be made available to educators if we want to effectively deal with disruptive behaviour in our classrooms. Research needs to focus on teacher strategies and their outcomes in order to determine which methods would be more suitable for certain individuals in order to promote healthy development (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004).

According to research done by Hamre, Pianta, Downer & Mashburn, (2008), there was a slightly higher chance of learners with disruptive behaviour having a conflictual relationship with their educator. Perceptions of problem behaviour by educators accounted for 53% of teachers' reports of conflict. What this does suggest, however, is that problem behaviour did not always result in a bad relationship with an educator. Other factors in the teacher's life, such as feelings of depression, lack of confidence in teaching skills, or lack of support, may play a role in creating conflict relationships between teachers and learners (Hamre *et al.*, 2008). One might find that those learners who are disruptive in class receive the most attention from the educator, whilst those who behave in a desirable manner do not receive attention from the teacher. Thus, learners who may need additional support from teachers may not be receiving it. Other learners may not be able to focus as a result of the behaviour of a learner who is disruptive (Prinsloo, 2005).

#### **2.4.2 Impact on learning**

In a study of children who were four or five years old it was found that if the learner had problem behaviour this would affect their outcomes in mathematics and reading

programmes. These learners were also more likely to show insufficient development in their motivation to learn, as well as ability to concentrate and show persistence with a task (Bulotsky-Shearer, Fernandez, Dominguez & Rouse, 2011). Given ten problem behaviours, teachers rated talking out of turn as second to last in negatively affecting the development of learners. Uncooperative behaviour was believed to have serious negative effects on learners as it was rated second on this list (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Bru (2009) found that disruptive behaviour did not necessarily result in lower academic outcomes for the other learners in the class; however, the disruptive learner him/herself tended to have lower academic results than the other learners in the class. He found non-significant associations between the marks of all learners in a class and disruptive behaviour; however, the learner who was disruptive may show lower academic achievement than other classmates. A positive correlation was found with disruptive behaviour and being male (with low mathematics grades) in a study involving disruptive behaviour and classroom goal structure (Kaplan *et al.*, 2002).

Although Bru's research revealed that academic outcomes were not that much lower in classrooms with disruptive learners, 40% of the learners felt that their concentration was affected by excess noise created by classmates and 60% felt that if they had more peace in the classroom they would be able to learn better (2009). His research suggested that it was possible for disruptive learners to be in mainstream classes without affecting the academics of other learners. In these cases, resources and additional support would need to be available for the educator (Bru, 2009).

Kohen, Oliver & Pierre (2009) found that the outcomes of children in Kindergarten could be affected by the surrounding neighbourhood but that the school had a more important role in shaping their learners' outcomes. Disruptive behaviour may stem from emotional and/or behavioural problems. Either way, it was a challenge for educators and disrupts learning. This may affect the learning outcomes of the disruptive child as well as the other learners in the classroom (Wehby, Lane & Falk, 2003). South Africa has a socioeconomic structure that places many children in

classrooms such as the ones described above. Many of our learners do not live in ideal home circumstances either. It is important to determine the effect this has on disruptive behaviour and on learning, as educators need to be able to counteract these external influences on education.

Generally, where a disruptive learner is involved the educator will deal with it in a way that will detract from that learner's academics, such as by removing the learner from the classroom or giving them a time-out. During this time the learner is obviously missing out on what is being taught in the lessons which can be detrimental to his academic growth. Research seems to focus more on interventions to deal with the behaviour rather than interventions that equip educators to teach learners regardless of this behaviour (Wehby *et al.*, 2003).

Wehby *et al.* (2003) questioned the idea that learners' behaviour needs to be under control before the educator can commence teaching that learner. In other words, learning may be suffering because the educator was focusing so much time and energy on the discipline in the classroom. They suggest that one needs to consider the academic needs of these learners with emotional and behavioural disorders and accommodate them, perhaps through training our educators in being better able to cope with the behaviours and not allowing them to affect their teaching.

### **2.4.3 Impact on classroom management**

Many educators (86%) battled when it came to dealing with disruptive behaviour and 45.5% of these educators found the greatest challenge to be figuring out effective solutions to manage the problem behaviour. It was mainly the less experienced teachers who found this. Generally the more experienced teachers reported less time being spent on behaviour problems (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

In a study conducted by Arbuckle and Little (2004), educators were surveyed in order to determine their perceptions and management of disruptive behaviour. This was for educators teaching in the middle years of school in Australia (years five to nine). The researchers found that 52.1% of respondents felt confident in how they managed their classroom and only 1% indicated that they did not feel confident.

However, 40.6% of the respondents did not select an answer and the researchers questioned whether this suggests that they were uncomfortable admitting that they did not feel confident (Arbuckle & Little, 2004).

Teachers new to the profession have more difficulty in dealing with disruptive behaviour and discipline issues due to their lack of experience. Of those surveyed in a study conducted by Public Agenda (2004), 85% found this to be true. A focus group was held as part of this same study and educators mentioned that a lack of experience and a lack of training resulted in new teachers being more susceptible to the negative effects of disruptive behaviour. The idea that an improvement in student behaviour could be achieved by teacher training institutions placing more focus on the management of a classroom was supported by 91% of the educators surveyed in research conducted by Public Agenda (2004).

In order to study the effects of classroom environment on behaviour, an intervention was implemented in a Grade four class where there was disruptive behaviour such as shouting out, throwing things, hitting and pushing and ignoring instructions. The intervention involved three steps: firstly, the educator had to observe disruptive behaviour in the class and what led up to it and how the areas of the classroom were being used at the time; secondly, the educator needed to focus on the areas in the classroom that tended to create disruptive behaviour and make changes to these areas; and thirdly, the teacher needed to constructively criticize the changes and their effects and make further changes if necessary (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010).

Before changes in the classroom occurred the engagement of the learners in the class was around 3%. Once the modification had taken place this engagement went up to around 45%. Disruptive behaviour decreased soon after the modification had been implemented but the final observations were inconsistent and may suggest that the effects of change may not last long-term. Despite this the educator reported overall satisfaction with the improvement in learner behaviour in response to the changes made in the classroom. She found that it had improved involvement in academics and reduced disruptive behaviour. This kind of intervention would require training in classroom modification, which is something that may need to be included

in tertiary education, should it be found that disruptive behaviour is a problem that educators are struggling to deal with (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010).

An intervention known as 'tootling' was implemented in third grade classrooms to research whether it could be used as a means of reducing disruptive behaviour. Tootling is where a child reported another child's prosocial behaviour to the educator. The educator then read out all the reports of prosocial behaviours she received at the end of each day. The findings showed that when the educator was making use of tootling in her class the levels of disruptive behaviour dropped significantly. This study made use of a small sample and thus more research would need to be done in order for the findings to become more generalizable. It does suggest that it may prove to be an effective means of dealing with disruptive behaviour, particularly with the younger grades (Cihak, Kirk & Boon, 2009).

Reactive discipline tends to be the chosen intervention strategy. This is put into effect after the behaviour has already occurred. It often involves strategies such as time out, a loss of privileges, etc. Proactive discipline is more preventative and encourages appropriate behaviour as opposed to setting a negative consequence in response to a disruptive behaviour. This type of discipline may involve using a certain type of language or discussing feelings in an attempt to prevent that behaviour from occurring (Nungesser & Watkins, 2005).

Ellis & Tod (2009) believe that too much attention is paid towards stopping an undesirable behaviour and not enough attention is paid towards promoting a desirable behaviour. Though there may be times when one will need to stop a behaviour, such as talking out of turn or other disruptive behaviours, one also needs to implement strategies that will promote acceptable behaviour, such as completing work quietly (Ellis & Tod, 2009). Teachers and learners may benefit by the teacher concentrating on positive educator-learner interactions during teaching and classroom activities. This would improve the learners' social, emotional and behavioural capabilities and encourage engagement in the lessons, thereby reducing disruptive behaviour in the classroom (Conroy, Sutherland, Haydon, Stormant & Harmon, 2009).

There may be benefits to training educators in effective communication skills in order to reduce disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Reactive discipline, which largely makes use of behavioural modification strategies and reward and punishment strategies, may not fully deal with the disruptive behaviour and where the behaviour may be stemming from. It may be more effective to train educators in using both behavioural strategies as well as how to communicate effectively to the learners in order to manage their behaviour in the classroom (Nungesser & Watkins, 2005).

#### **2.4.4 Impact on schools**

Discipline and behaviour are necessary in order for schools to thrive. This statement was supported by 97% of the educators and 78% of the parents who completed questionnaires regarding discipline policies. The principal was seen as the individual who needs to be the example as to the expectations regarding discipline. This was agreed on by every nine out of ten educators (Public Agenda, 2004).

The belief that the few individuals presenting with behaviour problems ruined the school experience for many of the other learners was supported by 85% of teachers and 73% of parents. Parents (88%) and teachers (91%) believed that schools can avoid larger discipline problems by ensuring the minor rules are obeyed. Many educators (six in every ten) felt that their school could be doing more in terms of instilling discipline with regards to general misbehaviour (Public Agenda, 2004).

School management needs to be aware of the effect that disruptive behaviour may be having on their educators. Many educators may be too lenient when it comes to discipline as they feel that they don't receive much support from the school or the learners' parents. A finding from Public Agenda (2004) show that 52% of educators believed this is the case and that misbehaviour of learners is a result of this leniency.

School resources may need to be reviewed in order to assess how these may be contributing towards disruptive behaviour. Over half the parents surveyed (54%) and 62% of teachers felt that behaviour problems could be due to too many learners being placed in a classroom. It appeared that schools that cater for higher numbers

of learners from a disadvantaged background reported more problems with discipline (Public Agenda, 2004).

Poverty and under-resourced classrooms were found to be associated with increased rates of disruptive behaviour at school (Thomas *et al.*, 2008). From research mentioned earlier, in which rural schools seem to report more disruptive behaviour than urban schools, and junior primary educators seemed to have more difficulty with it than senior educators, schools need to be aware of their socio-economic situation and plan interventions based on it. Interventions may need to specifically focus on the junior grades in order to successfully deal with disruptive behaviour and this may also pave the way towards less disruptive behaviour in the more senior grades (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Findings from a study conducted by Thomas *et al.* (2008) suggested that in order to effectively prevent disruptive behaviour not only the school, but also the parents, need to implement interventions. Examples of such preventative interventions could include the training of educators in classroom management, improving the learners' concentration and engagement in lessons, and improving the family structure at home to offer more support to the learner. These would be particularly beneficial in economically disadvantaged areas (Thomas *et al.*, 2008).

In China, rural schools seemed to report a larger amount of disruptive behaviour than urban schools. Rural educators also reported battling to deal with discipline issues more so than urban teachers. These educators claimed that they battle to understand the feelings of their learners. It seems that disruptive behaviour is more prominent in the lower grades, with higher grade level teachers reporting fewer incidences of behaviour problems. The lower grade teachers reported over-active behaviour as being a problem and having a negative effect on the learners (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

In a study conducted by Thomas, Bierman, Thompson & Powers (2008), the effects of home and school conditions in contributing towards aggressive-disruptive behaviour in the first grade was examined. The schools were selected due to their economic disadvantage. School variables included low quality classrooms and high

rates of student poverty and the vulnerabilities coming from the child included aggression at home, poor attention, aggressiveness and hostility. The findings from this research supported the hypothesis that aggressive-disruptive behaviour could be predicted based on the child and school situations (Thomas *et al.*, 2008).

#### **2.4.5 Impact on peer groups**

If one wants to be included in a social group one has to have characteristics that are attractive to those around one. Problem behaviours may affect whether the learner is accepted into a peer group or not. One particular study focused on these affects. They found that disruptive behaviour exhibited in the past and in the present would place a child at risk for low social inclusion. There was a significant association between problem behaviour in grade 1 and feelings of loneliness and low peer acceptance in grade 6 (Nyberg, Henricsson & Rydell, 2008). Apart from the fact that non-disruptive learners may lose out on teacher time, they may also be implicated into class punishments due to the disruptive learners' behaviours. These learners may, in turn, isolate or become aggressive towards those learners that exhibit disruptive behaviour (Ellis & Tod, 2009).

One needs to be aware that externalizing behaviour may also be used as a protective measure against feelings of loneliness. Boys generally reported more feelings of loneliness and showed more externalizing behaviour. The behaviour they engaged in would have received attention from others and even though it may be negative attention, the child may feel as though they were a part of the group (Nyberg *et al.*, 2008). Social skills lessons may be an option that would assist learners to interact with one another appropriately. By receiving the attention of friends (and in a positive manner) the need to be disruptive in class may be reduced.

In research by Thomas *et al.* (2008), it was found that males exhibited more aggressive behaviour than female children. Kaplan *et al.* (2002) found that disruptive behaviour tended to be more positively associated with being male. Interestingly, Hartley (1980) found that teachers were more likely to describe male learners in less positive terms with regards to their behaviour and schoolwork than their female learners. Researchers would need to bear this in mind when studying

the perceptions of teachers with reference to gender as bias may exist on the part of the teacher towards a particular gender.

Arbuckle and Little (2004) found that there were higher levels of concern by educators towards male learners engaging in disruptive behaviour. These researchers also discovered that males displayed higher levels of aggressive or disruptive behaviour in secondary school years when compared to primary school years. This difference was not seen with female learners. Chinese educators also found that behaviour problems tend to be more common amongst the male learners in their classrooms (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Educators must bear in mind that research has shown that even at a young age, girls may affiliate themselves with friends who have behaviour problems and thus intervention strategies need to ensure that both male and female learners will respond to them (Miller, Loeber & Hipwell, 2009).

#### **2.4.6 Impact on parents**

In a study conducted by Nungesser & Watkins (2005), educators reported that the home environment played a large role in the creation of disruptive behaviour in a learner. Thomas *et al.* (2008) found an association between aggressive-disruptive behaviour at home and aggressive-disruptive behaviour at school with grade one children. There needs to be a consistency between the learner's school and home life and parents need to be involved in intervention plans.

The Public Agenda (2004) survey revealed that 82% of the educators and 74% of the parents felt that ill-discipline by the parents at home was largely to blame for the behaviour problems occurring in schools and 69% of the teachers believed that discipline would improve should parents take more accountability at home. Interestingly, only 34% of the parents believed that they had managed to instil discipline in their child. Many parents (43%) believed that if the educator was not spending so much time dealing with discipline in the classroom, their child would be learning a lot more. The same number of parents felt that the disciplining of general misbehaviour needed to be improved by the school. Many parents and teachers (seven of every ten surveyed) believed that it was the general culture of disrespect

that exists in our society that leads to the discipline issues arising in our schools (Public Agenda, 2004).

Miller *et al.*, (2009) found that low warmth and strict discipline by parents contributed to the ability to predict disruptive behaviour in seven and eight-year old girls. However it was also found that parenting styles (and delinquent peers) could not be used to predict the responses educators gave when rating disruptive behaviour (Miller *et al.*, 2009).

Parents need to consider their own children's characteristics in determining how to deal with disruptive behaviour. In a study that looked at factors that contribute to disruptive behaviour in early childhood, it was found that if the child had a lower level of physiological regulation - in other words, they were not able to manage their own behaviour effectively - their mother would need to have more control over their behaviour. These children would benefit from more structure. If a child has a high level of physiological regulation their reaction to high maternal control may result in increasing their disruptive behaviour. Thus parents need to consider their child's frustration levels and how they react to discipline; they need to consider whether their child is capable of regulating their own behaviour or not (Degnan, Calkins, Keane & Hill-Soderlund, 2008).

#### **2.4.7 Impact on educators**

Friedman (1995) conducted research investigating whether learner behaviour contributed towards burnout in educators, more specifically towards male and female educators with different beliefs with regards to controlling learners. Whilst the behaviour of learners did have a large effect on burnout, other factors need to be considered. A disrespectful attitude towards staff and/or peers had a large influence on teacher burnout. There were no differences amongst educators in terms of the disruptive behaviour they were exposed to; however, there did appear to be a connection between the educator beliefs and what they felt contributed to burnout. Educators with a more humanistic approach to teaching struggled more in dealing with disrespect, whilst educators who were more custodial seemed to be more affected by learners not paying attention. Non-attention played a greater role in

affecting male teacher burnout, whilst disrespect affected female educator burnout (Friedman, 1995).

What this research suggests is that interventions dealing with disruptive behaviour need to take into account the educator's gender as well as their ideologies towards teaching. Educators may have the same exposure to disruptive behaviour but may react differently towards it and thus how they are affected by the behaviour will be different. This implies that interventions need to be varied and possible coping skills need to be made available for individual educators (Friedman, 1995).

Otero López, Santiago, Godás, Castro, Villardefrances & Ponte (2008) have found negative correlations between aspects of educator burnout, such as exhaustion and depersonalisation, and family and friend support structures, optimism, and hardiness. Exhaustion and depersonalisation were positively correlated with issues such as learner disruptive behaviour, conflict, and lack of support with regards to discipline. A teacher with good support structures and optimism would more likely develop a sense of personal accomplishment. However this would be negatively affected should there be issues such as disruptive behaviour and lack of support (Otero López *et al.*, 2008).

From the above study it was found that student disruptive behaviour mostly contributed to emotional exhaustion in educators, whilst the lack of support in issues regarding discipline were more likely to contribute towards depersonalisation. Feelings of personal accomplishment seemed to be affected by conflict management and the difficulty educators experienced with this (Otero López *et al.*, 2008).

Chang (2009) takes a different approach to teacher burnout, stating that it was the educators' perception towards the behaviour that resulted in the effect that the behaviour had towards them experiencing burnout. In other words, the reaction the educator had towards a particular behaviour may actually be the cause of the burnout (Chang, 2009).

Some educators admitted that discipline and behaviour problems have resulted in them contemplating resignation from the teaching profession. As many as one in

three educators found this statement to be true or know someone who has actually left teaching because the disciplining of learners has become unbearable. Many educators (49% of teachers surveyed) reported that disciplining a learner has resulted in unfair accusations from parents (Public Agenda, 2004). Once again this highlights the importance of involving the parents in the intervention strategies used. Parents need to take responsibility from their side to implement the strategies and to continue working with the educator and school in order to resolve problem behaviour and improve development of their child.

Educators require training in order to develop the skills necessary to assess and manage disruptive behaviour. This will provide them with effective strategies that will reduce the amount of disruptive behaviour in their classroom. Through training, educators will become more confident in their discipline strategies and will therefore be better able to positively influence their learners. They will also then be able to focus on supporting the learners and guiding them towards reaching their potential (Prinsloo, 2005). Much of the research mentioned points to the positive impact a mentoring system may have for less experienced educators. Research suggests that mentoring of less experienced teachers by those with experience may be beneficial in alleviating problem behaviour in the classroom (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This researcher has experienced many of the above situations described whilst teaching and understands the frustrations related to dealing with disruptive behaviours. The researcher did not have a good repertoire of intervention strategies as this was not something that was taught during studies towards becoming an educator. The researcher studied a Postgraduate Certificate in Education for the foundation phase. Many educators in this country are in a similar situation and thus more emphasis may need to be placed in training them in strategies that will assist them, especially those who are less experienced.

Research in this field is very limited and hard to find and thus this research will form a base that other research may stem from. It will also provide insight into educators and their experiences in the classroom with regards to disruptive behaviour. It is this

researcher's belief that disruptive behaviour will present as a problem for many schools and educators, however there is no research to confirm this. It will also be interesting to get educators' opinions of what they classify disruptive behaviour to encompass and what their difficulties are in dealing with these behaviours. In this way, researchers can target specific difficulties and look at ways to address them.

This chapter has outlined relevant literature and research surrounding the topic of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The literature reviewed will be used to inform the current study in terms of methodology, analysis, and results. The following chapter will present the methodology that the researcher will use in order to elicit data regarding disruptive behaviour.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology**

The following chapter will specify the methodology the researcher used in going about the research. It will highlight the goals of the research and then discuss the research methods in terms of the sample, the research instrument, the administration procedure, as well as validity and reliability concerns. Ethical considerations will also be discussed, as well as problems that the researcher came across during the process. Finally, the method of data analysis will be explained.

This research aimed to gather data regarding teachers' perceptions of disruptive behaviour of learners, and its impact in the classroom. This was done through the use of a survey questionnaire. It targeted schools from the Empangeni and surrounding area and was intended for educators teaching Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3. A mixed-method approach was used to gather this data, whereby the researcher formulated a questionnaire that made use of mostly quantitative, but also some qualitative, questions. Educators were asked to complete the questionnaires; however, the units of analysis were the children in their classes. This study involved observation and there was no manipulation of variables (Jackson, 2009).

#### **3.1 Research Goals**

The researcher aimed to study educators' perceptions of disruptive behaviour and its impact in the classroom. This research focused on educators' beliefs and it aimed to determine whether educators considered disruptive behaviour in the classroom to be problematic, and to what extent. It also sought to understand what types of behaviours educators classified as disruptive. The research explored educators' beliefs regarding the impact that disruptive behaviour has on aspects such as teaching, learning, classroom management, school support systems, peer groups, parents, and educators.

The following questions were posed by the researcher:

1. What behaviours constitute as disruptive to teaching and learning?
2. What, in the perception of educators, is the extent of disruptive behaviour in foundation phase classrooms amongst schools in the Empangeni area?
3. According to the educators, what is the effect of disruptive behaviour to the teaching and learning process?

### **3.2 Qualitative Research**

The inclusion of open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided the educators with the opportunity to embellish on answers so that the researcher could gain more insight into their perceptions towards disruptive behaviour and its impact in the classroom. This also meant that educators would not be confined to the researcher's (possibly limited) options for answers and thus it provided the opportunity for new ideas to be introduced, which the researcher may not have considered in the initial hypothesis.

### **3.3 Quantitative Research**

The survey questionnaire was largely quantitative in that it involved responses that provided numerical data. This method was selected as it meant a number of questionnaires could be sent out in order for a larger amount of data to be collected and analysed. This increased the external validity of the study and meant that it was possible for the results to be generalizable to other schools in the Empangeni area that were not a part of the sample (McBride, 2010).

### **3.4 Research Design**

#### **3.4.1 Sample**

A list of schools in Kwazulu Natal was retrieved from the Kwazulu Natal Department of Education website. The researcher selected all the schools that fell within the Lower Umfolozi Circuit in the Empangeni district. As the research was examining the foundation phase, all high schools were eliminated from the list. The researcher

was left with 156 schools that were arranged alphabetically according to the following wards; Kwambonambi, Mhlana, Mthonjaneni, Ndundulu, Ngwelezane, Ntambanana, Obuka, Richards Bay, and Umbiya (Department of Education, 2012).

Similar to the research conducted by Public Agenda (2004), this researcher made use of random probability sampling. This was used in order to ensure that every school (and Junior Primary teacher within each school) in the Empangeni and surrounding area had an equal chance of being selected for the study. This increased the representativeness of the research and reduced possible sampling error. The researcher originally considered the use of simple random sampling as this method would have ensured that every school on the list had an equal probability of being selected. In many cases this would have provided the most representative selection of individuals from the population for the sample as it reduces the chance of over- or under-representing a particular group and thus reduces sampling error. After further consideration the researcher decided to use systematic sampling as, by using this method, the researcher ensured that schools from each ward were represented. This in effect meant that the results were more generalizable to each ward as well as to the Lower Umfolozi Circuit population. Simple random sampling would not necessarily have achieved this (McBride, 2010; Durrheim, 1999; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Struwig & Stead, 2001; Van Vuuren & Maree, 1999).

In a study conducted by Hartley (1980), the educators' perceptions towards male and female learners was researched using two schools. Due to the limited number of schools selected the study did not have the ability to be generalized to the larger population. Otero Lopez *et al.* (2008) incorporated 1386 teachers into their sample, thereby creating a very representative study. Studies conducted by Bru (2009), Kohen *et al.* (2009), Public Agenda (2004) and Kaplan *et al.* (2002) also made use of large samples, which made their results more generalizable.

This researcher selected 26 schools to which questionnaires were sent. This research was aimed at a relatively small population (Empangeni and surrounding area). A sampling ratio of 16.67% was achieved by selecting 26 schools from a list of 156 schools. The number of schools used ensured a representative population

from each area was targeted, thus it made the results more generalizable to the entire population. This also reduced sampling error as it reduced the difference in the observations between the sample group and the entire population of teachers in the Empangeni area (McBride, 2010; Durrheim, 1999; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Van Vuuren & Maree, 1999).

Schools were selected through the use of systematic sampling, where every sixth school on the list was chosen to be included in the sample. The researcher wrote out numbers one to ten on individual slips of paper. These were placed into a box and an individual was selected to pick a number. The number seven was selected and thus the researcher began with the seventh school on the list and included every sixth school after that into the sample. Either two or three schools from each of the above-mentioned wards were selected to be included in the sample (McBride, 2010; Durrheim, 1999; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996; Van Vuuren & Maree, 1999).

A questionnaire was given to every Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 educator from each school selected as part of the sample. A total of 129 questionnaires were distributed and a total of 92 questionnaires were collected back. The response rate achieved was 71.32%. This was a high response rate when compared with research by Arbuckle and Little (2004) which achieved a response rate of 27.4%. These researchers had sent questionnaires out to 350 educators and 96 questionnaires were returned.

### **3.4.2 Instrument**

The researcher wished to examine educators' observations regarding disruptive behaviour of their learners, thus an appropriate choice of instrument was the use of a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was formulated by the researcher, with some of the questions being adapted from surveys created for research conducted by Public Agenda (2004) and Guardino and Fullerton (2010). Through the use of literature as well as clearly defined goals, the questions formed increased the construct validity of this research (McBride, 2010).

Both quantitative and qualitative questions were incorporated into the survey. The bulk of the survey made use of descriptive questions involving quantitative data so that large amounts of information could be analysed. Closed-ended questions were used to determine the extent of disruptive behaviour in the classroom, whilst the open-ended questions allowed further insight into the perspectives of educators on the nature of the behaviour and its effect on their teaching practices (McBride, 2010; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A consisted of closed-ended questions with multiple-choice options that requested biographical information about the educator, the school, and its learners. Through the request of descriptive information, characteristics about the sample were derived. The questions in Section B were formulated to elicit educators' perceptions around what behaviour constitute as disruptive, the extent of disruptive behaviour in their classrooms, and how educators felt disruptive behaviour impacted on the classroom and school situation. Section B made use of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions were in the form of nominal scales, through the use of multiple-choice questions, and interval scales, through the use of likert-type scales (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Kazdin, 2000; McBride, 2010; Struwig & Stead, 2001).

Section C made use of open-ended questions as well as questions requiring likert-type scale responses. Section B and Section C each had one dichotomous question. The aim of Section C was to gather extra information about disruptive behaviour, such as whether educators received support with regards to dealing with disruptive behaviour. The likert-type scales gave educators the opportunity to agree or disagree with various situations that may be perceived as predisposing learners or schools to showing or having disruptive behaviour, and whether additional support or training would be beneficial in dealing with disruptive behaviour (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Kazdin, 2000; McBride, 2010; Struwig & Stead, 2001).

Attached to the questionnaire was an informed consent letter describing disruptive behaviour, the research and its aims, and ethical considerations including confidentiality and anonymity. It also provided the educators with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Contact information was also provided so that

respondents had the opportunity to contact the researcher or the research supervisor if necessary. A consent form was attached where educators were asked to fill in a declaration confirming that they were willing to participate in the research and that they were aware that their responses would be used as data for this particular research project. The informed consent letter advised educators to separate the consent form from the questionnaire in order to ensure anonymity.

Disadvantages to using this approach are that the instrument required educators' observations of behaviour and so some responses may have inaccurately represented certain behaviours. Thus answers may be biased according to their individual response styles. Educators' may have given socially desirable answers and may have represented certain behaviours inaccurately when they completed the questionnaire (Bru, 2009; McBride, 2010).

### **3.4.3 Administration**

Administration of this questionnaire followed the same procedure as Arbuckle and Little (2004) as it obtained permission through the university ethics committee, then from the principal of each school, and then from individual staff members. The researcher obtained permission from the University of Zululand's ethics committee to conduct the research. An application was made to the Department of Education for permission to conduct research in educational institutions. This application underwent evaluation by a committee and was approved. A sample of 26 schools was chosen from the list of schools falling in the Lower Umfolozi Circuit.

The researcher approached the principal of each school, explained the nature of the research and obtained permission to hand out the questionnaires to all educators teaching Grades 1, 2, and 3. The questionnaires were explained to the educators or the relevant heads of department (when educators were not available) and left with the educators to be filled out at a time convenient for them. Attached to the questionnaires was an informed consent page in order for educators to provide their consent to participate in the study. The researcher explained that the school would be contacted in order to organize collection of the questionnaires (McBride, 2010).

The researcher collected the questionnaires, coded the data, and the data was entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. The results were then used to determine whether the hypotheses originally put forward by the researcher could be supported.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

Validity and reliability were important factors to consider when conducting research as it ensured that the research was testing what it was supposed to test and that the results of the research obtained from the sample population were more generalizable to the population at large.

The reliability of the study was tested by checking the internal consistency through the use of Cronbach's coefficient alpha. This determined whether this research would receive similar results should it be administered again under similar situations, and that the responses received by the educators in the present study would be similar to how they would respond should they fill in another questionnaire at a different time. An internal validity test was run using SPSS on all the questions involving a likert-scale (this made up majority of the quantitative parts of the questionnaire). An alpha level of .660 was achieved which suggests fairly good internal reliability. Reliability is important as unreliable methods lead to greater variability in results (Jackson, 2009; Kazdin, 2000; McBride, 2010; Durrheim, 1999).

It is important that all educators' who completed the survey understood how the researcher defined the term 'disruptive behaviour'. As stated by Arbuckle and Little (2004), there is no standard description for disruptive behaviour. In order for educators' responses to be consistent, a basic uniform definition was necessary in order to ensure that each educator had a similar understanding of disruptive behaviour to that of the researcher as well as the other participants in the study. The researcher included an operational definition of disruptive behaviour in the informed consent letter in order to ensure increased interrater reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was important as if it was unreliable then validity would be non-existent (Jackson, 2009; McBride, 2010; Durrheim, 1999).

The questionnaire was designed so that the answers obtained would allow the researcher to respond to the aims and objectives of the study. It was important that the questionnaire tested what the research aimed to study as this would increase the validity of the study. The researcher made use of various literature and other research studies regarding disruptive behaviour and this increased the face validity of the survey as the questions selected appeared to measure what the researcher wanted to measure. Expert validity was present as the researcher had several lecturers examine and provide feedback on the questionnaire. Content validity was increased by formulating a questionnaire that represented the behaviour being studied. This representativeness was improved by referring to other research studies (such as Public Agenda, 2004) and allowing the questionnaires from those studies to inform the development of the questionnaire for this study (Jackson, 2009; McBride, 2010; Guardino & Fullerton, 2010; Public Agenda, 2004; Struwig & Stead, 2001).

The use of probability sampling encouraged this study to be representative and generalizable to the population of the Empangeni and surrounding area. Probability sampling reduced the amount of sampling error that existed in the study, mostly because it ensured that every group within the population was represented. Due to the number of educators approached, and the various areas that were targeted within the Lower Umfolozi circuit, one could say that the observations made by educators in the sample group would be very similar to those that might have been made by other educators in the population group. The research methods chosen increased the external validity of this study (McBride, 2010; Struwig & Stead, 2001).

Due to the fact that this study was not controlled, there existed a third-variable problem, whereby other external factors may have affected the results of the study. This could have affected internal validity in that it may have decreased under such circumstances (McBride, 2010).

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical issues were important to the research process as they assured the protection of the participants, as well as any other bodies that may be affected (such as schools

and the learners within them). Professional conduct was maintained throughout this process as the researcher took great care to ensure that there would be no negative effects created by the research. The information obtained from this research can be used in formulating plans to alleviate disruptive behaviour in the classroom, thus the principles of non-maleficence and beneficence have been addressed. Once the research has been completed, the dissertation will be made available to the participants should they wish to read it (Allan, 2008; Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999; Kazdin, 2000; McBride, 2010).

Permission to conduct this research was obtained by the University of Zululand's ethics committee and the proposal was then sent on to the Department of Education in Pietermaritzburg for approval to conduct research in the schools. Through random probability sampling the justice principle was ascertained as this method of selecting a sample group ensured that every educator had an equal chance of being selected as a participant in the research; thus, fair selection occurred. The researcher contacted the principals for permission to circulate the questionnaire amongst the junior primary educators. The educators (or relevant heads of department where educators were not available) were then approached to explain the research, its aims, issues of confidentiality, and instructions. All this information was also included in a covering letter. An informed consent letter was attached to the questionnaire. This contained a declaration that the educators were requested to sign, indicating that they understood the research and what was required of them, that they were willing participants in filling in the questionnaires, and that they understood their rights with respect to their contribution to the research (Kazdin, 2000; McBride, 2010).

All participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality as names were not recorded on the questionnaires and questionnaires were placed inside envelopes for collection by the researcher. The covering letter instructed educators to detach the informed consent page from the questionnaire and hand these in separately so as to maintain anonymity and preserve confidentiality. This also encouraged honest responses from participants and potentially reduced the amount of socially desirable answers that were given (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 1999; McBride, 2010).

The researcher has included a section within this dissertation that informs readers about the limitations of the study and whether any errors (intended or unintended) occurred. The researcher has referred to various literature studies throughout this research and thorough referencing of all sources has been included, thus the researcher has considered the ethics involved in reporting research (McBride, 2010).

### **3.7 Data analysis and interpretation**

Quantitative information from the questionnaires was coded so that the data could be entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. Frequency distributions, in the form of tables, bar graphs, and cross-tabulations were generated in order to display the information gathered from the questionnaires. This research did not lend itself to analysing causation and it is important to note that where relationships exist between variables it does not suggest that one variable causes the other (Coolidge, 2013; Struwig & Stead, 2001; Tredoux & Smith, 1999).

The qualitative aspects of the questionnaire were analysed through content analysis. Through analysis of the educators' expansions on various questions, commonalities that existed in the perceptions held by the educators with regards to disruptive behaviour, and its effects on educators, learners, parents, and the school, could be determined. The researcher highlighted common responses that were given by educators and these have been used to enhance the findings from the quantitative analysis (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

The researcher formulated the following hypotheses:

1. There will be an agreement among educators that disruptive behaviours may include: shouting out and interrupting in class; getting out of seat and moving around the classroom; and misplacing belongings such as stationery.
2. There will be a proportion of children in each class showing disruptive behaviour.
3. Educators will agree that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on the teaching and learning process.

The researcher used the information gathered from both the quantitative data and the qualitative data in order to determine whether these hypotheses should be supported (Jackson, 2009).

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on the methodology behind the current research. It described the research methods and procedures that the researcher used in order to develop the research, distribute the questionnaires, and analyse the data collected. The areas of reliability and validity were addressed and ethical issues arising from the research were mentioned. The following chapter will focus on the results that were generated from the analysis of the data. These results will then be discussed in the context of the hypotheses formulated and in light of other research conducted in the field of disruptive behaviour.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Analysis of data and discussion of results**

The following chapter will deal with the analysis and discussion of data collected from the survey. Areas of specific focus will include demographic characteristics, the characteristics of disruptive behaviour as perceived by educators, the extent that this behaviour exists in the classroom and, finally, the impact that educators believe it has on the teaching and learning process.

Data was analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Much of the research made use of closed-ended questions and this data was coded and entered into SPSS. The questionnaire had a few open-ended questions, which have been analysed through qualitative means. The results obtained will be discussed alongside relevant studies regarding disruptive behaviour, as well as the hypotheses that this researcher had put forward.

#### **4.1 Demographics**

Section A of the questionnaire requested demographic information from the participants. It was noticed that some participants did not respond to one or more of the questions requesting demographic information. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the respondents into the various demographic areas.

Table 1

*Demographic characteristics of respondents*

Demographic characteristics	Respondent sub-groups	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Gender	Female	88	95.7
	Male	3	3.3
Age	20 years or younger	0	0
	21 -25 years	5	5.4
	26 – 30 years	8	8.7
	31 – 35 years	7	7.6
	36 – 40 years	11	12
	41 – 45 years	19	20.7
	46 – 50 years	21	22.8
	51 years or older	19	20.7
Level of education	National Senior Certificate	14	15.2
	Undergraduate degree	11	12
	Postgraduate degree	21	22.8
	Postgraduate Certificate in Education	9	9.8
	Masters degree	0	0
	Doctoral degree	1	1.1
	Other	22	23.9
Years of teaching experience	0 – 5 years	19	20.7
	6 – 10 years	10	10.9
	11 – 15 years	8	8.7
	16 – 20 years	27	29.3
	21 – 25 years	16	17.4
	26 – 30 years	2	2.2
	31 years or more	8	8.7
School classification	Rural	85	92.4
	Urban	5	5.4
Medium of instruction	English	24	26.1
	isiZulu	61	66.3
	Afrikaans	0	0
	English and isiZulu	4	4.3
Grade	1	28	30.4
	2	27	29.3
	3	32	34.8
	R	1	1.1
	Grade 1 and Grade 3	1	1.1
Number of learners in classroom	Less than 11	0	0
	11 – 20 learners	3	3.3
	21 – 30 learners	17	18.5
	31 – 40 learners	52	56.5
	41 – 50 learners	12	13
	51 – 60 learners	4	4.3
	More than 60 learners	3	3.3

This study aimed to research into the perceptions of educators' towards disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The majority of respondents were female, with only 3 respondents being male. A large majority of the respondents were from schools in rural areas, with only five participants indicating that they taught at a school in an urban area. No participants indicated that they taught at an Afrikaans medium school. Most of the educators were from schools where isiZulu was the medium of instruction.

Most of the educators who completed the questionnaire had between 16 to 20 years of teaching experience. There were some educators who indicated that their highest qualification was a National Senior Certificate. Nearly 30% of the respondents selected 'other' as an option. These respondents were given an opportunity to specify their qualifications. Qualifications that were recorded included; NPDE, SPTD and ABET Certificate, ACE Leadership, PTD and FDE, and various diplomas that specialised in education.

This research focused on disruptive behaviour in Grade 1, Grade 2, and Grade 3 classes. There was a fairly similar number of respondents from each grade category. A majority of the teachers had between 31 and 40 learners in their class.

## **4.2 Characteristics of disruptive behaviour**

*Hypothesis 1: There will be an agreement among educators that disruptive behaviours may include: shouting out and interrupting in class; getting out of seat and moving around the classroom; and misplacing belongings such as stationery.*

In order to gain further insight into what behaviours educators would classify as disruptive, the researcher compiled a list of various behaviours and requested that the educators tick those that they felt fit the category of disruptive behaviours. This list was created using various sources (Guardino & Fullerton, 2010; Public Agenda, 2004; Shen *et. al*, 2009). Educators were permitted to tick as many behaviours as they felt necessary. Table 2 shows the various behaviours, the number of educators who ticked each behaviour, and the percentage of respondents who selected each behaviour.

Table 2

*Behaviours educators classify as disruptive*

Behaviour	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Talking in class	74	80.43
Walking around the classroom	56	60.87
Shouting out	51	55.43
Playful behaviour	49	53.26
Getting up from seat	45	48.91
Attention-seeking	41	44.57
Forgetfulness	39	42.39
Fighting	36	39.13
Irresponsibility with belongings	35	38.04
Ignoring instructions	34	36.96
Hyperactivity	31	33.7
Bullying	31	33.7
Pushing	27	29.35
Throwing things	25	27.17
Inattention	21	22.83
Tardiness	21	22.83
Hitting	19	20.65
Uncooperative behaviour	17	18.48
Cheating	15	16.3
Rowdiness	14	15.22
Disrespect	11	11.96
Drugs	6	6.52
Truancy	4	4.35

Table 2 shows that the most popular selections for behaviours that educators' considered as disruptive included 'talking in class', 'walking around the classroom', 'shouting out', and 'playful behaviour'. This ties in with the behaviours that Guardino and Fullerton (2010) included in their definition of disruptive behaviour: 'shouting out

in class', 'talking out of turn', 'and 'moving around the class without permission'. Talking out of turn was one of the more frequent problem behaviours that Chinese educators found appearing in their class and they experienced difficulty in dealing with it (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Many of the respondents selected options such as; 'throwing things', 'getting up from seat', 'hitting', 'ignoring instructions', irresponsibility with belongings', 'forgetfulness', 'fighting', 'inattention', 'hyperactivity', 'bullying', pushing', 'tardiness', and 'attention-seeking'. Those behaviours that had a minimal number of selections included: 'rowdiness', 'truancy', 'drugs', 'cheating', 'disrespect', and 'uncooperative behaviour'. In the survey conducted by Public Agenda (2004), educators identified the following problematic behaviours: speaking out, playing around, disrespect, cheating, tardiness, bullying, rowdiness, truancy, drugs, and physical fighting. Shen *et.al* (2009) lists not paying attention, being uncooperative, and hyperactivity as being problem behaviours. The results of this study suggest that very few respondents used the abovementioned terms in their descriptions of what constitutes as disruptive behaviour. This may be because they do not see these behaviours as being disruptive, they may classify these behaviours in a different category to disruptive, or they may not experience these behaviours at school and therefore in their particular setting it is not disruptive.

Further opportunity was provided for the educators to list other behaviours that were not mentioned in the list compiled by the researcher. These included passing notes around the classroom, throwing papers on the floor, loss of concentration and day dreaming, late-coming, crying in class, aggressiveness, looking out through the windows, laughing, choral answering, name calling and teasing, destroying learning materials, failing to do homework and then copying from others, rebellious to authority and not obeying the rules, sleeping during lessons, gossiping, stealing, not following instructions carefully, illness, not wanting to read and write, laziness, gambling, bringing toys, cell phones, carelessness, untidiness, shyness, incomplete work, chewing pencils, making noise, tapping, slamming books, scraping chairs on the floor, singing, and eating and drinking in class. Some of the respondents wrote items that were included in the researcher's list and this may be due to English being a second language and the vocabulary used by the researcher. Many of the

respondents added 'absenteeism' as a disruptive behaviour and the researcher assumes that this may be disruptive due to the fact that learners fall behind in class and thus would require the educator's time during another lesson in order to catch up with work that has been missed.

The above data suggests that educators agree that behaviours such as shouting out, interrupting educators and other learners, getting out of one's seat and moving around the class, and misplacing belongings can be considered to be disruptive. This provides support for hypothesis one which states that 'there will be an agreement among educators that disruptive behaviours may include: shouting out and interrupting in class, getting out of seat and moving around the classroom, and misplacing belongings such as stationery'.

#### **4.3 The extent of disruptive behaviour in the classroom**

*Hypothesis 2: There will be a proportion of children in each class showing disruptive behaviour.*

Broadly defined, disruptive behaviour is a behaviour that prevents others from being productive by interfering with them. This may have a negative effect on learning (Herbert, 1998; Prinsloo, 2005). The majority of the educators surveyed in this study indicated that they encountered disruptive behaviour in their class with only 12% believing that they did not. Whilst there were educators who felt they did not experience disruptive behaviour, all the respondents answered the question that followed, which required them to tick various behaviours that they perceived to be disruptive in their classroom. This suggests that, to some extent, all the educators in the sample had experienced disruptive behaviour in their classroom. Table 3 displays information regarding whether educators experience disruptive behaviour and how they perceive it in their classrooms.

Table 3

*The extent of disruptive behaviour in classrooms as perceived by educators*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
Do you encounter disruptive behaviour in your classroom?	Yes	75	81.5
	No	11	12
What percentage of your class would you say behave in a disruptive manner?	0 – 10%	34	37
	11 – 20%	18	19.6
	21 – 30%	12	13
	31 – 40%	5	5.4
	41 – 50%	11	12
	51 – 60%	4	4.3
	61 – 70%	2	2.2
	71 – 80%	1	1.1
	81 – 90%	0	0
	91 – 100%	0	0
Disruptive behaviour is not a serious problem in my classroom	Strongly agree	7	7.6
	Agree	27	29.3
	Neutral	22	23.9
	Disagree	20	21.7
	Strongly disagree	13	14.1
Disruptive behaviour is a negative factor in the classroom	Strongly agree	21	22.8
	Agree	47	51.1
	Neutral	11	12
	Disagree	12	13
	Strongly disagree	0	0

Educators were asked to estimate what percentage of their class they felt behaved in a disruptive manner. Many of the respondents indicated that they experienced disruptive behaviour in less than 11% of their class. Some felt that 11 to 20% of their class exhibited disruptive behaviour, and a few believed that 21 to 30% of their class were disruptive. There were only 11 respondents that felt that 41 to 50% were disruptive. Chinese educators, surveyed in a study looking at teachers' perceptions of behaviour problems, believed that 15.5% of their learners had behaviour problems. In the current research 21% of the respondents shared a similar belief, indicating that between 11 and 20% of their learners were disruptive, however, 37% of the respondents felt that less than 11% of their learners were disruptive (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

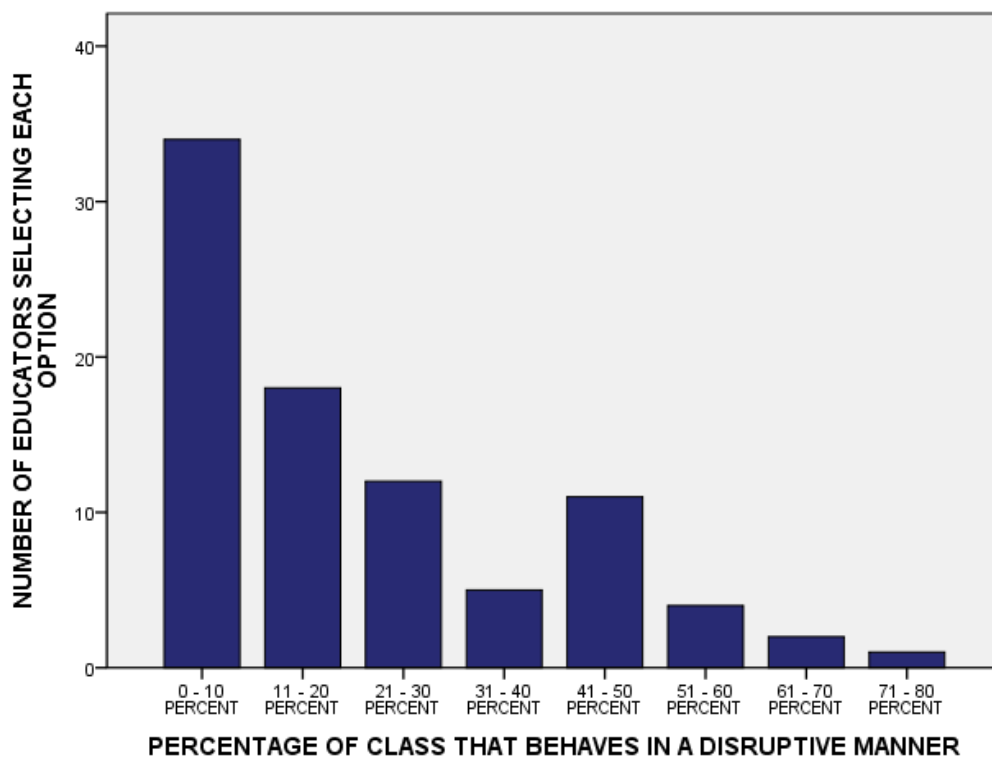


Figure 1. Bar graph representing the number of learners in their class that educators felt were disruptive

There appeared to be an even response towards the statement that 'disruptive behaviour is not a serious problem in their classroom'. Disruptive behaviour was

found by 68 of the respondents to be a negative factor in the classroom, with 21 of the respondents strongly agreeing and 47 of the respondents agreeing with this statement.

Prinsloo (2005) writes that many educators in South Africa reported attention-seeking and disruptive behaviour as common difficulties that affect the routine of the classroom and mentions factors that are outside of the educator's control, such as a learner with Autism or a learner's home background. Educators in this study were given the opportunity to list factors they felt contributed to disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Respondents mentioned factors such as a general lack of discipline, failure to provide instructions, or educators ignoring the problem, leaving the learners in the classroom during teaching time, arriving late for a lesson, and not preparing lessons in advance. The age of the disruptive learner was seen as a possible factor. Educators believe that overcrowding of classrooms contributes to disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Depending on the medium of instruction, one teacher pointed out that learners may not cope with workload because of a language difficulty. Drugs were mentioned as a factor by one respondent.

When asked what they felt contributed towards disruptive behaviour many of the educators' responded that they believed home background and parental involvement were contributors. There were 22 respondents in strong agreement and 49 respondents in agreement with the statement 'disruptive behaviour is a result of a lack of parental discipline at home'. This means a total of 77% of participants agreed with this statement. Some mentioned single parents, absentee parents, death of a parent (or both parents), child-headed households, or parents who leave their children with other caregivers as they want their child to be at a particular school. Also listed were uninvolved and disinterested parents and parents who are not able to assist as they may be illiterate. A general 'lack of education in the community' was one participant's response. This participant also noted that learners lacked motivation to learn. This in turn impacted on communication between parent and teacher. Some teachers commented on lack of nutrition or hunger, neglect, poverty, and domestic violence as being factors.

One educator noted that a disruptive learner may be a result of undiagnosed Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Another mentioned 'other behavioural disorders' that may aggravate disruptive behaviour. Being 'mentally challenged' or having learning difficulties was seen as a factor. As mentioned earlier, these are factors that are outside the educator's control and thus educators need to be equipped with the necessary skills in order to handle the various barriers that many learners have when attempting to access education. Some educators saw disruptive behaviour as a result of attention-seeking on the part of the learner or that the learner did not like school.

Comments by educators show a belief that disruptive behaviour is a result of a lack of strict discipline policies at their school, overcrowding of classrooms, and a lack of effective resources in the classrooms. The absentee rate of the educator was also commented on. Lessons that are not interesting or presented well may also result in disruptive behaviour. Prinsloo (2005) writes that educators can attempt to reduce disruptive behaviour through planning lessons that are engaging, setting up good reward and consequence strategies to use with learners, and setting a positive example for their learners. Interestingly, very few teachers and parents (26% and 32% respectively in a study conducted in America) believed that misbehaviour was a result of a boring lesson (Public Agenda, 2004).

Community infrastructure in terms of unemployment, lack of education, lack of resources (i.e. library, community sports facilities), and societal influence play a role in a learner developing disruptive behaviour. Due to some of these factors, learners may watch inappropriate television programmes which influence them to behave in a certain way. Cellular telephones were also seen to be a problem by one respondent. Another societal influence that wasn't mentioned specifically by the respondents in this study is that there may be a culture of disrespect that is infiltrating our schools from the outside communities. This was believed by many of the parents and teachers involved in the study conducted by Public Agenda (2004). Prinsloo (2005) also refers to this.

The Zululand area comprises of largely rural schools. The sample selected for this study included 92% of respondents from rural schools, with only 5% indicating that

they work at an urban school. The researcher noticed that the majority of the schools where questionnaires were dropped off were dusty, under-resourced, and overcrowded. Classroom numbers ranged from 31 to 50 learners for 70% of the respondents. Research by Thomas *et al.* (2008) investigated how a child's home and school background may predict the display of disruptive behaviour in grade one. The researchers found that the effects of home and school conditions could predict aggressive-disruptive behaviour. The sample used in this particular study involved grade one classes from economically disadvantaged schools. It did not look at grade one classes from advantaged communities and therefore a comparison between urban and rural schools cannot be made (Thomas *et al.*, 2008.)

It is not possible to compare whether conditions of home, community, and the school itself would result in more or less disruptive behaviour, as the majority of the schools involved were rural and no parents or community members were targeted as respondents. Table 4 shows the cross-tabulation between school classification and whether educators claimed to experience disruptive behaviour or not.

Table 4

*Cross-tabulation between school classification and disruptive behaviour*

		DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR		Total
		YES	NO	
CLASSIFICATION	RURAL	68	11	79
	URBAN	5	0	5
Total		73	11	84

Chi-square was run on the above cross tabulation and non-significant relationships between the classification of a school and educator perceptions surrounding disruptive behaviour was established. The Pearson Chi-square significance level was .371. Findings can be considered significant only when data achieve an alpha level of .05 or less. There were not enough participants from urban schools in order to make this a reliable result (Coolidge, 2013).

Kohen, Oliver & Pierre (2009) found that the outcomes of children in Kindergarten were more affected by the school than by the surrounding neighbourhood. In China rural schools seem to report a larger amount of disruptive behaviour than urban schools. Rural educators also reported battling to deal with discipline issues more so than urban teachers. What was also found was that disruptive behaviour was more prominent in the lower grades, with higher grade level teachers reporting fewer incidences of behaviour problems (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Table 5

*Cross-tabulation of grade level and whether educators experienced disruptive behaviour*

		Disruptive behaviour		Total
		YES	NO	
GRADE	GRADE 1	24	3	27
	GRADE 2	22	3	25
	GRADE 3	25	4	29
	GRADE R	1	0	1
	GRADE 1 AND GRADE 3	1	0	1
Total		73	10	83

Table 5 shows that there is not too much difference between the grades the educators were teaching and whether the educators experienced disruptive behaviour. A non-significant relationship exists between these two variables according to the Pearson Chi-square test. This is in conflict with what Shen *et al.* (2009) found in their study with Chinese educators, but it supports Arbuckle and Little's (2004) research, where teachers found that disruptive behaviour was more prevalent in the higher grades. This was found mostly with male learners.

Table 6

*Cross-tabulation between educator age and whether they experience disruptive behaviour*

	EXPERIENCE OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR		Total
	YES	NO	
	21 - 25 YEARS	5	
26 - 30 YEARS	6	1	7
31 - 35 YEARS	5	1	6
AGE 36 - 40 YEARS	9	2	11
41 - 45 YEARS	17	1	18
46 - 50 YEARS	17	2	19
51 YEARS OR OLDER	15	3	18
Total	74	10	84

Table 6 shows the age of the educator and whether they felt that they experienced disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Very few educators from each age category indicated that they did not have disruptive behaviour in their classroom. One may have expected that the more years of experience an educator has in teaching, the less behavioural problems he or she may experience as he or she would be better equipped to handle them. This does not seem to be the case in this study. One may also have assumed that those educators who are more qualified will be able to deal with behavioural problems better and therefore there would be less experience of disruptive behaviour; however, Table 7 shows that most of the teachers from every qualification category acknowledged that they experienced disruptive behaviour. Very few indicated that they did not.

Table 7

*Cross-tabulation between educator qualification and whether they experience disruptive behaviour*

		EXPERIENCE OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR		Total
		YES	NO	
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE	11	2	13
	UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	8	3	11
	POSTGRADUATE DEGREE	19	1	20
	PGCE	8	0	8
	DOCTORAL DEGREE	1	0	1
	OTHER	19	2	21
Total		66	8	74

The information gathered from the educators with regards to the extent of disruptive behaviour in their classroom reveals that disruptive behaviour appears to be occurring in varying degrees in every classroom, as shown in figure 2. The majority of respondents felt that they did encounter disruptive behaviour in their classroom. Many of the participants acknowledged that less than 11% of their learners behaved in a disruptive manner; however 36% felt that disruptive behaviour was a serious problem in their classroom. This information supports hypothesis two, which states that ‘there will be a proportion of children in each class showing disruptive behaviour’.

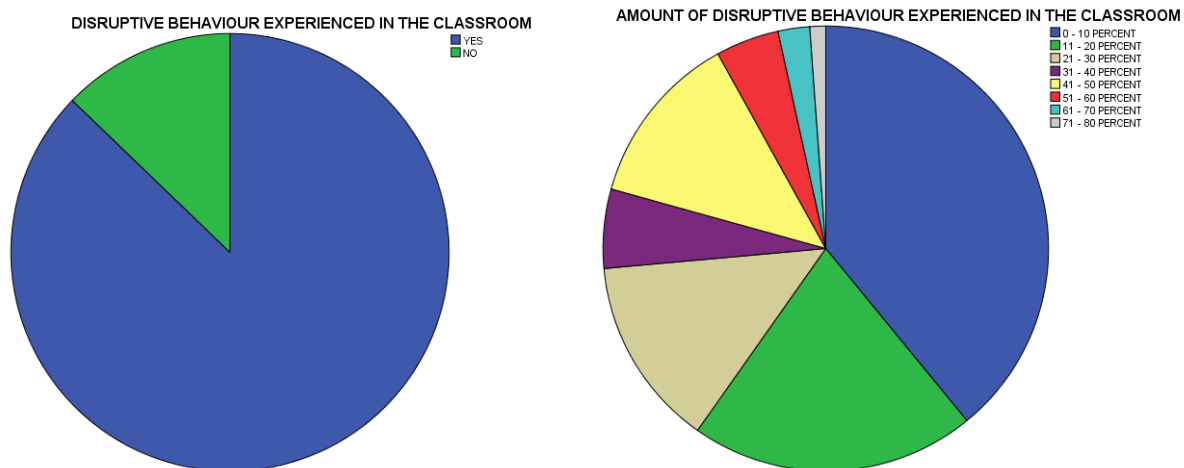


Figure 2. Pie graphs indicating educators' responses towards whether disruptive behaviour is experienced and the amount of disruptive behaviour that occurs

#### 4.4 Effects of disruptive behaviour

*Hypothesis 3: Educators will agree that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on the teaching and learning process.*

##### 4.4.1 Impact on teaching

Educators were posed a question, asking how much time they felt was taken from their lessons while they were dealing with disruptive behaviour. Figure 3 illustrates the percentage of lesson time that educators feel is spent dealing with disruptive behaviour. Most of the respondents felt that dealing with disruptive behaviour took between 0 and 10% of their lesson time and a fairly large amount felt it took between 11 and 20 % of their lesson time. Table 8 highlights the results received in more detail.

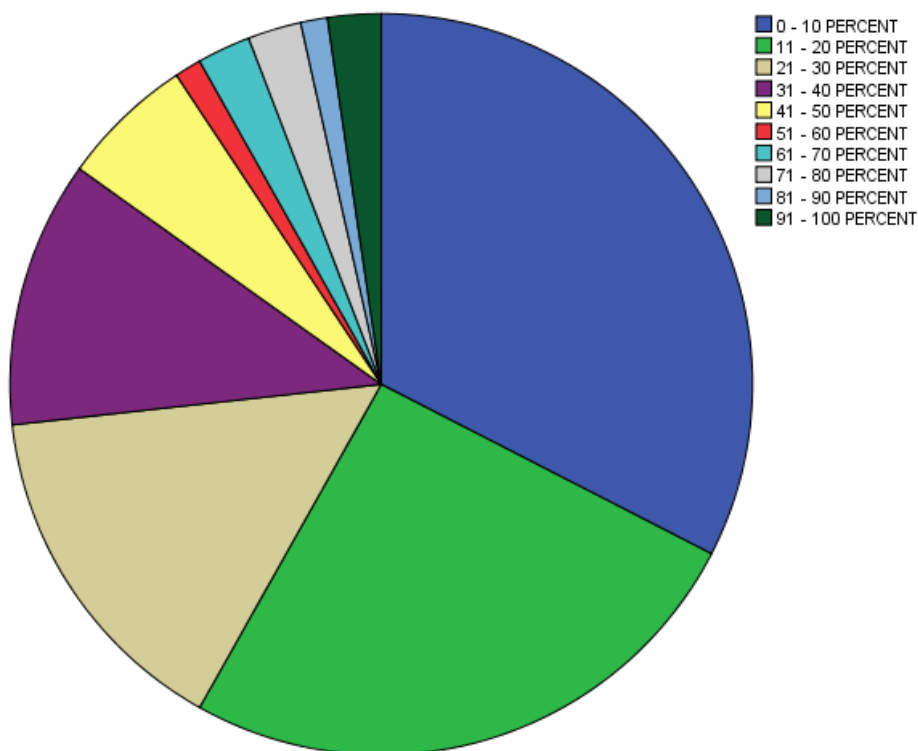


Figure 3. Pie graph representing the amount of lesson time educators feel is spent dealing with disruptive behaviour

Shen *et al.* (2009) found that 44% of the respondents believed that dealing with disruptive behaviour was taking up too much of their time. These teachers indicated that they were spending roughly 14.5% of their lesson time dealing with discipline. Along a similar theme, 77% of the educators completing the Public Agenda survey felt that if disruptive behaviour didn't take up so much of their time, their teaching would be more effective (Public Agenda, 2004). The results regarding the above - as well as other perceptions educators have with regards to the impact disruptive behaviour has on teaching - can be found in Table 8.

Table 8

*Educators' perceptions of the impact of disruptive behaviour on teaching*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
What percentage of lesson time do you feel you spend dealing with disruptive behaviour?	0 – 10%	28	30.4
	11 – 20%	22	23.9
	21 – 30%	13	14.1
	31 – 40%	10	10.9
	41 – 50%	5	5.4
	51 – 60%	1	1.1
	61 – 70%	2	2.2
	71 – 80%	2	2.2
	81 – 90%	1	1.1
	91 – 100%	2	2.2
Disruptive behaviour makes me feel unmotivated to teach in the classroom.	Strongly agree	6	6.5
	Agree	39	42.4
	Neutral	16	17.4
	Disagree	25	27.2
	Strongly disagree	5	5.4
Disruptive behaviour motivates me to adapt my teaching style.	Strongly agree	10	10.9
	Agree	55	59.8
	Neutral	10	10.9
	Disagree	12	13
	Strongly disagree	2	2.2
I spend more time dealing with disruptive behaviour than I do assisting those non-disruptive learners with their classwork.	Strongly agree	7	7.6
	Agree	29	31.5
	Neutral	16	17.4
	Disagree	29	31.5
	Strongly disagree	9	9.8

The statement 'disruptive behaviour makes me feel unmotivated to teach in the classroom' was given to the educators, to which 45 of respondents agreed. Those in disagreement to this statement were nearly 30 of the respondents. Interestingly, when comparing it to the responses received to the statement 'disruptive behaviour motivates me to adapt my teaching style', a large majority of the educators agreed. Educators may become discouraged when they feel that they are not managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom. This may result in their losing motivation in their teaching and in creating lessons that are engaging (Prinsloo, 2005).

Teachers were asked to list ways in which disruptive behaviour impacted on their teaching. This open-ended format allowed for more in-depth answers. Many educators felt that they were spending too much time on discipline, with one also mentioning that additional time was spent motivating the learners. Cheating was a problem as the educator believed that the learner knew the concepts only to find out that the learner had been cheating. Many educators believed that learners lose their concentration and attention while they deal with disruptive behaviour as the lesson was interrupted. One teacher described dealing with disruptive behaviour as 'frustrating' as it was time-consuming and it affected the presentation of the lesson. Planning of lessons and other schoolwork was also disturbed.

Educators indicated that one cannot go further with one's lesson due to dealing with disruptive behaviour and thus the lesson would not be completed. Some educators felt that instructions had to be repeated three or more times, or the lesson retaught, and that it led to falling behind with the work. Topics that needed to be completed were not done so by the end of the term. One educator said that it was a problem during compilation of assessment records, another that results analysis was not good as a result of disruptive behaviour.

One teacher noted that lessons that were too much fun tended to lead to disruptive behaviour and thus it was better to stick to boring methods of teaching so as to avoid this. Another said that emotions, as a result of disruptive behaviour, created a situation where the lesson was not taught in a good and successful way. Disruptive behaviour was found by many to waste time and broke the lesson continuity. One

teacher replied, saying it made her feel 'frustrated and emotionally exhausted. It ends the enthusiasm of teaching'.

#### 4.4.2 Impact on learning

Table 9 shows educators' responses with regards to disruptive behaviour and the impact it may have on learning in their classrooms.

Table 9

*Educators' perceptions on the impact of disruptive behaviour on learning*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
Disruptive behaviour negatively impacts on the scholastic progress made by learners.	Strongly agree	22	23.9
	Agree	37	40.2
	Neutral	13	14.1
	Disagree	13	14.1
	Strongly disagree	2	2.2
My learners would be able to learn better if there was less disruptive behaviour in my classroom.	Strongly agree	25	27.2
	Agree	52	56.5
	Neutral	7	7.6
	Disagree	5	5.4
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Learners who are disruptive show lower academic outcomes than those who aren't disruptive.	Strongly agree	30	32.6
	Agree	46	50
	Neutral	7	7.6
	Disagree	9	9.8
	Strongly disagree	0	0

A majority of the educators felt that disruptive behaviour impacted negatively on scholastic progress made by learners. Many of the respondents felt that learners would be able to learn better if there was less disruptive behaviour in their classroom

and of this 27% strongly agreed. In the study conducted by Public Agenda (2004), 43% of parents believed that their children would be learning more if dealing with discipline in the classroom was not taking up so much of the teachers' time. Wehby *et al.* (2003) wonder whether the idea that learners' behaviour needs to be under control before the educator can commence teaching makes sense. They suggest training educators as to how to teach despite disruptive behaviour and in this way learners' academic needs are not neglected.

Using open-ended questions, the researcher found that many teachers believed that disruptive behaviour interrupted other learners and wasted teaching and learning time. Learners failed to complete work on time, lost concentration and their listening skills were affected. The pace of learning was also affected. Bru's (2009) research revealed that 40% of the learners felt that their concentration was affected by excess noise created by classmates, 60% felt that if they had more peace in the classroom they would be able to learn better, and 80% reported that they talked to classmates without permission. Disturbing other learners was something a third of the participants admitted to doing and a quarter of the learners admitted to disturbing teaching. Prinsloo (2005) also believed that learners may not be able to focus as a result of the behaviour of a learner who is disruptive. Bru's (2009) research suggested that it was possible for disruptive learners to be in mainstream classes without affecting the academics of other learners. In these cases, resources and additional support would need to be available for the educator.

It was perceived by some educators that learners who showed disruptive behaviour in class had more attention shown to them than those who were well-behaved. Table 6 shows that there is an even response to this idea, with 39% of respondents agreeing that they spend more time on learners with disruptive behaviour and 41% saying that they don't, 17% remained neutral in this regard. Prinsloo (2005) wrote that one might find that those learners who were disruptive in class received the most attention from the educator, whilst those who behaved in a desirable manner did not receive attention from the teacher. Thus, learners who may need additional support from teachers may not be receiving it. This researcher also noted that when teaching more attention was spent on those learners creating disruptions and the well-behaved learners were left to continue with the work without assistance. This

limited the opportunity for extension activities to be given to the well-behaved learners.

One educator noted that the disruptive children in her classroom performed badly academically. In a comparison of academic outcomes between those learners who were disruptive in class and those who were not disruptive, 83% of the responses indicated that educators felt that learners who were disruptive showed lower academic outcomes than those who didn't create disturbance in the classroom. According to Bru (2009), disruptive behaviour did not necessarily result in lower academic outcomes for the other learners in the class. It seemed to be the disruptive learner who tended to produce lower academic outcomes than the other learners in the class. Kaplan *et al.* (2002) found a positive correlation with disruptive behaviour and low mathematics grades. Wehby *et al.*, (2003) believe that disruptive behaviour may have an effect on the learning outcomes of the disruptive child as well as the other learners in the classroom.

Academically, many teachers found that disruptive behaviour affected the learning of the child and affected pass rates. Learners lacked understanding of subject matter being taught to them according to one respondent. One educator commented that this resulted in incomplete schooling and increased drop-out rates. What needs to be considered is whether the disruptive behaviour is creating misunderstanding of subject matter or whether it is the misunderstanding of subject matter that leads to disruptive behaviour. Prinsloo (2005) states that learners may lose motivation, which may reduce their ability to learn effectively and could result in underachievement. This, in turn, may lead to many negative consequences, such as learners leaving school prematurely, undesirable social behaviour, and poverty. A study of four and five year olds found that problem behaviour would affect a learner's outcomes in mathematics and reading programmes. These learners were also more likely to have underdeveloped motivation to learn, as well as under-developed ability to concentrate and show persistence with a task (Bulotsky-Shearer, Fernandez, Dominguez & Rouse, 2011).

### 4.4.3 Impact on classroom management

Educators were asked about their discipline methods and whether these generally revolved around removing the child from the work situation, such as through a time-out or sending the learner out of the classroom. Participants were also requested to indicate how they felt towards authoritarian strategies and whether they felt discipline would be more under control if the little discipline issues were sorted out more effectively.

Table 10

*Educators' perceptions of the impact of disruptive behaviour on classroom management*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
My discipline methods in class generally involve removing the child from the work situation, such as by giving a time-out or sending the learner out of the classroom.	Strongly agree	4	4.3
	Agree	16	17.4
	Neutral	7	7.6
	Disagree	48	52.2
	Strongly disagree	16	17.4
Authoritarian (high control) strategies work best in dealing with disruptive behaviour.	Strongly agree	4	4.3
	Agree	38	41.3
	Neutral	22	23.9
	Disagree	13	14.1
	Strongly disagree	2	2.2
If minor discipline problems were better dealt with there wouldn't be discipline problems.	Strongly agree	14	15.2
	Agree	44	47.8
	Neutral	19	20.7
	Disagree	5	5.4
	Strongly disagree	2	2.2

A majority of the respondents indicated disagreement or strong disagreement toward removing the learner from the work situation. This either means that a majority of the respondents did not make use of discipline or that they used more positive approaches to discipline. This is contrary to what Nungesser and Watkins (2005) discovered. They found that reactive discipline tended to be the most chosen intervention strategy. They referred to proactive discipline which aims at preventing disruptive behaviour from occurring and involves encouraging appropriate behaviour rather than setting negative consequences in response to disruptive behaviour (Nungesser & Watkins, 2005). Ellis and Tod (2009) also believe that not enough attention is paid towards promoting a desirable behaviour.

Guardino and Fullerton (2010) studied whether changing the classroom setting and making some modifications to areas within a classroom may help reduce disruptive behaviour. This change was observed in a Grade 4 classroom and it was found that disruptive behaviour decreased and engagement in lessons increased. Disruptive behaviours also seemed to decrease in third grade classrooms where 'tootling (learners report other learners prosocial behaviour to the educator) was used (Cihak *et al.*, 2009).

Kaplan, Gheen and Midgley (2002) found that classrooms that are based on mastery goals (where learners were encouraged to learn and understand and improve over their own past performance) are more likely to show less disruptive behaviour than a classroom that is performance-based (where learners are motivated through either wanting to do better than others or by trying to avoid doing worse than others), thus showing that the classroom situation may influence a student with regards to exhibiting disruptive behaviour (Kaplan *et al.*, 2002).

Nearly 41% of the respondents in this study felt that authoritarian strategies worked best in dealing with disruptive behaviour in their class, a further 4% strongly agreed with this, just 2% strongly disagreed, and 14% disagreed. Nearly 24% of the respondents remained neutral with regards to this statement. There were 13 participants who did not respond to this question and the researcher wonders whether this, and the 13% of participants remaining neutral, may be due to the vocabulary used. Educators making use of authoritarian strategies tended to believe

that they did not have much control over their classrooms, non-authoritarian strategies were used by educators who felt that they did have control over their classroom. Generally speaking, educators would continue to use the same strategies that they usually refer to if they feel that these strategies are effective in dealing with disruptive behaviour (Rydell & Henricsson, 2004).

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'if minor discipline problems were better dealt with there would not be discipline problems', nearly 48% of the educators agreed, and nearly 15% strongly agreed. Results from Public Agenda (2004) showed that 88% of parents and 91% of teachers believed that schools could avoid larger discipline problems by ensuring the minor rules were obeyed.

It may be effective to train educators in using both proactive and reactive behavioural strategies as well as how to communicate effectively to the learners in order to address causes of behaviour and to manage their behaviour in the classroom (Nungesser & Watkins, 2005). Rydell and Henricsson (2004) have also found that educators need to be provided with more options of intervention strategies to assist them in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Kaplan *et al.* (2002) believe that observing and modifying classroom goal-structure (which focuses on encouraging learners to compete with their own past performance and not the performance on others) should be seen as an additional strategy to use to deter disruptive behaviour as behaviour modification and self-management may not be sufficient.

This is an area that needs to be researched in order to be able to provide educators with strategies. Wehby *et al.* (2003) found that research seemed to concentrate on interventions that deal with behaviour as opposed to training educators as to how to teach regardless of disruptive behaviour. They state that discipline generally involved methods that take the disruptive learner out of the learning situation (such as by giving a time-out or sending the learner out of the classroom). The learner is therefore missing learning opportunities and this may negatively affect his/her academic growth.

#### 4.4.4 Impact on schools

Table 11

*Educators' perceptions of the impact of disruptive behaviour on schools*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
The school experience of many is ruined by the disruptive behaviour of few.	Strongly agree	7	7.6
	Agree	46	50
	Neutral	22	23.9
	Disagree	9	9.8
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Do you receive support from your school in dealing with disruptive behaviour?	Yes	59	64.1
	No	29	31.5
Disruptive behaviour would be reduced if my school had more effective discipline policies in place.	Strongly agree	24	26.1
	Agree	47	51.1
	Neutral	9	9.8
	Disagree	8	8.7
	Strongly disagree	0	0
My school has effective discipline policies that are enforced to assist me.	Strongly agree	5	5.4
	Agree	43	46.7
	Neutral	18	19.6
	Disagree	15	16.3
	Strongly disagree	2	2.2
Disruptive behaviour is a result of overcrowding in my classroom.	Strongly agree	17	18.5
	Agree	33	35.9
	Neutral	10	10.9
	Disagree	22	23.9
	Strongly disagree	5	5.4

Disruptive behaviour may result in ruining other learners' experience at school. This was perceived to be true by 61% of the respondents. Just 11% disagreed that the school experience of many is ruined by the disruptive behaviour of few and nearly 28% remained neutral. Table 11 shows these results. In the Public Agenda (2004) study, the percentage of educators who agreed with this was much higher, with 85% believing that the few individuals presenting with behaviour problems ruined the school experience for many of the other learners. This was also agreed with by 73% of the parents involved in the survey.

With regards to receiving support from their school in dealing with disruptive behaviour, 64% of the participants in this study said that they did and 32% indicated that they did not receive support. Public Agenda (2004) on the other hand discovered that six in every ten educators felt that their school could be doing more in terms of instilling discipline. Another finding from Public Agenda (2004) showed that 52% of educators believed that many educators become too lenient with discipline if they weren't receiving support from the school or the learners' parents.

Many educators agreed that disruptive behaviour would be reduced if their school had more effective policies in place (26% of the respondents were in strong agreement). When asked whether their school had effective discipline policies enforced in order to assist them, 52% agreed and nearly 19% disagreed. Figure 4 and Figure 5 show a discrepancy in the responses indicated for the questions regarding school discipline policies. The majority of the respondents were in agreement that their schools required more effective discipline policies in order to reduce disruptive behaviour. This would imply that figure 5 should show that majority of the respondents were in disagreement that their school had effective discipline policies. This is clearly not the case as the majority of participants showed agreement that their school had effective discipline policies.

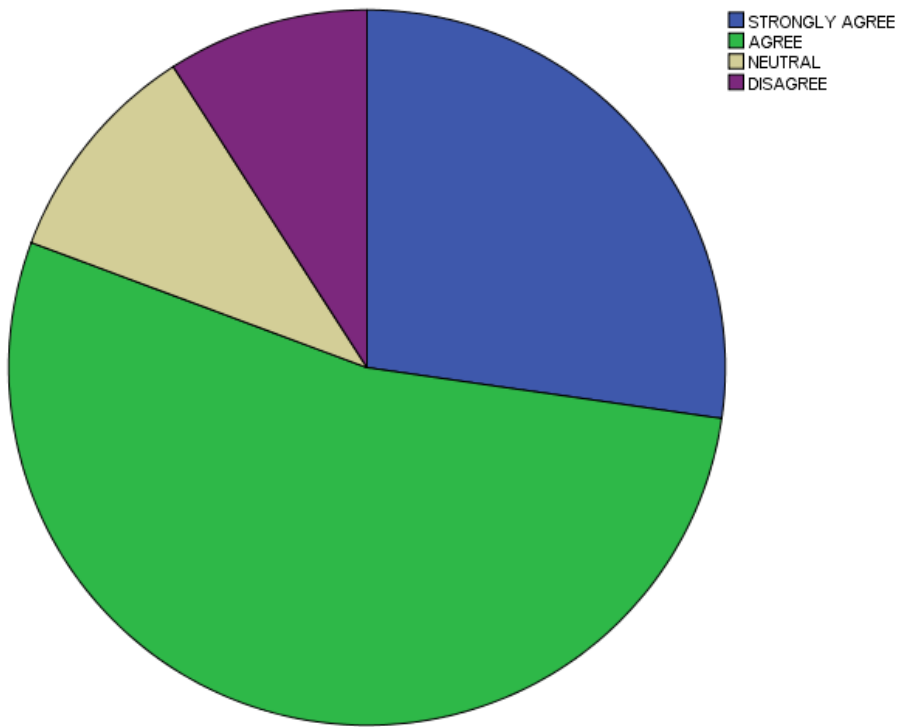


Figure 4. Disruptive behaviour would be reduced if my school had more effective discipline policies in place.

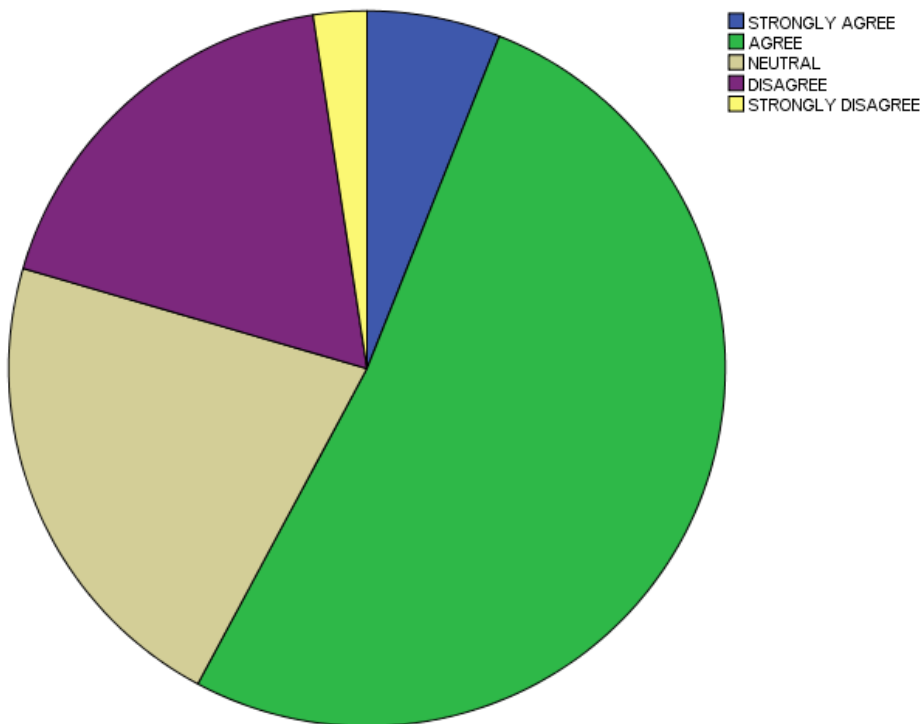


Figure 5. My school has effective discipline policies that are enforced to assist me.

Disciplining of general misbehaviour needed to be improved by the school according to 43% of parents surveyed in research conducted by Public Agenda (2004). In order for schools to thrive, 97% of educators and 78% of parents felt that a school required discipline. Nine out of every ten educators felt that the principal needed to set the example in terms of discipline (Public Agenda, 2004).

Overcrowding in the classroom was perceived, by 54% of educators surveyed, to result in disruptive behaviour. According to Public Agenda (2004), it appeared that schools that cater for higher numbers of learners from a disadvantaged background reported more problems with discipline. Over half the parents surveyed (54%) and 62% of teachers felt that behaviour problems could be due to too many learners being placed in a classroom.

Table 12

*Cross-tabulation between whether educators experience disruptive behaviour and the number of learners in a class*

	<u>DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>EXPERIENCED</u>		
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	
11 - 20 LEARNERS	1	2	3
21 - 30 LEARNERS	14	1	15
31 - 40 LEARNERS	42	6	48
41 - 50 LEARNERS	12	0	12
51 - 60 LEARNERS	2	2	4
61 OR MORE LEARNERS	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>85</b>

The researcher wanted to find out whether the number of learners an educator had in his/her class would correlate with their perceptions of whether they encountered disruptive behaviour. The findings were non-significant, with weak relationships existing between these variables.

The questionnaire provided the opportunity for educators to share what support they received from their schools in terms of dealing with disruptive behaviour. Those educators that believed that their school did support them acknowledged the

following means of support: the school provided methods for dealing with disruptive behaviour; the learner would be sent to the H.O.D. for a talking to (or other educators said that the learner was sent to the office to meet with the principal); teachers may meet to discuss and share ideas, or the school would call in the parents to discuss the child. One educator mentioned that the Learner Support Portfolio committee would assist, although it was never mentioned as to how it would assist. Others mentioned a discipline committee and another referred to a Learner Support Team. Many educators mentioned that their schools had discipline policies and learner Code of Conduct manuals that could be used. Detention was a consequence used for learners with disruptive behaviour for one respondent, whilst for another the learner was just cautioned. The principal provided suggestions for alternative punishments, such as collecting litter. Classroom Management and better lesson delivery were seen as supports the school offered this particular respondent, as was training of staff and attending workshops.

Respondents that felt that they did not receive support from their schools in dealing with disruptive behaviour were also provided the opportunity to mention what kind of support they felt needed to be in place at their school. One respondent believed that a psychologist needed to be present in order to attend to the learners. Many believed that teachers (and other staff members) and parents needed to meet to support each other. Some teachers would have liked to have had more training in skills and methods to use when dealing with disruptive behaviour, and would also have liked to receive helpful materials and attend workshops. One respondent mentioned that overcrowding in the classroom should be avoided. A couple of respondents mentioned that learners with disruptive behaviour were not 'normal' and that they should be taken to a special school where teachers with special needs qualifications could teach them.

#### **4.4.5 Impact on peer groups**

Table 13 shows the breakdown of results acquired from the participants' responses regarding disruptive behaviour and its impact on peer groups. Slightly more responses indicated disagreement towards the statement 'learners who are disruptive tend to have fewer friends'. This study targeted educators in Grade 1 to

Grade 3 classrooms. In a study by Nyberg *et al.* (2008) they found that there were significant associations between behaviour problems in Grade 1 and low social inclusion and feelings of loneliness for that learner when in Grade 6. There was also a chance that other learners may isolate learners who were disruptive as they become tired of being incorporated into class punishments and in losing out on lesson time (Ellis & Tod, 2009). Nyberg *et al.* (2008) also pointed out that it might be loneliness that motivated learners to become disruptive, as they were seeking attention, even though they received negative attention. In this study it was generally boys who reported loneliness and who showed more externalizing behaviour (Nyberg *et al.*, 2008).

Table 13

*Educators' perceptions of the impact of disruptive behaviour on peer groups*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
Learners who are disruptive tend to have fewer friends	Strongly agree	5	5.4
	Agree	30	32.6
	Neutral	14	15.2
	Disagree	34	37
	Strongly disagree	6	6.5
Females show less disruptive behaviour in my classroom than male learners	Strongly agree	12	13
	Agree	49	53.3
	Neutral	10	10.9
	Disagree	19	20.7
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Males show less disruptive behaviour in my classroom than female learners	Strongly agree	2	2.2
	Agree	13	14.1
	Neutral	14	15.2
	Disagree	52	56.5
	Strongly disagree	9	9.8

In a comparison between whether female or male learners were less disruptive 49 respondents agreed and 12 respondents strongly agreed that females showed less disruptive behaviour than males. The statement that males show less disruptive behaviour than females had 66% of respondents disagreeing with the statement. It appeared that the majority of the respondents believed male learners to be more disruptive than female. Around 16 to 21% of the educators believed that females showed more disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. In studies done by Kaplan *et al.* (2002) and Shen *et al.* (2009), it was found that male learners were more likely to engage in disruptive behaviour; however, research has shown that girls may affiliate themselves with friends who have behaviour problems and thus intervention strategies need to ensure that both male and female learners will respond to them (Miller, Loeber & Hipwell, 2009). Arbuckle and Little (2004) also found that educators were more worried about male learners displaying disruptive behaviour and that the amount of disruptive behaviour shown by males increased from the lower grades to the higher grades.

#### **4.4.6 Impact on parents**

Many teachers agreed that disruptive behaviour was a result of the lack of parental discipline in the home. In the study conducted by Public Agenda (2004), 82% of the educators and 74% of the parents felt that lack of discipline by parents was largely to blame for behaviour problems occurring in schools. Many teachers believed that discipline would improve if parents took more responsibility at home. Only 34% of the parents believed that they had managed to instil discipline in their child (Public Agenda, 2004). Table 14 shows the educators' perceptions towards discipline by parents.

Table 14

*Educators' perceptions of disruptive behaviour and its impact on parents*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
Disruptive behaviour is a result of lack of parental discipline at home	Strongly agree	22	23.9
	Agree	49	53.3
	Neutral	9	9.8
	Disagree	6	6.5
	Strongly disagree	2	2.2

Nungesser & Watkins (2005) found that educators reported that the home environment played a large role in causing disruptive behaviour. Low warmth and strict discipline by parents may contribute to the ability to predict disruptive behaviour in seven and eight-year old girls (Miller *et al.*, 2009). Parents need to be aware of their children's ability to regulate their own behaviour. If a child was not able to regulate his/her own behaviour then parents may need to be more structured and maintain more control with regards to discipline. If a child had control over his/her own behaviour then strict parenting may not be effective as it is unnecessary (Degnan *et al.*, 2008). Miller *et al.* (2009) discovered that parenting styles could not be used to predict the responses educators gave when rating disruptive behaviour.

Many educators - 49% of those responding to the Public Agenda survey (2004) - reported that disciplining a learner has resulted in unfair accusations from parents. It is important that parents take responsibility from their side and continue working with the educator and school in order to resolve problem behaviour and improve development of their child.

#### **4.4.7 Impact on educators**

When presented with the statement 'I have thought about leaving the teaching profession due to problems with behaviour' only 14% agreed and just over 79% were

in disagreement. Table 15 shows this. This statistic was much higher in the Public Agenda (2004) study where one in three educators had contemplated resignation, or knew someone who had resigned, due to discipline and behaviour problems. Symptoms of burnout did not seem to be a common experience, with 24% in agreement to the statement that disruptive behaviour has led to feelings of burnout.

Friedman (1995) found that a disrespectful attitude towards staff and/or peers had a large influence on teacher burnout. Educators with a humanistic approach to teaching struggled more in dealing with disrespect, whilst educators who were more supervisory were more affected by learners not paying attention. Non-attention played a greater role in male teacher burnout whilst disrespect affected female educator burnout (Friedman, 1995). Otero López *et al.* (2008) found that student disruptive behaviour mostly contributed to emotional exhaustion in educators, whilst the lack of support in issues regarding discipline were more likely to contribute towards depersonalisation. Feelings of personal accomplishment seemed to be affected by conflict management and the difficulty educators experience with this. Chang (2009) takes a different approach to teacher burnout, stating that it was the educators' perception towards the behaviour that resulted in the effect that the behaviour had towards them experiencing burnout.

Table 15

*The impact of disruptive behaviour on educators*

<b>QUESTION / STATEMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>% OF RESPONDENTS</b>
I have thought about leaving the teaching profession due to problems with behaviour	Strongly agree	3	3.3
	Agree	10	10.9
	Neutral	5	5.4
	Disagree	43	46.7
	Strongly disagree	30	32.6
Disruptive behaviour has lead me to feel symptoms of burnout (exhaustion, depersonalisation, lack of personal accomplishment)	Strongly agree	2	2.2
	Agree	20	21.7
	Neutral	15	16.3
	Disagree	36	39.1
	Strongly disagree	17	18.5
I have received adequate training in the management of disruptive behaviour in my class	Strongly agree	2	2.2
	Agree	25	27.2
	Neutral	20	21.7
	Disagree	31	33.7
	Strongly disagree	4	4.3
Training institutions should place more emphasis on discipline strategies in order to deal with disruptive behaviour effectively	Strongly agree	34	37
	Agree	47	51.1
	Neutral	1	1.1
	Disagree	2	2.2
	Strongly disagree	0	0
Mentoring programmes, where more experienced educators assist less experienced educators, would be beneficial in dealing with disruptive behaviour	Strongly agree	20	21.7
	Agree	48	52.2
	Neutral	13	14.1
	Disagree	3	3.3
	Strongly disagree	0	0

Table 15 shows that many teachers felt that they had not received adequate training in the management of disruptive behaviour. A total of 88% of the respondents felt that training institutions should place more emphasis on discipline strategies in order to deal with disruptive behaviour more effectively, with 37% of that in strong agreement. The idea that an improvement in student behaviour could be achieved by teacher training institutions placing more focus on the management of a classroom was supported by 91% of the educators surveyed in research conducted by Public Agenda (2004). This is a very similar statistic to that found in this current research. Prinsloo (2005) agrees that educators need training in order to effectively deal with discipline issues. Through training, educators can be empowered by learning many strategies and improving their confidence (Prinsloo, 2005).

A majority of the respondents felt that mentoring programmes would be beneficial in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Research suggests that mentoring of less experienced teachers by those with experience may be beneficial in alleviating problem behaviour in the classroom (Shen *et al.*, 2009). Shen *et al.* found that many educators (86%) battled when it came to dealing with disruptive behaviour and 45.5% of these educators found the greatest challenge to be figuring out effective solutions to manage the problem behaviour. It was mainly the less experienced teachers who found this. Generally the more experienced teachers reported less time being spent on behaviour problems (Shen *et al.*, 2009).

Figure 6 shows the educators' years of teaching experience and the responses they provided in terms of what percentage of lesson time they feel is spent dealing with disruptive behaviour. No significant relationship exists between the years of teaching experience and the percentage of time they felt that they spent dealing with discipline. Friedman (1995) suggests in his research that educators may have the same exposure to disruptive behaviour but may react differently towards it; thus, how they are affected by the behaviour will be different.

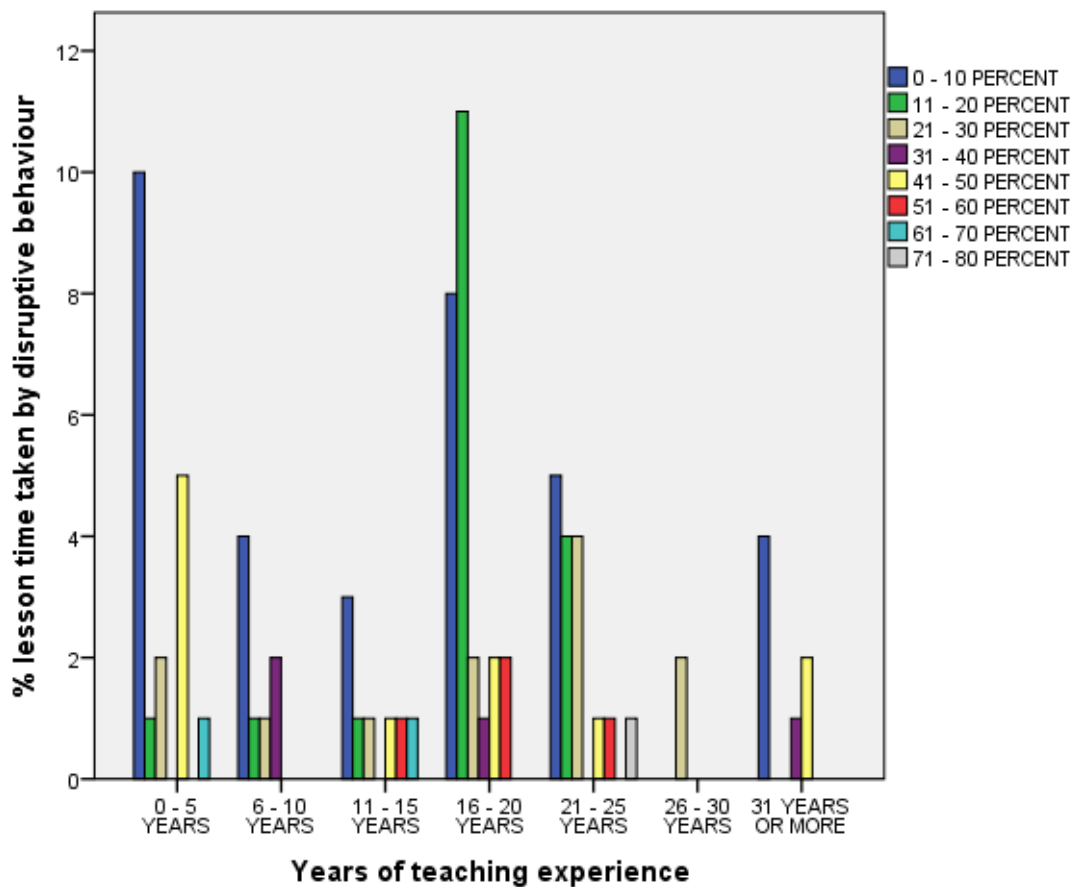


Figure 6. Bar graph showing years of teaching experience and the percentage of time spent dealing with disruptive behaviour

In a different study, 85% of respondents felt that teachers new to the profession would have more difficulty in dealing with disruptive behaviour due to their lack of experience. It was mentioned in a focus group that lack of experience and a lack of training often resulted in educators new to the field experiencing negative effects of disruptive behaviour (Public Agenda, 2004).

Through analysis of the data, it is clear that many educators feel that disruptive behaviour did impact teaching and learning, but this research cannot shed light as to the exact extent of the effect on teaching and learning in terms of percentages. The current research aimed to determine whether there was an impact from disruptive behaviour on teaching and learning, according to teachers. The information

presented above supports the hypothesis that 'educators will agree that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on the teaching and learning process'.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter details the analysis of data using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Statistical analysis was displayed through the use of tables, frequency distributions, graphs, and cross-tabulations. These results were analysed with reference to relevant research in the area of disruptive behaviour and the researcher was able to determine whether hypotheses were supported. The following chapter will sum up the main findings of the research and will highlight various limitations, as well as make recommendations for future research into this field.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Recommendations, limitations, and avenues for further research**

In this chapter the main findings from the research study will be discussed and the limitations that exist will be mentioned. The value of the research will be highlighted and suggestions for further research into the area of disruptive behaviour in the classroom will be made.

This research aimed to study educators' perceptions regarding disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. The data will therefore be based on how educators' classify disruptive behaviour and how they perceive it in their classrooms in terms of what behaviours they consider disruptive, whether these behaviours have an effect in the classroom and, if so, what effect they have, and what they believe may lead to learners becoming disruptive.

It needs to be born in mind that, for numerous reasons, educators' may view disruptive behaviour differently. A behaviour that one educator may believe to be disruptive, another educator may feel is not disruptive. An educator who has excellent discipline strategies may efficiently deal with disruptive behaviour and, even though she may have as many disruptive learners as another educator, she may feel that she experiences less disruption in her class and that it has less impact on her classroom. Educators who have many learners in their class may have adjusted to noisier classes than an educator who is used to a small class sizes and therefore each educator will have a different view of what they consider to be disruptive in their classroom.

The above are examples of how educator opinions may differ. The researcher has collected data through survey questionnaires that were distributed to a sample of schools in the Lower Umfolozi Circuit and filled out by educators in the foundation phase of these schools. The questionnaires were collected and data was coded and inputted into SPSS for statistical analysis.

## 5.1 Main findings

The researcher had formulated the following hypotheses:

1. There will be an agreement among educators that disruptive behaviours may include: shouting out and interrupting in class; getting out of seat and moving around the classroom; and misplacing belongings such as stationery.
2. There will be a proportion of children in each class showing disruptive behaviour.
3. Educators will agree that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on the teaching and learning process.

*Hypothesis 1: There will be an agreement among educators that disruptive behaviours may include: shouting out and interrupting in class; getting out of seat and moving around the classroom; and misplacing belongings such as stationery.*

The researcher formulated a list of behaviours and the educators were provided the opportunity to check off the behaviours from the list which they considered to be disruptive. The behaviours that received the most selections for being disruptive were talking in class – with 80% of respondents agreeing with this, walking around the classroom – 61% selection, shouting out – 55% selection, and playful behaviour – 53% selection. Irresponsibility with belongings was selected by 38% of the respondents. This information supports the above hypothesis as a majority of the participants checked off these items.

Other behaviours that many of the participants believed were disruptive included: 'throwing things'; 'getting up from seat'; 'hitting'; 'ignoring instructions'; irresponsibility with belongings'; 'forgetfulness'; 'fighting'; 'inattention'; 'hyperactivity'; 'bullying'; pushing'; 'tardiness'; and 'attention-seeking'. Very few educators selected behaviours such as 'rowdiness', 'truancy', 'drugs', 'cheating', 'disrespect', and 'uncooperative behaviour' as being disruptive. Educators may either believe that these items fall under a different category (as opposed to 'disruptive') or they may have only ticked off items that they experience as disruptive in their classroom.

Educators were also provided the opportunity to list other behaviours. Many educators made note of absenteeism as a disruptive behaviour. Whilst a child being absent cannot contribute to disruption in the class, that child's absence may be disruptive for the educator to perhaps go through work missed when that child returns to school. The implications of absenteeism on the teaching and learning process had not been considered by this researcher and it clearly is affecting these processes. Whilst it would fall outside the scope of this research, future research should be dedicated to absenteeism in connection with teaching and learning.

*Hypothesis 2: There will be a proportion of children in each class showing disruptive behaviour*

Numerous questions in the survey were posed requesting information that the researcher could use in order to determine the extent that disruptive behaviour exists in the classroom. In total 82% of the educators in the sample believed that they encountered disruptive behaviour in their classroom. Those that indicated that they did not experience it still identified behaviours that they felt were disruptive in their classroom. This implies that they do in fact experience disruptive behaviour.

Less than 11% of the class were selected as being disruptive by a majority of the respondents (37%). Several educators (33%) felt that they experienced between 11% and 30% disruptive behaviour by their learners. Very few educators selected options that suggested that their class had more than 30% of its learners being disruptive. Roughly half the respondents believed that disruptive behaviour was a serious problem in their class and half the respondents felt that it was not. However, 74% of the educators' responses indicated that they found disruptive behaviour to be a negative problem in their classroom.

Overall, it was found that most educators do experience a proportion of their class to be disruptive; however, it appears that for a majority of these educators the proportion appears to be relatively small, and therefore disruptive behaviour does not seem to pose a major problem in their classrooms. This does not mean that disruptive behaviour should be ignored. It implies that, perhaps, with only a little

more assistance and support, educators would be able to minimize this behaviour further, thereby improving the quality of teaching and learning in their classrooms.

The researcher introduced a section into the questionnaire in order to gain more insight into what reason educators felt contributed towards learners behaving in a disruptive manner. A large majority of the participants indicated that disruptive behaviour at school occurred because learners were not being properly disciplined by parents at home. The researcher agrees with this conclusion, as she found in her grade one classroom that the learners who were disruptive in class tended to come from family backgrounds where there was a casual attitude towards discipline or an inconsistent approach to discipline by parents.

Other factors that were mentioned by educators included barriers to learning; either mental barriers such as learning disabilities, socioeconomic barriers such as poverty, under-resourced and overcrowded classrooms, or lack of education in the surrounding community. Some educators believed that their school needed to place more emphasis on discipline in order to minimize disruptive behaviour. Whilst this research does not claim to address causative factors involved in disruptive behaviour, the perceptions of the educators does provide possible ideas which future research could address.

*Hypothesis 3: Educators will agree that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on the teaching and learning process.*

The researcher examined the impact that disruptive behaviour may have on teaching and learning processes. These were investigated separately under impact on teaching, impact on learning, impact on classroom management, impact on schools, impact on peer groups, impact on parents, and the impact on educators. Generally, teachers felt that dealing with disruptive behaviour took less than 11% of their lesson time; however, 24% felt 11 to 20% of lesson time was used, and 14% felt that between 21 to 30% of lesson time was used. Very few educators felt that more than 30% of lesson time was spent on dealing with disruptive behaviour.

When educators were asked to comment on how disruptive behaviour impacted on teaching, the following suggestions were made: too much time was being spent on discipline; lessons were interrupted with some lessons being left incomplete; many learners would lose their concentration and attention; and the presentation of the lesson was affected. Many of the respondents believed that learners would be able to learn better if there was less disruptive behaviour. A majority of the educators felt that disruptive behaviour impacts negatively on scholastic progress made by learners, and an overwhelming 83% of the respondents believed that learners who were disruptive showed lower academic outcomes than those who weren't disruptive.

Whilst most educators felt that minimal class time was spent on dealing with disruptive behaviour it appears that they feel it does have an impact on academic progress of learners. It was not so much the non-disruptive learners that they felt showed lower academic outcomes, but rather the learners who engaged in disruptive behaviour. If one considers all data collected, it would appear that most educators were in agreement that disruptive behaviour will have an impact on teaching and learning.

Overall, the majority of participants indicated that they experienced disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. The extent of disruptive behaviour seemed to fall largely between 0 and 30 percent, with 37% of respondents indicating 0 to 10% and 33% indicating 11 to 30%. Most of the respondents agreed that disruptive behaviour did affect the teaching and learning process. It appears that it was the learner who showed disruptive behaviour who also seemed to show lower academic achievement, as opposed to the learners who were not disruptive but may have a disruptive learner in their class.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

The researcher encountered numerous problems throughout the data collection process. The area that was selected for the research to be conducted in was larger than what was anticipated and thus the researcher had to travel far distances in order to distribute the questionnaires to the various schools selected in the sample.

The researcher took three weeks to deliver the questionnaires. This was done in the weeks between the end of November and early December. This in itself presented problems as some schools had closed for holidays early and other schools were finishing before 2 o' clock each day so by the time the researcher arrived at the school it would be closed and no staff were available to receive the questionnaires. It was also a busy time of year for educators and thus many schools requested that the researcher return in January (once schools had re-opened) to collect back the surveys. In total it took the researcher just over six months to collect most of the questionnaires.

The researcher also found that many schools returned fewer questionnaires than what they had originally received and some schools were not able to return any questionnaires. There were three schools where all the questionnaires were misplaced and thus no responses were received from them. Another school, which was a fair distance away, was unable to be contacted, despite numerous attempts, in order to collect the questionnaires. Some reasons that were attributed for the 71.32% response rate were the educators' workload at that particular time of year, absenteeism of educators, educators being on study leave, and questionnaires being misplaced.

Whilst distributing the questionnaires the researcher found that many of the educators were English second-language speakers and thus the questionnaire was more time-consuming to complete than anticipated. A consideration should more research be done in this area would be to have an isiZulu translation of the questionnaire. This will facilitate ease of understanding.

In most cases the researcher left the questionnaires with educators to complete at their own convenience. This meant that the researcher was not present during completion of the questionnaires and thus educators were not able to ask questions or have any assistance whilst filling in the form. The researcher noticed that some educators did not answer all the questions in the questionnaire. In a few cases the researcher remained with the educators during completion of the questionnaire but it was found that this put pressure on the educators to finish the questionnaire within certain time periods depending on their timetables. This resulted in questions being

skipped out. Thus the researcher made the decision to leave questionnaires with the school so that educators could fill it in at a convenient time for them and at their own pace.

During the inputting of data into the SPSS programme it was discovered that some educators had left out questions, or whole sections of questions, and thus their perceptions on those topics could not be taken into account. Whilst useful data was gained through analysis of the open-ended questions, there were some educators who did not fill in these sections. Many of the educators who did fill in answers to these questions were second-language English speakers and thus the researcher found some answers difficult to understand. There was also a lack of respondents coming from schools in urban areas and a lack of male respondents. This means that comparisons between these demographic groups would not have been reliable.

### **5.3 Value of research**

There is a lack of research into disruptive behaviour in the classroom, particularly in the South African context. Many learners in South Africa have barriers to learning in the form of poverty, uneducated/uninvolved/absent parents, poorly resourced and overcrowded schools, as well as poor nutrition and health. Many of the educators in this study highlighted these conditions in their responses. These are all important factors to consider when looking at the conditions in which many learners are being educated. Many of these situations cannot be changed but can be accommodated. Disruptive behaviour (for whatever reasons) exists in classrooms but given the right strategies and resources, educators may be able to create change in this area, thereby improving the learning that is happening at their schools.

This research aimed to find out the extent of disruptive behaviour in the classroom and its impact on teaching and learning. Many educators are experiencing difficulty in dealing with disruptive behaviour and thus there exists a need to incorporate discipline strategies into educator training through tertiary institutions or workshops. Mentorship programmes could also be created, where more experienced educators assist less experienced educators. Alternatively, schools that effectively reduce

disruptive behaviour through good use of discipline strategies could mentor schools that need assistance with effective discipline methods.

Many educators indicated that they felt their learners were disruptive because the parents were not taking responsibility for discipline at home. One suggestion to assist with this may be for schools to run parenting workshops where parents are given the opportunity to learn about discipline strategies that they can implement at home in order to effectively manage their child's behaviour. It is important for there to be follow-through between home and school; in other words, communication needs to exist between teacher and parent in order to work together to assist the learner the best way possible. The above points are supported by Thomas *et al* (2008), who write that schools and parents need to implement effective intervention strategies that are aimed at preventing disruptive behaviour.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The data collected showed that a total of 88% of the respondents felt that training institutions should place more emphasis on discipline strategies in order to deal with disruptive behaviour more effectively, with 37% of that in strong agreement. Many educators indicated in the survey that they would benefit from more training in the area of discipline. Training institutions may wish to allocate more time in their curriculum in order to deal with this or, alternatively, workshops focused on discipline in the classroom need to be held at locations convenient for educators. Each school could send one representative who is then provided with all the information and any necessary resources and that representative could then come back to the school and host an in-service training where the information is presented to the rest of the staff.

Parents could also be invited to participate in these workshops in order to improve discipline in the home. Many respondents indicated that a lack of discipline at home resulted in disruptive behaviour occurring in their classrooms. Alternatively, all schools should be hosting a parent information evening once a year where the educator for each grade meets with the parents. Any information with regards to the school, academic expectations of their child (especially in terms of homework as the

parent will need to be involved in this) and expectations of behaviour could be discussed. Parents could be provided with information on discipline strategies during this time.

Schools could be encouraged to start up mentorship programmes where more experienced teachers assist less experienced educators in how they successfully deal with disruptive behaviour. For those schools that are able to organize it, classroom assistants would be beneficial in each class as it would allow the educator to deal with disruptive behaviour whilst the assistant ensures the rest of the class continue with their work (or vice versa).

The overcrowding of our classrooms and the condition of the schools, in terms of resources, needs to be addressed. Many educators in this study felt that there were high numbers of learners in classrooms and that this resulted in disruptive behaviour. The Department of Education needs to formulate strategies to reduce the number of learners per classroom in order to make the classroom more manageable for the educator. In this way teaching and learning could potentially become more effective.

Wehby *et al.* (2003) believe that many educators may discipline learners by removing them from the learning situation. This results in these learners missing out on learning opportunities. Whilst reactive discipline methods can be effective in reducing disruptive behaviour, this may not always be the case and educators need to be equipped with proactive methods that may be used in conjunction in order to provide even more effective discipline structures within their class. Disruptive behaviour can potentially be reduced through planning lessons that are engaging, setting up good reward and consequence strategies to use with learners, and setting a positive example for their learners (Prinsloo, 2005).

Nungesser and Watkins (2005) and Ellis and Tod (2009) write about proactive discipline that aims to prevent disruptive behaviour from occurring and involves promoting appropriate behaviour rather than setting negative consequences in response to disruptive behaviour. This can take the form of star/rewards charts where learners earn points for good behaviour as well as praise by teachers in order to encourage a repeat of a certain positive behaviour. The learners will then

continue to behave in positive ways in order to receive the positive recognition. The more they focus on the positive behaviours, the less inclined towards negative behaviour the learners would be.

Kaplan *et al.* (2002) have discovered that learners respond well when educators have them compete against themselves, as opposed to competing against other learners. This can be with regards to academics (so the learner compares his marks from one term with his marks from the previous term in order to determine whether improvements are necessary) or behaviour (star charts do not need to be a competition amongst all learners, rather each learner's reward system is set according to their needs and what they are capable of). Should the learner improve on their own past performance they can receive recognition and praise. Cihak *et al.* (2009) researched into a process they termed 'tootling' that involves learners reporting another learner's positive behaviours. This encourages learners to behave in a desirable way all the time as they will never be aware of whether other learners are watching them or not and will want to be caught doing 'good' things in order to be praised and acknowledged.

Guardino & Fullerton (2010) have found that a change in the setting of a classroom may prove effective in the reduction of disruptive behaviour. This involves the educator identifying the areas in the classroom where disruptive behaviour generally occurs. Changes then need to be implemented so that those particular areas in the class are not as conducive to disruptive behaviour. As an example, the educator may have a group of learners who create disruption to the class and therefore the educator would need to rearrange seating arrangements in order to separate those learners. This idea may also involve organizing an area of a class (such as a reading corner) in order to ensure that learners are using that area for its intended function.

## **5.5 Avenues for further research**

Future research needs to focus on factors that influence or possibly cause disruptive behaviour. A large amount of resources would be required to research into this area;

however, it would provide more insight into areas that educators, parents, schools, and the greater community need to focus on in order to reduce disruptive behaviour.

It would also be beneficial for researchers to do observations in a variety of classrooms to develop a more standardized concept of disruptive behaviour so that it can be better quantified and analysed. This research focused purely on educators' perceptions of disruptive behaviour. The researcher did not enter the classrooms to gather data but rather relied on educators to provide information for analysis. Future research should include more male respondents, as well as more respondents from urban schools, as this will provide more holistic insight with regards to the various demographics and the experience of disruptive behaviour.

Various intervention approaches and discipline strategies could be implemented in selected classrooms by researchers. Observations could be done before the intervention and then again after the implementation of the intervention. The effects of these interventions could be documented and interventions that are found to be effective in dealing with/reducing disruptive behaviour in the classroom could be taught to educators at tertiary institutions. Research in this area needs to take into account overcrowding of classrooms and under-resourced schools as this is a reality in South Africa and intervention strategies will need to work around this.

The researcher found that many of the participants mentioned absenteeism as a challenge. This appears to cause disruption and negatively affect the teaching and learning going on in classrooms. This would be an important issue to research in the future as it seems to affect scholastic progress. Research could focus on what is causing learners to be absent frequently, how this affects their education, and what factors could be put into place to improve school attendance.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The main findings from this research have been discussed, limitations addressed, and recommendations for future research made. Disruptive behaviour in the classroom, according to the observations made by educators, does appear to exist in classrooms in Zululand and it does seem to be having an impact on teaching and

learning. If this is the case, then it stands to reason that a reduction in disruptive behaviour in the classroom should lead to an improvement in academic outcomes by some learners. Whilst not all factors that cause disruptive behaviour can be controlled by the educator, effective discipline strategies could empower the educator to reduce the amount of disruption experienced in the classroom. A reduction in disruption may result in a classroom environment more conducive to teaching and learning.

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## **Annexures**

Annexure one: Application to the department of education for permission to conduct research



**Application for Permission to Conduct Research in  
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions**

**1. Applicants Details**

Title: Miss Surname: Robarts  
 Name(s) Of Applicant(s): Paula Alice Email: paularobarts@gmail.com  
 Fax: 035 787 0438 Cell: 078 287 4967  
 Postal Address: P.O. Box 7032, Empangeni Rail, 3910

**2. Proposed Research Title:**

Educators' Perceptions of Disruptive Behaviour and its Impact in the Classroom

**3. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other research within the KZNDoe institutions?**  No

If "yes", please state reference Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?**  Yes

If "yes"  
**Name of tertiary institution:** University of Zululand  
**Faculty and or School:** Education  
**Qualification:** Masters in Educational Psychology  
**Name of Supervisor:** Dr S Govender **Supervisors Signature**

If "no", state purpose of research: \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Department  
 Educational Psychology and Special Education  
 University of Zululand

Date: 07/11/2012

Signature:

**Briefly state the Research Background:**

As a Grade 1 educator, the researcher was able to observe children in the classroom setting and was particularly interested in those children who were easily distracted from tasks and/or fidgety, forgetful with regards to their belongings (often misplacing their stationery), and often had a disorderly work area. There were children in class who constantly interrupted the lesson by shouting out or getting up from their seat and walking around the classroom. This often interfered with teaching, and assisting these children was time consuming and detrimental to the learning potential of the other children in the class.

The researcher found the teaching environment to be very stressful as a result of the disruptive behaviour in class. It impacted on the emotional aspect of teaching as it tested her patience and altered her mood and motivation in the classroom, to the point where she felt like giving up on the learner(s) or walking out of the classroom in pure frustration. The researcher taught a class of 27 learners but many schools in South Africa have classes with 40 (or more) learners, so one can imagine how disruptive classroom behaviour may affect the teacher and the teaching and learning occurring in the classroom.

This research aims to address to what extent (if any) disruptive behaviour is affecting the teaching and learning of educators and learners respectively. Due to the lack of research into the area of classroom behaviour in foundation phase classrooms (especially with regards to the South African context), this research has the potential to be used to encourage future research in terms of the causes of disruptive behaviour, and possible prevention or intervention strategies that can be implemented to assist learners, parents and educators in dealing with the situation.

**5. What is the main research question(s) :**

- 1.1.1 What behaviours constitute as disruptive to teaching and learning?
- 1.1.2 What, in the perception of educators, is the extent of disruptive behaviour in foundation phase classrooms amongst schools in the Empangeni area?
- 1.1.3 According to the educators, what is the effect of disruptive behaviour to the teaching process?

**6. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample:**

The data collection techniques will include both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Questionnaires will be sent out to educators from Grades 1, 2, and 3 from various schools that fall in the Lower Umfolozi Circuit Office. The questionnaires will include closed-ended questions, in order to determine the extent of disruptive behaviour in the classroom, and open-ended questions, in order to gain further insight into the perspectives of educators on the nature of the behaviour and its effect on the teaching practices.

Simple random probability sampling will be used in order to ensure that every school (and Junior Primary teacher within each school) that falls in the Lower Umfolozi Circuit Office has an equal chance of being selected for the study. Once the school has been selected, every educator from grade 1, 2, and 3 will be asked to complete a questionnaire. Schools will be contacted by the researcher, who will seek permission from the principal to meet with the Junior Primary staff to explain the study and distribute questionnaires.

Quantitative information from the questionnaires that have been collected will be coded so that the data can be entered into SPSS. Frequency distributions, in the form of tables and bar graphs will be generated in order to determine the proportion of learners who display disorganized classroom behaviour. The qualitative aspects of the questionnaire will be analysed using an interpretive approach.

**What contribution will the proposed study make to the education, health, safety, welfare of the learners and to the education system as a whole?:**

This research aims to address educator perceptions as to what extent (if any) disruptive behaviour is affecting the teaching and learning of educators and learners respectively. Due to the lack of research into the area of classroom behaviour in foundation phase classrooms (especially with regards to the South African context), this research has the potential to be used to encourage future research in terms of the causes of disruptive behaviour, and possible prevention or intervention strategies that can be implemented to assist learners, parents and educators in dealing with the situation.

The researcher found that dealing with disruptive behaviour in the class was very time-consuming and emotionally draining. As an inexperienced educator, the researcher felt that she was ill-equipped to deal with the few children in the class that could not behave. By preparing educators to deal with behaviour problems in the classroom (and possibly educating parents with regards to discipline strategies for their children) one can potentially reduce the disruptive behaviour these educators may be experiencing.

**KZN Department of Education Schools or Institutions from which sample will be drawn – If the list is long please attach at the end of the form**

Please see attached list

**7. Research data collection instruments: (Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached):**

A survey questionnaire will be distributed to Educators. Please see attached questionnaire.

**8. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians:**

Permission for participation in the research will first be obtained by the Department of Education and then by the respective principals and educators. All participants in this study will be given the choice to participate and will be given all the information necessary in order for them to make an informed and autonomous decision. The research will not harm any individuals involved as it aims to cast light on the extent and effect of disruptive behaviour in classrooms.

**9. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable):**

All participants will be assured of anonymity and confidentiality as names will not be recorded on the questionnaires and questionnaires will be placed into boxes for collection by the researcher. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity will be discussed so that participants are comfortable in participating in the research. Once the research has been completed, the dissertation will be made available to the participants should they wish to read it.

**10. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable): n/a**

**11. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable): n/a**

**12. Research Timelines :**

This research is a partial requirement towards the researcher's M.Ed (Psych) and thus the researcher would like to conduct the research in November 2012 in order to complete the dissertation by early 2013.

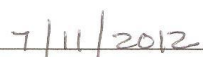
**13. Declaration**

I hereby agree to comply with the relevant ethical conduct to ensure that participants' privacy and the confidentiality of records and other critical information.

**I, Paula Robarts, declare that the above information is true and correct**



Signature of Applicant



Date

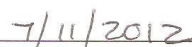
**14. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.**

I/We agree to provide the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/We grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using the print or electronic media.



Signature of Applicant(s)



Date

**Return a completed form to:**

Sibusiso Alwar

The Research Unit; Resource Planning; KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

**Hand Delivered:**

Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street; Pietermaritzburg; 3201

**Or**

**Ordinary Mail**

Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200

**Or**

**Email**

[sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za)

## Annexure two: Permission from the department of education to conduct research



**kzn education**

Department:  
Education  
KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8/343

Miss. Paula Alice Robarts  
P.O Box 7032  
Empangeni Rail  
3910

Dear Miss. Robarts

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISTRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR AND ITS IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 January 2013 to 31 December 2014.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the schools and institutions in the Kwazulu Natal Department of Education.

**Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**  
Head of Department: Education

21/05/2013  
Date

...dedicated to service and performance  
beyond the call of duty.

#### KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POTAL : Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office G 25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, Pietermaritzburg 3201

TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail: sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za | Web: www.kzneducation.gov.za

## Annexure three: Ethical clearance certificate

**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS  
COMMITTEE**  
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-30)



**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND**  
Website: <http://www.uzulu.ac.za>

Private Bag X1001  
KwaDlangezwa 3886

Tel: 035 902 6645  
Fax: 035 902 6222  
Email: [dviljoen@pan.uzulu.ac.za](mailto:dviljoen@pan.uzulu.ac.za)

### ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2012/22				
Project Title	Educators perception of disruptive behavior in the foundation phase classroom				
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	P Robarts				
Supervisor and Co- supervisor	Dr. S Govender		Prof. MM Hlongwane		
Department	Education Psychology & Special Education				
Nature of Project	Honours/4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Master's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x	Doctoral	Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives **PROVISIONAL** ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project proposal and the documents listed on page 2 of this Certificate. Special conditions, if any, are also listed on page 2.

The Researcher may therefore commence with the research as from the date of this Certificate, using the reference number indicated above, but may not conduct any data collection using research instruments that are yet to be approved.

Please note that the UZREC must be informed immediately of

- Any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the UZREC
- Any material breaches of ethical undertakings or events that impact upon the ethical conduct of the research

The Principal Researcher must report to the UZREC in the prescribe format, where applicable, annually and at the end of the project, in respect of ethical compliance.

The table below indicates which documents the UZREC considered in granting this Certificate and which documents, if any, still require ethical clearance. (Please note that this is not a closed list and should new instruments be developed, these may also require approval.)

Documents	Considered	To be submitted	Not required
Faculty Research Ethics Committee recommendation	X		
Animal Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Health Research Ethics Committee recommendation			X
Ethical clearance application form	X		
Project registration proposal	X		
Informed consent from participants	X		
Informed consent from parent/guardian	X		
Permission for access to sites/information/participants		X	
Permission to use documents/copyright clearance			X
Data collection/survey instrument/questionnaire	X		
Data collection instrument in appropriate language		Only if necessary	
Other data collection instruments		Only if used	

**Special conditions:** Documents marked "To be submitted" must be presented for ethical clearance before any data collection can commence.

- a) A letter of access is obtained

The UZREC retains the right to

- Withdraw or amend this Certificate if
  - Any unethical principles or practices are revealed or suspected
  - Relevant information has been withheld or misrepresented
  - Regulatory changes of whatsoever nature so require
  - The conditions contained in this Certificate have not been adhered to
- Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting the research.



**Professor Rob Midgley**  
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research and Innovation  
 Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee  
 20 February 2013

## Annexure four: Letter of informed consent

### Informed Consent Letter

#### RESEARCH TOPIC: EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND ITS IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM

Dear Educator

I am currently studying towards my Master degree in Educational psychology at the University of Zululand. A requirement of this course is that I complete a dissertation. I am interested in gaining more insight into disruptive behaviour and its impact in the classroom. I would like to study this from the perspective of educators and how you experience disruptive behaviour in your classroom. Disruptive Behaviour is a term that can be used to describe a behaviour that an individual displays that interferes with another person/other people and prevents that person/those people from continuing with a task or activity. This behaviour causes displeasure to that person/those people who is/are affected by it. The information collected from this research will be used to help improve the culture of teaching and learning at schools and help both learners and educators.

Please assist me by filling out the attached consent form and questionnaire. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. It is made up of three sections. Section A asks for your personal particulars, Section B requires information regarding disruptive behaviour and its impact on your classroom, and Section C asks questions about management of disruptive behaviour. Please read each question carefully before answering. There are no right or wrong answers. This research aims to find out your opinion regarding disruptive behaviour in the classroom and therefore answers should reflect your particular teaching and learning environment. Please return the questionnaire and consent form to your front office. I will collect it within two days of its distribution.

Note that confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research study and complete anonymity is guaranteed. In order to maintain anonymity please DO NOT write any of your personal details, such as your name, anywhere on the questionnaire. Note that the consent form and the

questionnaire are to be handed in separately. This is to encourage all participants to answer all questions as honestly as possible and to increase the validity of the research study.

The completed research will be made available through via the University of Zululand's library should you wish to review the results.

Should you require any clarification please feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the numbers provided below.

Researcher:	Designation	Contact number:
Miss Paula Robarts	Intern Psychologist University of Zululand	0782874967
Supervisor:		
Dr. S. Govender	Educational Psychologist Department of Educational Psychology and Special Education University of Zululand	0359026442

Your assistance with this research is greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Robarts  
Intern Psychologist

Annexure five: Consent form

**CONSENT FORM**

**EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND  
IT'S IMPACT IN THE CLASSROOM**

**DECLARATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (full name), hereby confirm that I understand the contents of the covering letter and the nature of the research project and consent to participating in the research project by completing the attached questionnaire.

I am aware that the answers I provide in the questionnaire will contribute towards research regarding disruptive behaviour in the classroom. I am also aware that my anonymity is guaranteed. I am also aware that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time prior to the publication of the result.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (in full): \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**Section A**

**Please read each question carefully and tick the box that corresponds to your answer.**

1. Gender

- a. Female
- b. Male

2. Age

- a. 20 years or younger
- b. 21 – 25
- c. 26 – 30
- d. 31 – 35
- e. 36 – 40
- f. 41 – 45
- g. 46- 50
- h. 51 +

3. Highest level of education

- a. National Senior Certificate
- b. Undergraduate degree
- c. Postgraduate degree
- d. Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)
- e. Masters degree
- f. Doctoral degree
- g. Other Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Years teaching at a school

- a. 0 – 5
- b. 6 – 10
- c. 11 – 15
- d. 16 – 20
- e. 21 – 25
- f. 26 – 30
- g. 31+

5. Classification of your school

- a. Rural
- b. Urban

6. Medium of instruction

- a. English
- b. isiZulu
- c. Afrikaans

7. What grade level do you teach?

- a. Grade 1
- b. Grade 2
- c. Grade 3

8. Number of learners in your classroom

- a. Less than 11
- b. 11 – 20
- c. 21 – 30
- d. 31 – 40
- e. 41 – 50
- f. 51 – 60
- g. 60 +

**Section B**

**Please read each question carefully and tick the box that corresponds to your preferred response.**

9. Do you encounter disruptive behaviour in your classroom?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Which behaviours do you believe to be disruptive to your classroom? You may circle more than one item for this particular question.

- a. Shouting out
- b. throwing things
- c. Getting up from seat
- d. hitting
- e. Walking around the classroom
- f. ignoring instructions
- g. Talking in class
- h. Rowdiness (disorderliness)
- i. Irresponsibility with belongings
- j. Truancy (bunking)
- k. Forgetfulness
- l. Drugs
- m. Playful behaviour
- n. Fighting
- o. Disrespect
- p. Inattention
- q. Cheating
- r. uncooperative behaviour
- s. Tardiness (not being punctual)
- t. Hyperactivity

- u. Bullying
- v. Pushing
- w. Attention-seeking

11. What other behaviours might you classify as disruptive to your classroom?

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12. What percentage of your class would you say behave in a disruptive manner?

- a. 0 – 10 %
- b. 11 – 20 %
- c. 21 – 30 %
- d. 31 – 40 %
- e. 41 – 50 %
- f. 51 – 60 %
- g. 61 – 70 %
- h. 71 – 80 %
- i. 81 – 90 %
- j. 91 – 100%

13. What percentage of lesson time do you feel you spend dealing with disruptive behaviour?

- a. 0 – 10 %
- b. 11 – 20 %
- c. 21 – 30 %
- d. 31 – 40 %
- e. 41 – 50 %
- f. 51 – 60 %
- g. 61 – 70 %
- h. 71 – 80 %
- i. 81 – 90 %
- j. 91 – 100%

14. How does disruptive behaviour affect learning in your classroom?

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15. How does disruptive behaviour affect teaching in your classroom?

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**Please place a tick in the box next to your preferred response to the statements below;**

16. Disruptive behaviour is not a serious problem in my classroom.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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17. Females show less disruptive behaviour in my classroom than male learners.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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18. Males show less disruptive behaviour in my classroom than female learners.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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19. Disruptive behaviour is a negative factor in the classroom.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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20. Disruptive behaviour negatively impacts on the scholastic progress made by learners.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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21. My learners would be able to learn better if there was less disruptive behaviour in my classroom.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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22. Learners who are disruptive show lower academic outcomes than those who aren't disruptive.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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23. The school experience of many is ruined by the disruptive behaviour of a few.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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24. Learners who are disruptive tend to have fewer friends.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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25. Disruptive behaviour makes me feel unmotivated to teach in the classroom.

a. strongly agree		b. agree		c. neutral		d. disagree		e. strongly disagree	
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26. Disruptive behaviour motivates me to adapt my teaching style.

a. strongly agree		b. agree		c. neutral		d. disagree		e. strongly disagree	
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27. I spend more time dealing with disruptive behaviour than I do assisting those non-disruptive learners with their classwork.

a. strongly agree		b. agree		c. neutral		d. disagree		e. strongly disagree	
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28. My discipline methods in class generally involve removing the child from the work situation, such as by giving a time-out or sending the learner out of the classroom.

a. strongly agree		b. agree		c. neutral		d. disagree		e. strongly disagree	
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29. I have thought about leaving the teaching profession due to problems with behaviour.

a. strongly agree		b. agree		c. neutral		d. disagree		e. strongly disagree	
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30. Disruptive behaviour has led me to feel symptoms of burnout (exhaustion, depersonalisation, lack of personal accomplishment).

a. strongly agree		b. agree		c. neutral		d. disagree		e. strongly disagree	
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### Section C

**Please read the following questions carefully.**

31. Do you receive support from your school in dealing with disruptive behaviour? Please tick the box that corresponds to your preferred response.

- a. Yes
- b. No

32. If you answered yes to the above question, what support do you receive?

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33. If you answered no to question 39, what support would assist you in dealing with disruptive behaviour?

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34. In your view, what other factors may contribute to increased disruptive behaviour in the classroom?

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**Please place a tick in the box that corresponds with your preferred response.**

35. Disruptive behaviour would be reduced if my school had more effective discipline policies in place.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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36. Disruptive behaviour is a result of overcrowding in my classroom.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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37. Disruptive behaviour is a result of lack of parental discipline at home.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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38. Authoritarian (High control) strategies work best in dealing with disruptive behaviour in my class.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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39. I have received adequate training in the management of disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------	--------------------------	----------	--------------------------	------------	--------------------------	-------------	--------------------------	----------------------	--------------------------

40. Training institutions should place more emphasis on discipline strategies in order to deal with disruptive behaviour effectively.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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41. Mentoring programmes, where more experienced educators assist less experienced educators, would be beneficial in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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42. My school has effective discipline policies that are enforced to assist me.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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43. If minor discipline problems were better dealt with there wouldn't be discipline problems.

a. strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	c. neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	e. strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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## Annexure seven: Letter from editor

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND  
Private Bag X1001  
KwaDlangezima  
3886

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Proofreading of Master's Thesis

I have written this letter to inform you that the Master's thesis entitled 'Educators' Perceptions of Disruptive Behaviour and Its Impact in the Classroom', written by Miss Paula Robarts (student number 201100013) in partial fulfilment of her Master's Degree in Education and Psychology, has undergone the process of proofreading and editing.

Said process was duly performed by myself, Mrs Layle Cathey (nee Henderson). I have a Master of Arts Degree in Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, awarded by Rhodes University in 2010 (please see attached). This, coupled with extensive proofreading experience garnered while a student in Grahamstown, makes me (I believe) suitably capable of performing this task.

Kindly contact me if you have any queries.

Sincerely



Mrs Layle Rose Cathey  
0845173824  
[layleh@yahoo.com](mailto:layleh@yahoo.com)