



**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**A Case Study of Principals Leadership Roles in Addressing Learner Indiscipline in Four
Secondary Schools in the uMgungundlovu District.**

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**A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Education in the Discipline of Educational Leadership Management and Policy**

Supervisor: Dr P. E. Mthembu

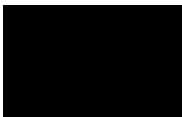
FEBRUARY 2023

DECLARATION

I, **Yovana Naidoo**, declare that:

- I. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- II. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- III. This dissertation does not contain any other person's data, pictures, graphs, or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from those persons.
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Signe



Yovana Naidoo

Date: 28 February 2023

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.



15

February

2023

SIGNATURE

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my selfless, loving parents, Yogambal Naidoo and Ronnie Naidoo.

The effort put into this master's degree was motivated by your encouragement and love. Mom, you have created a framework of dedication and passion in the education field, which I model today. Dad, your unwavering support is and forever will be unmatched. I owe everything to both of you!

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First and foremost, I would like to express my immense gratitude to my supervisor, Dr P. E Mthembu. Thank you for your patience, understanding, guidance and motivation throughout this arduous but fulfilling journey. I will forever be grateful for your role in my development.

I thank God for providing me with this opportunity and the strength to see it through.

To my amazing parents, thank you for all you continue to do for me. I appreciate you both more than words can ever express.

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To my partner, Austin Cruetz Thomas, I cannot fathom my life without you. I treasure your patience and persistence. Thank you for your constant support and motivation throughout this process. May this accomplishment serve us both as we venture through our future.

I wish to thank all my family, friends and colleagues. This moment of celebration and fulfilment would not have been possible without your constant support and motivation—a special thank you to Mandy Naidoo for her professional mentorship throughout my career.

To my learners, with whom I have crossed paths, thank you for influencing my life positively and making it worthwhile.

Last but not least, a heartfelt thank you to the participants of this study. Thank you for allowing me to access your lives and share your experiences with me. After listening to your professional stories, I aspire to be a versatile leader like each of you.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



16 September 2020

Miss Yovana Naidoo (213548055)
School Of Education
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Dear Miss Naidoo,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00001841/2020

Project title: A Case Study of Principals Leadership Roles in Addressing Learner Indiscipline in Six Secondary Schools in the uMgungundlovu District

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 22 August 2020 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

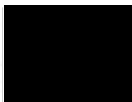
This approval is valid until 16 September 2021.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

ABSTRACT

The study explores the common and reoccurring phenomenon of learner indiscipline in secondary schools, specifically the principals' role in addressing learner indiscipline from a leadership perspective. Principals are school leaders with versatile leadership styles that influence how they address learner indiscipline. Discipline refers to the ability of humans to act appropriately, at the right time and under the right circumstances. Learning needs to take place in a safe and conducive environment. Schools are considered to 'produce' well-rounded learners in society. Moreover, some laws and policies are in place to protect learners and aim to create disciplined citizens. Nonetheless, indiscipline is still an area of concern for principals.

The interpretive research paradigm suits this study while being qualitative. This study's research design is a case study and has a qualitative approach. Four participants had been a purposive sampling of secondary school principals in the uMgungundlovu District, an area where several cases of violence had been documented. Data was generated from face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which were thereafter analysed through an inductive approach. For the case of this study, the theoretical framework is the Response to Intervention and Instruction model (RTII) and Responsive classroom intertwined with the School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) model.

Findings suggest that principals must aim to increase parental involvement and utilise tools like the SGB and school code of conduct. Principals are encouraged to acknowledge and implement certain leadership styles, which align with the notions of bringing about self-disciplined learners who will emerge as well-rounded citizens. Discipline remains the essential element of any learner because learner indiscipline disrupts learner academics. Numerous scholars accentuate that principals are responsible for performing inter-changeable functions; addressing learner indiscipline is two-fold as the study indicates, principals must create self-orderly learners, by using preventative measures, resulting in schools achieving the objectives of the school, one of which being academic success.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEP	Character Education Partnership
DBE	Department of Basic Education
FEDSAS	The Federation of Governing Bodies of South African Schools
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
PAM	The Personnel Administrative Measures
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RTII	The Response to Intervention and Instruction model
SA	South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMS System	Short Message Service System
SMT	School Management Team
SWPBIS	School Wide Positive Behaviour Intervention Support model
SWPBS	School Wide Positive Behaviour Support model
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
USA	United States of America

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ETHICAL CLEARANCE	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER 1	1
1.1 Introduction and background to the study	1
1.2 Policy, conceptual and empirical issues	4
1.3 Personal motivation and professional motivation.....	7
1.4 Statement of the Problem.....	9
1.5 Purpose of the Study	11
1.6 Objectives of the study	11
1.7 Key research questions	11
1.8 Significance of the Study.....	12
1.9 Limitations of the Study	13
1.10 Delimitations of Study	13
1.11 Clarification of Concepts.....	14
1.11.1 Leadership.....	14
1.11.2 Learner indiscipline	15
1.11.3 Leadership strategies	15
1.12 Overview of the chapters of the study	15
1.13 Chapter summary.....	16
1. CHAPTER 2	18
2.1 Introduction.....	18
2.2 Learner indiscipline in schools	18
2.3 Principal leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline.....	20
2.4 Leadership styles	23
2.4.1 Vision.....	24
2.4.2 Honesty and integrity.....	24
2.4.3 Trust.....	24

2.4.4	Service	25
2.4.5	Modelling.....	25
2.4.6	Pioneering.....	25
2.4.7	Appreciation of others	26
2.4.8	Empowerment.....	26
2.5	Leadership strategies for addressing learner indiscipline	26
2.6	Principals addressing bullying.....	34
2.7	The role of principals in addressing learner violence.....	37
2.8	The principal's role in enhancing parental involvement to address learner indiscipline.....	41
2.9	Strategies for increasing parental involvement.....	43
2.10	The implementation of character education by school principals	44
2.11	The principal's role in the effective communication	46
2.12	Theoretical Framework.....	49
2.12.1	The School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) Model	49
2.12.2	The Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) model.....	50
2.13	Chapter Summary	51
2.	CHAPTER 3	53
2.1	Introduction.....	53
3.2	Interpretive research paradigm	53
3.3	Research approach	54
3.4	Research design	54
3.5	Research Population strategies	55
3.6	Data generation methods	56
3.7	Semi-structured interviews	56
3.8	Document review.....	57
3.9	Data analysis strategy	57
3.10	Trustworthiness of the Study	58
3.11	Considering ethical issues.....	59
3.12	Chapter Summary	60
3.	CHAPTER 4	61
4.1	Introduction.....	61
4.2	Profiling the Participants	61
4.3	Themes.....	62
4.3.1	Principals' leadership role and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline	62
4.3.1.1	Reinforcing the code of conduct for learners.....	62

4.3.1.2	Principals' roles in supporting staff to address learner indiscipline.....	68
4.3.1.3	The principal's role in supporting the SGB in addressing learner indiscipline	71
4.3.1.4	A philosophy of values and vision for addressing learner indiscipline	74
4.3.2	Strategies and processes used by principals to address learner indiscipline.....	78
4.3.3	Lessons learned from the principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline.	82
4.4	Chapter Summary	86
4.	CHAPTER 5	87
5.1	Introduction.....	87
5.2	Summary.....	87
5.3	Conclusions.....	90
5.3.1	What are the principals' leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?	91
5.3.2	How do secondary school principals describe their leadership strategies and processes for addressing learner indiscipline?.....	91
5.3.3	What can we learn from principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences regarding addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?	92
5.4	Recommendations.....	93
5.4.1	Identification of preferred leadership roles.....	93
5.4.2	Principals as agents of change	93
5.4.3	Implementation of targeted training and development programmes	94
5.4.4	Strengthening of the mechanisms and tools for addressing learner indiscipline	94
5.4.5	Creating a value-driven culture in schools	95
5.5	Implications for further research	95
5.6	Conclusion	96
	REFERENCES	97
	Appendices	105
	Appendix 1: Permission to conduct research.....	105
	Appendix 2: Informed consent letter to participants	106
	Appendix 3: Schedule of interview questions	111
	Appendix 4: Document Review Checklist	113
	Appendix 5: Certificate from Language Editor	115
	Appendix 6: Originality report	116

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

The focus of this study was to explore how four secondary school principals addressed issues of learner indiscipline. This is because the pestilence of learner indiscipline affects the quality of education (see, for instance, Masingi, 2017) and thus has a ripple effect on the quality of citizens and society in general. Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014) contend that education is a worldwide challenge, and learner indiscipline is a fundamental attribute of this challenge. Discipline refers to the ability of humans to act appropriately at the right time and under the right circumstances, whether there is supervision or not (Wang'ang'a & Awuor, 2019). Effective learning requires a safe and conducive environment (Usman & Madudili, 2019).

Schools are expected to 'produce' well-rounded and productive individuals who contribute positively to their communities and society in general, and discipline remains a core element for the success of any learner because discipline contributes positively to academic performance (Wang'ang'a & Awuor, 2019). Discussions about the notion of indiscipline in school have been an ongoing issue and have been reported as potentially causing teacher stress and negatively affecting teaching and learning (Schulze & Steyn, 2007). Learner indiscipline has progressively evolved over the years, and with this evolution came varying strategies for addressing learner indiscipline (see, for instance, Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Mkandla, 2019; Zulu, Oosthuizen & Wolhuter, 2019). Due to the societal changes, coupled with changes in the policy environment regarding learner discipline, learner indiscipline has tended to require principals to focus on eliminating punitive exclusionary measures to a more social, cooperative, competence-based inclusive approach (Smith & Amushigamo, 2016). This implies the necessity for a change in the leadership approach of school principals.

For this study, the principal's leadership role refers to their leadership experiences, strategies, and practices for addressing learner indiscipline. Naidoo (2019) contends that principals must

perform three interchangeable functions, namely, management of finances, management of human resources, and holding and driving the vision that is focused on school development and improvement. Principals lead schools, and schools play a crucial role in building the learners' character and impacting the nation's social development through the development of socially responsible learners (Belle, 2016; Belle, 2017; Nakpodia, 2010).

Smith and Amushigamo (2016) contend that positive learner behaviour arises from a positive school culture, the cultivation of which the school principal is responsible. This means that all principals in all schools have this responsibility, as no educational institution is immune to issues of learner indiscipline (Ige, 2019). Therefore, for decades, learner indiscipline in schools has been a concern for principals (Wolhuter & Van der Walt, 2020). In line with Wolhuter and Van der Walt's (2020) argument, Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah and Achiaa (2018) contend that the ubiquity of learner indiscipline in schools has been a perpetual problem. However, the severity of learner indiscipline has not been the same in schools. For instance, secondary schools have experienced more severe issues of learner indiscipline (see, for example, Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014; Wolhuter & Van der Walt, 2020). Consequently, globally, learner indiscipline has been characterised as a serious and persistent challenge, negatively affecting teaching and learning (Ige, 2019).

Kutsyuruba, Klinger and Hussain (2015) researched the relationship between school safety and learner achievement and allude that schools must address discipline challenges to ensure that schools are safe and conducive to learning outcomes by learners. Discipline is, therefore, at the centre of success. Discipline may be conceptualised as self-control, self-direction, self-reliance and accountability for one's behaviour and conduct (Chonco, 2019; Ige, 2019; Kiende, 2019; Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014). For this study, indiscipline is understood as the opposite of discipline, which is often characterised by a lack of discipline and presents as disruptive behaviour, affecting the quality of teaching and learning (Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah & Achiaa, 2018; Benewaa, 2020). In this regard, learner indiscipline and its disruptive nature will be used to understand the principals' role in addressing learner indiscipline in this study.

Communities expect schools to have ‘disciplined learners’ (see, for instance, Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Ali et al. (2014) understand school discipline to have two main purposes. Firstly, school discipline ensures the safety of both the staff and the learners, and secondly, it creates a possibility for a favourable learning and teaching environment (Ali et al., 2014). While Owen (2005) underlines the link between childhood discipline and adult behaviour, Nakpodia (2010) and Berger (2003) argue that the education system is responsible for producing socialised citizens who can value human dignity. In this regard, Belle (2016) suggests that education is responsible for instilling not only knowledge and skills but also attitudes and values, such as self-discipline, to assist learners to become adults in the dynamic world in which they will work and live. For this to happen, the role of school leadership, especially principals, is essential. Principals still find it difficult to address in secondary schools, contesting the quality of learners who enter the dynamic working class (Belle, 2016).

The effective maintenance of discipline in schools enhances the effectiveness of education by providing a platform for quality teaching and learning (Jauhari, Sujantu & Abdullah, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to explore the issues concerning the achievement of discipline in schools. Learner indiscipline may present in various ways within the changing contexts of schools. It is the responsibility of school principals, as leaders, to build the capacity of the schools to respond to the various, often evolving manifestations of learner indiscipline arising from a range of factors, for example, violence, bullying and truancy. Examples of the predominant forms of learner indiscipline may include talking without permission, teasing fellow learners, non-completion of given work, verbal attacks on other learners and teachers, graffiti on classroom and toilets walls and the use of drugs (Simuforosa & Rosemary, 2014). It is, thus, important to explore the various strategies principals use to address learner indiscipline as part of their leadership role (Belle, 2016; De Matthews, Carey, Olivarez & Saeedi, 2017). Omote, Thinguri and Moenga (2015) have identified formal approaches such as guidance, counselling, classroom instruction, and informal approaches, including peer group influences. This study will explore the link between the principals’ leadership role and the responsibility to address learner indiscipline. This study aims to contribute to the body of research on the principal’s roles in addressing learner indiscipline.

A study conducted by Omote et al. (2015) reveals that principals face ongoing challenges in addressing learner indiscipline. For example, in secondary schools, learner indiscipline includes the bunking of lessons, learners making rude remarks, smoking in the toilets, talking while the teacher is teaching, violence, theft and bullying (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). To complicate matters, secondary school principals are often faced with contestations arising from the limitations of law and policy, inadequate teacher preparation for the new modalities, parental influence, political influence and insufficient knowledge and resources. It is with these notions, that Omote et al. (2015) have called for school principals to be provided with a clear guiding framework for the prevention and management of learner indiscipline.

Belle (2017) has highlighted the fact that it is not in not trying that the challenge of learner indiscipline persists; principals are attempting to maintain positive discipline. In this regard, Belle (2017) argues that there are laws and policies to protect and uphold learners' rights and produce disciplined citizens, but that learner indiscipline continues to be an area of concern for many school principals. These issues point to the fact that secondary school principals have a difficult role to play in addressing not only learner indiscipline but several other variables as well. For instance, a recent study revealed that more than 60% of teachers believe the principal must address learner indiscipline (Belle & Ravi, 2020). Hence, for this study, exploring the leadership role of principals in addressing learner indiscipline is relevant and vital.

1.2 Policy, conceptual and empirical issues

Foremost, Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution foregrounds the human rights of everyone, including children (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Schools are at the forefront of ensuring the respect, protection and upholding human rights. Children spend a considerable amount of their developmental years in schools; thus, they must leave schools as individuals who have begun to develop into responsible, well-rounded citizens. The principals, as leaders of schools, are the driving force of the effort to achieve the holistic development of learners (Belle, 2016).

The *Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM)* policy points out that “[leadership] requires the combination of many qualities, directed towards the enhancement of the school and the

Education Department as a whole” (Department of Basic Education, 2003, p.49). These qualities include being visionaries, instructional leaders, curriculum specialists, disciplinarians, facility managers, public relations experts, legal analysts, technology experts and counsellors, among others (Bush & Glover, 2016). This implies that the point of departure for the effectiveness of the efforts to address learner indiscipline is effective leadership. School leaders should possess a solid combination of knowledge and skills to effectively and positively deal with issues of learner discipline and support teachers and learners to ensure this happens. This means that school principals must set schools in the direction towards the effective implementation of the mechanisms to ensure the achievement of the objectives of addressing learner indiscipline. Effective leadership also entails adhering to The South African Schools Act 86, Section 8 (1996) which explicitly states that the governing body must adopt the school's code of conduct after consultation with the educators, parents, and learners. Thus, principals must play this significant role of managing this process and ensuring the governing body plays their crucial role in adopting the school code of conduct; after all, the code of conduct will dictate the discipline expected by learners and concurrently guide how the principal addresses learner indiscipline.

Considering the principal's roles in the effective implementation of discipline strategies, the *Protocol to Deal with Incidences of Corporal Punishments in Schools* claims that the implementation and promotion of “positive, non-violent forms of discipline” should be a general practice in all schools (Department of Basic Education, 2017, p.11). In this regard, the findings from research by Makhasane and Chikoko (2016) suggest that leadership has been the missing link in the country's education system's mission to abolish the use of corporal punishment in schools. Herein lies the responsibility of principals to ensure that schools are managed following policies and laws and that teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to implement positive approaches to learner discipline.

In a more directive stance, the *Policy on The South African Standard for Principalship* contends that principals must adopt transformational leadership approaches, which must include a responsibility to create “an environment that is trusting, disciplined and conducive to teaching and learning and that addresses the challenges of transformational change” (Department of

Basic Education, 2015, p.15). This shift towards a transformational disposition can be embodied within the practice of transformational leadership. Latz (2020) suggests that transformational change may be associated with an instance in which school principals adopt a preventative management-orientated approach to addressing learner indiscipline. In this regard, Sadruddin (2012) points out that positive reinforcement may be another beneficial approach to addressing learner indiscipline. However, for this study, leadership focuses on proactive and cooperative rather than punitive measures for addressing learner indiscipline in schools.

Through empirical observation, the perceptions of learner indiscipline are fluid and may range from minor offences to major detrimental offences committed by learners. Nationally and internationally, research is abundant on the teachers' perceptions of discipline in schools. However, despite such, any reference to learner discipline often tends to be construed as negative behaviour and misbehaviour by learners. Sullivan, Johnson, Owens and Conway (2014) found that learner misbehaviour negatively impacts the teacher's professional resilience and that troublesome behaviour was often associated with truancy. Their study gave rise to themes of high learner achievement and engagement because of maintaining 'orderly learning environments, and in contrast, ineffective classroom management leads to disadvantageous resistance and general misbehaviour by learners (Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway, 2014). For this study, the notion of learner misbehaviour is associated with learner indiscipline. While Sullivan, Johnson, Owens and Conway (2014) focused on the teachers' perspectives and classroom management practices, this study argues that it is the school principal who can facilitate the effective implementation of positive change in this regard by supporting teachers to address learner indiscipline and its effects.

Relevant to this study, Russell and Stone (2002), in their study to explore servant leadership with the perspective of the style offering to improve leadership in organisations, postulated that servant leadership is inadequately supported by empirical research. For this study, it is assumed that servant leadership occurs when a leader adopts the role of a servant in their relationship with their followers. Servant leadership, as selfless orientation and disposition towards leadership, centres on the need for the service of the people rather than the self-interests of a leader (Russell & Stone, 2002), a school principal for this study. For Russell and Stone (2002),

power is, without a doubt, associated with leadership; however, in servant leadership, power does not have to dominate leadership. Instead, in the instance of school principals, power must be used to provide a foundation for serving those entrusted to leaders (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Nene (2013) conducted a study in the Pinetown District of KwaZulu-Natal in which findings suggested that learners who were bullies often used intimidation to bully their victims. The findings of the study revealed that cases of sexual harassment, drug and alcohol abuse and possession of dangerous weapons on school premises were among the reported issues (Nene, 2013). Recently, regarding learner indiscipline, Mwilima (2021) has reported that some learners in secondary schools do not complete class work and homework tasks are rude to teachers and staff, participate in sexual activities at a young age and use vulgar language. The disorderliness has attracted significant public interest, as Ramadwa (2018) stated in a *News24* article entitled “Lack of discipline in schools concerning, but teachers not disempowered”. In this article, it was reported that approximately 67 000 teachers had left the teaching profession due to the experiences of learner indiscipline in schools and a lack of support from the education department (Ramadwa, 2018). This extent of brain drain, attributed to learner indiscipline, elevates the need to explore the leadership role of school principals in addressing learner indiscipline.

1.3 Personal motivation and professional motivation

As discussed above, learner indiscipline may hinder or interfere with the efforts to ensure quality teaching and learning (Ige, 2019; Latz, 2020). Regardless of their levels, all stakeholders in the education sector must strive to desire favourable behaviour from learners. Post-Level 1 teachers are often at the forefront of ensuring learner discipline, as they must monitor learners’ behaviour in classrooms, corridors, and playgrounds. Recently, complaints about learner indiscipline have exponentially increased (Simuforsa & Rosemary, 2014). Teachers must ensure compliance with the rules and codes of conduct set by school governing bodies, led by the principal. The roles and responsibilities of the principal, the School Management Team (SMT) and teachers must be to create a safe and conducive environment for quality teaching and learning (Department of Basic Education, 2003; Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). These roles and responsibilities include the effective maintenance of discipline (Department of Basic

Education, 2003) and supporting staff to fulfil their obligations in respect of this matter. Hence, professionally, the promote positive discipline for the achievement of quality is a collective duty for school communities.

I have observed several instances of learner indiscipline from my six years of teaching experience in a secondary schooling context. Moreover, as a Grade 9 Department Head, I am responsible for dealing with a range of manifestations of learner indiscipline first-hand, such as violence, bullying, substance abuse, sexual offences, and many others. Other instances of learner indiscipline that I have observed include late coming, blatant disrespect, and apathy towards learning, all of which interfere with the efforts to ensure quality teaching and learning.

For instance, I recently dealt with a case in which a learner entered a classroom so intoxicated that he could barely walk. The learner was subjected to regular drug and alcohol testing, sent home and his parents were called to the school. However, to the principal's concern, the learner went to the extent of swapping his urine samples with water when faced with a drug test to evade facing the consequences, which constituted an additional offence. In addition, I have observed some Grade 12 learners bullying Grade 8 learners, whereby cellphones and money have been extorted, but met with total disregard and inaction from the school. There have also been several cases of serious misconduct and fist-fighting on the school grounds. Moreover, the school principal has received a significant number of calls from community members about cases of learners hitchhiking, littering and urinating on their lawns.

Late-coming and learner apathy are a menace for many teachers in schools nationwide (see, for instance, Maile & Olowoyo, 2017). While late coming might seem trivial compared to other forms of indiscipline, it steals time and disrupts teaching and learning. For instance, when a latecomer was asked for a reason for her lack of punctuality, she responded, "I accidentally walked slowly". In addition, I have witnessed instances where learners display blatant disrespect by clicking their tongues at their teachers, including the school principal, rolling their eyes and back-chatting. It is these concerning experiences, amongst others, of learner indiscipline, which cause interfere with the efforts to ensure quality teaching and learning. From a leadership perspective, this has sparked my interest in exploring and understanding how

principals use their leadership roles to address instances of learner indiscipline in selected secondary schools.

Learner indiscipline often results in tensions and makes it difficult for teachers to ensure access to quality teaching and learning. However, to make matters worse, I have also noticed that certain learners are often defiant towards their teachers, projecting an inconsistency with expected behaviour. Indiscipline in secondary schools can be addressed by instilling positive and cooperative discipline. In this regard, I have observed the principal attempting to address these discipline challenges, resulting in learners getting suspended from schools pending a disciplinary hearing. However, I have seldom witnessed an instance where a learner has been expelled from school, even though the severity of the offence is severe. Often, the learner who has committed an offence will habitually slip back into the learning environment, some of whom become repeat offenders. Therefore, from the perspective of this study, there was a need for exploring how school principals used their leadership roles to address the scourge of learner indiscipline.

While the process of the suspension of a learner is time-consuming and taxing, it has assisted some learners to rehabilitate their behaviour and re-enter school with a disciplined disposition. I believe that school principals can help teachers by developing proactive ways for dealing with cases of indiscipline instead of being reactive and waiting for discipline problems to escalate. Principals must assist and support teachers to follow relevant protocols for addressing learner indiscipline. Henceforth, it is important to address discipline issues as it benefits the well-being of the learner and the school, in a broader sense, protects learners' future assets (Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah, & Achiaa, 2018).

1.4 Statement of the Problem

School principals are key role players in the efforts to achieve education objectives and promote sound and conducive learning and teaching environments (Benewaa, 2020; Belle, 2016; Narain, 2015). As Narain (2015) and Temitayo, Nayaya and Lukman (2013) allude, learner indiscipline affects the functionality of a school; thus, discipline is a significant component of the mechanisms of ensuring that these objectives are met.

Accordingly, it is necessary to undertake an inquiry to clarify the aspects of school discipline within the context of the principal's leadership role (Belle, 2016). The literature on learner discipline proposes a range of strategies that school principals may use to address learner indiscipline, including the active and decisive role of the School Governing Body (SBG) (Prinsloo, 2016), effective implementation of the code of conduct for learners (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012), whole-school approaches to learner behaviour and discipline (Belle, 2017) and paper trail and collaboration disposition by school principals (De Matthews et al., 2017; Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). Such preventative management-orientated strategies may provide insights into how school principals may employ their leadership roles to address learner indiscipline (Latz, 2020).

Some of the above-mentioned strategies may be problematic or difficult to implement effectively in some schooling contexts. This may be a reason why despite the fact principals try to address issues of indiscipline, these challenges persist (Wolhuter & van der Walt, 2020). However, principals often utilise unfavourable instead of positive disciplinary measures. However, schools are implementing reactive discipline-orientated measures, such as detention, suspension, expulsion and corporal punishment (see, for instance, Losen, Hodson, Keith II, Morrison & Belway, 2015; Makhasane & Chikoko, 2016; Latz, 2020). These approaches to addressing learner indiscipline often impact negatively the learning and teaching environments, socialisation of learners and the achievement of learning outcomes. What is unclear though is how principals can change from these punitive approaches of punishment to adopting more constructive approaches that can encourage and assist learners to develop and assume responsibility for their behaviour (Belle, 2017).

A huge body of literature exists regarding learner indiscipline internationally. For instance, Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014), Nakopodia (2010) and Temitayo, Nayaya and Lukman (2013) have examined notions of learner discipline in Nigeria, while Nabiswa (2018) and Omote, Thinguri and Moenga (2015) have explored the approaches for addressing learner indiscipline in Kenya. In a spate of desperation, the people of Namibia have called for corporal punishment to be reintroduced in schools to mitigate indiscipline, since such action goes against the

Namibian supreme law, their Ministry of Education put policies in place for principals to viably address learner indiscipline (Upindi, Mushaandja & Likando, 2018).

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Taking into consideration the various contextual differences, as alluded to above, there is limited literature in South Africa on ways of addressing learner indiscipline from the principals' perspectives. This research study, therefore, aims to contribute to the bridging of this gap within the South African context. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to explore the leadership roles of school principals in addressing learner indiscipline. It is expected that an exploration of this concept will enable a better understanding of the important relationships between the principal leadership roles and addressing discipline while exposing strategies to achieve discipline effectively.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- explore the principal's leadership role and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools;
- examine the principal's leadership strategies for addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools; and
- explore lessons that can be learned regarding principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools.

1.7 Key research questions

The key research questions for the study were as follows:

- What are the principals' leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?
- How do secondary school principals describe their leadership strategies and processes for addressing learner indiscipline?
- What can we learn from principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences regarding addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?

1.8 Significance of the Study

Research revolving learner discipline and its management is ubiquitous. Kiende (2019), amongst other researchers (Lunga, Koen & Mthiyane, 2021; Nunan, 2018; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012), explored the management of learner discipline, and concluded that management, a form of leadership, is crucial to creating peaceful school climate with the insinuation of proper learner discipline. Nunan (2018) shares this notion and relates his study to high schools. Kiende's (2019) primary school study revealed that negative home environments in which learners grow up in causes indiscipline, thus a positive school environment is mandatory for favourable learner discipline. This study presented discipline to be a social problem and therefore recommended counselling and guidance for parental involvement in learners' lives (Kiende, 2019).

Mestry and Khumalo (2012) investigate the significance of the School Governing Body (SGB) and learner discipline with the implementation of the code of conduct. The context of the study was rural areas in South Africa and the focus was on the SGB using the code of conduct as a tool for addressing learner indiscipline. Nunan's (2018) study also claims that all stakeholders must take accountability for learner indiscipline and implement policies effectively. While the environmental and social factors concur with the study by Kiende (2019) and Nunan (2018) regarding learner discipline and share the controversies of corporal punishment, there seems to be an obvious gap in the research: principal leadership in addressing learner indiscipline.

The proposed study provides a suitable opportunity to advance the understanding of the school principal's leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline. Discipline is an important life skill required to survive and do well. Austin (2021) recognises the relationship between school achievement and principal leadership and considers affiliation to be a range of focus. Hence, a study on the principals' leadership role regarding the addressing of learner indiscipline in secondary schools can potentially be a useful contribution to education (Narain, 2015). The findings of this study will also contribute to the literature on leadership roles and their effectiveness in the implementation of discipline strategies and measures within specific secondary schooling contexts, like creating an environment conducive to suitable learner

behaviour and implementing the school of conduct effectively. Thus, the research findings presented can serve as a guide for principals who may be exploring their role in addressing learner indiscipline.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

According to Price and Murnan (2004), limitations of a study design is the systematic unfairness that the researcher had no control over, of which can affect the results of a study. Generally, research studies may comprise of two major categories of limitations, namely threats to internal validity and threats to external validity (Price & Murnan, 2004). Based on this premise, this study may be subject to threats of external validity due to three limitations. Firstly, this was a small-scale study comprising four schools within the uMgungundlovu District. However, this study did not intend to generalise findings to wider contexts (Merriam, 2009); the intention was to explore the phenomenon under investigation within specific schooling contexts. Secondly, the study explored the school principal's role in addressing indiscipline. While this study explores how principals addressed the issue of learner indiscipline, this research excludes other stakeholders who may have a role in addressing learner indiscipline. Thirdly, data collection methods comprised semi-structured interviews and document review the implementation of which was often impacted by time constraints. This suggests that not all issues or aspects relating to the principals' roles and learner indiscipline were investigated.

1.10 Delimitations of Study

A delimitation can be theorised as a systematic bias intentionally introduced to a study (Price & Murnan, 2004). A researcher has control over the delimitations (Price and Murnan, 2004). For instance, this study was delimited to four secondary schools and thus focused on four principals' perspectives in the geographical area of the uMgungunglovu area. While these principals' recollections may not be generalised, their accounts might serve as valuable support to other principals grappling with discipline issues, as pointed out by Belle (2017). Furthermore, this research study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which required the researcher and participants to follow appropriate protocols, such as wearing a mask, sanitising and social distancing. These restrictions affected how data collection was undertaken. The

context of the pandemic also affected the manner in which principals addressed learner indiscipline, which once more makes the results inaccurate to generalise post pandemic.

1.11 Clarification of Concepts

While certain concepts in this study might be quite common, they may be misconceived or understood differently by some readers. This section aims to alleviate misconceptions that may arise during this study. The concepts discussed in the section below, namely, leadership, learner indiscipline, and leadership strategies are crucial for understanding the discussions, meanings and interpretations in the study.

1.11.1 Leadership

Leadership is a key notion and thread cutting across this study. Northouse (2021) has pointed out that global influences and generational differences have allowed different people to adopt different meanings for the concept of leadership. According to Northouse (2021), in the past, leadership was often associated with control and the centralisation of power. However, recently, the notion of leadership has been defined as the influence over a group of people to reach a set target or common goal (Northouse, 2021). Furthermore, rather than being conceived as a product, leadership is a process (Northouse, 2021).

For this study, leadership can be associated with accountability (Belle & Ravi, 2020), as principals have a responsibility to lead the trajectory of their schools so that they can reach optimum performance. For instance, the principal must lead the school (Mwilima, 2021). In essence, within a schooling context, leadership can be understood as the influence the principal has over staff and learners, for instance, when addressing learner indiscipline. This study emphasises two types of leadership, namely, servant leadership and democratic leadership. Servant leadership can be defined as, for example, an instance where a principal plays the role of a servant to their followers, a selfless style of leadership centres around the needs of their staff instead of the self-interest of the principal (Russell & Stone, 2002). Democratic leadership is characterised and underpinned by the principles such as inclusiveness, self-determination, equal participation and deliberation (see, for instance, Dike & Madubueze, 2019).

1.11.2 Learner indiscipline

The notion of learner indiscipline can be defined as a lack of discipline among learners (Ali et al., 2014). Indiscipline is the opposite of discipline, while discipline refers to behaviour that is associated with order and obedience (Mwilima, 2021). Indiscipline refers to a deficiency of conformity, for instance, with school rules and codes of conduct, any of which may sway the school off its course and cause disruption in the education of learners. Ali et al. (2014) define learner indiscipline as a set of unruly behaviours and disobedience of school rules and regulations. Therefore, learner indiscipline can be associated with the defiance of school authority (Belle & Ravi, 2020), which may, for instance, involve learners carrying dangerous weapons to school, smoking marijuana, gambling, using and/or creating pornography and vandalising school property (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Essentially, learner indiscipline refers to the defilement of social rules (Mwilima, 2021). It is the view of this study that issues of learner indiscipline are complex and thus requires strong leadership strategies for principals to address them.

1.11.3 Leadership strategies

Within a schooling context, the notion of leadership strategies refers to the plans or approaches used by principals to deal with the issues facing their schools. Hence, leadership strategies can be understood as the diplomacies or tactics used by school principals to address a range of undesirable issues, including learner indiscipline. Leadership strategies differ from usual strategies as it is used in conjunction with a leadership role and the various contexts of specific problems, such as learner indiscipline. The exploration of the mitigation strategies used by principals is crucial for addressing learner indiscipline (Omote et al., 2015). Examples of leadership strategies may include parental conferencing, special incident reports, the installation and use of video surveillance cameras, the use of SMS systems and an attendance card (Belle, 2017). Strategies may either be repressive or reactive and, within the context of this study, it is the school principal who must decide on, choose and drive the implementation of these strategies.

1.12 Overview of the chapters of the study

This study comprises six chapters, whose content is summarised in the section below:

Chapter One sets the tone for the study and presents and discusses the following aspects of the study: introduction and background of the study, the rationale of the study, the statement of the problem, personal and professional motivation, key research questions and objectives, the significance of the study, clarification of concepts, limitations, and delimitation of the study.

Chapter Two presents and discusses the relevant literature that was used to substantiate and situate the research for the study within the scholarly conversation. The work of various scholars in the field of learner indiscipline, leadership and mitigation and preventative strategies are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Three presents and discusses the theoretical framework for the study, namely, the Response to Intervention and Instruction model (RTII) and Responsive classroom, which complement the framework of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS) model. These models are discussed concerning their application study. This chapter also presents the research design and methodology for the study. In this regard, the chapter presents the research paradigm, approach, design, sampling, data generation method, instruments, data analysis method, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations for the study.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. Herein, the researcher uses quotations from the data generated from the field. The participants' views are amalgamated with discussions and supported by relevant literature.

Chapter Five concludes the study through a reflection on the findings on the principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools. Thereafter, the chapter presents recommendations, what may be done and ideas for further research based on the findings of the study.

1.13 Chapter summary

This chapter set the tone and presented the overview of the study. The chapter presented the background for the study and rationale followed by the statement of the problem under

investigation. The purpose of the study was then discussed as well as its key research questions and objectives. This was followed by a discussion of the researcher's professional and personal motivation for undertaking the study. Finally, the chapter presented the clarification of the key concepts used in the study, and the limitations and delimitations.

The next chapter discusses the literature relevant to the topic of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The implementation of disciplinary processes in schools is a time-consuming and demanding task for school leaders (Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). However, disciplinary processes remain pertinent for the smooth and proper functioning of the school (Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014; Mwilima, 2021). Good discipline is the essence and foundation for quality teaching and learning (Grubaugh, 2020). Furthermore, Gastil (1994), citing Bass, describes leadership as an instrument of goal achievement. In this study, goal achievement can be regarded as learners behaving in a disciplined manner, for which the school leader is responsible. In this regard, this chapter presents a review of relevant literature, focusing on the leadership role, the principals' experiences and the strategies used to address learner indiscipline.

2.2 Learner indiscipline in schools

There have been extensive reports about disruptive learner behaviour in South African schools (Lunga, Koen & Mthiyane, 2021; Nunan, 2018; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). Belle (2017) contends that learner indiscipline is hampering the mission of schools in South Africa. Therefore, disruptive learner behaviour, or in this study, learner indiscipline, requires effective school leadership. Leadership and discipline play a significant role in the overall improvement and success of a school (Sebastian, Huang & Allensworth, 2017). Bush and Glover (2016) state that the role of a school leader, specifically the school principal, has transformed to align with the changing context of South Africa. Despite this attempt to reform, there has been, what Mestry and Khumalo (2012) call, the erosion of discipline in many schools. Such erosion of discipline manifests in two forms, namely, through a lack of respect for teachers and generally unacceptable learner behaviour (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

Learner indiscipline appears to be problematic nationally and internationally. Though Mwilima (2021) claims that learner indiscipline is on the increase globally, for instance in the United

States of America and the United Kingdom, research conducted in the African continent reveals the severity of learner indiscipline and its impact to such an extent that principals are often left with the necessary mechanisms (Omote et al., 2015; Ali et al., 2014; Narain, 2015; Kiende, 2019; Chaka, 2018; Mwilima, 2021). The findings of the research conducted by Wang'ang'a and Awuor (2019) in Kenya suggest that discipline is the capacity to display appropriate behaviours while following sensible instructions. Furthermore, discipline involves acting fittingly under the circumstances without supervision or coercion from external sources. Henceforth, with the presence of learner indiscipline, which is the opposite of what the Kenyan research by Wang'ang'a & Awuor (2019) suggests, secondary school principals should have strategies, tools and intervention processes in place for addressing learner indiscipline. The findings of this study reveal that the time factor is crucial when principals are addressing learner indiscipline.

It is interesting to note literature on learner indiscipline in a primary schooling context, as primary schools feed learners to secondary schools and learners carry their discipline habits with them. Kiende (2019) contends that discipline should lead to obedience, self-control and contextually-relevant decision-making. In this regard, the skills of a school principal to manage and ensure learner discipline are important (Kiende, 2019). Findings from Kiende's (2019) study suggest that indiscipline is rife in primary schools and may manifest through bullying, drug and substance abuse, absenteeism, disrespect, fighting and rudeness. These are the same issues of learner indiscipline which arise in secondary schooling contexts. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) confirm that learners carrying dangerous weapons to school, smoking marijuana, gambling, the use of and/or creation of pornography and vandalising school property persists in secondary schools. Mwilima (2021) conducted a study on learner indiscipline in Namibia and identified learner indiscipline to be constituted by brazen acts of violation of the school rules.

Narain (2015) conducted a study in South Africa which focused on the role of school leaders in the management of learner indiscipline. The findings of the study revealed that school principals have personal and professional inputs which influence how learner indiscipline is addressed (Narain, 2015). The literature suggests that principals in rural schools in South Africa often lack

the knowledge and skills to address serious cases of misconduct. This is problematic given the fact that school principals are the core of change in learner behaviour and thus hold the power to bring about behavioural transformation (Narain, 2015).

Discipline, conceptualised earlier as the attainment of self-control, self-direction and self-reliance while being accountable for one's behaviour and conduct (Ali, Dada, Isiaka, & Salmon, 2014; Chonco, 2019; Ige, 2019; Kiende, 2019), is held in high stead in almost all educational contexts, as it equips learners with the socialisation skills for the fast-changing world while allowing for quality teaching and learning to take place (Nakpodia, 2010). This is important given the fact that quality teaching and learning is a key objective of the South African education system (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). Simuforosa and Rosemary (2014) support this view in their argument that discipline is an essential element in the socialisation of learners, as well as character development and their education.

Though these leadership roles have been well emphasised in research, Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014; see also Wolhuter & Van der Walt, 2020) contend that school principals are still experiencing challenges with the management of learner indiscipline, which is detrimental to efforts towards the achievement of quality teaching and learning. The challenges include learner apathy, bullying, vandalism, truancy, substance abuse and violence. The experiences of these challenges persist largely in secondary schools and harm the overall objectives of education (Mwaniki, 2018; Narain, 2015). To curb these challenges, principals must adopt targeted approaches to address learner indiscipline.

2.3 Principal leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline

For this study, leadership is defined as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2010, p. 3). Northouse (2010) bases this definition on the fact that the notion of leadership has specific components, namely, leadership is a *process*, which involves *influence*, occurs in groups and involves *common goals*. Leadership cannot simply exist in isolation (Sebastian, Huang & Allensworth, 2017; Narain, 2015). Within the context of a school, the principal relies on their school management team (SMT) for the supervision and implementation of the processes for addressing learner indiscipline. Latz

(2020) suggests that discipline is a subset of management. It is within this view that leadership and management could be considered interdependent.

Within a schooling context, the principal must ensure effective resource requisition, allocation, management, evaluation and security (Bush & Glover, 2016). The principal is also responsible for creating a safe environment, where quality teaching and learning can take place, regardless of the context of the school (De Matthews et al., 2017). Furthermore, Chaka (2018) contends that to ensure acceptable standards of learner achievement, principals must ensure a supportive environment for staff and learners. Mngadi (2021) has argued that the roles of school principals are changing from a focus on administrative duties to ensuring that learners can learn and succeed. In addition to this, school principals are accountable for the maintenance of learner discipline (Belle, 2017). The focus on learner indiscipline, especially in secondary schools, has been an issue of concern for many principals. (Daily News, 2019; Wolhuter & Van der Walt, 2020). Some of the cases of learner indiscipline that have been reported include physical conflicts among learners, bullying, disrespect for teachers, theft verbal abuse of teachers and substances abuse (Nzama & Oluwatoyin, 2021; Gahungu, 2018; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012).

Smith and Amushigamo (2016) suggest that the principal's leadership role is a significant factor in the running of a school. However, in addition to all the roles discussed above, principals are expected to serve as role models for both teachers and learners (Buthelezi, 2021). It is, therefore, against this background that the school principal must promote positive behaviour amongst the staff, which will influence learner behaviour (Smith & Amushigamo, 2016). Smith and Amushigamo (2016) argue that the creation of a foundation for positive learner behaviour must be undertaken within the core values of respect and care as exemplified by the principal.

Klein and Schwanenberg (2020) contend that the school principal is key to the success of a school. Research on school leadership is permeated by the notion that principals must serve as both leaders and managers to ensure the smooth running of their schools (Klein & Schwanenberg, 2020). Research reveals that while principals understand the high demands of their positions, they have elevated and prioritised professional development in their efforts to improve performance in schools. However, principals in European contexts have adopted a

more traditional focus in the sense that their role has been rooted in governance, focusing specifically on the functionality and ordinance of the school instead of outcomes and improvements (Klein & Schwanenberg, 2020). This is contrary to the view of principals in the past, in which they were regarded as little more than teachers with added administrative tasks. Considering this transition, Klein and Schwanenberg (2020) note that principals are struggling to adapt to their roles in respect of school improvement and that this can largely be attributed to a lack of formal training to prepare them for this new role. While the European context differs from the South African one, the ideologies of change, adaptation and formal training have universal relevance. Hence, it is the view of this study that there should be rigorous efforts to address the professional development needs of school principals for them to solidify their roles in leading overall school improvement.

Valuable lessons that can be learned concerning leadership roles and experiences include principals ensuring that a disciplinary committee is established as a sub-committee of the School Governing Body (SGB), which will include members of the SGB, teachers and school management team (SASA, 1996; Mwilima, 2021). These lessons can enhance the success of the efforts for ensuring the effective implementation of learner discipline programmes. Latz (2020, p.4) states “the Disciplinary Committee motive is to achieve effective management of schools, through better management of indiscipline of students.” Principals, working with the SGB, have a responsibility to build the capacity of the disciplinary committee, on its roles and responsibilities in respect of learner discipline.

According to SASA, the SGB consists of teachers, learner representatives (for secondary schools), parent representatives and the school principal, of which the chairperson must be a parent member (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The SGB must develop a code of conduct for learners, which must be used to guide learner behaviour and related disciplinary proceedings and processes (Prinsloo, 2016). In terms of the South African Schools Act, the school principals have both professional, that is, ensuring quality learning and teaching, and governance, that is, supporting the SGB to fulfil its responsibilities, and responsibilities (Republic of South Africa, 1996. Furthermore, Belle and Ravi (2020, p.131) contend that “when parents are involved in the disciplinary committee, students are more conscious and show more positive behaviour in

school”. School principals should establish a firm sense of support and active involvement from parents to contribute to the effectiveness of the efforts to address learner indiscipline in schools.

Another valuable lesson for principals, regarding their roles and experiences, may include them exploring the possible causes of learner indiscipline within their specific contexts (Mwaniki, 2018). Belle and Ravi (2020) and Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah and Achiaa (2018) report that the causes of learner indiscipline include strict school rules and regulations, experiences of poverty, access to negative information from digital media and peer pressure. However, Wolhuter and Van der Walt (2020, p.1) have argued that a set of six factors account for the learner (in)discipline in schools, namely, teacher-related factors, learner-related factors, school-related factors, education system-related factors, parent-related factors, and society-related factors. This suggests that school principals must consider all these factors when designing and crafting programmes and strategies to manage learner (in)discipline in schools effectively.

2.4 Leadership styles

For this study, this chapter will explore two specific types of leadership styles, namely, democratic leadership and servant leadership. This focus emerged from the participants’ responses when asked to identify their leadership styles. In respect of the findings of this study, the majority of the participants claimed to be democratic in their leadership, while only a few described their leadership style as being servant leadership.

Gastil (1994) contend that the democratic leadership style is conceptually different from any of the notions of authority. Democratic leadership can be defined within the realms of three specific performance functions, namely, assisting in a group’s decision-making process; empowering and uplifting group members; and delegating responsibilities amongst group members (Gastil, 1994). In South Africa, leadership has played a critical role in the work of democratic movements (Gastil, 1994). In a research conducted by Gastil (1994), it was revealed that democratic leadership was characterised by the principles of inclusiveness, self-determination, equal participation and deliberation. The literature on leadership suggests that there are functional and accompanying attributes for servant leadership (see, for instance,

Russell & Stone, 2002), in which the functional attributes apply to both servant and democratic leadership.

The eight functional attributes discussed in the section below could be considered as the operative qualities and effective characteristics that actuate leadership responsibilities (Russell & Stone, 2002). For this study, a leadership style determines the trajectory of how a principal chooses to address learner indiscipline (Gastil, 1994). Leadership styles are characteristic-specific as they can assist to guide the principal's decision-making processes and their effectiveness in their roles and responsibilities.

2.4.1 Vision

A visionary servant leader must utilise foresight to foresee the unforeseeable (Russell & Stone, 2002). This thinking is aligned with the notion of a goal-driven organisation, in which, for example, in respect of the topic of this study, stakeholders are committed to addressing learner indiscipline. A committed vision will require the principal to continuously reinforce the vision for it to become a reality (Bush & Glover, 2003). For this study, this implies that the principal will constantly align the efforts of the school to address learner indiscipline, decreasing the possibility of the reoccurrence thereof.

2.4.2 Honesty and integrity

Honesty and integrity are humble traits admired by followers and are encompassed with respect and fairness (Russell & Stone, 2002). These attributes serve as a safety net during challenging circumstances and are closely associated with both the democratic and servant styles of leadership, as they require that leaders must be honest and have integrity (Gray, 2009).

2.4.3 Trust

Good leadership requires trust to enhance confidence in the decision-making processes (Russell & Stone, 2002). Leaders can build trust by being honest and embodying integrity in their dealings. That is, without trust, followers will not have confidence in the leader. For instance, staff and other stakeholders must be able to trust the principal to provide validating strategies which have strong potential for success when, for instance, addressing learner indiscipline in

respect of this study. As Stronge and Xu (2021) suggest, trust can enhance parental involvement, which is a requirement for ensuring success in dealing with learner indiscipline.

2.4.4 Service

Leaders must have the desire to serve. The desire to serve is at the core of servant leadership. However, servant leaders must also prepare their followers to embrace the attribute of serving. Leadership is demanding and involves sacrifice; thus, leadership is inherently a service (Russell & Stone, 2002). If school principals are complacent with poor learner discipline and do not see the need to improve and the benefits of improving, then they may be unable to serve. In contrast, principals who proactively get involved and use their positions to make a positive impact on, for instance, learner discipline, can provide a rewarding service to their schools (Allensworth, 2017).

2.4.5 Modelling

Modelling occurs through the setting of a personal example and is the foundation for the development of the ethical tone and culture of a school (Russell & Stone, 2002). In this regard, a school principal must encourage and support learners to be disciplined. This may, for instance, be cascaded to teachers, where the principal ensures that teachers are punctual, well-prepared and professionally carry themselves. In doing this, learners are likely to model these behaviours, which will ensure a conducive teaching and learning environment with fewer discipline issues (Smith & Amushigamo, 2016).

2.4.6 Pioneering

Pioneering involves initiating new paths using unique ways. Leaders have a responsibility to initiate and lead social change, which is possible when leaders challenge the status quo and push boundaries (Gaziel, 2007; Russell & Stone, 2002). This suggests that a leader must be innovative and explore effective ways of addressing issues such as learner indiscipline. That is, in doing this, they must consider all the contributing factors and craft contextually-relevant responses to the issues facing their schools.

2.4.7 Appreciation of others

Servant leadership cannot exist without leaders acknowledging and appreciating those with whom they work (Russell & Stone, 2002). This suggests that showing concern for people is important for creating safe and progressive relationships. For instance, learner indiscipline potentially creates an unsafe environment for both teachers and learners. Thus, when school principals are making a concerted effort to address learner indiscipline, they are demonstrating their concern or appreciation for the people they work with (Russell & Stone, 2002).

2.4.8 Empowerment

With power, comes authority, trust, and accountability (Russell & Stone, 2002). Empowerment has the potential to boost the morale for improved decision-making by principals when addressing, for instance, issues such as learner indiscipline. In turn, the principal must empower staff to assist in the efforts of addressing issues such as learner indiscipline (Stronge & Xu, 2021).

2.5 Leadership strategies for addressing learner indiscipline

For this study, strategic leadership is defined as the act of persuading followers, for instance, the SMT and staff, to work towards fulfilling the long-term without compromising the short-term, goals of the school (Wang'ang'a & Awuor, 2019). This is complemented by a definition of strategic leadership as envisioning, maintaining flexibility and influencing staff to expedite strategic change for addressing, for instance, learner indiscipline (Wang'ang'a & Awuor, 2019). With the key notion being strategy, this implies that school principals must be tactful in their pursuit of addressing the challenge of learner indiscipline. Being strategic is a prerequisite and must cut through the principal's decision-making disposition when addressing, for instance, learner indiscipline in their schools.

Leadership must be understood as a behaviour rather than a position (Gastil, 1994). Behaviour can influence a principal's development and implementation of strategies for addressing learner indiscipline. Mestry and Khumalo (2012) have explored the use of the code of conduct for learners as a strategy for managing discipline schools in South Africa. In this work, Mestry and Khumalo (2012) assert that the success of the implementation of the code of conduct for learners

depends on the effectiveness of the school leader. The effective implementation of the code of conduct for learners implies consistency in how school leaders address issues of discipline (Mwaniki, 2018). This implies that a school principal must have a strong understanding of the requirements of the code of conduct for learners and have the capacity to communicate and reinforce the commitment to it by all the members of their school community. This, for instance, implies ensuring that both learners and teachers understand what the required standards of conduct are in terms of the code of conduct for learners (Belle, 2017).

Baak, Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, Conway and Lucas (2014) put forth the notion of punishing learners or engaging them, suggesting this as one of the strategies for addressing learner indiscipline. This, they argue, includes educating and challenging staff to enact humane behaviour policies and practices and focus on engaging pedagogies rather than managing behaviours. Principals should also ensure behaviour management practices are aligned with the school philosophy and collect and use data to inform and justify policies and practices (Baak et al., 2014). This means that as leaders, school principals must enact preventative and cooperative policies to manage the behaviour of learners. At the core of this, they argue, must be the implementation of educative rather than punitive approaches to managing learner discipline (Baak et al., 2014). That is, equitable rather than equal practices must be used, adopting a range of problem-solving and conflict-resolution strategies.

With adherence to these eight leadership strategies, managing discipline will be more effective and capable of eradicating the ramifications of the use of punitive measures. Maphosa (2011) attests to such as he explores the notion of discipline versus punishment and claims that many challenges resulting from the use of punitive disciplinary measures, including failure to reform the learner's conscience, achieve voluntary, make the offender love to develop positive behaviour, cheerful self-control, and capitalising on making learners obey out of fear rather than understanding (Maphosa, 2011).

The above findings are contrary to the idea that learner discipline should be cultivated through coercive means rather than the understanding of the need to behave positively. This is because discipline and punishment differ in the sense that discipline impacts the learner in distinct ways,

whereas punishment could be regarded as a temporary halt on indiscipline (Maphosa, 2011). In this regard, discipline enables the awakening of self-control, respect and responsibility within learners, thus is more likely than punishment to have a positive lasting effect (Maphosa, 2011). This means that for Maphosa (2011), discipline is relevant as the focus is on self-control rather than coercion (Motshana, 2004).

Furthermore, investigating the principal's role in supporting teaching and learning, Sebastian, Huang and Allensworth (2017) assert that principals must adopt an instructional leadership style to promote the vision of their schools (Belle & Ravi, 2020). This vision must include creating an environment that will induce and encourage positive learner behaviour. This implies that school principals must support and develop the capacity of teachers to employ proactive ways of managing learner discipline, in its different modalities (Allensworth, 2017). On the other hand, the findings of Gaziel's (2007) study revealed that cultural and organisational factors can facilitate or hinder the school principal's contribution and effect on the accomplishment of organisational outcomes. These contributions have a direct correlation with the effectiveness of the school and the difference the school can make in the learners' lives (Gaziel, 2007).

This means that school principals must develop and support a culture of positive behaviour, as learner indiscipline will disrupt the functioning of the school and the achievement of its objectives (Benewaa, 2020). Makhasane and Chikoko (2016) support this view when suggesting that without principals setting direction towards positive learner discipline, learners will be susceptible to indiscipline. In this regard, Smith and Amushigamo (2016) contend that engaged school leadership may be useful in creating a school culture that exudes reverence, care, enriches relationships, provides a sense of belonging, admiration and recognition and collaboration. This type of school culture may be considered collaborative, whereby the school principal is not working in isolation and influences a web of relationships, each of which can be associated with their leadership (Smith & Amushigamo, 2016).

Michael, Wolhuter and Van Wyk (2012) state that parental involvement is key to addressing learner indiscipline (Chikoko & Makhasane, 2016). However, the literature suggests that schools often find it challenging to involve parents as they mostly do not attend meetings or

honour invitations by schools. According to Omote, Thinguri and Moenga (2015), parental interference is a challenge for school leaders, in which case the scholars recommend that parents and guardians must avoid using the hands-off approach when it comes to their learner discipline. This means that the challenge of ensuring effective parental involvement is ultimately the principal's responsibility (Michael, Wolhuter & Van Wyk, 2012).

Principals must find appropriate ways of inculcating learner responsibility through, for instance, the initiation of various support and counselling programmes, involving relevant sectors, including social services, psychological services and law enforcement services (Ige, 2019; Narain, 2017). Belle and Ravi (2020) suggest that learners who misbehave must be subjected to a school community service whereby they engage in small useful practical tasks, which will instil responsibility in them, and teach them accountability. Narain (2017) claims that anti-bullying programmes, for instance, may provide support and counselling for both victims and perpetrators of bullying. Principals must also lead and manage the active role of The Representative Council of Learners' (RCL) to involve learners in the development of rules and ways of living within the learning and teaching environment (Narain, 2015). These strategies, amongst others, may assist principals to understand the importance of a supportive role in addressing learner indiscipline.

Bush and Glover (2003) assert that leaders must be visionaries, as vision is an important element of leadership. The concept of vision as described by Bush and Glover (2003) refers to a mental picture of the preferred future. However, there are certain generalisations about the notion of the principal's visions. Firstly, outstanding school leaders have a vision for their learners' behaviour, as an expectation that must be communicated in a way which secures commitment among all members of the school community (Bush & Glover, 2003). In this regard, the communication of a vision requires the communication of meaning and commitment to institutionalising the vision for successful leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003). When the communication of the expected behaviours is good, learners are more likely to understand the vision in respect of the expected behaviour and embrace it as the norm of their school life. To recap, school leaders have a responsibility to create a conducive culture within their school,

which may be generated from their execution of the vision as a determining factor for how they will mobilise members of their school community to address, for instance, learner indiscipline.

Discipline within a schooling context can contribute to the cultivation of a conducive learning and teaching environment and the development of self-discipline among learners (Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). The element of self-discipline should be facilitated by the school principal with strategies that aim to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations of the school. This suggests that cognisance must be taken when deciding on the relevance of disciplinary strategies. Omote, Thinguri and Moenga (2015) identify and classify disciplinary strategies as being punitive or preventative. Their view is that school principals must adopt preventative approaches to addressing indiscipline (Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). For instance, school principals may subject learners to ‘useful punishment’ which will benefit the community, including grass-cutting, gardening and clearing of bushes (Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). Physical exercise may also be used as a form of discipline, which will allow learners to reflect on their indiscipline while contributing to their health. Such measures differ from punitive disciplinary strategies which use pain to deter learners from indiscipline which may cause resentment and hostility among learners and teachers (Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015). However, school principals must navigate a range of issues, including political factors, interference by parents, legislative and policy limitations, inadequate support and inadequate knowledge in respect of learner discipline (Omote, Thinguri & Moenga, 2015).

Schools, led by principals, must prepare learners to live a useful and productive life in society and to meaningfully contribute to the development of their country. Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014) have identified learner indiscipline to be becoming a trend in secondary schools. Learner indiscipline, as conceptualised by Ali et al. (2014) refers to a lack of self-control and utter disregard for the school rules, regulations and authority. Thus, the notion of discipline in this context may be regarded as respect for school rules and authority, which means that any behaviour which contradicts respect will be regarded as learner indiscipline. Indiscipline in this regard may be regarded as any act that does not comply with societal norms and values and occurs when there are unruly acts of behaviour and acts of wrongdoing. Ali et al. (2014) caution that acts of wrong doings must not be perceived from the student’s nature, but rather should be

perceived by the mood of the student at the time of the enacting of the indiscipline. In this regard, school principals must ensure learners who commit indiscipline must not attract condemnation; they must be assisted to appreciate the situation and work to correct and transform their behaviour and conduct (Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014).

Motshana (2004) considers a school to be effective when there is congruence between the institution's objectives and its achievements. While the common indicator for determining school effectiveness remains learner achievement, it is important to take cognisance of the fact that learner achievement is sometimes influenced by learner behaviour. Thus, addressing indiscipline is paramount to the school's overall effectiveness. This can be achieved by the result strong administrative leadership of the school principal (Motshana, 2004). However, there is no distinctive theory of leadership which can neatly be associated with the universally preferred way of addressing learner indiscipline. Theories of leadership include the managerial models, transformational leadership, political and transactional leadership, post-modern leadership, moral leadership, instructional leadership, contingency leadership, and the African model of leadership. A considerably new theory is the relational leadership theory, which is open to interpretation and is viewed by Uhl-Bien (2006) from a relational process and views leadership as a social construction.

Transformational leadership may allow school principals to become agents of change. Transformational leadership has been related to positive impacts in an educational setting and has been touted to lead schools to more success (Austin, 2021). The success of learners can be attributed to the leadership of the principal implemented and their understanding of accountability (Austin, 2021). Stronge and Xu (2021) support Austin's (2021) view by highlighting that principals serve two core functions, namely, setting direction and exercising influence and serving as a catalyst for composing change motivated by the improvement of the school. Principals who are effective in their roles shape the school's discourse by acting as agents of change while revolutionising diverse demands into enabling elements (Stronge & Xu, 2021). Austin (2021) examines the correlation between principal leadership and what he considers the non-academic factor of learner indiscipline at a secondary school level. In this

regard, Stronge and Xu (2021) assert that transformational leadership may assist school principals to address learner indiscipline.

The transformational leadership model centres on how principals influence, empower and inspire their staff by creating a vision that encourages exemplary behaviour (Stronge & Xu, 2021). Within transformation leadership, the principal must support both staff and learners, introduce intellectual stimulation, set and communicate high expectations for the institution, and create a school culture conducive to good behaviour and effective teaching and learning (Stronge & Xu, 2021). This suggests that it is important for school leaders to ensure that all stakeholders feel included and accounted for when initiating change. These could take the form of open discussions, in which ideas and concerns can be tabled for engagement to enable a situation where learners, teachers, and other stakeholders can feel included in and develop a sense of ownership for the change (Stronge & Xu, 2021). This means that the adopted strategies must support the direction towards positive and proactive discipline (Stronge & Xu, 2021).

Onderi and Makori (2013) reported a plethora of issues and challenges faced by school leaders. As accounting officers, school leaders are accountable for every facet of the department of education. Principals, in particular, have a significant role to play in the maintenance of discipline (Onderi & Makori, 2013). Among the various contexts that Onderi and Makori (2013) refer to, they specifically mentioned the fact that South Africa is faced with the challenge of declining professionalism by school principals, resulting in poor school leadership and management. Once a school leader has been appointed, the department of basic education must train and support principals to ensure that they can execute their roles effectively. This training and support should go beyond the policies and paperwork, leaning towards a more practical approach to encouraging professionalism.

According to Onderi and Makori (2013), learner indiscipline can be attributed to a range of issues, including the use of alcohol, drugs and other substances. They also go on to note a lack of communication between the administrator and the learner is a contributing factor to learner indiscipline (Onderi & Makori, 2013). Therefore, the role of the school principal must include

managing the relationships between teachers and their learners and ensuring harmony to avoid negative consequences for teaching and learning (Onderi & Makori, 2013).

Other promoting factors for indiscipline may include role ambiguity, conflicting stakeholder expectations, inadequate access to financial resources the lack of incentives and deficiencies in the authority to deal with the relevant issues (Onderi & Makori, 2013). Role ambiguity can be instrumental in the perception and enactment of the school principal's leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline. The challenge of role indistinctness can be resolved by supporting school principals in fulfilling their roles. The conflicting stakeholder expectations can be lessened by, for instance, the clear communication of the vision of the school in respect of learner discipline. Principals must play an active role in the endeavours of making resources equitably accessible to assist in the maintenance of learner discipline. Financial resources may be gained through fund raising activities, while professional resources may include the establishment of relevant support structures for staff and the implementation of appropriate professional development activities (Onderi & Makori, 2013).

Onderi and Makori (2013) imply that if principals can ensure proper security management on school premises, then there will be a reduction in violence in secondary schools. For instance, violent and destructive unrest in Kenya, where seventy girls were raped and nineteen were killed when male students descended on them during a school strike (Onderi & Makori, 2013). In another case, the United States of America experienced a massacre killing nineteen people and injuring several others, while leaving the affected to grapple with the trauma (Onderi & Makori, 2013). However, when delving into the reasoning behind the massacre, it was discovered that the perpetrators were teased and felt isolated. These distressing examples highlight the fact that safety in schools cannot be taken for granted.

The above cases suggest that solid platforms should be built to ensure there are effective means of communicating and for dealing with the reasons learners felt victimised and resorted to violence. Medlen, cited in Onderi and Makori (2013), asserts that schools are facing issues that are different, sophisticated and complex. Hence, school principals must create platforms to address challenges faced by learners and ensure that these platforms are user-friendly and

effective for learners. It is platforms which serve functions like this, which can increase school safety and create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning and a reduced prevalence of learner indiscipline.

When grappling with learner indiscipline in the international context, it is noteworthy that discipline is promoted and that there is a political commitment and emphasis on social inclusion (Araújo, 2005). This notion of social inclusion, as mentioned by Araújo (2005), arises from a plethora of causes for learner indiscipline. These issues are also applicable and prevalent in South Africa and present through different manifestations. As Araújo (2005) suggests, the cultural and social backgrounds of the learner may contribute to the deepening of social inequalities in education. If learners are ill-disciplined, their performance may be disrupted, leading to poor learner attainment. Considering Araújo's (2005) idea of promoting social justice in disciplinary matters, it seems to mirror South Africa's infamous past of injustices. Thus, how school principals address the challenge of learner indiscipline must be founded on equity and social justice.

The complexities and dynamics of the principal's role in addressing learner indiscipline are vast and serious. This is especially important as indiscipline can be carried from home into school and vice versa (Araújo, 2005). Whilst the responsibility for addressing learner indiscipline lies with the parents, teachers and principals also have an important role to play (Araújo, 2005). Hence, one of the roles of the school principal is to develop strategies for supporting parents to participate productively in assisting schools to prevent and manage learner indiscipline. This suggests that government may have to recognise this important reality and support and mediate the processes of strengthening the hand of the school leaders in this respect. This points to the issue that school leaders cannot address the challenge of learner discipline in isolation.

2.6 Principals addressing bullying

Winnaar, Arends and Beku (2018) define bullying as a constituent of school-based violence and involves antagonistic behaviour to harm a learner who may be regarded as less dominant. The school climate, for which the principal is responsible, may affect the intensity and prevalence of bullying. Bullying has been on the rise and is an international concern (Winnaar,

Arends & Beku, 2018). It is important to note that bullying occurs at three levels, namely, when learners are travelling to and from school, amongst peers and teachers bullying learners (Mahabeer, 2020). A study conducted by Mkhize and Gopal (2021) reminds us of the sub-issue of cyberbullying and its spike during the advent of COVID-19, with its effects and influences still lingering across schools in South Africa. Furthermore, Mahabeer (2020) mentions various other types of bullying, including physical, psychological, sexual and verbal forms of abuse, all of which have detrimental effects on victims, perpetrators, and bystanders.

Ngidi and Moletsane (2018) conducted a qualitative study which explored bullying in school toilets. The findings of the study revealed that incident of bullying in toilets was prevalent since this space was secluded and considered an indefensible space, hidden from the teachers' eyes (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). In this study, findings suggested that bullying was omnipresent, had dire long-term mental and physical effects, and negatively affected cognitive development and compromised learner achievement (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018).

Ngidi and Moletsane (2018), referring to the 2015 report on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), reported that the victims of bullying often died, either from the act of bullying or committed suicide. The report argued that teachers and learners must feel safe in a stable environment as less indiscipline tended to support high academic performance among learners (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). The study recommended that teachers must be capacitated to recognise and appropriately respond to incidents of bullying (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). On the other hand, the findings of the study suggested that victims often felt as though teachers were unconcerned about their safety as no action was taken against the bullies (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018).

In this regard, the role of the school principal in addressing bullying is twofold. Firstly, the principal must equip teachers with skills to devise and implement preventative and responsive measures to address bullying. Furthermore, the principal must ensure that their school has a safe infrastructure, so that it does not provide places that are out of sight for teachers and in which learners can engage in indiscipline. The principal must conscientise learners about the dangers of bullying and implement progressive measures to support the victims and perpetrators

of bullying. The findings of the study, thus, suggest that school principals must think spatially when addressing the issue of learner indiscipline, as indicated by Ngidi and Moletsane (2018) in respect of the issue of bullying.

On the other hand, Winnaar, Arends and Beku (2018) conducted a study on bullying concerning the school climate and the school's socio-economic status. According to Winnaar, Arends and Beku (2018), there is a need for strong partnerships between communities and schools to reduce the incidents of bullying, given the fact that a school is a microcosm of its surroundings. This implies that bullying and school-based violence are often prevalent in schools which are subjected to unhealthy socioeconomic climates (Winnaar, Arends & Beku, 2018).

In keeping with the above notion, the TIMSS report claimed that South Africa is twice as high as the international average for bullying (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018; Winnaar, Arends & Beku, 2018). The findings of this study support the fact that schools with a healthy environment tend to be characterised by high academic achievement and a low number of cases of bullying (Winnaar, Arends & Beku, 2018). This implies that positive school climates may be progressive as they allow for healthy interaction among learners and teachers. However, it is important to point out that the school climate is often impacted by a range of school- and learner-level factors. This informs the principal's perception of the level of bullying, which may be influencing their discipline strategies, safety as well as academic success (Winnaar, Arends & Beku, 2018).

While there is extensive research (see, for instance, Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018; Winnaar, Arends & Beku, 2018; Mahabeer, 2020; Mkhize & Gopal, 2021) conducted on the prevalence of bullying, there has been less focus on the principal's role in addressing this form of indiscipline. One study poses a crucial question to principals: "What is the social work intervention in addressing the bullying phenomenon amongst learners in the school setting?" (Masilo, 2018, p. S2). Masilo (2018) explains that access to certain helpful resources, for example, a social worker, has largely been unsupported as the South African government does not provide financial assistance for such a service. The recommendations suggested point to the importance of building the capacity of school principals to design and implement prevention and

intervention programmes, including the appointment of social workers, creating a healthy school environment, establishing school safety committees, and initiating and encouraging parental involvement (Masilo, 2018). All these variables are dependent on the level of attention the principal dedicates to each and how it impacts the school climate. In this regard, the principal has an important and pivotal role to play in creating a conducive school in which indiscipline has no place.

2.7 The role of principals in addressing learner violence

Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly (2016) investigated the prevalence of violence in schools in the uMgungundlovu District in a cross-sectional quantitative study. For this study, data were collected from sixteen secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. The findings of the study suggested that violence was a serious public health concern in South Africa (Khuzwayo, Taylor & Connolly, 2016). The findings of the study indicated that violence often resulted in injury and had dire psychological consequences for both teachers and learners (Khuzwayo, Taylor & Connolly, 2016). The study further revealed significant concern that the causes of young people being involved in violence could often be explained along the lines of the demographics of their communities. The findings of the study revealed that young people were exposed to a range of types of violence, including fighting, robbery and sexual violence, which exposures made them susceptible to becoming perpetrators (Khuzwayo, Taylor & Connolly, 2016). The study indicated that these acts often became normalised and common, resulting in them not being regarded as abnormal and worthy of addressing anymore (Khuzwayo, Taylor & Connolly, 2016). Henderson (2013) argued that, at the time, the prevalence of gang activity was increasing and infiltrating schools, resulting in learner-on-learner violence. In this regard, Davids and Waghid (2016) state that schools are important in equipping learners to become productive members of their communities. This suggests that given the fact that violence is a social problem, schools, especially the principals, must be aware that they are likely to be affected by it and develop and implement programmes to respond to and prevent it.

Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly (2016) indicate that violence continues to seethe in secondary schools in the uMgungundlovu District, filtering in from the communities from which learners come. Thus, how principals address indiscipline should be privy to and aligned with the social

influence learners face. For instance, the study by Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly (2016) explored the fact that girls and boys were often socialised differently and that boys were expected to be physically stronger than girls, whereas girls were socialised to be weaker and sensitive (Khuzwayo, Taylor & Connolly, 2016). In this regard, Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly (2016) recommended that school principals must create a culture that conscientises boys and girls to be equal and challenge and eradicate the stereotypical constructions which promote fertile ground for violence. The conclusion of the study conducted by Khuzwayo, Taylor and Connolly (2016) suggest that principals should aim for the interventions with careful consideration of the demographics of the area. This means that they must understand troubling behaviour and its characteristics as serving as a warning sign and allowing them to identify socio-cultural risk factors for learner indiscipline (Henderson, 2013).

Davids and Waghid (2016) conducted a study entitled 'Responding to Violence in Post-Apartheid Schools: On Leadership as mutual engagement'. The findings of this study revealed that school principals had a responsibility to restore schools as safe sites in post-apartheid South Africa. It argued that principals had not received sufficient training to deal with the prevalence of violence in schools (Davids & Waghid, 2016). the findings of the study pointed to the importance of building the capacity of school principals to confront violence and encourage humane and just behaviour. While the context of the study may have been that of a previously disadvantaged context, the violence faced by the school leaders shares similarities with school leaders in the uMgungundlovu area. There are ample training opportunities to assist school principals to manage curriculum delivery. However, the opportunities for training on preventing and responding to learner indiscipline are insufficient, which deprives principals of the skills to cope with and address cases of indiscipline (Davids & Waghid, 2016). The study also postulated that children in South Africa were more likely to experience violence in schools than in their homes (Davids & Waghid, 2016). This places the role of the school, especially that of a school principal, at the centre of the fight against violence.

Davids and Waghid's (2016) study further reported on the disciplinary practices used in the five schools. The procedures were largely similar and included the following: all offenders were called to the principal's office, which impacted the learning and teaching times and negatively

affected the benefits of being in school for the learners. The principals of the five secondary schools generally felt that teachers must not focus on unruly learners in the classroom as it disrupted teaching and learning; as a result, offenders were often placed in isolation (Davids & Waghid, 2016). Some participants believed that their disciplinary protocols did not adhere to the sanctions stipulated in each of their codes of conduct. That is, no matter the offence, the offender was often subjected to detention while parents were called to the school for extreme cases and as a last resort (Davids & Waghid, 2016).

The findings revealed that the principals often felt comfortable addressing indiscipline using the prescribed procedures and that they experienced significant discomfort addressing offences of a sexual nature (Davids & Waghid, 2016). In this regard, learners were often suspended without the involvement or participation of their parents in the cases. Notwithstanding the policy documents of the schools which did not support punitive discipline measures, the principals claimed that due to the volume of violent and disruptive learners, they did not have the time to deal with every learner according to the policy. A major finding in Davids and Waghid's (2016) study was that principals lacked adequate support from the department of education, parents or guardians. Furthermore, principals felt as though the only existing form of support for addressing learner indiscipline was the policy and not its accompanying practices. Although principals are teachers accountable for the effective implementation of policy (Mwilima, 2021), they were often inundated with what Davids and Waghid (2016, p. 36) refer to as "educationally unrelated tasks".

Henderson (2013), an American researcher, conducted a study on school principals' perceived leadership styles and ability to lead during a violent crisis. While this study took place in a different context, the factors influencing learner violence are similar to that of South Africa. Henderson (2013) supports Davids and Waghid's (2016) views that schools must provide a safe space for learning, yet the disappointing reality is that schools still face violence in crisis proportions. The findings of this study reveal that it is important to build relationships for the general welfare of the learners and staff. Principals must develop a sense of preparedness for similar events of a violent nature among their staff, which will in turn, influence the school

climate and culture (Henderson, 2013). Henderson (2013) refers to the current horror of violent outbursts within the American schooling system and describes them as unimaginable horrors that principals must consider when devising plans to address learner indiscipline. In the same vein, Henderson (2013) suggests that the first and foremost level of defence against violent threats is professional and competent leadership. Principals have a tall order in creating a safe yet amicable environment while they are expected to be less intrusive on learner freedoms (Henderson, 2013). This points to the necessity of a well-planned and rehearsed school crisis management plan, which may include intervention strategies and proactive protocols (Henderson, 2013).

Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) collected data from four schools to explore learner discipline, particularly in the post-corporal punishment era. The study mentions a key element to effective teaching and learning, namely, learner discipline. The study also elaborates on how school management, led by the principal, may enforce progressive disciplinary measures without infringing on the human rights of their learners' (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). The researchers also revealed that the school management team and school principal cannot discipline learners in solitude; rather parents must serve as the 'first teachers' of their children by instilling the ability to distinguish right from wrong, allowing learners to practise decent values and morals (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). While principals navigate their way from a variation of less serious misbehaviour to more serious offences, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) contend that learners strive for a secure healthy environment. Thus, principals must not waver from the education legislation when addressing the most extreme cases of indiscipline. This notion emphasises that all cases of learner indiscipline must be managed and responded to without disrespecting and violating the learners' rights (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). The Department of Education contends that learner discipline must aim to guide and assist learners to behave in an expected manner (Department of Education, 2000). This approach supports the notion of redirecting learner behaviour from aggressive and vengeful anti-social behaviour to more constructive forms of behaviour (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

2.8 The principal's role in enhancing parental involvement to address learner indiscipline

Parents bring up children, which means that they do not grow up instinctively (Mwilima, 2021). However, there may be instances in which parents cannot fulfil this obligation and are not fully involved in raising their children. Inadequate parental involvement can, for instance, be attributed to the fact that some parents may be unable to spend quality time with their children for a range of reasons. This could deprive parents of the opportunity to instil specific morals into their children, which could result in deficiencies in how learners interact and engage within the school environment, sometimes causing all sorts of indiscipline. Mwilima (2021) claims that parents lose twelve hours of parental contact a week due to work commitments, the consequences of which will be expected to be compensated for and addressed by the school. The fact that parents do not have enough time to supervise or raise their children presents a contradiction in reality, given the fact that schools must encourage parental involvement.

The study by Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) was placed within Patterson's social interaction framework. This model puts forth that learner behaviour is often influenced by their parents' behaviours. There are many sources of the lack of parental involvement. For instance, reasons for the lack of parental involvement may stem from their low-economic status and physical, psychological and emotional stressors (Banerjee, 2016). Consequentially, a cycle may be created, in which parents address learner indiscipline harshly and inconsistently, and their children are pushed to misbehave more. Children are known to model social behaviour to which they are exposed; thus, herein lies the importance of a healthy school culture cultivated and maintained by the principal.

Mwilima's (2021) study examined learner indiscipline in secondary schools in Namibia. Among the themes of the study was a deficiency in parental support, which combined with other factors gave rise to discipline concerns (Mwilima, 2021). Principals can influence teachers to implement various methods to maintain learner discipline, such as creating a disciplinary committee and encouraging parental participation (Mwilima, 2021). A healthy school culture, which as proposed by Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) the principal is responsible for, can be created through the establishment of a set of rules and regulations. These rules and regulations

must be presented to all school stakeholders for discussion and acceptance, for which the principal is accountable. The shared understanding of rules and regulations will enable parents to monitor and advise their children accordingly, leaving less room for misunderstanding and possible learner indiscipline.

Mwilima (2021) contends that the purpose of rules is to control and deter any form of learner behaviour which could lead to the interruption of teaching and learning, and/or cause damage to the reputation of the school. Furthermore, rules serve the crucial function of bringing about order and harmony among members of the school community (Mwilima, 2021). Principals should foster and encourage sound relationships among parents and their children to ensure the successful observance of the rules and regulations both at home and at school. Some parents might find this intrusive; however, when this is communicated and driven by the educational role it plays in a learner's life, principals may be able to win parents over. This is important as well-disciplined schools are often characterised by a high level of parental involvement and community partnerships (Mwilima, 2012). Thus, school principals must educate and equip parents with knowledge and skills for promoting learner discipline and academic achievement (Banerjee, 2016).

Banerjee (2016) has referred to the impact parents can have on their children's academic socialisation and how this could improve their academic achievement. Taylor, Clayton and Rowley (2004) explored the understanding of parental influences on learners' school-related development. Academic socialisation implies differential parental belief contexts and choice of behaviours which may impact children's school development (Taylor et al., 2004). Naturally, parents are considered the principal agents of a child's socialisation, which role is further advanced by schools through the guidance and direction of the school principal. This process involves the moulding of the learners' attitudes, skills and behaviours to prepare for their roles as productive members of their communities and society, (Taylor et al., 2004). Literature suggests that a school must prepare learners to become decent citizens who will meaningfully contribute to society (see, for instance, Nakpodia, 2010; Berger, 2003; Belle, 2016). This suggests a partnership between parents and the school to produce this desired outcome.

2.9 Strategies for increasing parental involvement

Schools cannot be solely responsible for learner indiscipline. The principal, staff and learners require constant support from the parents and community at large. This means that it will be helpful if parents understood the school culture, vision, and mission, and encourage their children to align their behaviours accordingly. The learners' home environment can influence their behaviour and should be in unison with the school environment. A lack of parental involvement poses a challenge to the ability of the education system to produce intellectually, emotionally and psychologically holistically-shaped learners (Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya & Simui, 2020).

Parental involvement is a crucial component in the efforts to improve learner achievement. Thus, school principals must make it clear to parents that their roles do not end after visiting the school for a parents' meeting; rather their responsibilities include the constant supervision of their children and making the necessary provisions for ensuring that learners are comfortable and safe (Mwase et al., 2020). In this regard, principals must have regular parent meetings or interactions with the parents of their learners. These meetings must have a clear theme and purpose. For instance, group meetings must discuss either discipline or poor results and offer solutions and support so parents can feel positive about being involved in their child's development rather than being attacked by the school.

Another strategy may be holding open days, whereby parents are welcome to browse through a regular school day to enhance their capacity to monitor their children's learning and contribute to school functionality. School principals may also encourage parents to participate in the management of the school and motivate them to get involved in sporting and extracurricular activities. This can be done through the nomination of parent components for the SGB to various management structures of the school. As Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya and Simui (2020) contend, quality education is possible through the assistance of the parents. The gaps in parental involvement identified by Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya and Simui (2020) suggest that principals must find strategies to resolve conflicts with parents and promote parental involvement is an important mechanism for enhancing learner discipline. Parents may also be involved in the processes of developing and adopting the code of conduct for learners,

thereby increasing awareness and ownership. To take this process forward, principals could make copies of the code of conduct available to each child and their parents/guardians and request them to sign and pledge that they will actively assist the school by ensuring that their child abides by the school code of conduct (see, for instance, Nene, 2013). Overall, the principal must create channels for communication between the school and the parents, have an open-door policy and provide the necessary academic or non-academic support which they may require from time to time. Also, schools, through principals, may create situations where parents can volunteer services for the benefit of the learners and the school (Stronge & Xu, 2021).

By building the social capital of a school through increasing parental involvement, the principal can contribute to the efforts to address learner indiscipline. This will assist in improving the school climate and building a solid foundation, based on trust, to cope with ongoing change within the school (Stronge & Xu, 2021). As Stronge and Xu (2021) have stated, virtuous leaders value and are grateful for the input from stakeholders to accomplish the key goals of a school.

2.10 The implementation of character education by school principals

One interesting concept which might assist school principals to address learner indiscipline could be character education. Singh (2019) reveals that character education has the potential to enhance discipline and promote ethical behaviour amongst learners. Character education has evolved, in defining terms, a phenomenon he refers to as Character Education Partnership (CEP), whereby there is a proactive effort by schools, with government assistance, to instil in learners core values, such as honesty, fairness, self-respect and respect for others. Similarly, Gray (2009) identifies the importance of character education as acting upon core ethical values required to build the capacity for respect, honesty, empathy, and responsibility.

To enhance moral education, all education stakeholders, parents and teachers included, must work together to ensure that learners conduct themselves in a responsible manner (Singh, 2019). This call is in line with the requirements of character education which pivots with the shared commitment to assist learners to become caring and conscientious citizens who can contribute meaningfully to their communities and society (Singh, 2019). It is within this background that school principals must create a positive school environment, capable of promoting the

intellectual, emotional, ethical, and social expansion of learners (Singh, 2019). As Gray (2009) argues, the aims of moral education should not end after being included in the curriculum; instead, they should become an active constituent of moral practice.

While the concept of character education has not been formalised in South African schools, it is worth the try to proactively address learner indiscipline. The culture conducive to character education is one within a physically and psychologically safe environment (Gray, 2009). Principals must understand that character education has various interpretations and practices (Gray, 2009), and that there are activities which they can carry out to cultivate it. Singh (2019) suggests that school principals may have to host meetings with stakeholders to communicate the character-related goals of the school and explore ways of providing learners with a safe platform to express their feelings and experiences while exploring their core values. These may consist of one-to-one discussions, journal writing and cross-age tutoring (Singh, 2019). Principals can also incorporate plans for character education in classes, sports and other co-curricular activities, all of which must be monitored and followed up (Singh, 2019). Learner indiscipline may be addressed through the inclusion of numerous actions, such as cooperative learning, anti-bullying campaigns and peer mediation. The principal may address these activities through learner-representative bodies and related governance learning projects (Singh, 2019).

Considering that these initiatives are not compulsory in government schools, it is up to each school principal to foster a culture of self-motivation amongst learners and assist them to create appropriate behavioural norms and rules. School principals must work with SGBs to develop appropriate policies to guide the school and its practices. According to Singh (2019), principals should include aspects of character education in staff planning and meetings and can allocate staff time to brainstorm core values and reflect on their implementation of character education, as well as how learners are receiving the initiatives (Singh, 2019). This should be an ongoing process in which all stakeholders must be involved. A combined effort will increase effectiveness; thus, principals are encouraged to open communication and parallel leadership roles for parents and relevant community members (Singh, 2019).

Singh (2019) claims that these channels, made possible by the principal, will allow for the character-building processes to unfold through various programmes, including after-school interventions. However, evaluation is key to creating and maintaining an ‘ethical learning community’, one which Singh (2019) implies will be less susceptible to learner indiscipline and all its detrimental effects on individuals and the teaching and learning processes. This of course will depend on the buy from staff, parents and learners, led by the school principal. As Singh (2019) reiterates, the promotion of character education should serve as a plan of action to manifest good values in learners’ lives, the outcome of which will be inspiring and important for preparing future leaders.

School principals must aim to lead all stakeholders, especially the learners, to the best results, as they have the authority and power to manage school-based competences, commitment and motivation (Sunaengsih, Kurniady & Halimi, 2019). Gray (2009) recognises that an enhanced programme of character education can lead learners to accept that stakeholders are helping them to become better individuals, which can provide them with a healthy trajectory to finding meaning in their schoolwork, ultimately increasing their academic performance. Character education can, thus, improve the quality of citizens produced by schools and contribute to the efforts to overcome a nation’s crisis of character; (Gray, 2009).

Sunaengsih, Kurniady and Halimi (2019) contend that participative leadership can enhance the implementation of character education programmes, particularly regarding decision-making processes. That is, principals who are successful in getting their institutions to buy-in to the idea and implementation are already on their way to setting a general standard for directing their schools towards the desired vision (Sunaengsih, Kurniady & Halimi, 2019), which may include the benefit of fewer discipline challenges which principals must lead schools to address.

2.11 The principal’s role in the effective communication

Samuel and Okotoni (2018) claim that an effective communication system is crucial for the functionality of any organisation as it narrates the direction, objects and shared goals. Within a schooling context, the development of goals is led by the school principals who Samuel and Okotoni (2018) suggest are the primary managers of schools. This exchange of information also

referred to as communication by Samuel and Okotoni (2018), allows an organisation to run smoothly towards its shared goals.

Part of the principal's role is to conceive ideas, especially those which address, for instance, learner indiscipline as a hindrance to academic success. These ideas can only materialise through effective communication from the principals to staff, learners and parents. If principals lack the skills for effective communication, then the ideas are likely to be unclear and possibly misconstrued (Samuel & Okotoni, 2018). Transparency brought about through consistent and clear communication allows for collaborative support (Samuel & Okotoni, 2018). Communication works both ways and occurs at all levels of a school, and it is the quality of communication which impacts how it influences staff members and learners to react to the ideas communicated. Principals implement certain styles of communication, much like styles of leadership. These styles potentially affect the success of organisations such as a school. Issues of learner indiscipline should not be kept behind closed doors as its occurrence is essential for a relevant address by the school principal while promoting a preventative mindset of staff. It is suggested that a more supportive communication style by the principal is likely to result in the fulfilment of the school's organisational goals (Samuel & Okotoni, 2018).

Samuel and Okotoni (2018) recommend that principals must implement an open, results-driven, multi-channel and inclusive communication pattern to contribute to the achievement of the goals of the school, addressing learner indiscipline included. Therefore, school principals must receive appropriate training on effective communication skills (Samuel & Okotoni, 2018). This will build the capacity of school principals to observe and assess situations to choose the best possible communication style. Berkovich and Eyal (2018) explored the effects of the principals' communication practices on teachers' emotional distress, and the findings of their study revealed two themes, namely, normalisation and empowerment. Every effort made to contribute to the effective reaction to learner indiscipline counts. Therefore, communication by principals must include the empowerment of their staff to alleviate the negative emotions that their teachers' may be experiencing (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018). Moreover, principals must normalise their communication strategies through, for instance, holding empathetic conversations with

their teachers to equip them with the skills to become preventative and empowered when grappling with the challenges brought about by the prevalence of learner indiscipline.

There are practical implications for the recommendations set out above (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018). Just as Samuel and Okotoni (2018) suggest, Berkovich and Eyal (2018) attest to the fact that school principals should undergo training for effective communication. Secondly, principals must use empathy to interject the occurrence of negativity so that teachers may address their emotional reservations to effectively address learner indiscipline. As Berkovich and Eyal (2018) claim, a principal must implement programmes to promote emotional support through effective communication with their staff through appropriate mechanisms useful for addressing learner indiscipline, in the case of this study.

Mohamed and Abidin (2021) focused on the communication styles of principals and school culture. They claim that leadership is the action of working in a group to achieve one main objective; thus, leadership is related to power, which principals must utilise to perform actions which supersede the school's culture to be progressive and resilient (Mohamed & Abidin, 2021). This description of leadership cannot be valid without the use of proper communication by school principals.

Literature suggests that where communication is inadequate, teachers often feel demotivated as they are excluded from participating in making decisions about matters that affect them (Mohamed & Abidin, 2021). When decisions are taken regarding learner indiscipline and teachers feel they have been excluded, this may have negative consequences for the implementation of the remedial interventions. For instance, principals may find it difficult to get the teachers' buy-in regarding the implementation of the programmes for addressing learner indiscipline. Mohamed and Abidin (2021) contend that effective training could assist to improve the skills of principals to communicate and manage schools properly. Stemming from the various styles of communication, as mentioned in the above paragraph, a principal's role should be to lead regarding communication, starting with a clear statement of objectives.

The next section presents and discuss the theoretical framework that was used to analyse, interpret, and understand the findings and discussions in this study.

2.12 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is a lens through which used to analyse, interpret and understand discussions in the research study. Lederman and Lederman (2015) contend that theoretical frameworks are crucial for all studies as they justify the significance of the research questions. For this study, the theoretical framework used was the School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) model intertwined with the Response to Intervention and Instruction model (RTII) and Responsive classroom. These models complemented each other in explaining the principals' experiences and strategies in addressing learner indiscipline. The models are explained and discussed in the section below.

2.12.1 The School-Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support (SWPBIS) Model

Principals and other educational stakeholders are desperate to find preventative solutions to these menacing types of learner indiscipline. As such, Öğülmüş and Vuran (2016) reviewed the Schoolwide Positive Behavioural Interventions and Support Practices (SWPBIS) and claimed that they had potential. As a result of their study, this framework focuses on the social behavioural difficulties and guaranteed behavioural success coupled with academic achievement, both of which the school principal is responsible for. The school principal has a role in the effective implementation of the SWPBIS and its pertinence.

Relating to the need for solutions, the SWPBIS was developed with the major themes of data-based decision-making, multi-tiered support and prevention (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016). Principals can adapt the key features of the framework to the contexts of their school cultures and the severity of the prevalence of learner indiscipline. These features include describing expected behaviours, acknowledging and recognising learners when they behave as expected, encouraging learners to learn the school-wide behaviour expectations actively, and accumulating and using data based on learner behaviour to influence decision-making (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016). Additionally, the principal may organise teams or committees to implement school-wide behaviour support programmes, be part of the team or committee,

provide appropriate timelines for carrying out behaviour support processes, consider school-wide behaviour as one of the important objectives for the school, and involve the government in supporting the identified initiatives (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016).

The SWPBIS has been implemented widely across the United States to address disruptive behaviour in schools through the application of the principles of behaviour, social learning and organisational behaviour by school principals (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016). Disruptive behaviour is not necessarily contained in the United States context, as discussed earlier; learner indiscipline is a global issue, which applies equally to South Africa. Öğülmüş and Vuran (2016) cite Sugai when alluding to the important components, such as maintaining the use of procedures, and decision-making based on data while considering the description of learner indiscipline. This is based on the assumption that evidence-based interventions may enable principals to address learner indiscipline (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016).

2.12.2 The Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) model

The RTII model complements the SWPBIS model, especially regarding the strategies that school principals use to address learner indiscipline. Öğülmüş and Vuran (2016) point out that problem behaviours, such as bullying, drug abuse and alcohol use emerged in the late 1990s. The RTII is a responsive classroom model which arises from the notion of the early detection of learner indiscipline while implementing intervention strategies to contain or manage the risk of learner indiscipline (Belle, 2017). This approach involves principals adopting preventative management-orientated strategies. The RTII model thus suggests that principals should encourage parental involvement and continuous professional development of teachers in respect of the management of learner discipline. This thinking is supported by Michael, Wolhuter and Van Wyk (2012), who recognised school principals as the key players in initiating and enhancing parental involvement for the effective running of schools.

The RTII model focuses on the self-realisation of the learner to practise acceptable behaviour while inspiring learners to be active participants in their learning. Principals can use continuous professional development to ensure that teachers are responsive to the needs of learners and are effectively contributing to the environment of the school. According to Belle (2017), this model

can be applied to the entire school and can assist principals in their efforts to create a culture of self-discipline; thus being proactive towards the development of both teachers and learners'. The responsive classroom model suggests that the principal must promote teacher collaboration, whereby teachers can meet with each other at the table and discuss ways of approaching and solving the problems that they may be experiencing (Belle, 2017). In addition, this model involves principals, for instance, reaching out to community groups and other relevant external platforms to stimulate teachers' growth and development, allowing for a better resolution of challenges, such as learner indiscipline (Belle, 2017). This implies an inclusive process that involves two-way communication between teachers and parents, as parental involvement is necessary for, for instance, academic success. Learners will likely model more acceptable behaviour once this model presents them with an organised environment, with clear rules and consequences, while being encouraged to practise self-control. Hence, for this study, this model provided a valuable framework for exploring and understanding the leadership role of the selected secondary school principals to address learner indiscipline.

2.13 Chapter Summary

This literature review chapter drew from the work of several scholars in support of how principals may address learner indiscipline. The chapter discussed key areas of the study, such as learner indiscipline, principals' roles in addressing learner indiscipline and leadership styles. Particular attention was afforded to leadership considerations required to address such issues as bullying and violence. Moreover, this chapter explored the pivotal role of parental involvement and how school principals may enhance parental involvement to address problems experienced by schools. It then discussed the importance of effective communication as a mechanism for building an arsenal for ensuring collaborative work to address the challenges facing schools.

Lastly, this chapter also presented the SWPBIS approach and the RTII model as a lens for viewing the discussions in this study. The SWPBIS focuses on social behavioural complications and aims to ensure behavioural success and academic achievement, all for which the school principal is accountable. The RTII model involves providing intervention for learners in a responsive and preventative manner while equipping teachers to implement classroom responses to bring about learner discipline.

The next chapter presents and discusses the methodological and design considerations made to investigate the key research questions of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the methodology and design adopted for investigating the key research questions for the study. In doing this, the chapter presents and discusses the research paradigm, research approach, and research design, including the sampling strategies, data generation strategies and procedures, and data analysis strategies. In addition, the chapter also discusses the issues regarding the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations made to ensure the respect, protection and upholding of the rights of the participants.

3.2 Interpretive research paradigm

This study was situated in the interpretive paradigm, as it aimed to understand the school principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline. I located this research in the interpretative paradigm because this paradigm enabled the description and understanding of how the principals made sense of their leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.

Ontology refers to the nature of beliefs about reality (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Through the interpretivist lens, I could acknowledge that reality is socially constructed and that I had to find meaning in the way in which the principals, as participants in this study, perceived their leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline. According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016), observing an ontological belief system (explicitly or implicitly) guides the researcher to certain epistemological theories. Epistemology describes the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge as well as the process by which knowledge is obtained and supported (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The belief is that principals play a significant role in addressing learner indiscipline. The knowledge behind this belief will stem from exploring this notion. The research will support the ontology as the intention was to utilise the participants' responses as a means for understanding and describing practices intended to achieve a conducive learning and teaching environment. The subjective nature of the chosen paradigm enabled me to interpret

the data generated, and understand specific behaviours, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, and human agency regarding the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Rehman and Alharthi (2016) claim that methodology is the approach, plan of action and design that informs one's choice of research methods. This study arises from a qualitative case study, the methodology is explored in detail in the sections which follow.

3.3 Research approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. The intention and nature of qualitative research have been described by Merriam (2009) as the uncovering of the meanings of a phenomenon. For this study, the adoption of a qualitative research approach enabled an understanding of how school principals understood and interpreted their experiences and perceived their leadership roles regarding the establishment and maintenance of a conducive learning and teaching environment, free from learner indiscipline. As Merriam (2009) implies, the qualitative approach enabled me to explore how school principals, as participants in this study, constructed their realities and what meanings they attributed to their experiences of addressing learner indiscipline. Hence, I, as the qualitative researcher, aimed to make sense of the naturally occurring experiences of the participants.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) assert that qualitative data usually consists of textual or visual data. This study comprised and used textual data. Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) contend that the most powerful method in qualitative research is a case study, as it has the potential to realise both the practical and theoretical aims of a research study. Generating qualitative data was relevant and appropriate to the use of the interpretivist paradigm, as it provided textual data that assisted in the in-depth understanding and interpreting of the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline.

3.4 Research design

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define a research design as a plan regarding how a researcher will systematically collect and analyse the data to respond to the key research questions of a study. For this study, I used a multi-case study, with the case being the school principal.

Ebneyamini and Moghadam (2018) state that a case study illuminates a set of decisions, why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what results. Thus, in this study, each principal's set of decisions grappling with learner indiscipline was explored, along with the reasoning behind the decisions, how they were implemented and what impact these had on their responsibility in respect of addressing learner indiscipline. These 'how' and 'why' questions assisted me in making prominent links between the principals' leadership role and addressing learner indiscipline.

Merriam (2009) defines a case study as an in-depth empirical inquiry, which studies a specific phenomenon within a real-life context. The phenomenon in this proposed study was the principal's leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline. Case studies fall into the realm of the interpretivist paradigm, emphasising the notion of understanding a phenomenon, namely, the relationship between school leaders and discipline (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). A case study was appropriate for this study, as it is, just like the process of discipline, which is the phenomenon being explored in this study, practically orientated (Ebneyamini & Moghadam, 2018). This planned and systematic approach involved me generating data from the four secondary school principals, in the form of semi-structured interviews and documents review to constitute a case. The rationale for using the case study approach was to provide a mechanism to describe what it is like within a naturalistic school context using a leadership role to address learner discipline. Specifically, this case study was an instrumental one, as it aimed to explore the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline. Merriam (2009) posits that a case study should be bounded; hence this study was bounded to four principals in the secondary schools in a specific education district.

3.5 Research Population strategies

For this study, I have used purposive sampling to select the four secondary school principals. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), interpretivist research bases its sampling on the focus on collecting rich, in-depth and detailed descriptions and analyses. For this study, four school principals were purposefully selected to provide detailed descriptions of their roles, experiences and strategies in addressing learner indiscipline. The bounded system was four secondary schools located within the uMgungundlovu District Department of Education. I

chose these schools because they would have dealt with discipline satisfactorily, based on the interactions I had had with the colleagues with whom I interact regularly, especially during cluster meetings. Hence, I believed that the principals selected were knowledgeable and experienced in their fields. These schools were also convenient in respect of travelling distance as I worked in a school within the district.

These schools were chosen because they are part of 1 345 schools with cases of violence in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (Daily News, 2019). These urban schools shared similarities in terms of the types of issues of learner indiscipline, such as bullying and violence. It was expected that differences would include the strategies used by the principals when addressing learner indiscipline. As Hyetth, Kenny and Dickson-Swift (2014) suggest, I sought what was common and different in these cases while considering the physical setting, historical background, and institutional, political, and contextual factors of the issues.

3.6 Data generation methods

In-depth semi-structured interviews and document reviews, discussed below, were used to generate data to respond to the key research questions for this study.

3.7 Semi-structured interviews

Once I had obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, I conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews with each of the four principals once they consented to participate in the study. The purpose of an interview is to generate data based on a set of questions or areas to respond to the study's key research questions, making this method advantageous for the use of the interpretivist paradigm (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Furthermore, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) state that the purpose of the interview is to find out what a person knows and thinks, which in this case, enhanced the understanding, description and exploration of the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline. The interview process allowed me to ask open-ended questions within the main objectives of the study to explore the emerging themes of the principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.

The interviews took place person-to-person, in the context of the school and at the convenience of the interviewees. Before the interview, the participants were reminded of their ethical rights to autonomy and informed consent. I then asked probing and clarifying questions about the notions of discipline in their schools and their leadership role in achieving such. In keeping with the paradigm of the study, an interview allowed for an exploration and description of the participants' experiences and understandings of their leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. The semi-structured nature of the interviews provided me with the flexibility required to elicit in-depth responses and to probe where clarification and expansion were required. Thereafter, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The recording of the interview allowed me to focus on the expression and the mood of the participant, which sometimes contributed to the understanding of the meanings they ascribed to their realities regarding addressing learner indiscipline.

3.8 Document review

I corroborated data generated through the semi-structured interviews using document review, which included the review of documents such as strategic plans, learner indiscipline incidents, codes of conduct for learners, school-parent correspondence, office referrals from teachers, as well as minutes of SGB and disciplinary committee meetings. For this study, I regarded documents as referring to a wide range of written, digital and physical material relevant to the study (Merriam, 2009). It was not the intention of this study to use document review to be pre-emptive of which documents would be available, but to use the available documents, especially those referred to by the participants during the interviews.

3.9 Data analysis strategy

The data generated for this study were analysed through an inductive approach. According to Merriam (2009), qualitative data collection and analysis are recursive and dynamic. Merriam (2009) expands on this idea by suggesting that it is paramount for analysis to begin early during the process of conducting a study. Due to the qualitative textual nature of the data generated in this study, I transcribed the interviews verbatim for the proper organisation and management of data.

In this regard, I unfolded patterns on the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline stemming from the raw data generated from the interviews. The audio-recorded interviews were displayed in the research as an organised, condensed collection of information as per the participants' responses (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The interviews were transcribed through the process of open coding. During the process of analysing the data, I read the transcripts carefully and identified commonalities. I also incorporated document review, making notes on the margins of the documents on issues that related to what had transpired from the interviews. From this open coding process, I could construct themes and incorporate relevant literature and theoretical framework.

3.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

Qualitative researchers conceptualise the idea of rigour in multiple ways. For his study, the work by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which discusses the concept of trustworthiness, was used. Trustworthiness is established when findings reflect the meanings as described by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thus, for this study, trustworthiness was ensured using credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

I ensured credibility during data analysis through a process of reflecting, sifting, exploring, judging relevance and meaning and developing themes that accurately depicted the experiences of the participants. In support of this, Bertram, and Christiansen (2014) state that for credibility, findings should reflect the reality and the experience of the participants and principals addressing discipline issues in respect of this study. Purposeful sampling potentially contributed to the in-depth understanding as information-rich participants, who had experience in the principalship, were selected (Merriam, 2009).

Dependability was ensured by using the audit trail, which involved maintaining and preserving all transcripts, notes and audio recordings. I also ensured that this research was credible by incorporating literature in discussing the findings on notions of leadership roles and strategies regarding addressing discipline (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Furthermore, I also received

inputs through feedback from my supervisor, which enhanced the dependability of the discussions of the findings.

Transferability enabled me to determine the extent to which the research findings could be transferred to a similar context (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). I provided explicit and detailed descriptions of the processes and procedures to enable the readers to measure the transferability of the conclusions made and results presented to similar contexts. The use of verbatim quotes from the transcribed interviews was intended to enable other researchers to confirm possible themes regarding learner indiscipline. Pandey and Patnaik (2014) claim that dependability revolves around whether or not the findings of the participants' perspectives are repeated when the study is repeated, which means that confirmability may explore the degree of neutrality.

For confirmability, I used member-checking to determine the accuracy of the findings, which involved taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants for feedback (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Merriam, 2009). In this regard, I sent the transcripts and summary findings of all the data to each participant. I requested them to provide comments regarding the accuracy and any changes they may want to suggest that would better capture the essence of their experiences regarding their leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.

3.11 Considering ethical issues

Ethical requirements enhance the honesty and integrity of the study (Hyetth, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014). In this regard, I applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Ethical Clearance Committee. After the approval had been granted, I could continue with the research process. I adhered to the ethical principles of autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence when conducting this study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). First and foremost, permission was obtained from the gatekeeper, in this case, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. Subsequently, I requested consent from the participants, who were the principals of four secondary schools. This was carried out in the form of a letter from the UKZN stating the purpose and details of the research study. The letter stated that no harm or disrepute would be brought to the four schools or the principals involved in the study. In this regard, the participants needed to feel safe and comfortable with revealing information

(Merriam, 2009). This was reinforced by the protection of their identities using pseudonyms. Finally, it was ensured that the research conducted and presented was beneficial to the education community as it could contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed the methodological and design considerations made in respect of the conduct of the study. The study adopted a qualitative case study approach within an interpretivist research paradigm. Purposive sampling was used to select the four principals of secondary schools within the uMgungundlovu District Department of Education, an area where several cases of violence had been documented. Data was generated through face-to-face semi-structured interviews and document review, and the data generated were analysed through an inductive approach. Trustworthiness was ensured through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. All the relevant ethical principles were adhered to.

The next chapter presents, discusses and interprets the data generated and the findings to respond to the key research questions, the aim and the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The research design and methodology used to generate the necessary data were presented and discussed in the preceding chapter. In this chapter, the data obtained from the interviews with four secondary school principals and document reviews will be presented, discussed, analysed and interpreted. Seven themes were generated from the data collected. These themes will be presented and considered in line with the following key research questions of the study:

1. What are the principals' leadership roles and experiences addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?
2. How do secondary school principals describe their leadership strategies and processes for addressing learner indiscipline?
3. What can we learn from principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences regarding addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?

4.2 Profiling the Participants

I conducted open-ended interview sessions with each of the four secondary school principals in the uMgungundlovu District in KwaZulu-Natal. Whilst all four principals had a secondary school context, their journeys and experience in the education field varied, all of which influenced their leadership in addressing learner indiscipline. The information about each of the participants is presented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 4.2: Profiles of the participants

PARTICIPANT	YEARS IN THE EDUCATION	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS PRINCIPAL	LEADERSHIP STYLE USED	AGE RANGE IN YEARS
A	35	3	Democratic	50-60
B	32	13	Democratic	50-60
C	30	4	Servant	50-60
D	28	5	Democratic	50-60

Table 5.2 above presents relevant information from the participants who were principals at the secondary schools within the uMgungundlovu District Department of Education. From the table above, it could be deduced that the participants had a wealth of experience in the field of education, with their experience ranging from 28-35 years. Nevertheless, their overall teaching experience suggests that they had dealt with the issues of learner indiscipline. It is interesting to note that most participants considered their leadership styles democratic, while only one participant claimed to be a servant leader. These two styles share many similarities, as discussed in Chapter 2.

4.3 Themes

The themes were generated from the data produced through the semi-structured interviews held with the participants to explore the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline in four secondary schools. The discussions in this chapter will be structured according to the following themes and sub-themes:

- Principals' leadership role and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline:
 - Reinforcing the code of conduct for learners
 - Principals' roles in supporting staff to address learner indiscipline
 - The principal's role in supporting the SGB in addressing learner indiscipline
 - A philosophy of values and vision for addressing learner indiscipline
- Strategies and processes used by principals to address learner indiscipline
- Lessons learned from the principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline:
 - Principals' leadership styles in the capacity of addressing learner indiscipline

4.3.1 Principals' leadership role and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline

4.3.1.1 Reinforcing the code of conduct for learners

What emerged from the participants' responses, when they were asked about their school's code of conduct for learners, was that the code of conduct played a significant role in assisting their efforts to address learner indiscipline. All participants referred to the need for their school's code of conduct for learners to be reinforced. However, they had different views about the form

of reinforcement that should be undertaken. However, common in their responses regarding the code of conduct for learners was that they believed it was their responsibility as school principals to ensure that parents and teachers understood and adhered to it. Participant A shared their views in this regard as follows:

My role is to ensure that the code of conduct, and the rules are followed and that the teachers are empowered as to how to administer discipline, and the learners must know what the consequences are of indiscipline... the code of conduct is the most significant thing because you have it in writing, everyone accepts it, you can address the matter of indiscipline.

The finding above suggests that the effectiveness of the code of conduct for learners is dependent on the effectiveness of the school leadership, especially the ownership of the responsibility to ensure its success: “*My role is to ensure that the code of conduct, the rules are followed and that the teachers are empowered*”. Thus, the effective implementation of the code of conduct for learners will enable consistency in its application by school leaders to address discipline issues (Mwaniki, 2018). In this regard, the school principal must have a sound understanding of the implementation of the code of conduct for learners and have the capacity and techniques to reinforce its application across the school. Thus, allowing learners to understand how they must conduct themselves within the school context (Belle, 2017). In this regard, Participant D had the following to say:

I think having a code of conduct and knowing what it is is a major step towards preventing issues of learner indiscipline, but you will always get that minority that will constantly be undermining that, you know, but the most important thing is that they do not get away with it.

From the above, it could be deduced that Participant D understood the code of conduct for learners as serving as a preventative tool, which underlined the need for it to be reinforced by the school, led by the principal. Participant A understood his role as reinforcing the school code

of conduct for learners to be fair to members of the school community. In this regard, Participant A had the following to say:

...ensuring that the code of conduct is up to date and revised all the time to ensure that the code of conduct is a living document. By this, I mean that parents must know what it is, what it entails, learners must know what it involves, and the staff. In fact, everyone in the institution must know what is contained in the code of conduct, and everyone must be part of the code of conduct. Because when you are developing this policy, although a few people write it, it impacts everyone, so everyone must have a fair chance of contributing to it and accepting it. So, one of the main things is to ensure that everyone follows the code of conduct in a fair way.

From the above statement, the code of conduct for learners is vital for addressing learner indiscipline and should not be stagnant. Regarding the above statement, the code of conduct for learners must move with or adjust to the changing situations regarding learner discipline: “*The code of conduct is a living document*”. That is, it must align with the relevant contextual changes the school and learners face. This means that it should be regularly reviewed to align with these dynamics. Secondly, the code of conduct for learners must be owned and understood by all the school community members: “*Everyone in the institution must know what is contained in the code of conduct, and everyone must be part of the code of conduct*”. This means that the strength of the code of conduct for learners is in the collective ownership, understanding and application.

Bush and Glover (2003) contend that leaders are visionaries. This suggests that a vision is an essential element of leadership. Outstanding school leaders have a vision for their learners’ behaviour. This expectation or vision must be communicated in a way that secures commitment from all the members of the school community, including staff and learners. The communication of the vision for the school requires the communication of its meaning and ways of institutionalising it (Bush & Glover, 2003). Participant B reported that their school had “*a very progressive code of conduct*”, and he viewed this as a “*positive approach to addressing learner indiscipline*”. In this regard, Participant B had the following to say:

...we have a workshop with staff, we go through discipline, we go through the code of conduct. And of course, on an annual basis, the school governing body also sits down and reviews the code of conduct, so my job, in the main, is to set the vision, to see if we are moving along in that direction, and also to grow people and empower them.

In respect of the above, the participant understood his leadership role as that of being the vision setter and holder: “*My job in the main, is to set the vision*” and to rally and mobilise members of their school community to work *towards* the achievement of such a vision: “*to see if we are moving along in that direction*”. In addition to this, Participant B understood their leadership role as that of “*grow[ing] people and empower[ing] them*”. This is an important consideration as growing and empowering learners, in particular, in understanding and owning the code of conduct, can make them less susceptible to indiscipline. The document reviews obtained from the data collection corroborated this notion of growing people and empowering them as the code of conduct stipulates:

If there is a suspicion of substance abuse, the learner will be taken to the office, where their rights will be explained to them. After that, the learner will be subjected to onsite testing. If the test results are positive, the parents will be called in and notified of the drug test and the positive results. The test kit will be kept as evidence...

The above suggests that the school had a set procedure to deal with indiscipline, which must be followed meticulously to ensure learner discipline. The presence of a documented process is essential for ensuring that everyone is reading from the same script in respect of learner discipline. This clarity of rules and procedures could contribute to the stability of the school, which is vital for ensuring a climate conducive to quality learning and teaching.

Participants also cited examples of what the code of conduct stipulated, for instance, regarding bullying. This is what Participant B had to say regarding this issue:

...in terms of the code of conduct, you have to take your child to SANCA for counselling and rehabilitation. And for the child to return to school, the child must submit a positive test result.

Furthermore, it emerged from the participants that there was a need for o empower learners: *“Of course, we find out that there is bullying, and of course, we deal with it in terms of the code of conduct. But we also offer psychological counselling for both the victim and the perpetrator”* (Participant B). The above response suggests that the code of conduct for learners serves as the standard operating procedure for how learner (in)discipline must be addressed and managed. When the rules of the game are clear, there will be less confusion about how specific situations must be handled. Literature provides insights regarding counselling and rehabilitation for learner indiscipline. The literature points out that principals must find methods and ways to inculcate learner responsibility through the initiation of various support and counselling programmes and involvement of other relevant sectors, including social services, psychological services and law enforcement services (Ige, 2019; Narain, 2017).

Moreover, these examples of learner indiscipline imply active parental involvement, part of which is the parent acknowledging their child’s act of indiscipline within the parameters of the code of conduct. Participant B said they *“also speak to the parents about the code of conduct at the orientation meeting. So, the parents also become aware, and they realise this is how their child must conform to the school rules and code of conduct”*. The finding about the importance of parental involvement supports the view by Michael, Wolhuter and Van Wyk (2012) that the duty of resolving the challenge of poor parental involvement is the principal’s responsibility. Considering the framework of this study, the RTII model, which focuses on self-realisation by the learner to display acceptable behaviour, suggests that the principals must encourage parental involvement. From Participant B’s response, it is evident that they understood their role as school principals as fulfilling the requirements of and reinforcing the code of conduct for learners to address current issues. Participant B seems to adopt an inclusive approach to addressing learner indiscipline by including methods of counselling and working to actively involve parents in interpreting and implementing the code of conduct for learners.

Whilst the code of conduct is crucial in theory, the main issue is whether or not learners own and comply with it. When the participants were asked to respond to this question, most reported that learners complied with the code of conduct. This is what Participant B had to say in this regard:

They conform to the school's code of conduct...they do...you get as I told you...a child/a group of children would not conform, but the percentage is very low...I mean, we understand that children will be children, and they will, from time to time, not comply or express behaviour that is not in keeping with the code of conduct. But we always try and find out the underlying reasons for that and then try and treat that, rather than just treat it as you have done A, B and C, and this is the punishment because it doesn't work like that.

However, Participant C shared a different view and questioned the fact that the code of conduct sometimes contained trivial rules:

It does; the problem with the school code of conduct is that petty rules are broken because it contains petty rules. So, that affects the levels of compliance because, as it stands, I think there are too many irrelevant rules in it, so that's why you get this book because transgressions and appearance transgressions, and so we have, I'd say, a 70% compliance, because of the quality of the rules.

From Participant C's response, it is evident that the principal had not assisted the SGB in reviewing the code of conduct for learners to make it relevant to the prevailing situation at the school. In this regard, Participant C believed that “*certain rules are petty*” and claimed that reinforcing those rules, as a school leader, would be less effective and counterproductive. This suggests that the code of conduct for learners, in this instance was a dead document. The notion of the code of conduct as a “*living document*”, as alluded to by Participant A, supports Mestry and Khumalo's (2012) claim that the code of conduct must pronounce discipline processes to address current issues within the school. Therefore, if the principal does not work with the SGB

to adapt and review the code of conduct for learners, as reported by Participant C above, then they are most likely to experience difficulty in getting learners to comply with it.

4.3.1.2 Principals' roles in supporting staff to address learner indiscipline

In accordance with the requirements to maintain a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment, school principals have a responsibility to ensure learner discipline. Whilst principals are accountable for learner discipline, it is the teachers who are at the forefront of dealing with learner indiscipline. This means that principals must support their staff in the effective implementation of the procedures to address learner indiscipline. The school principals, who participated in this study, were asked how they supported their staff regarding learner discipline. The participants' responses revealed that they took on various roles when supporting their teachers, all of which factored in variables such as consulting, pastoral care, counselling and discipline systems. Participant B reported that their school took a holistic approach and ensured positive communication when dealing with the issue of learner discipline:

...we take the child as a holistic being. We don't just look at the intellectual needs; we look at the emotional, the psychological, their family relations... all of those things, so a very holistic approach we take to discipline. Then I communicate very positively with both the staff and the learners, so when a child is referred to me for indiscipline, I take more of a counselling approach. I try to find out the underlying reason, and how we assist the child so that the child can start functioning in a disciplined way.

Participant B's response above reveals that the principals not only supported their staff but also communicated positively with them. This points to the principal's way of supporting their teachers in addressing learner indiscipline. Thus, the principal, as expressed by Participant B, also modelled specific ways of moving the school from punishment to discipline: "*When a child is referred to me for indiscipline, I take a more of a counselling approach*". This suggests that the principal took a more holistic view of indiscipline's causes, as Bronfenbrenner (1979) advocated in his multidimensional contextualist model. In this regard, Participant B understood the importance of the contextual variables that may account for the behaviours they saw in their learners. Participant C shared a similar approach, stating, "*I am very happy to intervene*

directly”. In this instance, teachers were supported through direct contact or interactions with the principal. Participant A suggested that he was also directly involved in addressing learner indiscipline, as reflected in their response below:

...encouraging the teachers, supporting them all the time, and sincere support. Empowering them with strategies about discipline, but also I feel that, talking to children, all the time and encouraging them, whether it's informal, or whether it's assembly, or whether you go to a class, or you talk to them in groups, or on a one to one when you meet children on the corridors, you talk to them all the time, encourage them and make them feel important. That's when you find that they will have a different type of respect for the school, the institution and the teachers as well.

In essence, the notion of the principal directly being involved could be understood as a leader supporting their staff to address learner indiscipline. Effectively addressing indiscipline must start with school leadership. Chaka (2018) contends that to achieve a high standard of learner achievement; principals must ensure a supportive learning and teaching environment. From the above response, it can be deduced that school leaders have a responsibility to model effective and positive ways of dealing with learner indiscipline and support both teachers and learners support in ensuring a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment. Hence, school leaders need to set schools in the direction towards an overall enhancement while influencing teachers and learners to work towards achieving the objective of addressing learner indiscipline. This finding supports Smith and Amushigamo's (2016) view that teachers want to feel that they belong and are appreciated. This can be achieved through the 'sincere support' from the school principal, as reported by Participant A.

A common view among the interviewees was regarding the importance of staff development in addressing learner indiscipline, which will empower teachers to respond confidently. These initiatives would provide a support system for teachers to effectively handle and address learner indiscipline. Participant B shared their example as captured in the following response:

These staff development sessions that we have really empower the teachers. For example, I invited a counsellor to come through and talk to teachers about ADHD and also to talk to the children about autism because we do have children with these issues....So, at the end of the day, when my teachers are empowered, I know that we are making inroads in the system; we are making inroads in people's lives. And we find that children respond excellently.

School principals must find ways to inculcate a sense of responsibility in learners by implementing various support and counselling programmes involving relevant sectors, including social services, psychological services and law enforcement services (Ige, 2019; Narain, 2017). Raising awareness of ADHD and autism, as reflected in the response above, can improve tolerance amongst teachers and empower them to act progressively when addressing indiscipline. Moreover, in line with Ige's (2019) and Narain's (2017) view regarding law enforcement services, Participant D stated "*I do try to always encourage both the staff as well as the discipline officer to work within the legal framework, but to display compassion in all instances*". Working within the parameters of the law is of utmost importance, as the law provides a framework for the minimum standards required to deal with specific issues (Oosthuizen, 2003).

Participant C shared an example of how he played his role in ensuring that appropriate structures were set up, that resources were available, and that their staff were trained and prepared for the task of addressing learner indiscipline issues. Participant C shared as follows:

The structures and resources are in place, and it is... if there is an incident now, there are enough trained staff to deal with that situation in a very effective manner very quickly, and that ranges from the security company we have to training of the actual staff. For example, I have a level 3 First Aid person here, so if there's a stabbing, I have hands-on support straight away. Furthermore, I try to have an open-door policy, by which I encourage them to come to brainstorm their own strategies, so rather than me to tell them what to do I encourage them to come and tell me what the problem is and then help them find solutions from their own minds, rather than me telling them...

According to Allensworth (2017), principals must support and develop the capacity of teachers to employ proactive ways of managing learner discipline. For this study, the principals led and guided teachers through the processes and procedures for addressing and resolving learner indiscipline. Participant B emphasised the importance of exploring various avenues when teachers are addressing learner indiscipline:

...there are avenues by which you can solve discipline problems, rather than trying to solve it on your own. You can always refer the child to the discipline officer, you can always refer the child to the pastoral heads, refer the child to the counsellor, refer the child to the social worker.

These strategies for staff development for supporting teachers support the views of the RTII framework used in this study, as they point to the importance of the continuous professional development of teachers (Belle, 2017). Principals can use continuous professional development programmes and activities to ensure that teachers are responsive to learner discipline issues and are thus effectively contributing to the efforts of ensuring a safe and support learning and teaching environment. These supporting mechanisms, amongst others, will assist principals in their leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.

4.3.1.3 The principal's role in supporting the SGB in addressing learner indiscipline

The SGB is an important stakeholder in any school, as it is responsible for the governance and direction of the school in terms of sections 20 and 21 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996). This responsibility includes the management of the concerns of learner indiscipline through the code of conduct for learners. If principals have a strong and functional SGB, they stand a good chance to be effective in their leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline. While the SGB comprises parent components, a teacher component and a learner component, it is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure that the SGB is active, and functional and can fulfil its responsibilities in terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. For this study, the participants painted a picture that suggested

that the SGBs in their schools were effective and vigorous in the execution of their duties as per the relevant Act. This is captured in Participant C's response as follows:

I've got an amazing governing body; they take their responsibility very seriously and they are very effective...all of our major cases have gone through them. They are also very wise, in a sense that I was a very inexperienced head, and so they offered excellent guidance because they were all governors from primary school onwards. I just inherited a very experienced group of governors who understood their roles very clearly, but also don't interfere with operational issues, so I am very blessed.

As it is evident from the above excerpt from Participant C, the principal relied on their SGB for guidance when executing his leadership role in terms of governance issues, such as learner indiscipline. The participant attributes this to the functionality of their SGB and captures this as “*all major cases have gone through them*”, which suggests that the SGB has been active in its roles in addressing learner indiscipline. The above excerpt suggests that the SGB was included and relied upon by the principal for major cases of learner indiscipline. This highlights the extent of parental involvement in this school, as the SGB includes a parent component. As Belle (2017) indicates, the framework of the RTII model and the responsive classroom model both encourage parental involvement and steady collaboration when implemented by the school principal.

This sentiment was similar to those of Participants A and D, who were appreciative of their active SGB, especially in respect of the work of the tribunals. In this regard, there was an implied reference to the South African Schools Act which pointed to the fact that the SGB understood its governance responsibilities, as captured in Participant A's response below:

The school governing body, I must say, is now very active...which is good. They are very supportive of the school as well, but in terms of the school's act, their role only comes in when there are serious matters of tribunals. So, you have a disciplinary committee of the school governing body. The school governing body is about governance; it is not about

the professional management of the school. Managing discipline in the school ultimately rests with the school management team, the principal, and the staff – the teachers.

Participant D also reported that their school had an active SGB and emphasised the fact that they had been supportive when addressing issues of learner indiscipline, as captured in the excerpt from Participant D below:

They play a very active role. Firstly, we have parents who are part of tribunal committees, so they know how to chair and run a tribunal. And the second thing is, if in an instance we have to have a recommendation for expulsion, you know, the governing body has to ratify that decision. The governing body always supports the tribunal committee for an expulsion because they know we do not take it for a small for first step instance, it's always something that's major or there would have been steps before that with that issue, so they always support us, and anything that we do to implement some kind of discipline.

Quite telling from the above account is the clarity of the explanation of the principal's role in the SGB regarding learner discipline. Participant B shared how their SGB made an effort to rehabilitate learners who were facing serious misconduct. In keeping with this hands-on and holistic approach to addressing learner indiscipline, it was reported that the school “*has a person who just deals with the discipline itself. And he is the learners' affairs officer and was appointed by the SGB.*” In this regard, Participant B responded as follows:

...on the tribunal side, we have two members of the SGB that serve on the tribunal. Then there is a discipline subcommittee of the governing body, and there it's either chaired by the vice chair or it is chaired by the chairperson himself, so there's a hands-on approach. They are also very supportive towards the management and the children. They also take the holistic approach, you know...so even if the child has committed some deed that is unacceptable, they also want to rehabilitate the child; of course, where there is no avenue for rehabilitation, then obviously, it's an expulsion right away.

If principals take on their roles of cultivating a healthy, beneficial relationship with the SGBs, this has the potential to benefit both the principal and the learners. The SGB is a dynamic body, one which can assist the principal in making the effective and necessary changes to promote discipline in their schools. However, the literature suggests that not all school principals are as “*blessed*” with a functional and supportive SGB as Participant C (see, for instance, Selamolela, 2019). While this study presents positive themes of the principals being successful in addressing learner indiscipline with the support from their active SGBs, the literature suggests that this may be inconsistent with the situation in other schools in South Africa (see, for instance, Kekana & Makura, 2020; Selamolela, 2019; Diamond, 2015). Mestry and Khumalo (2012) identified a problem of parent governors as not being knowledgeable about the relevant legislation. According to Mestry and Khumalo (2012), the SGBs were inadequate and ineffective in their role of governance in education. The socio-economic climate of South Africa has led to rural schools, in particular, not having skilled, knowledgeable and experienced parent members of the SGB (see, for instance, Lugalo, 2017). This implies that this could affect their role of guiding and supporting the school principal in their task of addressing learner indiscipline, among other issues.

The Department of Education has tried to initiate training workshops; however, it was noted that there was an excess of information in one day of training, thus impacting the success of the workshop. Furthermore, there was a one-size-fits-all approach where SGB members were trained in English, which impacted the interpretation of the training (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). For this study, it would seem that the school principals were active in building the capacity of their SGBs, especially regarding issues of learner indiscipline. However, it is also important to point out that the functionality of the SGBs in these schools could suggest higher social capital in the communities in which the schools are situated. In this regard, it may be important to consider this aspect in assessing the leadership role of school principals in addressing learner indiscipline.

4.3.1.4 A philosophy of values and vision for addressing learner indiscipline

As suggested in the section above, school leaders must be visionary. This correlates with the school’s vision and mission statement and feeds into strategies of how learner indiscipline may

have to be addressed. Each principal has their vision to which they drive their schools. For this study, the visions encompassed and incorporated academic improvement and learner discipline. The participants were asked to explain the visions for their school and how learner indiscipline affected the achievement of such visions. In this regard, Participant C remarked as follows:

It's very important for teaching and learning to take place in a structured environment, an environment that is positive, an environment that encourages learners to reflect on their behaviour and improve. We take a very positive approach and proactive approach to discipline. We take the child as a holistic being. We just don't look at the intellectual needs, we look at the emotional, the psychological, their family relations... all of those things which contribute to a holistic approach to discipline.

The vision of Participant B's school revolved around equipping their learners to cope and succeed within a constantly evolving society. Discipline is part and parcel of coping and evolving in society: *"I envision to prepare our learners for a society that is constantly evolving, so my vision is that we equip children with the necessary skills to participate meaningfully in the wider society and by extension in the world"*. In a similar sentiment, Participant D reported that *"my ultimate vision is to create responsible adults for society"*. This implies an understanding of the importance of learner discipline as a foundation for ensuring effective and quality learning and teaching.

The participant went on to indicate the following regarding the link between learner discipline and academic achievement, which is the *"core business of any school"*:

The core business of any school is the academics, and you need to excel in your academics in order for you to be seen as growing, progressing and developing. But academic growth and development do not work in isolation. In order for us to achieve that growth in this day and age, within the 21st century, we need to look at what we offer our learners. We have a very holistic approach towards education...we believe in the extra-mural activities. So that's what we tend to do and we believe that those three aspects will develop them to go into a society as very responsible adults which is our ultimate vision, to ensure

that they are able to assimilate into a society having the skills, knowing their responsibilities.

The data revealed that Participant A attested to the vision of paying a dedicated focus on the academic functionality of their school. In this regard, Participant A reported that “*my ultimate vision is for a school that the community will look up to in terms of academic results and terms of discipline and respectful learners*”. Therefore, although the issue was learner discipline, this was understood as an important prerequisite for the school’s performance in its core business, namely, providing quality learning and teaching.

From the above excerpts, it could be deduced that the participants understood the constructs of learner discipline and academic performance as interrelated and interdependent. Participant D reiterates this understanding in the following excerpt:

I think it’s essential because the child who is not self-disciplined cannot progress in any field, and if they don’t have the skills and the most important one of that being self-discipline - if there’s no self-discipline and there’s indiscipline, it certainly undermines the vision of the school.

The above statement implies that learner indiscipline can undermine the academic aspects of the vision of the school. Hence, the school principal must have a philosophy underpinned by values and vision that elevate the core business of their school, one that discourages learner indiscipline as an undesirable phenomenon that pulls the school off the track of its core business. In this regard, Participant C claimed as follows:

...here’s a big shift that happens, and again, it’s my own philosophy at odds. I think value-driven schools are the new norm because it’s a move away from hierarchical patriarchal and historical institutions. The modern youth is not interested in punitive forms of discipline. I don’t think they have any effect on them. We tried to move to a child-centred approach, where discipline is approached from a different perspective. Rather than discipline as participatory, it’s communal, it’s based on respect rather than

threatening them. What we have done is we have tried to redefine and say what are alternate discipline strategies.

Participant C acknowledges the fact that learner behaviour is contextually-bound. Thus, Participant C's approach took account of the contextual issues involved or implicated in learner discipline. In this regard, Participant C stated as follows:

I try to be amongst the learners, and I try to figure out the narratives, and I have tried to move the focus a lot more to the pastoral child and to try and understand why these learners behave in a certain way, and 80% of the time it's because of underlying psychosocial issues...

The following excerpt from Participant's C response suggests a principal who took the initiative by, for example, inviting an organisation to support them with communication of the vision of their school. Furthermore, the participant suggests that the vision for their school was created through an inclusive and participatory process, allowing all the stakeholders of the school to own and share the vision. While this may seem a mammoth undertaking, this may explain the principal's thinking in recruiting technical support, as indicated by Participant C below:

Through a process by which five core values were identified, and then in the line with those values, we then wrote a mission statement for the school. We then wrote a 5-year action plan, a 5-year vision which is reviewed annually... So, we brought in a facilitator from an organisation called FEDSAS which is the Federation for South African Schools, for our workshop process. It was very important to me that our staff and learners own the process. So, they ran the workshops; they took part in the workshops, facilitated by a central facilitator who then took the wording and wrote up something, so he pulled it all together at the end, and that was all presented to the governing body, to the staff and learners to say can everybody buy into this.

As Bush and Glover (2003) suggest, leadership requires a vision. From the above, it is evident that as leaders, the school principals had to articulate a clear and relevant vision for the school

community to stimulate and mobilise the school community to work to achieve the organisational objectives of their schools regarding learner discipline and academic performance. Hence, the school principal must focus on rallying all the members of their school community, including their stakeholders, to act and work in accordance with the vision. A shared vision potentially propagates healthy relationships and collaboration between the principal, SMT, staff and learners and imbues a sense of belonging required to build a strong community (Smith & Amushigamo, 2016) to tackle such issues as learner indiscipline.

4.3.2 Strategies and processes used by principals to address learner indiscipline

Instances of learner indiscipline are rife in many schools in South Africa, especially secondary schools (see, for instance, Obadire and Sinthumule, 2021). Principals tend to focus on the possible causes when formulating strategies to address learner indiscipline. From the above findings, it can be deduced that it is with the ammunition of the cause that the principal can move their school in a logical direction of addressing learner indiscipline. Whilst the various cases of indiscipline might be similar, their causes may be unique; thus, demanding a holistic approach to addressing learner indiscipline. The participants focused on the prevalence of substance abuse among their learners and shared their courses of action in addressing this as an aspect of learner indiscipline. For example, Participant A felt that the issue of discipline is varied but that it was not a once-off issue; it was a continuous battle that requires a continuous process of intervention. Hence, ill-disciplined learners require constant work and encouragement to reshape their behaviour. Participant A mentioned the issue of indiscipline in the form of substance abuse, which often arose from instances of peer pressure. In this regard, he indicated as follows:

I think the biggest indiscipline is where children want to smoke... and then go onto heavier stuff, like dagga and also, doing this in groups because of peer pressure, and also finding gaps in the school, where there are places for them to hide and smoke. Social media is another thing that creates ill-discipline, where people start saying things to each other on social media or filming and sending it. We had an incident of peer pressure where a grade 11 boy was influenced by others to smoke dagga after school, yet he came from a perfect family.

It can be assumed that indiscipline sometimes stems from children not being raised properly. Some children are exposed to the wrong things from the environments that they come from, which often lead them to think that these behaviours are acceptable. When this happens, some learners import these behaviours to their schools. Participant A alluded to the fact that “...*in an institution, if you want to achieve what you want to achieve, you have to sort out the discipline. And parents and learners must take responsibility for the wrongdoings; I feel very strongly about that*”. Similarly, Participant C believed that indiscipline stemmed from unaddressed and unresolved behavioural issues, while approximately 90% of indiscipline cases arose from the emulation of bad role models. Participant C, therefore, placed the blame at the door of parents: “...*parents refuse to acknowledge or accept their children’s behaviour*”.

Participant A shared an incident in which a Grade 9 learner was found in possession of marijuana. From the review of documents, it was found that this learner had gone through the process of a tribunal. The principal reflected on this issue of indiscipline and confirmed that this learner was about to be expelled. However, it was the practice of Participant A’s democratic leadership which saw him compiling a full investigation and listening to all parties involved. It was this thorough and fair process that exposed the conditions experienced by the learner and allowed him to access rehabilitation services rather than getting expelled.

The above finding points to the importance of the role of the school in shaping a child’s behaviour and assisting them to turn their situation around and go back on track. Participant A stated that he called in the learner and shook his hand to congratulate him on his turnaround behaviour and was encouraged to continue on this good streak. The importance of this finding lies in the recognition that a learner can change their behaviour with the appropriate, targeted support. In other words, the responsibility to deal with learner discipline that schools have, as reported by Participant A was that this must not be used as an opportunity to write-off and get rid of the learner; it is rather an opportunity to exercise restorative justice for the learner.

Throughout all experiences of learner indiscipline, Participant B reported that they always tried their best not to disrupt teaching and learning. He provided a detailed account of the strategy

that they used to address the issue of substance abuse in his school. From this account, it could be deduced that the principal thought it was necessary to employ a discipline officer to assist the school in addressing learner indiscipline. In this regard, he stated:

A child starts to exhibit negative behaviour in the classroom, and the teacher then obviously refers the child to a discipline officer; we try not to disrupt teaching and learning, so we pull the child out, so that the rest of the class can carry on with work. That's one very important aspect; we don't disrupt teaching and learning. So, we isolate the child; the child is taken out. Then the discipline officer starts talking to the child, getting information. If there is a suspicion that there is substance abuse, then the child is brought down to the office, then I explain to the child his rights, then we test, and we do onsite testing. If the test results are positive for whatever, then we call the parents, and we say to the parent we have done a drug test, and the test is positive, we keep the test kit, show it to the parent, and say to the parent, that in terms of the code of conduct, you have to take your child to SANCA, for counselling and rehabilitation. And for the child to return to school, the child must submit a positive test result. If the result is still confirming the presence of drugs, they can't return to school. So only when they get a negative result, then they can come back to school and say here's my test; it's clear, then we admit the child back at school. But in the meantime, work provision for work is made.

The participant believed to be fulfilling his role by ensuring the indiscipline is addressed positively and progressively, one which allows teaching and learning to continue. However, there is a potentially problematic dimension of this approach. From the response, it is unclear how the educational rights of the learner that is pulled out are protected. For instance, there is a question regarding the mechanisms in place for the learner to continue to learn while the problem of indiscipline is being addressed. If no mechanisms are in place, such an approach may present a serious risk of learners eventually dropping out of school. The requirement of a certificate as a license to re-enter the school may be problematic if it can take the educational rights of the child away: *For the child to return to school, the child must submit a positive test result*".

However, in respect of the above, Participant B outlined the process of linking external and internal service provisioning for learners with discipline problems:

The school counsellor and social worker take over the counselling role. So that when the child is reintegrated, doesn't suddenly come here and feel the pressure so great that they fall off the wagon again, you know, so we try to make it as supportive as possible so that they then feel, when they return, I'm capable of making decisions on my own, I can stand on my own, I can make the right choices and so on.

This finding supports the findings by Simuforsa and Rosemary (2014) and Ofori, Tordzro, Asamoah and Achiaa (2018) that the process of addressing learner indiscipline must also address the causes and holistically cultivating a benevolent environment for teaching and learning for the benefit the learner. In this regard, Participant B shared a case of learner indiscipline that had happened in their school. Participant B explained the process that they followed in addressing the issue:

And then, if there is an extreme, we had a case where a youngster was selling these Zanex tablets; of course, we had to monitor carefully and make sure we had all our ducks in a row... Evidence-based...that nobody can say we incriminated this child by entrapment or whatever, so we worked for about two/three weeks and then we got him with evidence. In those cases, then, it's an immediate suspension for a child. But once that child is on suspension, we still give him all the work. Then we set up a disciplinary enquiry, and it was chaired by an independent legal person. There are two members of the governing body, so it's a three-person committee. They sit, they hear the evidence, the evidence is put before them, and then they make a determination, is the child guilty or not. The child is allowed to bring parents, a lawyer, and counsellor, or anybody to that hearing. Once that committee has made a finding and made a ruling in terms of sanction, then that is then circulated to the full governing body for their input. Once they had a look at it, they either support or didn't support it. If they don't support it, then we review the process, why are you not supporting, and they give us reasons, and we look at it again. Once that is done and if it's rumination for expulsion, then if the SGB is comfortable with that, then

you send the paperwork to the department. The child remains at school until the department makes up its mind. Then the department takes about two to three weeks.

From the above experience of dealing with a case of learner indiscipline, it is evident that the principal executed their role of addressing the case. For instance, the principal stood by the values of the school and ensured that teaching and learning were not disrupted. For instance, he orchestrated a process which included the SGB and guided their decision based on evidence, all within the realms of an appropriate legal framework.

From the findings of this study, it could be deduced that the participants experienced similar types of learner indiscipline. A common factor in these cases was the incident of substance abuse by learners. Given the incidents shared by the participants, principals must adopt solid approaches to address learner indiscipline. In keeping with the framework of this study, namely, the RTII model (Belle, 2017), each of the participants approached the cases in their schools differently, ranging from leading a child to self-actualisation, counselling, and parental involvement to tribunal processes as part of the code of conduct for learners.

4.3.3 Lessons learned from the principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline.

The principle of leadership drives the essence of this study; hence it was appropriate to ask the participants about their leadership styles when addressing learner indiscipline. The styles of the participants' leadership influenced how they addressed learner indiscipline. Whilst the participants indicated their styles of leadership, one must take cognisance of the fluidity of leadership and its context. The majority of the responses revolved around the notion of democratic leadership, whereby principals reported that they had an open-door policy and consulted their staff when making decisions. However, one participant offered a unique response stemming from his experience in an independent school, as discussed below.

Participant C, in his own right, has a philosophical framework and considers his style of leadership to be that of servant leadership. Participant C described servant leadership to be *“the idea that the leader eats last. Non-hierarchical... and communal and the decentralisation of*

power”. It must be pointed out that this may point to the contextual contrast that Participant C divulged in respect of the differences that may prevail from school to school regarding leadership choices. This contrast was supported by his twenty-two years of experience in independent schools and influenced his practice of leadership. In this regard, Participant C had the following to say:

I was trained as a disciplinary specialist in the independent school system, and I found that a lot of the knowledge I gained there was not transferable to this system. So, you are much more vulnerable in this system because of the fact that everything goes on very careful review, and you have to be procedurally correct.

Participant C recognised and referred to the difference between the independent and public education systems. In this regard, he believed that “*a principal’s power [was] much more limited in the state system as opposed to the independent school’s system*”. In other words, Participant C believed that the environment in the public education system was more constrained compared to that of the independent schooling system. Participant C, therefore, felt that it was more difficult to address learner indiscipline in public schools because of the rigid procedures that had to be complied with.

Participant C believed that “*the principal’s power is much limited*” in a government school. Considering the data presented earlier on in this chapter, this may be interpreted as the state principal’s power being constrained by certain structures and processes, such as the school’s code of conduct and the school governing body. However, it must be pointed out that the legislative processes in place for public schools are important for the respect, protection and upholding of the rights of learners. Without these, there may be inconsistencies in how disciplinary procedures are applied by schools, which could lead to chaos, confusion and unfairness in the education system. That is when addressing learner indiscipline, various stakeholders are involved by law, which cushions the processes from personal biases and provides a more universal mechanism for ensuring justice in the handling of learner indiscipline.

As such, Participants A and D claimed to be practising democratic leadership. Participant A believed that as a school leader, he was responsible for supporting his staff, and he believed that leadership had to be understood as a shared responsibility, which involved teachers and other members of the school community. This sentiment also points to the importance of utilising the strengths that teachers may have to deal with issues such as learner indiscipline, the issue under investigation in this study. This suggests that Participant A believed that addressing learner indiscipline, like ensuring effective teaching and learning, was a collective responsibility that should tap into the strengths of the whole school community. For Participant A, no principal can address learner indiscipline alone; school principals must mobilise and utilise the strengths of their communities to address the challenge of learner indiscipline. In this regard, Participant A had the following to say:

I believe that if you give people a chance to express themselves, you can get the best out of them, I also believe in sharing responsibility, and before I take a decision, I consult...I get a consultation from many and as varied members of staff as possible. Not to say I don't stick to what I want in terms of eventually getting it. I find that as a leader, I have to think about what I want first, so I sell my ideas and get the support of staff at all levels to see the benefit of what I want as a leader of the school...but I believe in delegating duties with responsibility. So, I don't delegate and don't follow up because then nothing happens in many cases. But I delegate with responsibility, the responsibility being mine, and if it doesn't work, I'm not going to say it's because I delegated to someone else that it didn't work. Ultimately, it has to be my responsibility, and I'm the main person to ensure that.

Furthermore, in the excerpt below Participant A implied that a democratic leader should recognise that staff members must be empowered:

I find that by working in collaboration with each other, you can achieve much more. But also, I see this duty of delegation as empowering the staff, because staff want to be empowered. They don't want to sit back and get other people to do things, although it is

an easy way out. But I find that if you give them an opportunity to empower themselves, people show more respect to the institution and to yourself as a leader.

The response from Participant A suggests that the staff should not have a battle with addressing learner indiscipline; rather, they must feel empowered through their responsibility, which the principal as a leader has delegated to their teachers. In this regard, the principal will be creating a nuance of respect and responsibility, which will reflect in the school culture and point to the school's approach to addressing learner indiscipline. As Smith and Amushigamo (2016) have indicated, the principal's leadership role is a central contributory factor to the running of the school. That is, principals must serve as role models for both teachers and learners.

Participant D categorised herself as a democratic leader, who showed compassion and encouragement. She shared a similar perspective to that of Participant A in the light of empowering staff and encouraging them:

While I may listen to discussions, arguments, etc...at the end of the day I still go back to policy and legislation to guide me in terms of decisions. In terms of dealing with this particular matter, while you would have time for empathy and compassion, you still have to revert to the legislation. And I think, linking it to my style of leadership, I would say that my style of leadership is democratic, and it is within the legislative framework, and I do believe I'm a very compassionate leader, and I do try to always encourage both staff as well as the discipline officer to work within the legal framework, but to display compassion in all instances.

Hussain, Ahmad, Malik and Batool (2017) have identified leadership as a basic phenomenon in educational organisations. In this regard, the principals' leadership style sets the trajectory for the standard of education in the school. Each of the leadership styles of the principals who participated in this study was important, as it influenced the direction and approach the school adopted in dealing with the challenge of learner indiscipline. As three of the study's participants claimed to be leading democratically, it could be deduced that they demonstrated that through delegating duties among their staff and empowering them to participate actively in decision-

making processes. However, regardless of the leadership style, the findings of this study suggest that it is important to create a supportive environment where the goals of the school can be reached, as argued by Hussain, Ahmad, Malik and Batool (2017). Having considered the styles of leadership adopted by the participants, it is important to remember that power accompanies leadership, especially in contexts where leadership is understood to be situated or located in a post or a position, such as a principalship. The findings of this study point to the importance of carefully considering the exercise of power to ensure that issues that require collective responses, such as learner indiscipline, can be successfully addressed. This is especially important given the fact that there is no set leadership style in the education system and no specification that prescribes how power must be exercised within such a leadership style. What leadership style is adopted and how power gets exercised within it is a matter of personal preference and contextual relevance.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and discussed data generated to respond to the key research questions of the study. The chapter presented and discussed findings in respect of the insights of the participants on their leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline. The key points discussed in this chapter included the reinforcing of the code of conduct for learners to address learner indiscipline, principals' roles in supporting and empowering staff to address learner indiscipline, the principal's roles in assisting the SGB to play an active role in addressing learner indiscipline. The chapter concluded by lifting some lessons that could be learned from what emerged from this study regarding the principals' leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline.

The next chapter will present conclusions and recommendations in respect of the findings of the study as presented and discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIVE STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study and provides a summary of the key issues and considerations. The research questions are used as a basis for drawing conclusions based on the key findings of the study. Correlations between the findings and literature will be drawn to highlight key issues for the study. Finally, recommendations are provided based on the findings of the study.

5.2 Summary

Overall, this study explored principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline in selected secondary schools within the jurisdiction of uMgungundlovu District Department of Education, province of KwaZulu-Natal. This research aligns with what seems to be a global discourse of attempting to progressively address learner indiscipline, considers several underlying factors that may account for its prevalence, and explores the principals' leadership role in addressing it. This study takes the view that school leadership must be strong and effective in dealing with challenges and ensuring success (Baptise, 2019).

The findings of this study point to the fact that, as argued by Kiende (2019), schools must address learner indiscipline to create safe learning and teaching space, which will ensure that the school, led and driven by a principal, achieves the desired outcomes for its learners. As Nakpodia (2010) and Berger (2003) have pointed out, the South African education system must contribute to the nation's efforts to produce well-rounded citizens who can participate as productive members of their communities and society at large. At the same time, there is an array of strategies that principals may use to address learner indiscipline (see, for instance, Prinsloo, 2016; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012; DeMatthews et al., 2017; Latz, 2020), the challenge lies in the deficiencies in the implementation of the strategies. Literature reveals that principals are key to changing the punitive to more cooperative and progressive approaches to learner discipline, which can encourage learners to take personal responsibility for their behaviour (Belle, 2017).

The limitations of the study were shared and discussed in Chapter 1, including the small-scale nature of this study, which made it impossible to generalise the findings of the study. Nonetheless, the findings of this study are significant as they contribute to the understanding of the principal's leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline. The findings of this study are also useful for educational planning in respect of how the issue of learner indiscipline may be understood and addressed to ensure a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment. The principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline was investigated through the following key research questions:

1. What are the principals' leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?
2. How do secondary school principals describe their leadership strategies and processes for addressing learner indiscipline?
3. What can we learn from principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences regarding addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?

An extensive literature review was conducted to address issues about the key research questions. The key issues in the literature view included the exploration of the prevalence of learner indiscipline in schools nationally and internationally (see, for instance, Klein & Schwanenberg, 2020). The literature also revealed how school principals used their leadership roles to address learner indiscipline in collaboration with their school management teams (see, for instance, Sebastian, Huang & Allensworth, 2017; Narain, 2015), the role of the SGBs in addressing learner indiscipline (see, for instance, Latz, 2020), and the implementation of the code of conduct for learners. Russell and Stone's (2002) study, which examined servant leadership and the elements associated with it, was also discussed. Literature on democratic leadership was also explored, with Gastil (1994) stating that principals should be inclusive and deliberate when addressing learner indiscipline. Gastil (1994) also alluded to the fact that transformational leadership could be relevant for dealing with learner indiscipline. Austin (2021) pointed out that transformational leadership potentially allows principals to become

agents of change and to set direction and influence followers to pursue the collective vision of the school (Stronge & Xu, 2021).

With the above-mentioned issues and the external factors mentioned throughout Chapter 2, the literature review revealed how principals were addressing several manifestations of challenges, including bullying (see, for instance, Mahabeer, 2020; Winnaar et al., 2018) and learner violence (see, for instance, Khuzwayo, Taylor & Connolly, 2016; Henderson, 2013). Also, reference was made to the crucial role of parents' involvement in addressing learner indiscipline and the principal's role in improving parental involvement (see, for instance, Mwilima, 2021; Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021; Banerjee, 2016; Mwase, Simuyaba, Mwewa, Muleya & Simui, 2020). Another important issue that was discussed was the significance of character education as a mechanism for instilling the core values in learners to promote self-discipline and a sense of responsibility (see, for instance, Singh, 2019). It was argued that by implementing character education programmes, school principals could improve awareness of social responsibility among learners and contribute to the nation's efforts of producing well-rounded citizens who can contribute productively to their communities and society at large. It was also argued that principals must enhance their communication mechanisms to strengthen their efforts in addressing learner indiscipline (see, for instance, Samuel & Okotoni, 2018).

This study used the Response to Intervention and Instruction model and the Responsive classroom framework of the School Wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support model as a framework for analysing and understanding the findings of the study. As argued by Belle (2017), the rationale for choosing this framework lies in the fact that it has the potential to assist principals in creating a culture of proactive response and building self-discipline and problem-solving skills in learners. Furthermore, principals can contextualise the features of the framework to suit their school cultures and the severity of learner indiscipline in their schools (see, for instance, Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016).

The research study was a qualitative multi-case study located and situated within the interpretive paradigm, with the case being the principal. Four secondary school principals were purposefully selected to provide detailed accounts of their leadership roles, experience and

strategies in addressing indiscipline. Data to respond to the key research questions was generated through semi-structured interviews which were held with the four school principals. The interviews took place person-to-person, and the participants were reminded of their ethical rights to autonomy and confidentiality. The data from the interviews was afterwards coded, transcribed and analysed through an inductive approach. The data generated through interviews was corroborated with data from the review of key documents. Trustworthiness was ensured through the mechanisms to enhance the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the conduct of the research. All the necessary ethical considerations were made to ensure the respect, protection and upholding of the rights of the participants (See Chapter 4).

The findings of the study were structured and discussed according to the following themes:

- Principals' leadership role and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline:
 - Reinforcing the code of conduct for learners
 - Principals' roles in supporting staff to address learner indiscipline
 - The principal's role in supporting the SGB in addressing learner indiscipline
 - A philosophy of values and vision for addressing learner indiscipline
- Strategies and processes used by principals to address learner indiscipline
- Lessons learned from the principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline:

5.3 Conclusions

In this section, conclusions will be made based on the key findings of the study. The conclusions are presented in line with the key research questions of the study. All conclusions presented are related to the study's framework, The Responsive classroom model complemented by the SWPBIS model. Principals can adapt the key features of the framework to the contexts of their school cultures and the seriousness of the occurrence of learner indiscipline. These features include describing expected behaviours, acknowledging and recognising learners when they behave as expected, encouraging learners to actively learn the school-wide behaviour expectations, and gathering and using data based on learner behaviour to impact decision-making (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016).

5.3.1 What are the principals' leadership roles and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?

The principal is the leader, who is answerable for the functioning of a school; thus, in respect of this study, the principal is responsible for leading the initiatives and interventions for ensuring learner discipline using proactive and preventative approaches and mechanisms. This research has been instigated by the literature that claims that principals are inundated with cases of learner indiscipline (see, for instance, Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank, Mothatha & Squelch, 1994; Latz, 2020).

The findings revealed that the principals, who were the participants of this study, used the school code of conduct for learners as the key mechanism for addressing and managing learner indiscipline. The principals reported that it was important to review and ensure that the code of conduct for learners was in sync with the developments in schools to ensure its effectiveness. This concurs with the research of Mestry and Khumalo (2012), who emphasise the code of conduct as a pivotal tool for addressing learner indiscipline. Moreover, the principals reported that the principal alone could not address learner indiscipline; this required the involvement of all the members of the school community, including the relevant stakeholders. As Nunan (2018) reveals that all stakeholders must be responsible for learners' discipline. In this regard, the principals had to be prepared to share the leadership with the relevant members of the school community. A key issue in ensuring the ownership of the processes of ensuring effective learner discipline was communication (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). In this regard, some principals procured external expertise to assist them with the advocacy and communication of the code of conduct for learners. The above findings point to the importance of the principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.

5.3.2 How do secondary school principals describe their leadership strategies and processes for addressing learner indiscipline?

For this study, the school principals described their leadership styles as democratic and servant, which implies that they were driven by the principles of inclusivity, fairness and participation. The principals, who were participants in this study, understood themselves as visionaries, whose responsibilities included creating a safe and supportive teaching and learning

environment. This alludes to the conclusions of Russel and Stone (2002), who highlight that being visionary is a valuable leadership style.

The principals understood learner discipline as a foundation for ensuring academic performance, which means that learner indiscipline potentially compromised and undermined academic performance. As Latz (2020) stipulates, there is a correlation between learner indiscipline and poor academic achievement. Therefore, for the principals, there could be no quality learning and teaching and academic progress without learner discipline. This means that the prevalence of learner indiscipline was a serious leadership test for the school principals and required them to articulate the direction that would take their schools out of this crisis. (Russel & Stone, 2002).

The principals acknowledged and emphasised the importance of parental involvement in addressing learner indiscipline and their role in motivating parents to participate actively in the activities and programmes for addressing this issue. The findings of this study revealed that all the principals who participated in this study, unlike principals in other contexts, had the advantage of functional school governing bodies, who supported their efforts to address learner indiscipline. For instance, their school governing bodies had presided over major cases of indiscipline and followed appropriate procedures to resolve the issues. The role of the SGB is significant in the process of addressing learner indiscipline (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). However, the principals argued that the processes of learner discipline were not intended to get rid of misbehaving learners, but that they were correctional and rehabilitative. For instance, it was reported that one principal had assisted a learner who was about to be expelled to improve their behaviour and ended up being retained.

5.3.3 What can we learn from principals' fulfilment of their leadership roles and experiences regarding addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools?

Participant C believed that "*the principal's power is much limited*" in a government school. Considering the data presented earlier on in this chapter, this may be interpreted as the state principal's power being constrained by certain structures and processes, such as the school's code of conduct and the school governing body. Austin (2021) states that education legislation

is a current area of interest and is bounding for school principals. However, it must be pointed out that the legislative processes in place for public schools are important for the respect, protection and upholding of the rights of learners. Without these, there may be inconsistencies in how disciplinary procedures are applied by schools, which could lead to chaos, confusion and unfairness in the education system. That is, when addressing learner indiscipline, various stakeholders are involved by law, which cushions the processes from personal biases and provides a more universal mechanism for ensuring justice in the handling of learner indiscipline.

Having considered the styles of leadership adopted by the participants, it is important to remember that power accompanies leadership, especially in contexts where leadership is understood to be situated or located in a post or a position, such as a principalship. The findings of this study point to the importance of carefully considering the exercise of power to ensure that issues that require collective responses, such as learner indiscipline, can be successfully addressed. This is especially important given the fact that there is no set leadership style in the education system and no specification that prescribes how power must be exercised within such a leadership style. As Bush and Glover (2016) claim, leadership must be resilient and agile. What leadership style is adopted and how power gets exercised within it is a matter of personal preference and contextual relevance.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Identification of preferred leadership roles

The findings pointed to the fact that school principals adopted leadership styles out of personal preference, as the Department of Education has not suggested any preference for the education system. It is, thus, recommended that the Department of Basic Education identifies preferred leadership styles for the education system, which will align with the challenges faced by the sector, such as learner indiscipline.

5.4.2 Principals as agents of change

The findings suggest that the leadership role of school principals and the challenges facing the basic education sector requires activist leaders who can function as change agents in the

education system. The position of principalship possesses a unique power, which should be channelled to the advantage of the education system. In this regard, school principals can use their positions of authority to initiate interventions, network and develop beneficial relationships with external structures to work towards the organisational aims and objectives of their schools. It is, therefore, recommended that principals, assisted by the Department of Education, must be aware that their work requires activist individuals who can lead change, even under the most difficult circumstances. This is a significant consideration given the fact that the education system must contribute to the nation's efforts to produce well-rounded citizens who can contribute meaningfully to the life of their communities and society at large.

5.4.3 Implementation of targeted training and development programmes

The findings of this study suggest that school principals must be the driving force behind the training and development of themselves, their staff, the SGB, and their learners, to build capacity for their schools to deal with the challenges they are facing. It is, thus, recommended that the Department of Education initiates targeted professional development activities to prepare school principals for this role.

5.4.4 Strengthening of the mechanisms and tools for addressing learner indiscipline

The findings of this study revealed that the schools from which the principals were selected were dealing with a range of learner indiscipline issues. The principals outlined the tools and mechanisms that they were using to address learner indiscipline, including the code of conduct for learners. However, the principals emphasised the need for the code of conduct for learners to be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is in sync with situations their school communities were facing regarding learner discipline. In this regard, the code of conduct for learners was a key mechanism used by the school principals to address learner indiscipline. It is, therefore, recommended that the Department of Education builds on this island of effectiveness and assists schools in strengthening the implementation of the code of conduct for learners as a tool and mechanism for addressing learner indiscipline and building a foundation for a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment.

5.4.5 Creating a value-driven culture in schools

Lastly, the findings of this study revealed that the principals were using specific values to drive the visions of their schools. Recently, there has been a renewed focus on using values as a foundation for building self-reliant schools, which can contribute positively to the nation's efforts of building resilient, caring and socially just communities. In addition, the findings revealed that the focus on values could assist schools to instil a disciplined attitude in learners, capable of supporting the core business of schools. It is, thus, recommended that the Department of Basic Education initiates programmes to assist schools in crafting visions using a value-driven approach to contribute to the sector's efforts to ensure learner discipline and academic success.

5.5 Implications for further research

Implications for further research are informed by the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this study. The following implications for further research are to be considered:

- As pointed out in the section above, the findings of this study may not be generalised to or represent the situation in other (secondary) schooling contexts. Therefore, there is a need to expand the current research theme to other schooling contexts to obtain a more complete understanding of the principals' leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline.
- Although the four secondary schools, according to the school principals, had made significant strides in building mechanisms for addressing learner indiscipline to ensure a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment, challenges were still reported by the principals who participated in this study. There is, therefore, a need to investigate how the schools can be assisted to build on their strengths to address the challenges that they were facing to ensure a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment.
- The study focused on school principals only. There is, therefore, a need to interrogate how, for instance, parents, teachers and learners are using their leadership roles to address learner indiscipline to ensure a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment.

- This study focused on learner discipline as an aspect of creating a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment. Learner discipline is but just one aspect of the problem. There is, therefore, a need to explore other aspects of the problem to ensure a safe and supportive learning and teaching environment.

5.6 Conclusion

Learner indiscipline is, without a doubt, not going to be eradicated instantly; it will continue to have a lingering threat to the effectiveness of the schooling system and, ultimately, society. However, the findings of this study provide a promising situation for principals and schools that are hard at work to address learner indiscipline. This means that although challenges persist, the school principals who participated in this study are not sitting on their laurels; they are doing something about their situations and providing leadership to deal with the challenge. This provides a good starting point for building schools with leadership that can protect learning and teaching from issues such as learner indiscipline to ensure that they contribute to the nation's efforts of building resilient, peaceful and socially just communities.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Permission to conduct research



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 3921062 / 033-3921051

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za
Buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Ref.:2/4/8/4185

Miss Yovana Naidoo
61 Newlyn Road
Allandale
PIETERMARITZBURG
3201

Dear Miss Naidoo

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A CASE STUDY OF PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP ROLES IN ADDRESSING LEARNER INDISCIPLINE IN SIX SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT"**, 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 07 August 2020 to 10 January 2022.
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 Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
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 Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 07 August 2020

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

Appendix 2: Informed consent letter to participants



Education and Development Studies,
School of Education,
College of Humanities,
University of KwaZulu-Natal,
Pietermaritzburg Campus, KwaZulu Natal
18 August 2020

Dear Principal

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER for Education students

My name is Yovana Naidoo. I am a **Masters** student from the School of Education, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am conducting research titled '**exploring school principal's leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools in the uMgungundlovu district**'.

Several studies suggest that schools are responsible for producing learners who are well rounded socialised citizens. A crucial part of that socialising involves learner discipline. Thus, Learner indiscipline needs to be addressed.

In view of the foregoing, I intend to explore the role of the principal in addressing learner indiscipline. **The objectives of the research are as follows:**

- **To explore the principal's leadership role and experiences in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools.**
- **To examine principal's leadership strategies of addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools.**

- To explore lessons that can be learned regarding principal's leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools.

You are invited to please participate in the study because you are a secondary school principal who is active in the quest for addressing learner indiscipline. To gather the information, I am interested in requesting you to participate in a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. I also request documents pertaining to disciplinary issues which I can review. The duration of your participation, if you choose to enrol and remain in the study, is expected to be a maximum of two hours. The study does not involve any risks and/or discomforts. You do not have to disclose any information or responses that you do not feel comfortable disclosing.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

Please note that:

- Your participation is voluntary. If you do not participate you **will not be penalized** in any way.
- Your confidentiality is guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms for you and your school.
- The interviews will last for about one and a half hours, and can be conducted over Zoom if you prefer.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be in the form of interview transcripts, document reviews and completed data analysis, and will be stored in secure storage and destroyed by shredding after 5 years. Digitally recorded data will be deleted after five years.

- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are **no financial** benefits involved. However, it is expected that you will gain insight into the principal's leadership role in addressing learner indiscipline in a secondary school context.

Thank you

Yours faithfully



.....
My contact details are as follows:

Email: yovananaidoo6@gmail.com

Cell phone: 079 3424 843

My supervisor is Dr Pinkie Mthembu. She is a lecturer in the School of Education, College of Humanities, Edgewood Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal

My supervisor's contact details are:

Email: Mthembup@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: 084 5817 544

You may also contact the Research Office at:

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics

Govan Mbeki Centre

Tel +27312604557

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you for reading this document about this research.

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

I (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study entitled 'Exploring Principal's leadership roles in addressing learner indiscipline in secondary schools in the uMgungundlovu district' by Yovana Naidoo. I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

I voluntarily give permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded.

I give permission for the disciplinary documents to be used as a source of data.

My identity will not be disclosed and pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at yovananaidoo6@gmail.com/ 079 3414 843.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researcher, then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent. Please Tick:

Audio recording of interviews	Willing	Not willing
Use of disciplinary documents document reviews	Willing	Not willing

.....
Name of Participant

.....
Signature of Participant

.....
Date

Appendix 3: Schedule of interview questions

Interview Schedule:

1. How would you describe the context of your school?
2. There are various leadership styles. Which leadership style best describes your role as school principal, and why?
- 3.1 Leaders are seen to be visionaries. Can you please elaborate your school's vision and what steps do you take to drive your school towards this vision?
- 3.2 What role does learner discipline play in achieving your schools' vision?
- 4.1 How would you define learner indiscipline?
- 4.2 Why, do you think, it important for learners to be disciplined in school?
5. Please can you discuss your role, as a principal, in addressing learner indiscipline?
6. Can you kindly describe some of the experiences of learner indiscipline in your school?
7. What would you regard as the common causes for learner indiscipline within the context of the school?
- 8.1 What are some of the strategies that you have implemented to address learner indiscipline?
- 8.2 Are there any challenges in this implementation process?
- 8.3 How do you mitigate these challenges?
9. What measures are in place to ensure a safe and conducive environment for teaching and learning?

10. Can you mention some of the ways in which you, as a school leader, offer support to equip staff to address indiscipline effectively?
11. Are there any preventative measures in place to address learner indiscipline?
Please can you elaborate on them.
12. Does the schools SGB play an active and effective role in learner indiscipline issues?
How so?
13. How well do learners comply with the school code of conduct and does it assist with maintaining learner behaviour?
14. Is your RCL active in the maintenance of learner discipline? How so?
15. Research claims that discipline socialises learners, do you agree with this notion? How will ill-disciplined learners impact our society, if not dealt with effectively?
16. What are your overall views/ comments on learner indiscipline among secondary school learners?

Appendix 4: Document Review Checklist

Document Review Checklist

Type of Document: _____

Review Date: _____

	Yes	No	Comment
Type of discipline/ offense			
Does the document contain the learner's details?			
Is the document precise and clear to understand?			
Does the document follow a comprehensible format?			
Is the context of the indiscipline described?			
Is there mention of relevant policy and the code of conduct regarding the indiscipline?			
Does the document specify the way in which the learner will be disciplined?			

Does the document include consequences/punishment to be faced by the learner?			
Does the principal's signature appear on the document?			
Was the document securely archived?			
Are there referrals by teachers/other learners to the office?			
Disciplinary meeting minutes available			
Does it specify who was involved?			
Review the code of conduct			
Are there referrals for intervention? (i.e. SANCA, social work, rehab, etc)			

Appendix 5: Certificate from Language Editor

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Date: 29 December 2022

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis bearing the provisional title ***A Case Study of Principals Leadership Roles in Addressing Learner Indiscipline in Four Secondary Schools in the uMgungundlovu District***, to be submitted by **Yovana Naidoo** has been edited for language correctness and spelling, consistency, coherence, and completeness of the list of references and cited authors, by Ntwintwi Proofreading and Editing Solutions. Neither the research content and substance nor the author's intentions were altered in any way during the editing process.

Ntwintwi guarantees the quality of English language in this thesis, provided our editor's changes are accepted and further changes made to the thesis are checked by our editor.

Yours sincerely,



JABULANI NGCOBO

NTWINTWI PROOFREADING AND EDITING SOLUTIONS

Appendix 6: Originality report

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1.1 Introduction and Rationale of the study

The focus of this study is to explore how four secondary school principals address issues of learner indiscipline. This is because the pestilence of learner indiscipline affects the quality of education, thus having a ripple effect on the society and the quality of citizens. Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014) state that education is a world wide challenge; learner indiscipline is a fundamental attribute to this challenge. As Wang'ang'a and Awuor (2019) stipulate, discipline refers to the ability in humans to act appropriately, at the right time and under the right circumstances, regardless of whether there is supervision or not. Moreover, learning needs to take place in a safe and conducive environment. Schools are considered to 'produce' well-rounded learners into society, and discipline remains the core element of any learner because learner indiscipline disrupts learner academics (Wang'ang'a & Awuor, 2019). In contrast, the notion of indiscipline in school has been an ongoing issue and causes teacher stress, affecting teaching and learning (Schulze & Steyn, 2007). Learner indiscipline has progressively evolved over the years, and with this evolution came varying strategies of addressing learner indiscipline. Due to the societal changes complimented with changes in policy, learner indiscipline requires principals to shift their focus by eliminating punitive exclusionary measures, to a more social competence-based inclusive approach (Smith & Amushigamo, 2016).

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