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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADHD	Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
BSP	Behaviour Support Program
CD	Conduct Disorder
CICO	Check-in/Check-out
CPE	Certificate of Primary Education
FSS	First Step to Success
GBG	Good Behaviour Game
GSSTU	Government Secondary School Teachers' Union
HSC	Higher School Certificate
IDEIA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IEP	Individualised education program
MBWA	Management by Walking Around
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
ODR	Office Discipline Referrals
OT	Omission Training
OTR	Opportunity to Respond
PAT	Preferred Activity Time
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RDR	Responsive Dispute Resolution
RTII	Response to Intervention and Instruction
SC	School Certificate
SDT	School Disciplinary Team
SGB	School Governing Bodies
SMT	School Management Team
SST	Student Support Team
SWPBS	School-wide Positive Behavioural Support

UNESCO   United Nations Educational and Scientific
                                Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in the life of an individual and in the economic development of a country. Education is a basic human right and every child should be given the chance to acquire it. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), article 29, the aims of education are to:

- Develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent.
- Prepare the child for an active adult life in a society.
- Foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values and for the cultural identity and values of others (Bureau of Catholic Education 2002: 60).

In the same vein, in line with the World Education Forum at Dakar in 2000 (UNESCO 2000), Griffith (2008: 101) suggests that education should reflect not only knowledge and skills that should be acquired, but also the values and attitudes that are an increasingly important consideration in the world in which learners will live and work. These would include values such as character building, patriotism, tolerance, non-violence, service to others, respect for human rights and human life. The principle underlying the Convention and Forum on Education highlights the call for a shift in education and schooling from the modern paradigm to the ecological paradigm; from the instrumentalist view of education of preparing the learners for the labour market, to thinking of learners evolving and learning in a social and cultural environment where the aim of education is the holistic development of the learner. According to Stewart (2008: 10), education should aim at helping children to have fun, growing up happily and triggering and nurturing their natural curiosity. In addition, educators and school principals must make sure that when

they graduate from school, they have gained the relevant skills that employers require so that they have the chance to succeed in life (Stewart 2008: 10).

It is important to make this shift towards a learning school where learning is emergent and helps nurture and develop the search for understanding, skills, meaning, and purpose in all learners so that they can live fulfilled lives in a changing world (Clarke 2000: 148). If this is achieved, the vision of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, regarding the Mauritian child will also be achieved. His vision is to see the Mauritian child as a healthy child who has the opportunity to acquire a complete education in a child-friendly school environment, characterised by high ethical and human values and cultural sensitivity (Ministry of Women's Rights and Child Development and Family Welfare 2003: 5). However, in reality, the school situation in Mauritius is not the ideal learning environment for learners to meet their learning expectations and needs. According to the Ministry of Women's Rights and Child Development and Family Welfare (2003: 5), "If that was achieved, Mauritius would become a republic fit for children."

An ideal learning environment is one in which discipline is an integral part of a school which produces self-disciplined learners. Active schools that represent the communities prevent indiscipline and ensure safe and disciplined learning environments, which ensure effective instruction. Undoubtedly, effective instruction is the core function of the school. Squelch (2006: 247) and Galvin, Mercer and Costa (1994: 59) assert that good discipline is the key characteristic of an effective school that teaches children effectively by developing and supporting their learning regarding academic and social behaviour. Dunlap, Goodman, McEvoy and Paris (2010: 41) state that support for appropriate behaviour is linked to the concern of bringing an improvement in the academic success of learners. With academic success, the learners are likely to behave in the most appropriate manner (Olley, Cohn & Cowan 2010: 7).

The right to education as stipulated in article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that school discipline policy should take into consideration the rights and the

dignity of the child. This implies that the learner has the right to learn in an environment conducive to effective learning and in which he/she feels free and safe for active participation in the learning process. Rubin (2004: 163) asserts that the school should maintain a safe, orderly, civil and positive environment, which is free from hazing, harassment and bullying and is based on sound instruction and classroom management policies and clear disciplinary policies that are consistent and are enforced effectively. According to Gottfredson and Gottfredson (2001: 315), a disorderly school provides more frequent opportunities for learners to get into trouble and to manifest disruptive behaviour. This is consistent with the observation of Hillary Rodham Clinton quoted in Elliot, Hamburg and Williams (1998:16): "*If we can't keep them (learners) safe, we can't expect them to learn.*" Therefore, the child's learning is facilitated when he or she feels a sense of security in a supportive and enriched learning environment. Discipline can provide that sense of security that enhances effectiveness. Indeed, Rogers (1991: 12) acknowledges that learners learn when they feel good about themselves.

The issue of school discipline is one of the most pressing concerns of all stakeholders in education because it plays an important role in establishing a positive school ethos and thus indirectly affects the quality of education in schools. Ramharai, Curpen, Mariaye and Ramful (2006: 1) point out succinctly that the pedagogical relevance of discipline in the learning process cannot be overestimated to the extent that discipline and learning are interlocked in a mutually self-reinforcing spiral. Discipline ensures effective learning and when there is effective learning in the school, learners are self-disciplined and exhibit positive behaviour towards the school organisation as a whole. In this regard, Rooney (2006: 88) and Rogers (1991: 171) add that when learners' daily experiences in the school are positive and successful, misbehaviour is less of an issue.

Learner discipline is a daily, real school problem that is causing much harm to the effective teaching and learning process in Mauritian state secondary schools. Mauritian society is fast changing and its social, contextual, economic, family and culturally acquired values are changing to such a degree that school principals, educators, superintendents and the Ministry of Education fall short of taking the most appropriate

and effective learner discipline management strategies or measures. It is thus important to understand the nature of learner discipline and its possible causes so that the principals may take the necessary management strategies to maintain effective learner discipline. This is the only approach that may be taken to positively change the current learner discipline situation which is becoming alarming in state schools.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Within this perspective on the aims of education and the importance of the learners and educators functioning in a place where the learners are at the centre of process of teaching and learning, it is important to examine discipline as an aspect of school effectiveness. Mewasingh (2003: 2) argues that schools do not only impart education but they also build up the character of the learners and transform them into better human beings.

1.2.1 The importance of discipline

Discipline is a complex phenomenon, yet it underpins every aspect of school life and it is recognised as a key indicator of a successful school, as stipulated in the School Management Manual (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 27; Squelch 2006: 249). It determines the quality of education that the learners experience in a school. Thus, it is a pillar of the education system of a country. In this regard, Blandford (1998: 31) argues that a school which does not have an effective discipline policy that suggests strategies and mechanisms to support effective learner discipline, will not function as a centre of excellence for realising the core function of the school, namely effective instruction. It is like a ship without a rudder (Rivet 2008: 20). Clearly, discipline has an effect on the effectiveness of the school. Discipline can be conceptually defined as the degree of order and structure within a school (Mukuria 2002: 432). Mabeba and Prinsloo (2000: 34) refer to discipline as learning regulated scholarship and guidance. Oplatka and Atias (2007: 45) extend the concept of discipline to refer to the extent to which the learners' behaviour is viewed by the educators, principals, school

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superintendents and community as appropriate social behaviour and learners are self-governed. Therefore, discipline should equip the learners with abilities and willingness to govern their behaviour and their own lives. Discipline is not an event or a product but a developmental process that enables the learners to become educated adults. This view of discipline does not equate discipline with punishment. It involves therefore more than reprimanding learners and dispensing punishment (Keesor 2005: 64; Summukhiya 2008: 45; Van Wyk 2001: 176). Therefore, the end goal of discipline is not punishing but controlling teaching and guiding the learners so that an atmosphere or school climate conducive to effective teaching and learning is created and sustained. However, Thompson and Sharp (1994: 49) challenge this view in that they contend that behaviour should not be controlled but managed since control provides learners with an effective but destructive model of relationship skills. Therefore, in short, discipline should help learners to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Discipline is an essential management function since its goals are to:

- Promote socially acceptable behaviour and self-discipline pertaining to values such as honesty, courtesy, fairness, respect and regard for others (Rogers 1991: 11; Squelch 2006: 249; Oplatka & Atias 2007: 48).

- Reduce the need for educator intervention over time, thus enhancing effective learning (Charles 2002: 3; Oplatka & Atias 2007: 48; Thompson & Sharp 1994: 46).

- Improve the quality of life of the learners and educators in the school by establishing a positive school climate and an orderly and safe learning and teaching environment (Ministry of Education and Human Resources 2009: 27; Squelch 2006: 249; Oplatka & Atias 2007: 48).

Good discipline is therefore an important outcome that society expects of the school as an organisation. It is discipline that help learners to control their behaviour so that they act to

their ideas of what is good and what is wrong (Telep 2009: 2). Such a discipline would ensure effective teaching and learning in the school.

1.2.2 Discipline within the Mauritian context

The school is accountable to the public for helping every learner develop his/her potential in a friendly, encouraging, secure, supportive and positive environment, which promotes learning and prevents indiscipline. This is the trust that the public has placed in the school. More than ever within the "knowledge-based society" (Pay Research Bureau 2008: 269) and the "achievement-obsessed society" (Mahadeo 2008a: 12), parents expect schools not only to provide the learners with high quality education, but also a safe and secure learning environment.

However, the public perception is that there is a lack of discipline in schools, although only isolated instances of violence contribute to this perception (Simonsen, Sugai & Negron 2008: 32). In Mauritius, discipline is a sensitive issue, which is currently hotly debated by parents, educators, sociologists and the media (Ramjanally 2015: 10-11). It is the greatest problem in Mauritian schools (Varma 2008: 2). Gallup Polls of community members and educators for the last few years have ranked a lack of discipline and uncooperative learners as two of the most troublesome problems in public education (Rose & Gallup 2006: 50; Colvin 2004: xv). Indiscipline and violence have become matters of great concern since rapid transformation in the economic structure and the social fabric, brought about by globalisation, among other factors, has put additional pressure on secondary schools. This is consistent with Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014: 289) who assert that a lack of discipline is a matter of concern in many state schools throughout the world for the school management team, principals and educators; though it is to a lesser extent for parents, learners and the general public.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources states in a circular letter ME/Z2/3/88 (Ministry of Education & Human Resources 2007: 3) that in the recent past, it has been observed that learners' behaviour has degenerated both inside and outside the school

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premises, among learners themselves and between learners and educators. Historically, schools in Mauritius have been relatively safe havens from anti-social behaviour and violence (Elliot *et al.,* 1998: 3). However, a seminar by the Mauritius Research Council in 2006 on a lack of learner discipline in secondary schools has confirmed that indiscipline is reaching an alarming level. Many local newspapers indicate that the behaviour of many learners near and outside school premises has long revealed that learners totally reject the elementary rules of good manners taught at schools and do not show consideration for others and self-respect. As a result, indiscipline (or lack of discipline) is regarded as a serious problem in secondary schools of Mauritius. This is illustrated in the 2007 and 2011 reports of the Global School-based Student Health Survey in which an average of 34 % of Mauritian learners are involved in physical aggression in schools at least once yearly (Jeannot 2015: 17). Beside every year, the average percentage of secondary school learners present at school is not more than 40 % and the figure may reach 20 % during the third term in August and September among learners of Forms 5 and 6 - those who sit for the Cambridge International Exams in October and November (Le Mauricien 2015: 7).

Former Minister of Education, Dharam Gokhool agreed that the problem of indiscipline in schools is becoming a cause of alarm (Etienne 2007a: 12). The following illustrate that discipline is an urgent matter of concern:

- The launching of a Kit on Prevention of Violence at Schools by the Ombudsperson for children in September 2007.

- The creation of the post of senior educator to look into discipline in secondary schools (Pay Research Bureau 2008: 285).

- The joint committee between the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Federation of Managers for private colleges in 2005 to find solutions to combat absenteeism and truancy.

- The public criticism of the Federation of Managers for private colleges about the lethargy or passive attitude of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources regarding the prevalence of indiscipline in Mauritian secondary schools.

- The organisation of a national conference by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources for principals on the theme "enforcing discipline in secondary schools" in July 2008.

- The setting up of an inter-ministerial committee, including representatives from the Ministry of Gender and Equality, the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Integration to bring forward sustainable solutions to the problem of bullying and violence in secondary schools (Le Defi Quotidien 2015: 7).

Tredway, Brill and Hernandez (2006: 214) contend that there are many problems in schools regarding discipline. In Mauritius over the last ten years, indiscipline has spun out of control in many schools, although the majority of learners remain well intentioned, willing to learn and inclined to cooperate. This does not negate the fact that misbehaviour, even if it does come from the minority of learners, presents an increasingly serious problem for learners and educators (Osher, Bear, Sprague & Doyle 2011: 48). In an interview in *L'Express* (2008: 13), the former Minister of Education and Human Resources challenges Osher, Bear, Sprague and Doyle (2011) by stating that there is no need to find solutions to the discipline problem in schools since the few learners with antisocial or violent behaviour are dealt with effectively in their respective schools. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources is more reactive than proactive in the approach to discipline. This may explain the escalation of the discipline problem in schools. When there is a severe case of indiscipline in the state secondary school, the Ministry of Education sets up a Fact-Finding committee to find out what actually happened (Le Defi-Quotidien 2015: 17).

Discipline is closely connected with misbehaviour. In this regard, Mahasneh, Nor, Aroff, Abdullah, Samah and Mahasneh (2011: 4) postulate that when there is no misbehaviour, discipline is not a consideration. Yet, in Mauritius, various newspapers have expounded

on the misbehaviour or lack of discipline demonstrated by learners in state secondary schools. The following examples add weight to this argument:

- A Form 3 learner was physically assaulted and bullied by a group of his classmates during the recess after having noticed the theft of his personal school belongings in his absence from class to the toilet (Deena 2016: 4).

- Seven learners of a prevocational class of a state secondary school physically assaulted a classmate with premeditation in the classroom during recess and one uploaded the whole scene of aggression on Facebook and YouTube. The District court accused them of assault with premeditation and child ill-treatment under the Child Protection Act, and they were fined Rs 20,000 each (Elix 2015: 4).

- Learners of five state secondary schools refused to enter the classrooms and organised a sit-in of one day in their institution in an attempt to show their unhappiness following the transfer of their principal. Twenty-eight principals were transferred by the Ministry of Education as a normal procedure in the education system. The principal of a state secondary school may be transferred after having been Head of a particular school for a minimum period of two and a half years (Oudin 2015: 5).

- A gang of Form 4 and Form 5 learners protested against the implementation of the school discipline policy against absenteeism, truancy and school uniform by throwing a concrete brick at the Mercedes car of an educator who is the president of the school discipline committee (*L'Express* 02/07/14: 4).

- A group of learners threw stones on the car of the school principal to show their frustration against the school discipline policy (*L'Express* 12/06/14: 14).

- Six Form 4 learners of a northern state secondary school stole the hard discs from the computers in the computer room while the educator was giving individual

attention to a classmate. The police raided their respective homes and retrieved the stolen discs in their home personal computers (Sadien 2009: 28).

- Following the Ministry of Education and Human Resources' decision to extend the daily school hours by thirty additional minutes to include an extra activity period, the learners of many secondary schools manifested their resistance to this official regulation. They organised occasional protests in their respective schools, refused to enter their classrooms and also engaged in protests outside the school premises on streets and even in front of the premises of the Ministry over a period of two weeks. Subsequently, learners were arrested because they damaged school property and because of illegal public gatherings on the highway (Quirin 2009: 12).

- Two learners set fire to a water pipe in their classroom (Rivet 2008: 20).

- Sexual aggression was manifested by two learners towards a male learner in an unoccupied classroom in front of the friends of the aggressors during the third term examination period (Busgeet 2008: 1).

- Physical assault on a learner inside the classroom by a classmate who used a metal chair to break his arm. The victim was hospitalised (Nazirkhan-Mahmoud 2008: 4).

- Form 3 learners were playing poker for money in the absence of their educator in the classroom (Hilbert 2008: 12).

- Educators in three schools in Barkly and Port Louis were subjected to physical attacks by armed parents on the school premises for having attempted to discipline their children (Etienne 2007b: 5).

- A learner in an eastern state secondary school was hospitalised for having consumed too much alcohol with Coca-Cola during the school hours. (Groeme-Harmon 2007: 12).

- Learners damaged the principal's office with iron bars in the principal's physical presence. The latter's computers and office papers were destroyed (Chelumbrum 2009: 28).

- A learner showed his penis to a female educator during a class lesson (Jaffaralli 2007: 5).

- Two female learners performed strip-tease in their classroom in front of their classmates in the absence of the educator (Seblin 2008: 11).

- The male learners from a national state secondary school (the highest performing secondary school in Mauritius) threw bottles of urine at female learners from the private Loreto College and drew a penis on the wall of the girls' college. They were expressing their joy at having obtained the best results in the Cambridge "A" level exams in Mauritius (Boyjonauth 2005: 10).

The actions of learners who misbehave for whatever reason have a negative influence not only on their learning, but also on the learning of the peers and create stress for educators and principals in managing the learning process. Dealing with discipline increases the workload of the educators, demotivates them, makes them doubtful of their professional competence and increases their stress. Charles (2002: 4) and Garegae (2008: 53) declare that by dealing continually with learners' lack of discipline, educators suffer from fatigue, lethargy, exhaustion, tension, depression and high blood pressure. As a result, the English General Teaching Council has shown that a large proportion of educators has been driven out of the teaching profession by their unhappiness with learner behaviour (Milne 2008: 11). Increasingly, educators are losing their passion for teaching and even change jobs for their own security.

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In case of disciplinary problems, parents want their children to be transferred to another secondary school where there is an invitational learning environment and where their children are safe (Rivet 2008: 37). Learners' feeling of insecurity results in their absenteeism and poor attention paid in class (Elliot, *et al*., 1998: 9; Mathe 2008: 22-23). In addition, classes are disrupted and learners cannot concentrate on their learning task (Lam Hung 2008: 85). Thus, discipline should be imposed since the behaviour of learners has a connection with the disruption of the education process (Walsh 2003: 1; Mahasneh *et al.* 2011: 7-8). The school, although it cannot correct the harm inflicted on its learners by society, has to take up the challenge and has a duty to provide the best possible education, which ensures holistic development according to public and parental expectations.

Youth indiscipline is a complex, multifaceted problem with specific causes intimately intertwined with an array of society's most serious and intractable social and economic problems. According to Elliot *et al.* (1998: 50), the causes of indiscipline in schools stem from:

- Poverty.
- Racism or racial discrimination.
- The disintegration of the entire community.
- The increasing lack of educational and employment opportunities for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of the country.
- Overwhelming peer pressure.
- The disruption of values and social norms.

In a study by the Mauritius Research Council, Ramharai *et al.* (2006: 148-152) assert that the following are the main reasons for the lack of school discipline:

- School environment and learners' intake.
- Learners' lack of interest.

- The Ministry's, educators' and parents' irresponsibility.
- School premises and population.
- Peer influence.
- Uninspiring classes.

A survey of the local newspapers from 2008 to 2016 highlights numerous causes. Mahadeo (2008c: 13) mentioned in *L'Express Magazine* that the inability of the school to ensure and enforce learner discipline is the factor that contributes to learner's lack of discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius. *Le Defi Quotidien* (2015: 17) added that peer pressure and the laissez-faire attitudes of educators and principals with respect to learner discipline to avoid punitive transfer (parental interference in school discipline) and the Ministry of Education explain the state of learner discipline. According to Quirin (2009: 12) in *L'Express*, the main causes are the absence of communication at home, the interpersonal relationships in schools between educators, learners and the principal, the prevalence of nuclear family with working parents and the disproportionate concern for children's rights compared to their duties. A lack of good adult models for youth and the influence of social media have a negative impact on the behaviour of the learner at school (Hilbert 2008: 13). Saminaden (2008: 12), in *L'Express,* blamed the school for the manifestation of a lack of discipline among learners as he found that there is a lack of authority to manage discipline, the time-table is constraining and focuses too much on the syllabus and is too much examination-oriented, there is a lack of extra-curicular activities and the educators themselves are indisciplined. In addition, Ramjanally (2015: 11) pointed out in *L'Express* that private tuition is a demotivating factor for learners to learn at school and the situation is becoming alarming in the absence of a framework for counselling learners with learning difficulties and behaviour problems. The centralisation of authority and the irresponsibility and disengagement of parents at home and at schools give learners the freedom to manifest unacceptable behaviour at school (Panchoo 2016: 13).

The causes of the lack of discipline may be grouped into factors originating from the individual learner, the school context, the home context and the community context. The

dynamic integration of the learner into these various contexts is likely to make discipline in education a very complex phenomenon that has to be studied and addressed carefully to avoid an eventual crisis in the education system of Mauritius. Mahadeo (2008c: 13) warns in *L'Express Magazine* that the violence and lack of discipline that learners perpetuate in European schools is also finding its way into Mauritian schools.

1.2.3 The present management context of discipline

As a result of the continuing decrease in discipline in secondary schools in Mauritius, the Federation of Managers of Private Colleges, the Bureau of Catholic Education and the Educators' Trade Union, namely the Government Secondary School Teachers Union (GSSTU) have solicited meetings on many occasions with the former Minister of Education and Human Resources to discuss policies to find solutions to the situation regarding discipline.

This implies that they are concerned about the prevalence of the phenomenon. In an interview in *Le Matinal* newspaper (2008: 6), the president of the GSSTU, Narainduth Gopee urges that discipline in the educational institutions of Mauritius should be reviewed. In this regard, the Ombudsperson for children, Shirin Aumeeraudy-Cziffra claims in an interview with Etienne (2007: 12) in *L'Express Magazine* (2007:12) that it has become urgent to use positive and constructive discipline to correct the situation. Mahadeo (2008b: 1) in the *L'Express Magazine* criticises that the school relies too much on classical reactive disciplinary methods, such as detention, temporary expulsion and expulsion. Such measures have not proved to be effective as the learner, not his/her behaviour, is the focal point in the management of learner discipline.

In the Mauritian context, public policy-makers, the Minister of Education and Human Resources and principals who are guided by the Education Regulations (1957) are short-sighted. According to this regulation (1957: 611), the principal may make rules for the administration and discipline of the school, with the approval of the Minister of Education and Human Resources. The only measures mentioned in the act and which are

still in use, are suspension and expulsion. Therefore, the definition of discipline in Mauritius is reduced to its controlling or punitive aspects. As a result, Lam Hung (2008: 86) reasons that measures taken to deal with cases of indiscipline are inadequate as there are few or no administrative or legal guidelines. This lack of a legal framework for the principals in terms of the discipline of learners, the centralisation of school management by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the lack of political will of the Mauritian government are compounded by the myopia of the former Minister of Education and Human Resources. In this regard, Essoo (2008: 9) reports the remark of Mr Cadress Pillay, the Minister of Education and Human Resources of a former government of the 1995-2000 mandate, who points out that many lobbies with political backing prevented him from using public policies to implement educational reforms, also with regard to discipline. Furthermore, the former Minister of Education and Human Resources, Mr Dharam Gokhool, was accused of not being aware of the prevalence of ill-discipline because he did not want to know what was happening in schools. On many occasions he announced that he was in favour of a case-to-case policy on discipline because cases of indiscipline reported in the press were isolated (Hilbert 2007: 5; Bechuke & Debeila 2012: 252).

1.2.4 The principal as a manager of discipline

Despite the restricted administrative or legal framework within the educational system at school level, the principal has a moral responsibility to manage discipline in schools. This is because the bounded rationality, described by Cornish and Clarke (1987), in Elliot *et al*. (1998: 75), may influence more learners to behave in a less acceptable fashion. If the expression and setting of behavioural standards in schools is weak and unacceptable behaviour is tolerated, indiscipline will reach an uncontrollable level. Educators in Mauritius compare the educational situation to the situation in the Bronx where there is complete anarchy (Saminaden 2007: 5). Managing learners' behaviour and reducing antisocial behaviour is the primary task of the principal (Squelch 2006: 248; Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2006: 11; Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 1998: 111; Oplatka & Atias 2007: 55; Ministry of Education, Culture and

Human Resources 2009: 5; Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015: 4).

As Mauritian society becomes technically complex, socially diverse, culturally pluralistic and economically unstable, the number of factors beyond the principal's control increases. Yet, according to Panda (2000: 43), for a school to be effective in terms of learning and teaching and discipline management, the quality of leadership provided by the principal is a critical factor. More precisely, the quality of discipline among learners reflects the quality of leadership of principals (Management Plan 2001: 21).

Therefore, with the prevalence of indiscipline in schools, the role of the principal is becoming increasingly more complex. The best quality school leadership by the principal should be provided for the promotion of effective discipline (Ediger 2006: 149). Jackson and Davis (2000) in Thompson, Gregg and Niska (2004: 4) state that no single individual is more important for initiating and sustaining the promotion of school discipline than the school principal. Moreover, it becomes crucial that the principal assumes the responsibility for mobilising a broad array of strategies and resources in a coordinated and multidisciplinary effort to reduce the behavioural problems that plague Mauritian secondary schools and imperil the future of the youth. Managing discipline is an essential and primary role of the principal; otherwise, the school climate will deteriorate (Ruder 2006: 32). He/she cannot allow the learning environment to be compromised by disruptive learners. Parents, authorities and even educators blame the school for the lack of discipline and the principal has the responsibility for restoring the school reputation and creating an inviting and stable school environment. Importantly, the focus of the principal should be on the learners, the fundamental stakeholders of the school. With the latter at the centre of leadership, the principal has to redirect misbehaviour in a positive and helpful manner.

The principal should display participatory leadership that is democratic in nature, so that discipline can be developed and restored in a positive and proactive manner; at the same time reactive or corrective approaches to discipline must also be used. Sugai *et al.,* (2008:

5), Charles (2008: xi), Fields and Fields (2006: 20), Ruder (2006: 34), Colvin (2007: 9), Cohen, Kincaid and Childs (2007: 203) and Simonsen *et al.,* (2008: 33) all contend that positive, constructive behaviour support and policies should be adopted by the principal at school level. This should be done so that the management of discipline is based on professionalism and ethics, and he/she addresses the learner's needs, controls the conditions that foster misbehaviour, provides engaging teaching and promotes civil and responsible behaviour. Such approaches to discipline would foster desirable behaviour and discourage problem behaviour in schools. It implies that the principal should recognise the importance of instructional and behaviour supports not only for the disruptive learners, but for all the learners in the school. Therefore, for the achievement and implementation of effective disciplinary measures, literature favours a schoolwide positive behavioural approach by the principal. Only when there is effective discipline, does the school become a dynamic source to inspire, morally discipline, aesthetically stimulate and create an intelligent and vibrant learning environment for learners to cooperate towards the achievement of the school's mission: effective instruction (Crowther, Keagan, Ferguson & Hann 2002: xii).

From the foregoing discussion, it has become clear that the principal must play a vital role in maintaining discipline in schools since effective discipline is undoubtedly a matter of much concern in Mauritius. The researcher thus considers it to be important to determine the causes of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools and appropriate strategies that principals may adopt to promote discipline or reduce disruptive behaviour in schools.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The researcher has worked in primary schools for eight years and in both private Catholic secondary schools and state secondary schools for fourteen years. In the course of his duties, he has encountered varying degrees of learner misbehaviour. In every instance, the level of school discipline depended on both the leadership capacity of the principal to create a sound school climate and the disciplinary approaches adopted by the principals.

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The researcher has observed that the learning attitudes and behaviour of learners differed from school to school. It would therefore appear that the factors that determine the behaviour of learners are context-bound. Therefore, he contends that an investigation into the causes of a lack of discipline among the state secondary school learners will give him the needed insight into the problems connected to ill-discipline. It will also be important to examine and analyse the influence of the state secondary principal's leadership role on school discipline, so that positive discipline can be promoted for safer schools in Mauritius.

By undertaking an investigation into school discipline in state secondary schools, the researcher will gain the necessary information and a deeper understanding of the problems encountered by the learners and the principal regarding the process of effective instruction in the school context. The researcher will also seek to ascertain how indiscipline is imported from somewhere else into the school. Very likely, the causes will lie in society itself. In this regard, this study may also help to provide an overview of the emerging problems of the Mauritian society, which are compromising the basic function of state secondary schools. An understanding of these factors may help the researcher to determine the most appropriate disciplinary strategies that principals may adopt. In addition, a proactive school-based approach to discipline may be beneficial in analytical terms for principals, administrators, educators as well as the policy-makers in the Ministry of Education, and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. The researcher also considers it to be of crucial importance to redefine the perception and understanding of discipline by all the educational stakeholders in Mauritius. This is mainly because at the beginning of this twenty-first century, complex challenges are emerging regarding the development of information and technology for the principals who are the managers of discipline.

Moreover, the frequent occurrence of the violent and disruptive behaviour highlighted in the local newspapers over the past ten years and the inability or unwillingness on the part of schools to accept the challenge of maintaining discipline, has prompted the researcher to undertake this study. Above all, the researcher concludes that there seems to be a lack

of political will by the authorities to address disciplinary problems in the state secondary schools in Mauritius. The latest official report by the Ministry of Education and Science on the state of discipline in secondary schools dates back to 1994, when discipline and truancy was identified as areas of concern. In the light of what has been said above, the time is ripe to undertake a contemporary analysis of school discipline in state secondary schools. It is logical to argue that state secondary schools will probably have different characteristics today compared to those encountered in school and societal situations twenty years ago.

Through this study, the researcher also intends to create an opportunity for principals, superintendents, educators and learners in Mauritius to reflect more closely on school discipline/indiscipline and on their ability to exert an influence on the situation. From this perspective, this research becomes an essential tool for knowledge advancement on this topic, promotion of progress and allowing these stakeholders to relate in a more effective manner to their environment in an attempt to fulfil their purposes and find solutions to their conflicts (Cohen & Manion 1998: 40).

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The role of the principal in maintaining discipline is a key aspect of his/her leadership regarding the promotion of a sound school climate within a safe, positive and secure learning environment. In Mauritius, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research recruits state secondary school principals through the Public Service Commission to promote an effective teaching and learning environment. However, as discussed in paragraph 1.2.4, this cannot be achieved unless there is effective discipline among learners. The principal is the figurehead in the school organisation and therefore he/she has to be the driving force behind the effort to achieve this particular aspect of principalship. It is thus necessary to undertake an investigation to gain greater clarity regarding the aspects related to school discipline within the context of the principalship role. For the purpose of this study, therefore, the problem statement, from which the research questions flow, is formulated as follows:

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What is the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in selected Mauritian state secondary schools?

The main research question is subdivided into four sub-questions that pertain to school discipline and leadership, namely:

- What is meant by the concept 'school discipline'?
- Which factors determine the lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius?
- Which barriers prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline in state secondary schools?
- Which strategies may be developed and employed by state secondary school principals to maintain discipline among learners in Mauritius?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is *to investigate the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in selected Mauritian state secondary schools?* The sub-aims of the study are:
- To describe and clarify the concept of 'discipline.'
- To identify and describe the factors that determine the lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius.
- To identify the barriers to the principalship in maintaining effective discipline in their schools among learners.
- To develop guidelines that will help principals maintain discipline among learners in schools through their leadership.

Based on the literature study and the findings of the research on learner discipline, the researcher has developed and provided an education management model for maintaining discipline among learners. This model describes the strategies that principals can adopt

and implement in the context of the Mauritian state secondary schools to maintain effective discipline.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF THE STUDY

This study investigates the problem behaviour and discipline among learners in state secondary schools in the Republic of Mauritius, excluding the major outer island, Rodrigues. Due to its physical distance, research on this island was excluded on account of time and financial constraints. The island of Mauritius is divided into four school zones. State secondary schools in zone 2 were included in the sample of the study. Boys' schools and girls' schools were part of the study to gain thorough insight into the problem of discipline with the view to developing the best behaviour management model to maintain discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius. For the purpose of the study, only learners, principals, superintendents, educators and parents of state secondary schools participated in the research.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design is described as a set of guidelines and instructions that the researcher has to follow when addressing the research problem. According to Mouton (1996: 107), this involves the aim of the research, the selection and design of particular research methods, the selection of participants and the consideration of the trustworthiness and transferability of the study. It explains the procedures that the researcher uses to conduct the study. Therefore, the research design should make it clear to the reader about how, when, for whom and under what school conditions and situations the data are gathered (McMillan & Schumacher 2001: 30-31). Furthermore, the researcher chooses the research design that will provide him/her with the most valuable and appropriate answers to his/her research questions. It is thus evident that the research methodology aims at helping the reader (as well as the researcher) understand, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself (Cohen & Manion 2007: 49). This paragraph therefore

explains the structure of the study that underlines the approaches and methods used by the researcher to obtain evidence to answer the research questions stated in paragraph 1.4.

1.7.1 Literature Study

In any study, the researcher should trace the available literature, which is specifically relevant to the research problem. Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012: 1) state that a literature study allows the researcher to distinguish what studies have been made on learner discipline and what needs to be studied, identify factors that are relevant to the phenomenon, identify possible links between theory or concepts and practice, find out exemplary research, avoid replications that are unintentional and unnecssary, identify the main research methodologies and designs that have been adopted in studying such a problem, identify inconsistencies and contradictions, and identify possible advantages and disadvantages of the various research approaches that have been adopted previously by other researchers. By doing a literature study on learner discipline and the strategies that the principal may adopt and implement to maintain discipline among learners, the researcher framed his research on learner discipline.

The researcher builds on the literature study to set out research questions, which help him/her to advance understanding of the research problem or phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, a literature review consists of a study of the causes of a lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools, the role of the principals in maintaining discipline among learners in their schools and the possible disciplinary strategies that may be adopted by the principal in assuming this management role.

1.7.2 Empirical investigation

For the purpose of this study, the researcher undertook an investigation to find the most valid answers to and evidence regarding his research questions. To do this, the researcher became involved in the study of the phenomenon. Indeed, according to Mouton (2001: 53), information in different forms, namely data, documents, interviews, speeches,

diaries, question responses and test scores, through an empirical inquiry, is gathered, analysed and interpreted in an attempt to address the problem under investigation. In this study the researcher had to "get out of the chair, go out of the office and purposefully seek the necessary information out there" (Denscombe 2000: 6) to gain proper understanding and deeper insight in the phenomenon of learner discipline.

1.7.2.1 Research approach

The purpose of research is to extend the knowledge of the researcher and the reader or find the answers to the questions of the researcher (Matthews and Ross 2010: 8). In this study, the researcher attempted to determine the relationship between learner discipline and the principalship. To achieve this objective, the researcher selected the most appropriate research methods. The most useful guideline for the selection of a research method is based on the type of research questions the researcher is asking and the degree to which the research method informs the research questions (Denscombe 2010: 4-5). The research paradigm involves both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The researcher used the qualitative research approach in this study. In qualitative research words or visual images rather than numbers as the unit of analysis are used; the researcher uses also thick-descriptions, holistic perspectives, small scale studies, an emergent research design and his or her own involvement (Denscombe 2010: 325).

Moreover, as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the researcher strives to understand the meanings people have constructed with regard to their own experiences and world, which will help him/her to derive findings inductively in the form of themes, categories, concepts, tentative hypotheses, typologies as well as substantive theories (Merriam & Associates 2002: 4-5). Hence, Patton (2001:39) points out that qualitative research makes use of a naturalistic approach that aims at understanding phenomena in context-specific settings such as the "real world setting where the researcher's agenda is not to manipulate the phenomenon of interest." In this regard, the researcher deemed qualitative research as the most appropriate method for this study.

Ruiz (2004: 4) states that qualitative data is valuable and meaningful in the sense that it helps the researcher to understand and assess the social impact of the phenomenon, participants' self reports provides a reliable testimony of the immediate, as well as a greater long-term, influence on their own lives.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the social worlds of learners, principals, superintendents, educators and parents with which the latter construct reality regarding learner discipline. Since the research questions were approached in a descriptive and explanatory way, the qualitative research approach used by the researcher enabled him to understand experiences of the learners, principals, superintendents, educators and parents regarding the phenomenon from their subjective, insider perspective. In addition, the participants had the opportunity to contribute to the world of research through the various research instruments, while simultaneously informing all stakeholders in the education field of the reality of their experience about school discipline. In this way, the researcher sought a better understanding of discipline among learners and of principals' endeavours to maintain school discipline with the help of other stakeholders in selected Mauritian state secondary schools. As discussed in paragraph 1.2.3, school discipline among learners is a neglected issue that is largely ignored by the educational authorities in Mauritius.

Qualitative research has the capacity to lead to understanding and the presentation of points of view that are obscured or neglected. According to its epistemology, the perceptions of the study participants are considered important. In this study these perceptions were captured in order to obtain an accurate meaning of reality of learner discipline in selected state secondary schools (Wiersma & Jurs 2009: 232).

1.7.2.2 Research methods

The aim of the study was to gather information about the phenomenon of learner discipline in Mauritius and the role of principals in maintaining school discipline within the social, cultural and human world of learners, principals, superintendents, educators

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and parents within the context of selected secondary schools. For this purpose, the researcher used semi-structured focus group interviews, as well as individual interviews and observation as data collection instruments. They are the most popular qualitative research methods that will allow one to find valid and reliable answers to the research questions of the study.

Focus group interviewing was chosen as appropriate for the qualitative research paradigm to collect information from educators, parents and learners about their perceptions of learner discipline, the factors that cause a lack of school discipline among learners and the strategies used by principals to maintain school discipline in Mauritius. A focus group interview uses group dynamics which allows all participants who have knowledge on a particular phenomenon to express their feelings, experiences and thoughts (Denscombe 2010: 177). The researcher was of the opinion that since all the participants were situated in the same physical environment, focus group interviews were more appropriate than individual interviews. In this way, more participants can be interviewed in less time, thereby also saving costs. Moreover, the researcher could follow up opinions, ideas and perspectives, probe responses and investigate feelings and motives while considering the tone of voice, facial expressions and hesitations which are meaningful (Bell 2004: 135). By using focus group interviewing as a strategy, the researcher was in a position to develop better insight into the phenomenon of school discipline. This data collection instrument elicited privileged and relevant information about learner discipline from educators, parents and learners. The various criteria for selecting each of these types of participants are lengthily discussed in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.4.2 where the researcher analyses the research sampling.

The researcher conducted semi-structured individual interviews with the principals and superintendents to elicit information about their perceptions of learner discipline, the factors that may influence learner discipline and their role in maintaining discipline among learners in their schools. Learner discipline is a school phenomenon that affects principals; therefore the latter have their own particular perceptions, attitudes and ideas about the topic and, as heads of schools, they have an impact on this phenomenon.

Within the individual interview context, there was also a sub-context involving specific interactions and relations between the various entities involved and the information obtained was a product of social dynamics between the researcher-interviewer and the principals or superintendents. The researcher's role was as unobtrusive as possible in order to obtain the most relevant and authentic information on learner discipline and the principals' role in maintaining it. According to Denscombe (2010: 185), the researcher starts by the introduction of a theme and lets the interviewee or participant create his/her ideas and proceed with his/her train of thought on the particular topic. In this study, the researcher used a basic interview schedule in which he covered his key themes during the semi-structured interviews.

Further, the researcher also used observation to collect information about the causes of a lack of discipline among learners and the strategies that principals use to maintain discipline in secondary schools. Since learner discipline is a human behaviour, the researcher observed the behaviour of learners, educators, the superintendent and the principal in the natural school setting. He did this in two state secondary schools. He assumed the role of a non-participant observer who is passive and reflective (Davies & Hughes 2014: 203) in order to better understand learners' lack of discipline. He observed for at least sixty hours in each of the two research sites to gather the necessary information. He observed the events or circumstances in which learners manifested a lack of discipline, the causal factors, the behavioural strategies or interventions adopted by the school principal and the frequency of their occurrence. Observation helped him to triangulate the information gathered from the other data collection techniques so that the most reliable conclusions about the topic could be drawn.

The key informants of this study are therefore educators, learners, parents, principals and superintendents. The motivation and selection criteria for these key informants are extensively discussed in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.4.2.

1.7.2.3 Research sample

Sekaran & Bougie (2010: 263) refers to participants as a sample. A sample is defined as a subset of the population (Sekaran & Bougie 2010: 263). In qualitative research, sample selection is made not to meet statistical requirements of randomness but to serve a particular purpose (Smit 2001: 78) and therefore, the researcher uses purposeful sampling, which seeks cases which are information-rich and can be studied thoroughly to obtain information about learner discipline. Sampling in qualitative research implies that only a subset of the population referred to as sample is chosen for the research inquiry (Oppong 2013: 202). According to Kumar (2011: 192), the purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to gain in-depth knowledge about a situation, event or episode or to know as much as possible about different aspects of an individual on the assumption that the individual is typical of the group and will therefore provide insights into the group. Therefore, non-probability sampling was used for the purpose of this study. It is important to note that the aim of the study was not to generalise the findings of the research but to gain deeper insight into the problem in the Mauritian state secondary schools. The researcher used purposive sampling to identify and target learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals typical of the population being studied so as to enhance understanding of selected individuals as well as individual and group experiences of learner discipline (Davies & Hughes 2014: 62; Devers, Kelly & Frankel 2000: 2). However, the researcher used an explanatory sample rather than a representative sample as a means for generating insights and information about learner discipline and discover new ideas while probing this relatively unexplored topic in Mauritius (Denscombe 2010: 24). Exploratory samples are used in small-scale qualitative research.

For the purpose of the study, the concept/theory-based sample method was also used. Sampling is based on the principle that participants have a cognitive framework about the discipline problem among learners as they function through natural human processes that occur by being in the school world with the learners and other stakeholder (Penrod & Upcey 2005: 404). The researcher selected participants familiar with or who were

attempting to implement the concept/theory under study. In addition, he/she selected sites known to the participants. He gained access to state secondary schools where the selected participants experience the phenomenon in their daily life.

Since the non-probability sample was used and the aim of the study was not to generalise the findings, the researcher selected a small sample of the population. He selected four state secondary schools in the educational Zone 2 of the Republic of Mauritius. Four focus groups which consisted of six educators in each focus group, four focus group interviews with six parents in each focus group, and four focus group interviews with six learners were conducted. Four principals and two superintendents were interviewed individually. As has been mentioned, the researcher used also the observation method in two of the four state secondary schools so as to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon as it is manifested and perceived by educators, learners, parents, superintendents and principals.

1.7.2.4 Data collection and analysis

Qualitative researchers collect descriptive and narrative, non-numerative information in order to gain insights into the research phenomenon (Gay, Mills & Airasian 2011: 381). Data analysis is the process of working with the information in order to describe, discuss, interpret, evaluate and explain it in terms of the research questions (Matthews & Ross 2010: 316). Data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously. In this study voluminous data were obtained by the researcher through the responses of each focus group of educators, learners and parents, and interviews with each principal and superintendent. To sum up, the sorting of the data involved categorising them into meaningful segments.

Interviews were analysed by using the approach of Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010: 180-194) which consists of preparing and organising the collected data; reviewing and exploring the data; coding the data into categories; constructing thick descriptions of people, places and attitudes; building themes and testing hypothesis; and interpreting and

reporting the data. Lodico's approach is appropriate since it helps the researcher obtain information from the start of the process of data collection through the data processing stage. Therefore, the most valid information about learner discipline from the various participants' perspectives was of crucial importance to understand the state of discipline among secondary learners and the role of the principal therein.

The researcher used the inductive content analysis as the qualitative data analysis approach. Content analysis is a method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context with the aim of providing knowledge, new insights and a representation of facts and a practical guide to action (Elo & Kyngas 2008: 108). According to Krippendorff (2004: 27), the researcher used analytical constructs, or rules of inference, to move from the text to the answers to the research questions. This implied that the researcher drew conclusions from the transcribed interviews and the observation log to the school context to understand the problem of a lack of discipline among secondary school learners.

1.7.2.5 Trustworthiness, transferability and ethical considerations

These fundamental aspects of research are extensively discussed in chapter 4, paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8.

1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The key concepts that are related to the study are defined and clarified for the reader in this paragraph:

1.8.1 Principal

The principal is the head of a secondary school offering classes from Form 1 to Form 6 and he/she is responsible for the control and supervision of instruction in such a school

(Education [Amendment] Act 2002). He/she is the chief spiritual and cultural leader in the school and as such, he/she will have a direct impact on the learning and behaviour of learners (Mamary 2007: 53). The Wallace Foundation (2013: 4) identifies the principal as the person who shapes a vision of academic success for all learners; creates a climate conducive for education; cultivates leadership in others; improves instructions; and manages people, data and processes to foster school improvement. According to Smith, Sparks and Thurlow (2001: 10), the principal is the headmaster, head teacher or director who becomes the controller of the classroom processes, namely teaching and learning, at school. Furthermore, as an instructional leader, in an attempt to create a school environment which is conducive to the advancement of learning, the principal in Mauritius should:

- Ensure the follow-up of trainees at school level.
- Demonstrate good practice of leadership and management skills.
- Monitor procedures and practices used for tasks related to assessment priorities.
- Hold regular staff meetings, enable peer interaction and use in-house discussions to ensure the correct flow of communication related to all teaching and learning activities (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2006: 11).

In this study, the principal is the school head who is responsible for the proper day-to-day running of the secondary school and for the effective realisation of the teaching and learning process. In the context of Mauritius, the principal is commonly designated as the school's rector. For the sake of this study, however, the term "principal" is used.

1.8.2 Secondary school

The Education [Amendment] Act 2002 defines a secondary school as a school which provides post primary education of not less than five to seven years duration leading to a public examination at School Certificate level or Higher School Certificate level or the equivalent. According to the World Bank (2002), secondary education is the completion of the provision of basic education and lays the foundations for life-long learning and

human development by teaching more academic subjects or instruction that is more oriented to skills acquisition by using educators who are specialists in their specific fields. Learners, who are between the ages of eleven and nineteen years, study at a secondary school. In addition, scientific thinking, oral and writing competencies in different languages, knowledge of technology, aesthetic development, mathematical skills and other skills contribute to the basis of the secondary education (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2006: 8). In other words, the secondary school should provide an education that enables the fulfilment of the four pillars of the Delors Report, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (Ministry of Education and Human Resources 2014: 37).   In Mauritius, three different types of secondary schools, namely public or state secondary schools, the private secondary schools which are funded by the state and the private secondary schools which are fee-paying by parents are in operation. For the purpose of this study, secondary schools refer to state secondary schools only, which give free access to secondary schooling.

1.8.3 Learner

A learner is a person in various stages ranging from early childhood development to adult education phases, who is involved in any form of formal or non-formal education and training activity and is any person who receives or is obliged to receive education (Mothata, Lemmer, Mda & Pretorius 2000: 94). In the Mauritian context, the learner is a person aged between three years and nineteen years that is of school going age, who studies in a public or private secondary school. For the purpose of this study, the term "learner" is used instead of the term "pupil" or "student," which is widely used in the Mauritian context. In the primary education system, the learner is known as a pupil and in the secondary and tertiary system, the learner is known as a student.

1.8.4 Discipline

'Discipline' is a complex concept that is difficult to define, as it can be approached from various perspectives. According to Mukuria (2002: 432) and Ugboko and Adediwura (2012: 42), it is defined conceptually as the degree of order and structure to maintain high standards of behaviour within a school. It is linked inextricably to misbehaviour or behaviour that is good or bad or right or wrong within the school context. However, discipline in this study is not viewed from the custodial perspective, but from the humanistic perspective where it is applied in terms of appeals to the learner's reason rather than through punishment (Hoy & Miskel, 2005: 303). It entails the process of helping the learners to assume personal responsibility for their behaviour and to judge between right and wrong (Fields & Fields, 2006: 5). Therefore, discipline is simply the absence of misbehaviour, disruptive or inappropriate behaviour following the learners' consciousness of their responsibility towards themselves, others, the school and society at large. Therefore, in this study, it is clear that discipline is not limited to the definition of Young (2008: XV) and that of Temitayo, Nayaya and Lukman (2013: 8) , who describe it as the subjection of the learner to rules of conduct or behaviour, a state of order maintained by training and control. It is rather the process of facilitating the learner's learning and positive social-emotional-behavioural development (Olley, Cohn & Cowan 2010: 7).

1.9 CHAPTER DIVISION

This study contains six chapters, which are structured as follows:

Chapter one: Orientation to the study

The research problem within the Mauritian context is introduced in this chapter. The background to the study, the problem statement, the motivation of the researcher for the

study and the research methodology are presented. The most important concepts are also clarified for the reader.

Chapter two: The conceptual framework of the discipline problem in the Mauritian education context. The researcher critically review the literature about the current education system in Mauritius, and critically analyses some of its aspects that may contribute to the current state of learner discipline in secondary schools and the theories of learner discipline which explain the causes of a lack of discipline are studied and analysed critically.

Chapter three: Behavioural management strategies

The chapter reviews selected models of discipline which expose the strategies that may be adopted to maintain discipline among secondary school learners are presented and analysed. Research-based strategies and interventions that have proved efficient in secondary schools in different education systems of the Western world, mostly the United States of America, Canada and Britain are discussed. The role of the principal in the implementation of these behavioural strategies and interventions is also discussed.

Chapter four: Research methodology and design

Chapter four presents the research aims, the main research problem statement and the research sub-questions, describes and justifies the research approach, methods, instruments and sampling used for this study. It also presents the data collection and analysis methods, trustworthiness and transferability and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter five: Research findings: analysis and discussion

The findings of the investigation are analysed, interpreted and presented in this chapter. The findings about the causes of a lack of learner's discipline, the barriers of effective

implementation of disciplinary strategies in the selected Mauritian state secondary schools and the current implementation of learner disciplinary strategies by the principal are likely to guide the researcher towards proposing a model of learner discipline management in which the principal plays a pivotal role in its implementation.

Chapter six: Summary, contribution, conclusions and recommendations.

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the study. In addition, the conclusions of the study and the recommendations are discussed with the view of promoting school discipline among learners through effective principalship in state secondary schools in Mauritius. An education management model for maintaining effective discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius is proposed. Recommendations for further research on learner discipline are also made.

1.10 SUMMARY

The orientation to the study with its background, the researcher's motivation to study the phenomenon of school discipline among learners, the role of the principals in this regard and the aims of the study were presented. The researcher introduced the problem and briefly described how the study will be conducted.

In the next chapter, the present education system at secondary school level in Mauritius and the causes of the problem of school discipline among learners are discussed critically.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEM IN THE MAURITIAN EDUCATION CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Discipline is a phenomenon that can better be analysed and understood in its particular context. Mauritius is an island that has been colonised by the Dutch, the French and lastly by the British. In order to have a better insight into discipline in schools of Mauritius, it is important for the reader to have an overview of the historical development of education. The development of education in the country starts with the French settlers in Mauritius as from 1720. In this chapter, the colonial and post-colonial background of education is explained and analysed and the various educational reforms that were proposed by the successive Ministers of Education of the independent Mauritius are briefly presented. Moreover, the current education structure of the country is presented, followed by a critical review of the education system which points out its major features. The second part of the chapter includes a literature review of the most common factors that cause a lack of discipline among secondary school learners and also a review of some of the theories of discipline in schools.

2.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EDUCATION IN MAURITIUS

The background of education has been divided into various historical periods, namely the period of French Imperialism, British Imperialism and the post-independence period. This is mainly because the provision of education in the country was according to the needs and aspirations of the colonisers and/or to the economic and social conditions of the particular period of time.

When Mauritius was under the administration of the French East India Company during the period 1720-1767, people of European origins, Indian descents and slaves were brought to Isle de France (the French name of Mauritius) to work on plantations. The Company intended to establish schools in the colony in collaboration with the Order of St

Lazarre in Paris and the Catholic Church to provide educational services for the children of settlers. Yet, it failed to do so (Prithipaul 1976: 17).

After the French Revolution, in 1798, a Colonial Assembly was created. According to Mariaye (2005: 30), this Assembly recognised the need for education which was to provide moral and political education to citizens. So, the *Lycée National* was set up. However, only the elite were educated through the formal education provided by this only educational institution. This is because of financial difficulties and the diverse population had diverse needs and aspirations. Moreover, the children of the plantation class and the merchants did not need to attend schools since their education was provided informally by the priest Bellon (Pithipaul 1976: 47). David (2010: 238) argues that the Catholic Church catered for the elite rather than for the mass of slaves. There was hence a differentiated system of schooling with no provision of education for the slaves.

During the period of British Imperialism (1810-1968), when Mauritius was a British colony, many schools were set up for the slave children by the Reverend Jean Lebrun, a clergyman from the London Missionary Society (Selvon 2001: 200). The Anglican Church also set up schools after the provision of education was shifted to the control of the British Government, following the Education Ordinance of 1835 (Ramdoyal 1977: 73). Furthermore, Ramyead (1995: 47) adds that the Indian immigrants did not attend the state schools nor the Catholic schools. They rather built vernacular schools such as *baithkas* and *madrassas* where education was mostly based on the teaching of Hindu and Muslim scripts, languages and cultures (Gangoo 2004: 71).

Since the former education system under the British Administration is a mainstay of the current education system of Mauritius, it should be noted that two important systems were implemented through the 1857 Ordinance, namely the Grant-in-Aid system and the Payments by Results in 1866. According to the Grant-in-Aid system, the Governor Council authorised the payments towards the support of any school providing elementary instruction of children belonging to the poor classes (Ramyead 1995: 100; David 2010: 238). According to the Payment by Results system, the better the academic performance

of the school, the higher the funds it received from the State. With the introduction of the Payment by Results, the whole system of primary education became geared to the overemphasised system of graded examinations (Juggernauth 1993: 151).

As the education of the children of the Indian community was not catered for in the formal education (Barnwell & Toussaint 1949: 183), the Education Code of 1902 made provision for a half-time school system for them. In this context, a Monitorial and Volunteer system was set up (Ramdoyal 1977: 154). According to the Education code, the duty of the monitors and volunteers was to inculcate a sense of order and discipline in the learners and to ensure a strict control of their learning activities (Ramharai 2002: 15).

With the emergence of the Mauritius Labour Party in the 1930s and 40s and its political commitment to bring about educational changes in favour of the working class, the Education Act was promulgated in 1957. This Act was and is still the basis of all the educational changes that occurred in Mauritius. According to Ramharai *et al.* (2006: 18), the Ministry of Education has never drafted a common set of rules and regulations on education since 1957. It is the only document to which amendments are made on and off. The regulations underlying the Act are, inter alia, that no corporal punishment is inflicted on any learner in any school, the principal may suspend or withdraw a learner from the school with the approval of the Minister in the case of a lack of discipline, and rules for the administration and discipline of the school are made by the school principal but with approval of the Minister of Education (Education Regulations 1957: 601-621; Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015: 13).

2.2.1 DISCIPLINE AND EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN MAURITIUS

After the independence of the country in 1968, many educational plans and reforms were presented but not implemented because, according to Mariaye (2005: 51), the successive governments had to aim at cost effectiveness in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, there was no follow-up, and the rat race type of secondary schooling remained unsolved. Rat race schooling is a type of schooling in which learners learn by heart without

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understanding in an attempt to be among the Laureates for the State Scholarships at the end of the secondary schooling (Rivet 2008a: 15; Thomas 2008: 15; Hilbert 2006: 3). Some of the reforms met with resistance from the Cabinet ministers who did not give their political support to the Minister of Education (Mulloo 2001: 318).

The word "discipline" in schools is rarely mentioned in educational reforms in Mauritius. There are only recommendations that may be related to discipline as defined in paragraph 1.2. The following was proposed in the *Proposal for Structural Reforms* (1990):

- To make the school a pleasant place by providing, among others, more room for physical movement both inside and on the playground.

- To provide for the weaker learners a more favourable educator/learner ratio, particularly at the end of Level III (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture 1990: 89).

The following recommendations were made in the *Master Plan for the Year 2000* (1991):

- Learners, through the Student Council, will be encouraged to participate in decision-making through School Councils.

- These councils will advise and help to implement decisions concerning the general welfare of the learners, advise on the improvement of school facilities, assist learners in need and organize co-curricular and cultural activities for the benefits of the learners

(Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture 1991: 99)

The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (1997: 29-39) argues that absenteeism is one aspect of learners' lack of discipline in school, in the *White Paper on Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education* (1997). It stipulates that lack of discipline finds its source in frustrations, alienation or a sense of impotence in the face of remote authority.

It also stipulates that the Regional Education Directorates are responsible for enforcing discipline based on national guidelines. Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (1998: 74-78) adds in the *Action Plan for a New Education System in Mauritius* that the Student Council may help solve the disciplinary problems in schools and that school inspectors are expected to focus particularly on discipline.

In the *Strategy Plan 2008-2020*, some issues related to discipline are found to be important to be considered in order to improve the quality of education in Mauritius. The plan indicates that the quality of education is a function of the teaching quality and personal and motivation of educators. In this plan, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources (2008:33-73) asserts the following, inter alia:

- The fierce competition of the system at all levels is the direct result of branding and labeling of learners.

- The problem of absenteeism and private tuition at all levels should be addressed.

- The issue of quality in the educational provision and delivery should be addressed.

According to Ramharai *et al.* (2006: 14), the following are the few educational reforms that have been implemented since the country's independence in 1968:

- The ranking system at the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) level for admission to secondary education was replaced by the grading system.

- The introduction of the regionalisation and zoning system.

- More state secondary schools were built.

- The pre-vocational stream is introduced in secondary schools.

- Travel and Tourism, Environmental Management and 21ˢᵗ Century Science are new subjects at secondary schooling.

- Secondary schooling is made compulsory up to the age of 16.

The education set-up is basically still the same since the colonial period (Ramharai *et al.* 2006: 20). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources (2008: 26) acknowledges that the rapid pace at which the nation has been called upon to respond to the social demands for education has had the effect of limiting educational reforms.

2.3 THE CURRENT EDUCATION STRUCTURE OF MAURITIUS

The current education structure of Mauritius is illustrated in the diagram below:

Figure 2.1: The current education structure of Mauritius

Pathways of the Education and Training System in Mauritius
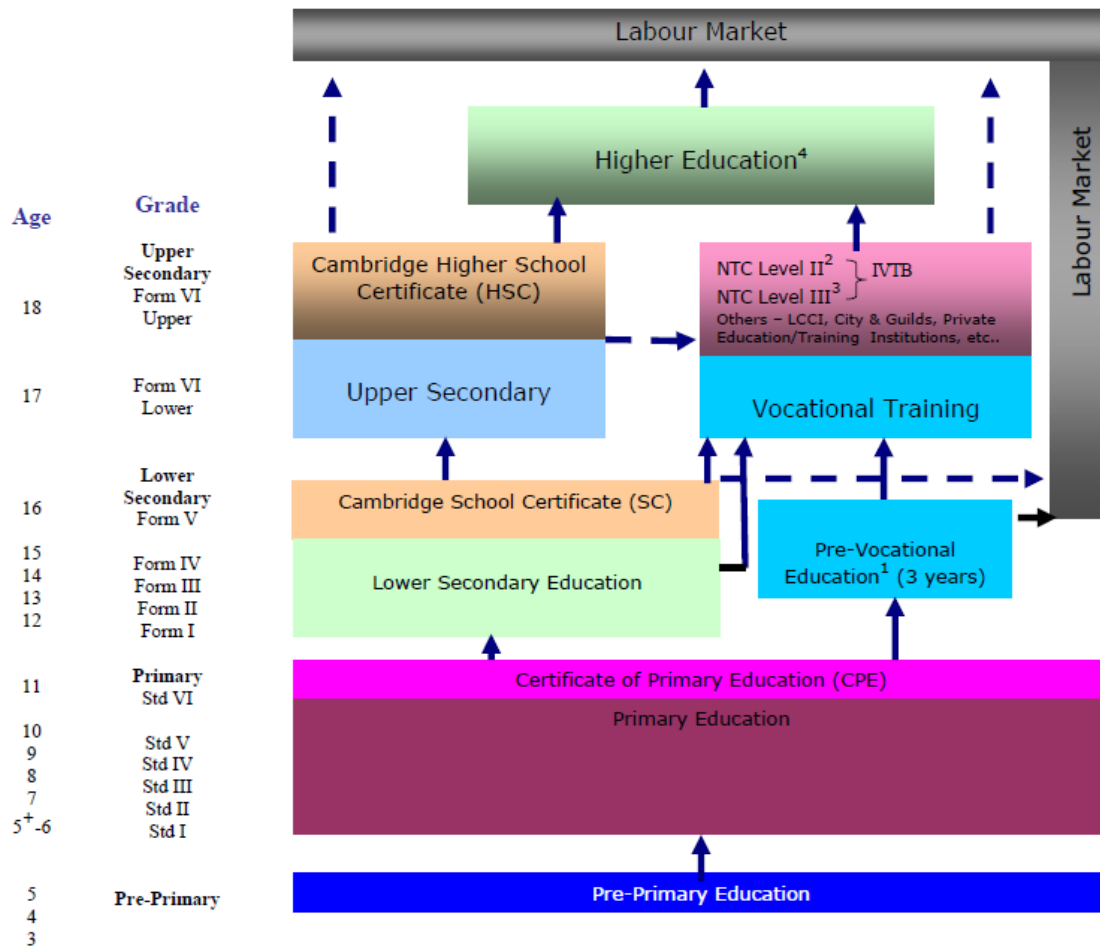
1. The Pre-vocational curriculum provides basic literacy, numeracy, science, Technical and ICT (Information and Computer Technology) skills.

2. Equivalent to education between SC (School Certificate) and HSC (Higher School Certificate)

3. Equivalent to education between Form III and SC (School Certificate).

4. Refers to post A Level or HSC (Higher School Certificate) (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2008: 22)

The education structure consists of the following four cycles:

- Early childhood development and education (0-5 years old)

This has two separate phases, namely the infant/toddler period (0-3 years old), known as Early Childhood Development, and pre-primary schooling during which the 3-5 years olds attend pre-primary schools.

- Primary schooling, of six years duration, leading to an end-of-cycle examination called the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE).
- Secondary Education for a minimum of five years leading to the Cambridge School Certificate (SC). This is the lower secondary education. Then there is the higher secondary education which requires at least a credit in four subjects at the Cambridge School Certificate exams for admission. At the end of two more years of higher secondary education, the learners sit for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate (HSC) exams.
- Postsecondary/Tertiary Education, which is provided by the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology, Mauritius, the University de Mascareignes, and the Open University of Mauritius.

(Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2008: 2)

The secondary education is divided into two streams, the normal or mainstream and the pre-vocational stream. Those learners who successfully pass the CPE exams are admitted to the mainstream. Those who fail the exams twice or who reach the age of 12 but failed the exam are admitted to the pre-vocational stream. Most secondary schools have both streams on the same premise. The latter attend the secondary school for three years, after which they are admitted to an Industrial and Vocational Institute where they follow the one-year National Certificate Foundation course. On completion of this course, they may have admission in the vocational sector where there are various levels of apprenticeships and trade certificates.

Compulsory education for any Mauritian child starts at the age of 5 where he/she enters the primary school and ends at the age of 16 when he/she completes his/her first five years of secondary education. The Education Regulations (1957) was amended in 2005 to make free education compulsory up to the age of 16 for all children.

According to the Education Regulations (1957), the provision of education is the sole responsibility of the government. The Ministry of Education determines the policy and requirements for the different levels of education. The country is divided into four education zones or regions. Each zone is administered by a Regional Directorate which has a Quality Assurance and Inspectorate Division that is responsible for ensuring, among others, the quality audit of the human resources, curriculum, infrastructure and equipment (Pay Research Bureau Report 2013: 294)

There are two categories of secondary schools in Mauritius: state secondary schools, (including Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Rabindranath Tagore Institute and four Mahatma Gandhi secondary schools) and private secondary schools, which are subcategorised into private aided schools comprising of private confessional and non-confessional schools, and private non-aided or fee-paying schools. The distribution of secondary schools by zone and type of administration is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Distribution of secondary schools by zone and administration, 2014

Zones	All schools[1]	Type of administration		
		State[2]	Private	
			Aided[3]	Non-aided
1. Port Louis/ North	57	23	27	7
2. Beau Bassin – Rose Hill/ East	42	17	20	5
3. Curepipe/South	39	13	21	5
4. Quatre Bornes/Vacoas-Phoenix/West	32	15	14	3
Mauritius (Total number of schools)	170	68	82	20

1. 60 of these schools offer academic education only and 116 both academic and pre-vocational education
2. State schools include Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Rabindranath Tagore Institute and 4 Mahatma Gandhi Secondary Schools.
3. Aided schools include Mauritius Educational Development Company and Rodrigues Educational Development Company.

(Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2014: 21)

The researcher is of the opinion that an overview of the actual current education system is fundamental to see the broader context of the phenomenon. Discipline cannot be studied in isolation as it is determined not only by the individual characteristics of the learner but also by the characteristics of the environment that shape the learner. Knowledge about the functioning of the current system is likely to help contextualise the occurrence of a lack of discipline in the school context.

2.4 CRITICISMS OF THE CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM

The present education system of Mauritius has always been the subject of much criticism by all the stakeholders in the education sector. It is considered in this paragraph that a critical overview of the system will give a better understanding of the dynamic educational context in which discipline is actually a phenomenon of much concern in the country. It could also help to understand the possible inherent and potential factors that may give rise to discipline problems and the effectiveness of possible strategies that may be adopted in the Mauritian education system to maintain discipline among the secondary school learners.

2.4.1 An elitist education system

The current education system is a very competitive system. Cut-throat competition plagues the system and causes much harm to the young Mauritian children and youth

(Bissoondoyal 2008: 139). In fact, the education system inherited from the colonisers has led to the development of a highly elitist culture. It is based on tough competition at the age of eleven already and it creates winners and losers. The major dysfunction of the system is to be found in the bottleneck situation which constrains access of learners from primary to secondary education. Out of 18 000 children who pass the CPE exam every year and 4 500 who obtain A+, there is intense competition to secure a place in the small number of perceived 'star' secondary schools or national colleges, branded officially by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research (Education [Amendment] Act 2006: 65) where only 1 000 places are available (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 2001: 1). The star schools are those schools that have the highest pass rates at the three most important examinations of the current education system, namely the Certificate of Primary Education, the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate (Mariaye 2005: 52). Such competition results in a 'rat race' beginning right from the lower primary years.

This exerts immense psychological pressure on learners, parents and educators. Selection of learners by schools through the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is one of the key determinants of competition within the education sector in Mauritius. According to the Leader of the Opposition, Paul Berenger (Ducasse 2009: 8), the real problem of the current education system is elitism. In addition, this fierce competition is the direct result of the branding and labeling of both learners and schools which further impacts and contributes to the perpetuation of the perceived need by parents and educators for increased private tuition (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2008: 39). This is because the Mauritian schools cater only for the development of the child's academic side (Peerun 2007: 12). The ideology of education, such as transmission-style or banking education, which occurs when knowledge is metaphorically deposited into and withdrawn from the learners' heads by the educator negatively impact on learners' behaviour at schools (Pane, Rocco, Miller & Salmon 2014: 300).

Elitism is likely to have implications for the discipline of learners. According to Arum (2005: 406), blending and tracking lead to curriculum variation which may have a

negative impact on the self-esteem of learners. Blending is a teaching and learning approach which educators use to create instructional activities and assignments that give learners the opportunity to work collaboratively (Poon 2013: 273). When the instructional methods do not serve the learner's needs, then he/she may misbehave (Temitayo, Nayaya & Lukman 2013: 10). Tracking means the selection of learners to participate in either academic enrichment programmes or in skills improvement programmes (Ogbu 2003: 4). As a result of tracking, learners may manifest a lack of discipline at school. The researcher should therefore analyse the possible effects or perception of elitism on discipline in Mauritius.

Elitism may bring about the categorisation of learners by all stakeholders and this may have a negative impact on the behaviour of those learners who can not compete in such an education system. It may cause frustration among those with learning difficulties and those who lose their self esteem and dignity in the process of emphasising elitism.

2.4.2 Private tuition

In the current system of education, teaching is too academic and theory based and education is more examination-oriented (Auckel 2008: 19-20). Moreover, the aims of schooling are more emphasised than the aims of education. In this vein, Alfred (2008a: 14) and Mahadeo (2008d: 13) argue that education has become merchandise in Mauritius where emphasis is more on academia and certification with the best grades and less on technical and vocational education and character education. The former Minister of Education and Human Resources, Vasant Bunwaree, acknowledges that the Cambridge exams are too academic and that an alternative has to be found (Alfred 2008b: 10). According to Alfred (2008a: 14), education in Mauritius does not tap the potential of the child in an attempt to make of him/her a thoroughly educated adult who may contribute to the progress of the society and the development of the community. Within this context, private tuition has emerged as an integral part of the Mauritian education. Private tuition is a necessary evil because the school system does not equip the child with the skills to learn the subject taught at schools and therefore, he or she does not acquire the required

knowledge in class (Etienne 2007a: 12; Mahadeo 2013: 5-6). According to Etienne (2007a: 12) and Dindyal and Besoondyal (2007: 16), there is a high rate of absenteeism at school because learners prefer private tuition to learning in the formal classes. Schools have become indoctrination centres and educators are vendors of merchandise. The learner who wants to get best exam grades persuades the parents to pay honoraria to obtain additional private teaching after school hours (Mahadeo 2008e: 11). So, it is clear that the education system lays more emphasis on quality results rather than the quality of education.

Private tuition is not a new phenomenon for having been the subject of complaint right back to 1911 by Mr. W.A. Russell, the principal of the Royal College (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 1997: 28). In 2006, the Association for the Department of Education in Africa insisted that private tuition was among the main flaws of the local education system and in 2007 UNESCO pointed out that it has become a real scourge with pedagogic and economic implications (Lam Hung 2008: 19). It should be noted that in the Mauritian education system, private tuition classes are held mostly in private secondary schools, where learners and educators have recourse to this private coaching. Moreover, in most cases, the state secondary school educator has, among other learners, his/her own "official" class learners, that is those from his/her own classes in the school where he/she teaches during the school hours. Educators do not commit themselves to teaching at school and learners disengage at school as there is a perception that the real teaching and learning process happens in private tuition (Ramharai *et al.* 2006: 157). According to Mahadeo (2013: 5-6), parents and learners turn to it because their learning expectations are not met at school. Consistent with these criticisms, the Ministry of Education noted that private tuition has been institutionalised in Mauritius (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 1997: 8) and it is so widespread that it is called the shadow system of education (Hollup 2004: 15). Furthermore, Bissoondoyal (2009: 5) points out that so long as the Mauritian education system promotes a narrow, bookish aspect of education leading to a cut-throat competition at all levels of schooling, the demand for after school tuition will exist. Former Minister of Education, Steve Obeegadoo, agreed with this view arguing that when a system is competitive and the

exams are defined to fill in a certain number of limited places in secondary schools, private tuition becomes a complement for better success (Rivet 2008b: 13). However, according to Mariaye (2005: 53), the most detrimental effect of this intense competition to secure admission for secondary schooling in the star colleges and to become laureates of the State Scholarships at the end of secondary schooling is that parents, educators and learners develop a narrow understanding of what education is and what it should achieve.

Learners' lack of interest in learning and private tuition are surveyed in local newspapers as causal factors of a lack of discipline at school in paragraph 1.2.2 of the first chapter. Moreover, according to Glasser's control theory of discipline in paragraph 2.6.2, an educator's teaching style and an uninteresting and boring curriculum may influence the learners' discipline. It will be thus interesting to analyse the effects of private tuition on learners' behaviour.

2.4.3 A knowledge-based education

The education system is only knowledge-oriented, not value-driven. However, the end of all knowledge must be building up of character (Ministry of Education and Scientific Research 1998: 52). There are only rigid prescribed curricula and timetables where the Cambridge School Certificate and Higher School Certificate syllabuses dictate what is to be taught and learned, leaving the learner with little time to pursue inner-felt needs or acquire purely practical skills. There is a lack of artistic, musical and sporting activities, lack of contact with the real world and lack of a soul-compatible pedagogy (Atchia 2007: 12). Discipline declines among secondary school learners because parents, educators and other stakeholders only concentrate on the curriculum which takes precedence over guidance and counselling sessions (Gitome, Katola & Nyabwari 2013: 5).

According to Atchia (2007: 12), there is actually no place for love in education, love for those who aim to bring from darkness into light and similarly the respect and love from learners for those who devote their lives to teaching. It is also argued consistently that these values are insufficiently present in the school education system and that private

tuition prevents learners from engaging in sports and value driven activities (Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare 2003: 22). Even in the strategic plan 2008-2020, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources does not emphasise the teaching of values. In this report, the Ministry aims at ensuring improvement and successful competitive rates in secondary school; improving the quality through a diversification of learning opportunities and a review of existing modes of delivery and assessment, and inclusion of a diversity of learners. It also attempts at embedding a culture of scientific thinking in line with the drive towards sustainable development and increasing opportunities for the integration of the special education needs of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resource 2008: 74). It is therefore obvious that even in the vision of the government, education does not encompass the teaching and learning of values which shape the character and personality of learners as future citizens of the country. There is no place for the holistic development of the child in the current education system in Mauritius. As a consequence, learners manifest a lack of discipline (Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014: 294-295).

In the Mauritian state secondary schools, learners of the mainstream classes and those in the pre-vocational classes, together with those elite learners, compete for the state scholarships. This is illustrated in the figure in paragraph 2.3. Since there is compulsory education up to sixteen years old, learners who fail their primary school education are admitted in a state secondary school. There are separate classes for them in the same school compound with the learners who successfully pass their primary education. So, they have the same school playground, the same morning assembly, the school activities and events, the same school library among others. This implies that they act, react and interact with those learners of the mainstreams. However, the characteristics and socio-economic background of the learners in the pre-vocational classes and those of the mainstream are not the same. From the discussion of the theories that explain the causes of a lack of discipline among learners in paragraph 2.5, it is evident that the co-existence of these two categories of learners may have an impact on the state of discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius.

2.4.4 Centralisation

Education is highly centralised in Mauritius. The Minister of Education has the sole responsibility, authority and power for policy decisions. According to the Education [amendment] Act (2002:28-39), the Minister of Education has control of the education system of Mauritius and shall be responsible for the general progress and development of the system. Moreover, he appoints the members of various education councils (Regional and National), he is responsible for education authorities which are run by private bodies, he may issue, renew or cancel the registration of private schools and educators and he inspects or delegates power to the Quality Assurance and Inspection Division. He also makes regulations and rules regarding the management and administration of all educational institutions, school admission, the condition of grant-in-aid to private schools, discipline in schools, the holding of exams, the time-table and curriculum of schools, the extent of private tuition by educators, the training of educators, the duration of holidays, the transfer of learners, among others. It is thus clear that principals and regional Directors of Education have limited power and authority over pedagogical and administrative matters. Principals may take decisions, only with the approval of the Ministry of Education (Education Regulations 1957: 611).

Moreover, the education system of Mauritius is managed by politicians. As soon as a new Minister of Education takes office, he/she not only dismantles or rejects the policies introduced by the previous Minister but he/she also introduces new initiatives (Chumun 2007: 13). The former Minister of Education, Kadress Pillay, reveals that during his political mandate, he could not implement educational policies because of political lobbying in the government itself (Essoo 2008: 12). This may explain why the actual education system, which is based on the British Education system inherited during the pre-independence period, has not known much reform. Today, it is still the 6+5+2 system with the actual Certificate of Primary Education exams introduced in 1980. Even a comparison of the Education Regulations (1957) and the Education (Amendment) Act 2002 makes it clear that the regulations have remained almost the same with some amendments. Essoo (2008: 12) adds that the education system is subject to the fear of changing the habits and trends that have already been acquired by many generations of

learners and educators and to political resistance to change. Thus, the current education in Mauritius lacks dynamism and it is the status quo which prevails.

It has been discussed in paragraph 1.2.4 of the previous chapter that the quality of discipline reflects the quality of leadership of the principal, who has a moral responsibility to manage a school. This research is likely to give a better and deeper insight into the functioning of the principal in his role to maintain discipline in this centralised system.

2.4.5 Automatic promotion

Automatic promotion is an aspect of the current education system. It is a practice whereby learners are promoted from grade to grade until they finish the primary cycle (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture 1990: 31). It is also practised at secondary level for the first three years in most schools. So, no matter how a learner achieves in his/her school work, he/she is promoted to the next class level. However, the learners who are slow in learning are largely put aside and ignored and fall further behind as they automatically move up the educational ladder. This practice is perverse as revealed by the strategy plan (2008-2020) of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resource which noted that only 20% of the cohort entering the first grade of the primary cycle in 1994 successfully completed the last grade of secondary education in 2006 (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resource 2008: 23). Sukon (2008: 3) suggests that the education system should do away with automatic promotion and alternatively use continuous assessment to evaluate the competencies of learners. Subsequently, the education system would turn out to be inclusive, not exclusive as it is actually in Mauritius (Hilbert 2009: 12; Mahadeo 2008d: 13).

2.4.6 Lack of discipline

As discussed in paragraphs 1.2.2 and 1.2.3, discipline is a very serious issue that is influencing the effectiveness of the local education system. In fact, this educational issue

was first the subject of an official ministerial report in 1994. The report was done to determine the state of discipline in secondary schools. It was found that absenteeism was a growing problem and a small number of certain types of schools were experiencing relatively serious indiscipline and truancy problems (Ministry of Education and Science 1994: 58). Ramharai *et al.* (2006: 15-17) point out that since the reform plans of the Ministry of Education barely mention discipline it is an indication that it assumes that it is not a major problem in the Mauritian schools. Yet, Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014: 124) and Varma (2008: 2) assert that the last two decades have witnessed a degradation of learner behaviour in and outside the Mauritian secondary school premises. The question of a lack of discipline at school is taking an alarming dimension. Moreover, disciplinary problems constitute a major factor that demotivates educators in the Flacq district of Mauritius (Belle 2007: 119-122).

It is clear from the above discussion that discipline is encompassed into the current education system of Mauritius and that the causes of a lack of learner discipline and the strategies that may be adopted by the school principal are subject to the policies, practices and procedures underlying the system. Learner's lack of discipline is a multifaceted phenomenon regarding its displays and causes as well as its meanings and functions in the social, psychological and pedagogical fields (Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon 2014: 254). The above criticism is likely to give the researcher a better and deeper understanding of the phenomenon in the state secondary schools particularly.

2.5 THE CAUSES OF A LACK OF DISCIPLINE AMONG LEARNERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In an attempt to bring a new paradigm in learner discipline, it is important to understand the interactive nature that underlies learner misbehaviour. The following discussion is general in nature; yet, it is likely to help the researcher to enlighten the situation in Mauritius. Leaman (2005:1) points out that learner behaviour that challenges the common expectations and values of the school and society is not the result of inherent wickedness

but is a multifaceted problem emerging from a complex network of factors. These factors could be internal and external (Dupper 2010: 25).

2.5.1 The internal factors

The internal factors are the causes of a lack of discipline within the individual learner. Leaman (2005:5) postulates that emotional, developmental and physical welfare are intrinsically associated with the manifestations of a lack of discipline. Internally, there are thus physical, developmental and emotional factors (Elliot *et al.* 1998: 81; Tremblay, Van Aken & Koops 2009: 114-118; Fields & Fields 2006: 46) which influence learner behaviour, though Richart, Brooks & Soler (2003: 27) state that learners do not fully understand what the consequences might be.

2.5.1.1 Biological deficits

Learners act out on account of many disorders that are related to acquired biological deficits. Elliot *et al.* (1998: 27) and Minke and Bear (2000:6) identify the following biological influences on learner behaviour: Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), sensory processing disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum, autism spectrum disorder, lead exposure, serious head injuries, maternal substance abuse, poor pre-natal nutrition, brain insult during delivery and child abuse and neglect. Fields and Fields (2006: 273) argue that learners with such disorders develop conduct disorder (CD) and may become defiant, stubborn, belligerent, and disobedient and may even yell out inappropriately. As a result, peers may become frustrated and show a lack of discipline as well. Reinke and Herman (2002: 550) reports that learners with such biological deficits may exhibit elevated levels of inattention, aggression towards people and animals, destruction of property, deceit or theft, school or home rule violations, truancy, educator and peer rejection, fighting, association with deviant peers, youth delinquency, membership in gangs, use and abuse of drugs and alcohol, and acts of violence.

2.5.1.2 Emotional and social incompetence

Charles (2008: 20-23) reports that the causes that reside in the individual learner are unmet needs that are related to belonging, hope, dignity, power, enjoyment, competence; thwarted desires; expediency; urge to transgress; inappropriate habits that violate established standards and expectancies; poor behaviour choices; avoidance; and temptation in relation to music, lyrics, styles of clothing and objects that he/she may desire to have. From this constructivist perspective, the causes of a lack of discipline are mainly linked to a lack of emotional competence and insufficient social competence. Hyson (2004: 57) and Fields and Fields (2006: 245-255) concur that when the learner's need for security, privacy, power, ownership, attention, success, challenge, love and affection are not met, they manifest a lack of discipline. In addition, when a lack of interpersonal problem-solving skills, social skills and perspective-seeking skill is manifested, the learners remain self-centered, unable to relate to the interests, needs and rights of others, with the result that they cannot avoid and resolve conflicts, compromise and manage aggressiveness (Slaby, Roedell, Arezzo & Hendrix 1995: 145). Mewasingh (2003: 77-78), Leaman (2005: 6-7) and Charles (2008: 23) assert also that a learner with low self-esteem, egocentricity and internalised anger may harbour many internal responses such as shame, frustration, resentment, fear, anxiety, guilt and confusion, leading to a lack of learning aspirations and motivation. These internalised feelings may come out through aggressive, controlling, bullying, unpredictable, high-tempered, obstructive and power-seeking behaviour (Lam Hung 2008: 87).

Moreover, Poorfallah, Vahdany and Arjmandi (2014: 248) state that learner discipline relates to age. Mutemeri and Gudyanga (2008: 3) mention Feldman (2004) to explain how the age of the learner may cause the learner to manifest a lack of discipline: "For pre-adolescents and teens, an identity crisis, the questions of "Where do I stand?" and "How do I compare to others?" are key concerns for learners who are in the age group of 11 to 17 years old. They add that the rapid physical transitions necessitate transition in the learner's mental make-up and his/her attitudes towards people and circumstances, and in so doing he/she may be stressed out of fear, anxiety or curiosity. In the same vein,

Nealis (2014: 14) and Kapalka (2009: 6) concur that the still growing adolescent brain translates into immature reasoning skills and increased impulsivity, which may lead him/her to poor choices by manifesting a lack of discipline as mentioned in the preceding statements. This is congruent with the view of Charles (2008: 20-23) stipulated in the above discussion.

2.5.1.3 Maturational level

Landy (2002: 54) suggests that adult intolerance and a misunderstanding of the learner's behaviour may result into the latter showing a lack of discipline. The unacceptable behaviour may be typical of the learner's developmental stage but parents, educators, superintendents and principals may not be aware of it. Inappropriate adult expectations that are incompatible with the learner's temperament and those that are a poor match for the learner's maturational levels, and inappropriate reinforcement from them and a lack of knowledge and understanding by the learner about how to behave appropriately or about the consequences of their behaviours may encourage him/her to show undesirable behaviour (Brady, Forton, Porter & Wood 2003: 86). Developmental deficits also may heighten the risk of a lack of discipline among learners.

These internal factors (discussed from paragraphs 2.5.1.1 to 2.5.1.3) have an influence on the behaviour of the learner and may contribute to a lack of discipline from him/her at school. However, the nature-nurture controversy, that is the extent of the impact of external factors and the internal factors on the learner's discipline, is also evident in the real roots of the lack of discipline and, in the effective management approaches to a lack of discipline in school. Though Fields and Fields (2006: 3) assert that effective discipline approaches must be based on knowledge of the learners' physical, emotional, and intellectual development and on the individual characteristics of the learner, Walker, Ramsey and Gresham (2004: 46) assert that it is difficult to identify clearly the role of inherited factors within the learner in the development of a lack of discipline. It should be noted however that they acknowledge the evidence of Rathvon (1999: 67), Leaman (2005: 1) and Noguera (2001: 210) that socio-environmental factors play a major role in

the manifestation of a lack of discipline in learners. Furthermore, rather than viewing discipline problems as only related to the internal learner deficits, they should be viewed also as a result of the learner-environmental mismatches (Dupper 2010:26). Effective management practices in behaviour management place a primary emphasis on causes within the environment that are observed to be related to a lack of discipline in schools (Zirpoli 2008: 24). Therefore, on account of this pressing need for a fundamental paradigm shift in behaviour management approaches, the researcher considers that a study of the external factors also will help him in the construction of an effective discipline management model.

2.5.2 External factors

Externally, school and classroom climate and the learner interactions with peers and adults can cause a lack of discipline (Noguera 2001: 202-218). The family, the school, the culture, the community, the media and peer pressure are the factors that are analysed to understand how they lead to a lack of discipline among learners at school.

2.5.2.1 The family

The family has the primary responsibility for developing ethical behaviour in learners (Brooks & Goble 1997: 50; Joubert & Bray 2007: 82). However, in the modern societies, parents neglect their role of primary educators for learners and they become rather developmental liabilities for adolescents (Zirpoli 2008: 140), and this may give rise to bullying and victimisation by peers (Lee & Oh 2011: 544). Trembley *et al.* (2009: 118) and Oloyede and Adesina (2013: 141) claim that family characteristics are good predictors of a lack of discipline in children. Many risk factors in the family setting impact on the learner behaviour at school. Child neglect and abuse, the learner's exposure to parental criminality and violence at home, aggressive interaction between siblings, mentally disturbed parents, availability and the use of weapons and drugs at home, a huge family size and disruption in family functioning due to divorce or remarriage of one parent may influence the learner's behaviour (Seegopaul 2016: 47; Elliot *et al.* 1998: 44-111; Bear 2005: 80; Magwa & Ngara 2014: 84; Adigeb & Mbua 2015: 36).

Besides this dysfunctional lifestyle and the breakdown in the family structure, Steinberg (2001: 9), Rogers (1991: 23) and Zirpoli (2008: 140) identify a lack of parental discipline and control, and parenting skills to be a major cause of a lack of discipline in learners. Umo (2013: 88) defines parenting as the activity which involves bringing up and looking after a child by the biological parents, a biological parent or surrogate parents. From this perspective, Barber, Stolz and Olsen (2005: 139) identify three dimensions of parenting, namely parental support in terms of nurturing, affective and compassionate qualities; psychological control, in terms of parent choice to change the child's feelings, to ignore or dismiss the child's views or to withdraw love or affection; and behavioural control in terms of parents' monitoring or knowledge of the child's activities. These dimensions affect the child's behaviour at school.

According to Mewasingh (2003:27), discipline begins at home when parents teach the learners right from wrong. However, parents' inadequate child rearing practices like harsh parental attitudes and discipline, parents' power assertive methods, parents' permissiveness of aggression, coercive-hostile parenting, no secure attachment for the learners with their parents due to lack of parental interaction with them, a lack of social capital, families with no sense of the future, no self-control, no sense of responsibility, delegation and cooperation and with emotional, spiritual and physical poverty are more likely to encourage learners to engage in problem behaviour at school (Lorrain 1999: 19; Gurian 2001: 233; Berk 2002: 129; Brooks & Goble 1997: 51; McClelland 1999: 51). Parents who adopt a laissez-faire attitude, out of ignorance (Mouton 2015: 143; Mugabe & Maposa 2013: 116) inculcate lawlessness, indiscipline and anti-social behaviour in their children (Mabitla 2006: 19). In addition, Gasa (2012: 149-150) who states that the more negative the emotional self-concept of the learner is due to the negative family climate, the more aggressive the learner is. This is consistent with Hung (2007: 116) who provides the evidence that a lack of parental supervision, involvement and encouragement in the learner's academic pursuit may result into a lack of discipline. Sampson (2002: 182-189), Elliot *et al.* (1998: 10) and Bear (2005: 80) reason that parents who set no clear and consistent limits, expectations and values for the learner and who

have no or little educational aspirations and understanding of the role of education in achieving life goals, convey a negative self-image to the learner with no confidence, motivation and self-efficacy in education. This is so because of working parents who have a lack of time to engage themselves in their children's learning and education (Watson & Bogotch 2015: 260).

The socio-economic status of the family may have an impact on the parenting styles of the parents, which may influence the behaviour of the children of the family. Magwa and Ngara (2014: 84) postulate that poverty of some learners and the high socio-economic status of the family of other learners may force the former to rob others in order to meet their daily needs or they may rob out of frustrations of being deprived of some needs. Arum and Ford (2012: 57) concur that the greater the economic inequality and social distance among learners at schools, the more discipline problems occur.

Reid, Patterson and Snyder (2002: 125) and Walker, Ramsey and Gresham (2004: 23) postulate that under these conditions, the learner comes to school with negative attitudes about schooling, a limited repertoire of cooperative behaviour skills and a predilection to use coercive tactics to control and manipulate others. Leaman (2005: 3) and Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014: 263) concur that the learner with little structure, guidance and balanced discipline at home will struggle to relate to the school discipline. Parents are too busy with own personal and professional activities so that they have little time to supervise their children's behaviour and activities (Asiyai 2012: 46; Van Breda 2014: 1058). Moreover, they are no more concerned with their children's academic performance and behaviour at schools (Abidoye & Onweazu 2010: 12). When parents expose their children to antisocial behaviours and fail to teach them the necessary social skills for successful interactions, the latter are vulnerable to learn inappropriate behaviour from those who may take advantage of them (Umo 2013: 88). Moreover, Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 107) and Whitelock 2012: 65) point out that the lack of parental support impedes the enforcement of the school discipline by the school principal and educators. Schools limit parental involvement to fundraising, voluntary social events and orientations (Jodut 2015: 13; Chikudo 2016: 40). In the same vein, McNamara (2010: 10)

postulates that without parent's active participation and support in the school policy implementation, there is likely to be an alarming situation of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools. Du Preez and Roux (2010: 19) also observe that when there is a discrepancy between values taught at school and those that are nurtured at home, disciplinary problems arise. So, parents should take up their primary and collaborative responsibility to discipline their children (De Atouguia 2014: 95). They should be part of the solution, not the cause of the problem of learners' lack of discipline at school (Bennett 2015: 8).

With the centralisation of the education system in Mauritius whereby the Minister has the sole responsibility, authority and power to take policy decisions in education (Paragraph 2.4.4), parents who are politically affluent and who have political contact and relationships with the Minister directly or indirectly through the elected member of parliament in their constituency, may have recourse to political interference in the school matters in general and in the implementation of the school discipline policy by the principal in particular (White 2010: 18). This however may encourage learners to manifest a lack of discipline as the principal as well as the educators may feel disempowered to deal with the problem (Pascal 2015: 26; Smit 2013: 364).

 2.5.2.2 The school

The school context, most importantly, helps to generate and shape the learners' attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. Elliot *et al.* (1998:17) and Leaman (2005: 2) acknowledge that the school is a little community or a microcosm of the community with its norms and social structure, a complete social environment that affects the learner's behaviour. The following characteristics of the school may encourage a lack of discipline among its learners:

- Poor design and use of school space;
- Overcrowded classroom due to large school population;
- Lack of caring but firm disciplinary procedures;
- Learner alienation;

- Rejection of at risk learners by peers and educators;
- Anger and resentment at school routines and demands for conformity;
- Poor quality of principal leadership;
- Lack of supervision by the principal;
- No teaching of social behaviour skills;
- No academic support for all learners;
- Lack of individuality and autonomy in learning;
- Lack of involvement in activities that raise the learner's self-esteem;
- Rigidity of procedures and classification, prescription of uniform standards of achievement in learning and conduct, interference with the freedom of the learner's growth;
- Learners are not allowed to work and play, pursue their hobbies and organise social functions in the school;
- Passive recipiency over shared activity;
- The inefficiency of the school management in handling of discipline problems;
- The non-existence of sports grounds in the school premise;
- Lack of extra-curricular activities;
- Harsh school rules and regulations.

(Ugboko & Adediwura 2012 : 42 ; Asiyai 2012 :43 ; Saiyidain 2000: 26-44; Walker *et al*. 2004: 282-283; Ramharai *et al.* 2006:148-189 ; Panchoo 2016 : 13)

It is clear from the above that some schools are neither creative nor active and they do not provide the learners with the opportunity and social network to be emotionally well-prepared to be responsible learners. Learners do not take the school as a place conducive for learning but a place for spending time (Thody 2011: 25; Modiba 2015: 299). In addition, Lukman and Hamadi (2014: 13) posit that in such schools learners disrespect their fellow learners, educators and the community members and engage in protest which promulgates violence, discrimination, harassment, bullying and intimidation, using weapons, drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

The pressure of academic competition coupled with the unavailability of extracurricular activities may also lead to a lack of discipline. Sampson (2002: 176) and Dupper (2010: 31) argue that extracurricular activities help learners develop the sense of discipline. In the same vein, Saiyidain (2000:26) mentions that the absence of extracurricular activities deprives learners to actively participate in the school life that is intrinsically valuable and pleasure-giving to them, exercising all their healthy, natural powers of action, cooperation and self-expression. Clayton (1997: 4) adds that competition is incompatible with the goal of building a community of learners and educators. Competitive situations rather are a setup for failure since not every learner can win (Hyson 2004: 30; Njoroge & Nyabuto 2014: 293). This is consistent to the discussion in paragraph 2.4.1 in the context of an elite education system.

The educator can be a factor of a lack of discipline in learners in the following ways:

- Ineffective use of innovative teaching techniques;
- Poor modeling of behaviour, like inconsistency, irresponsibility and lack of self-control;
- Showing little interest in learners;
- Providing ineffective guidance and feedback;
- Using ineffective personal communication;
- Failure to plan proactively;
- Using coercion, threat and punishment;
- Succumbing to personal frustration;
- Latecoming to classroom;
- Using of mobile phones in class;
- Lack of empowerment to deal with discipline problems due to parental or political interference in educator authority;
- Feeling of disempowerment due to learners' challenging behaviour to his/her authority;
- Overburdening learners with excessive work or too little work;

- Lack of educator training or professionally uncertified educators in classroom management and learner discipline management;
- Educators show their lack of trust in learners through their negative attitudes and expectations towards the latter in class;
- Allocating low grades to learners with bad behaviour;
- Absenteeism in class or leaving class unattended;
- The educator's self-defeating attitudes.

(Rampa 2014: 26; Daly, Der-Martirosian, Ong-Dean, Park & Wishard-Guerra 2011: 178; Manguvo, Whitney & Chareka 2011: 157-159; Gitome, Katola & Nyabwari 2013: 6; Asiyai: 2012; Khalil & Saar 2009: 144; Ogbu 2003: 127; Lorrain 1999: 20; Charles 2008: 24-25; Charles 2002: 2; Lewis 2009: 26; Wolhuter & Russo 2013: 1; Khalsa 2007: 52; Sprick 2009: 22; Kruger 2003: 207; Cushman & Kemp 2012: 48-49).

The end of character education in public schools led to the degradation of values in schools. In the context of personalism (the focus on individual rights and freedom, self-worth, self-respect, self-dignity and autonomy), permissiveness, cultural relativism (values are culturally relative and should not be determined by the school stakeholders) and increased emphasis on academic and cognitive skills, character education and the teaching of values are no more an educational priority in schools (Bear 2005: 77-84). Also, after the Student Rights Contestation period (1969-1992), learners are given the basic right to freedom of speech and expression in school, the right to privacy and freedom from unreasonable searches and the right to due process (Arum 2005: 60). However, the recognition of these learners' rights, following the *Goss v Topez* case in 1975, the *Bethel v Frazer* case in 1986 and the *Tinker v Des Moines Independent Community school* in 1969 in the USA, the school authority to discipline learners was undermined and learners feel free to manifest irresponsible behaviour as they ignore that they also have the responsibility to respect the rights of others (Charles 2008: 15; Rogers 1991: 85; Arum 2005: 60-61; Schimmel 2006: 1006). Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014: 134) reported that discipline problems in state secondary schools of Mauritius are the results of

the lack of authority and power of the principal, the School Management Team and educators. This lack of authority and power is coupled with the excessive emphasis by various ministries on the children's rights without teaching them their duties and responsibilities to their family, the school and the society; some learners may even threaten to report any disciplinary actions or interventions which principals may take to maintain discipline to the police or the press (Ramharai *et al.* 2006: 204-205). According to Joubert and Bray (2007: 81), the emphasis on the children's rights has empowered the learners to misbehave and disempowered educators and principals to maintain effective learner discipline. They are not able to take severe actions against learners who misbehave as each case of misbehaviour has to be referred to the Ministry of Education. The doctrine of *in loco parentis*, that is, the principal may take the place of the parents as to disciplining learners, among others, is no longer acceptable to the learners and parents (Skiba, Eckes & Brown 2010: 1072; Nakpodia 2010: 145).

In the Mauritian context, the Government of Mauritius has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child (1990) and passed the Child Protection Act 1994 and the Ombudsperson for Children Act 2003. All these Acts aim at promoting and protecting the rights of the child, and the government has a mandate to:
"*(a) ensure that the rights, needs and interests of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and associations of individuals;*
(b) promote the rights and best interests of children; and
*(c) promote the compliance with the Convention of Rights of the Child." (*The Ombudsperson for the Children Act 2003, Paragraph 5: 705*).*

In the Education Regulations 1957, the protection of the rights of the child at schools was already considered and enforced. Corporal punishment is prohibited in schools in Article 13(4) of the Regulations, and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources issues a circular letter to all schools at the beginning of each academic year stating that perpetrators of corporal punishment are liable to legal actions under the Child Protection Act 2003 (Newell 2015: 3).

Corporal punishment is defined as a kind of discipline that entails direct infliction of pain on the physical body of the learner (Moyo, Khewu & Bayaga 2014: 2). It is a reactive approach to discipline, including suspension and expulsion, that is used mostly in secondary schools of many countries (Sprick 2009: 19; Lewis 2009: 16), though it is outlawed following the constitutional rights of the child based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Tshalala (2012: 19) cites Greydanus, Pratt, Spates, Blake-Dreher, Greydanus-Gearhart and Patel (2003: 385) to mention that the aim of reactive discipline techniques is inflicting pain as a means of changing learners' unacceptable behaviour to acceptable behaviour.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child aims to promote and protect the rights and interests of the child. This is because many educators, administrators and parents believe that corporal punishment is necessary to teach learners a lesson and discourage them from similar practices in future (Mugabe & Maposa 2013: 112). Also, many parents view it as a traditional way to discipline effectively learners who misbehave by modifying their undesirable behaviour (Tshalala 2012: 48-49). However, Erkman and Rohner (2006: 252) maintain that many lower- and middle-class parents accept it as they want their children to obey and comply, whereas many middle-class and upper-class parents want their children to be independent and develop positive self-esteem. Moreover, punishment should not be used since it does not respect the learner's human dignity and his/her welfare, and according to Govender & Sookrajh (2014: 7) the less educators and the principal use corporal punishment at schools the more they teach learners self-discipline. So, alternatives to punishment such as the research-based discipline preventions, interventions and strategies (Paragraph 3.5) have been scientifically implemented and successfully proven and there should be a shift from punitive to preventive disciplinary strategies (US Department of Education 2014: 57; Willougby 2012: 47) (Paragraph 5.3.1). However, Maponya (2015: 187) asserts that alternatives to corporal punishment do not work effectively.

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In the Mauritian context, the National Children Council, the Child Development Unit and the Ombudsperson for Children operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare to ensure that the above mandate is respected and enforced. Whenever any case of child abuse arising in the family, at school, or in any other institution, in whatever form, is reported to the police or one of these parastatal bodies, an investigation is carried by the officers of the Child Development Unit or the Ombudsperson for Children, with the help of the police.

Following the Students Rights Contestation Period, the protection of the Children's rights based on the UN Child's Rights Convention, and the banning of corporal punishment, principals do not take the risk to be prosecuted by the court of Justice for child abuse or violation of the learner's rights. Though they want to intervene to maintain learner discipline, yet they fear the negative consequences of their disciplinary actions in so doing (Maynes, Mottonen & Sharpe 2015: 23).

The protection and promotion of the children's rights and the banning of corporal punishment in schools open the way to all types of undesirable behaviour from learners. This disempowers the educators' and principals' authority to maintain learner discipline effectively. However, Coetzee (2010: 479) points out that it is not the human rights and legal framework that disempower them but rather their lack of knowledge and skills to create a saner and safer school environment for the learners by respecting the latters' human dignity. Moreover, the absence of good and positive human relationships between the educators and learners and the absence of voice and choice give the principal less authority to maintain learner discipline at schools (Way 2011: 365). However, Arum and Ford (2012: 56) and Serame, Oosthuizen, Wolhuter and Zulu (2013: 3) add that the disciplinary climate of the school is not only the product of the educators', learners' and principal's beliefs and (in) actions and the interaction of these, but is also shaped by the legal context of the country.

The absence of school uniform also may be a cause of a lack of discipline among learners. The school uniform helps to instil learners with discipline and deter them from

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theft and violence (US Department of Education 2003: 24). However, Brunsma (2004: 43) challenges this view by stating that school uniform does not impact on learners' behaviour.

A lack of school connectedness from the learner may also encourage him/her to manifest a lack of discipline. School connectedness is the belief by learners that adults and peers in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals (Centres for Disease Control & Prevention 2009: 3). It refers to the interpersonal or affective aspects of the school environment which indicate the extent to which the learners feel cared for within the school context and part of the school (Shochet & Smith 2011: 476). When the learner witnesses a negative school climate, perceives harsh and preventive school discipline policies and practices, finds careless and unsupportive relationships with peers and educators and no extracurricular activities in schools, then he or she has low school engagement and may show a high level of emotional distress and a lack of discipline (Ozer 2005: 181; Dupper 2010: 26-31; Evertson & Weinstein 2006: 1; Wald & Casella 2006: 90).

2.5.2.3 The culture

Within the context of discipline, culture refers not only to race, languages, ethnicity and religion but also to experiences, education levels, socio-economic status, gender, age, lifestyle, political orientation, geography and temperament (Kaiser & Rasminsky 2003:55). Sampson (2002: 27) and Fields and Fields (2006: 65) point out that the school is an instrument of the mainstream or dominant culture. However, in a multicultural school setting, the cultural differences affect all expectations and interactions to such an extent that they result into a lack of discipline.

Learners who do not develop a strong connection with their school community due to psychological confusion between enculturation by their family and acculturation by formal schooling may easily be intellectually and emotionally affected (Collier 2004: 83). Moreover, Fields and Fields (2006: 65) and Zirpoli (2008: 71) assert that for some

learners, fitting in with their own culture and succeeding in the dominant culture of the school are not compatible. Therefore, learning a new set of expectations can be very stressful for them. They may hence manifest poor discipline.

School practices may fail to account for the knowledge, cognitive abilities, culture and values of the minority group learners. According to Ogbu (2003:4), the practice of leveling or tracking (the selection of learners to participate in either academic enrichment programmes or in skills improvement programmes) and the disproportionate representation of learners of the minority groups in special education reinforce the internalisation of these learners that they are intellectually inferior. This process is further reinforced by the collective mistreatment of those learners who are affected by memories of past mistreatment like slavery. From this perspective, Gay (2000: 122) claims that racism, oppression and less influence and power on societal levels may negatively influence the behaviour of learners from the minority culture. This is consistent with the finding of Yahaya, Ramli, Hashim, Ibrahim, Rahman and Yahaya (2009: 667) who assert that race is a factor which may cause learners to fight with each other.

Educators' expectations and attitudes may also encourage learners from minority cultures to manifest a lack of discipline. Banks (2004: 17) and Grossman (1995: 337) view that educators tend to have lower expectations for the poor learner from a minority group, evaluate them lower than objective evidence warrants, praise and call on them less often, criticise them more often and use harsher and more primitive techniques with them. Cushner, McClelland and Safford (2003: 13) and Pettit and Sugawara (2002: 130) add that educators rate learners from low socio-economic backgrounds as less competent socially and cognitively. In addition, disciplinary discrepancy in favour of one cultural group and against another one may contribute to increased mistrust and alienation. Ogbu (2003: 84) found that the disproportionate discipline of minority learners by educators is attributed to stereotypes that such learners misbehave in general. Consequently, the latter express self-doubt and exhibit poor school engagement and they act disproportionately (Corso 2003: 120).

2.5.2.4 The community

Social disorganisation in a learner's community is a cause of ill-discipline in schools. According to Sampson (2002: 125), Walker *et al.* (2004:49-50) and the Socially Disorganisation Theory of Shaw and Mckay (1969), social disorganisation refers to the absence of a sense of neighbourhood cohesion, a lack of neighbourhood support networks and conflicting values and social isolation due to the presence of high population turnover, racial and ethnic heterogeneity, low socio-economic status, high housing density, high crime rates, gangs and drug activity, poverty, discrimination and a lack of opportunities for education and employment. Under such conditions, the community is no longer functional to reinforce parents' and schools' norms, beliefs and values (Peterson & Morgan 2011: 118; Furstenberg 1999: 229).

Beside the parents' effort to teach the learners alternatives to behaviour problems may be compromised by a lack of validation for violence-free lifestyles in the community. Saiyidain (2000: 78) asserts that learners may show a low self-esteem, inadequate respect for cultural norms, and a lack of social competence which prevent them from effective participation in more formal networks such as schools. They, thus, may develop an oppositional culture to social controls through their defiance of the authority at school. This is consistent with the conventional wisdom that learners' lack of discipline in schools is a reflection of violence in the broader social context, from the neighbourhood surrounding the school (Elliot *et al.* 1998:127; Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015: 1). This is the result of the learner's personal fable, that is, his/her adolescent beliefs that his/her experiences, thoughts and feelings acquired in the community are unique, and subsequently a learner demonstrates foolish and risky behaviour in school (Larson, Richards, Moneta & Holmbeck 1996: 751).

2.5.2.5 The media

According to the social learning theory, an individual who observes a behaviour

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cognitively retains the behaviour (Bandura 1977: 12). Based on this principle of observational learning or modeling, it is clear that the media influences the learners' development and learning of discipline. This is consistent with Ali, Dada, Isiaka and Salmon (2014: 259) who posit that all acts of indiscipline that pervade secondary schools in Africa are the results of learning experiences that are gained with the influx of and acceptance of some Western cultures inconsistent with the practices and norms in the developing world. The learner's exposure to media violence in video games, TV news, cartoons, children's programmes, films, music and newspapers desensitises him/her to violent acts and makes him/her more likely to behave in an aggressive fashion (Walker *et al.* 2004:45; Huesman, Moise-Titus, Podolski & Eron 2003: 201-221; Pettit & Dodge 2003: 129). The depiction, idealisation and glorification of violence foster a general acceptance and legitimisation of violence and encourage learners to see violence as an entertainment and the violent heroes as role models (Comerci 1996: 405; Dukarm, Holl & McArarney 1995: 9; Elliot *et al.* 1998: 47). It is therefore regarded as endemic and culturally normative. Furthermore, Ramharai *et al*. (2006: 201) report that the easy access to the internet and mobile phone has democratised the availability of pornographic materials in schools and encourages the filming of sexual intercourse between friends and other sexually-related behaviours in classes. The misuse of internet, social networks and mobile phones are contributing factors to a lack of discipline among learners (National Economic and Social Council 2012: 21).

Educators report the increasing presence of mobile phones, which are used for text messaging in the classroom; the learners attend to the class lesson and at the same time attend to a conversation with the outside world. Miller, Berg, Cox, Carwile, Gerber, McGuire, Votteler and Williams (2011: 3) call this "multi-tasking". Bragulgia (2008: 59) states that most learners believe that using a mobile phone during the class seldom or never interferes with classroom learning; yet according to Block (2009: 1), educators consider texting during a class is impolite, disrespectful and hampers the learning process of the learners. Thus, use of mobile phones by the learners contributes to a lack of discipline.

Fields and Fields (2006: 331) maintain that media is a powerful force influencing the learner's behaviour and life. Adolescents are powerfully influenced by powerful media which is a useful tool of information in the era of rapid technological changes, but which may also negatively affect learners' behaviour (Beebeejaun-Muslum 2014: 125). According to Brooks and Goble (1997: 60), media convey the message that the use of violence is the best and most efficient means to solve conflicts. Thus, the media is considered a major cause of indiscipline among learners who are excessively exposed to it and to media violence.

2.5.2.6 Peer pressure

The peer group influences what the child values, knows, wears, eats and learns (Lukman & Hamadi 2014: 14). Peer pressure has a significant influence on learners as a lack of discipline is displayed by adolescents in groups rather than individually (Bezuidenhout 2013: 81). The hierarchical interaction of individual developmental needs and goals such as identity, affinity, mastery, defiance and competition for status push learners into status related confrontations among peers (Elliot *et al.* 1998: 45; Ramharai *et al.* 2006: 202). Friendship for adolescent learners is an important source of mutual understanding, intimacy and commitment (Zirpoli 2008: 140). However, in attempting to meet their developmental needs and goals, learners may be trained by the peer group in how to misbehave, may have recourse to drugs such as amphetamines or psychotrophic substances, tobacco, alcohol, weapons and other illegal substances, may bully other learners who are not part of the peer group, and also get involved with gangs outside the school (Temitayo, Nayaya & Lukman 2013: 11; Gitome, Katola & Nyabwari 2013: 6; Gasa 2012: 148; Satcher 2001: 49; Elliot *et al.* 1998: 45). In addition, body piercing, dyeing of hair and breaking of the school rules are ways for peer groups to react against school values and norms (Ramharai *et al.* 2006: 118). As a result, Yahaya *et al.* (2009: 667) state that learners are likely to easily retaliate with undesirable behaviour against other learners' attitudes to them, adopt negative attitudes that are modeled by their peers, and react with intense emotions in school. This is likely to increase the risk of a lack of discipline among learners when they are in their peer groups. Peer rejection also may

push a learner into behaviour problems towards other learners.

Furthermore, according to Walker *et al.* (2004:51) and Seegopaul (2016: 52), the grouping together of learners who are academically deficient and those who exhibit behaviour problems may promote a lack of discipline among learners. This is consistent with Jean Jacques Rousseau's statement in his book *Emile*, that a human child born innocent should be kept away from society and peers to protect him/her from becoming corrupted with indiscipline (Tremblay *et al.* 2009: 80). Fosco, Frank and Dishion (2011: 70) stipulate that coercion and contagion are the two processes which impact on learner behaviour. Coercion is an interpersonal and dynamic exchange during which aggressive behaviour is used to escape, reduce or avoid aversive experience by means of escape conditioning and reinforcement. On the other hand, contagion is a mutually influential peer process in which shared behaviour or emotional patterns are amplified through aggression or mutual reinforcement. This explains the mechanism of peer pressure acting on learner behaviour in schools.

These bio-ecological factors make it obvious that discipline is not only an individualised concept but also a context-bounded phenomenon. This is in line with the statement of Papacosta (2011: 131) that exposure to violence and victimisation in the community, family and school is a consistent factor that causes a lack of discipline among adolescents. By considering both categories of factors, the researcher has obtained a broader picture of the phenomenon which orients the researcher towards the most appropriate strategies that may be adopted to maintain positive discipline in the Mauritian state secondary schools.

2.6 THEORIES AND MODELS OF DISCIPLINE

In this paragraph, six theories related to the causes that influence discipline among learners are reviewed. According to Matthews and Ross (2010: 32) and Charles (2002: 222), theories provide a framework comprising the knowledge that gives us a better insight into working with young learners, and how the knowledge about the social world

may be used to help explain social phenomena. On the other hand, a model tries to represent the phenomenon. A model is often used in conjunction with a theory (Bhattacherjee 2012:14).

Although theories may be perceived as esoteric and remote from practice (Bush 2010: 24) as there is a theory-practice gap (English 2002: 3), Sharma (2009: 5) distinguishes between theory-for-understanding and theory-for-practice. The latter asserts that the relevance of theories should be judged by the extent to which it informs managerial action and contributes to the resolution of practical problems in schools. While Mustafa (2010: 11) points out that a theory is an orientation that focuses upon a limited range of aspects but ignore or makes assumptions about others, Mawonera and Lee (2005: 20) describes a model as a statement based on existing knowledge about a phenomenon to provide the best explanation about it.

Theories and models of discipline attempt to explain what discipline entails and hence help us to better understand the possible causes of a lack of discipline. This enhances the conceptual or theoretical understanding of a pluralism of causes (Griffiths 1997:372; Sharma 2009: 44). The researcher may then be able to select the most appropriate approaches to the phenomenon and avoid a one-dimensional stance.

The problem of a lack of discipline may be understood from the perspectives of many theorists. In this study the researcher makes an attempt to understand the problem from six perspectives: Dreikur's model of democratic discipline, Glasser's control theory of discipline, Patterson's social interactional stage model of discipline, Albert's model of cooperative learning, Curwin and Mendler's model of discipline with dignity, and the Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model of positive discipline. The researcher emphasises these models as the study examines learner discipline in the context of the secondary schools where the learners interact with all the stakeholders on the school premise; the perceptions of discipline for the learner should be linked with their self-identity, self-esteem, their social interactions with others, wherein they should be valued and respected. From an analysis of these selected models, discipline is treated as a

phenomenon that is learner-centered.

2.6.1 The Dreikurs' model of democratic discipline

Rudolf Dreikurs (1897-1972) was associated widely with the renowned Australian psychiatrist Alfred Adler in the field of family and child counselling, and he worked widely on misbehaviour and discipline in school classrooms.

According to Dreikurs (1968: 41-50), discipline is not punishment, but rather assisting learners to improve themselves. So, discipline is self-control, based on social interest. According to him, punishment should never be used. Since social belonging is viewed as important by the learner, his/her behaviour is self-determined or driven by purposeful goals. He further believes that the family plays a key role in meeting the learner's need for social belonging and that good discipline occurs best in a democratic setting.

2.6.1.1 The causes of a lack of discipline

Dreikurs (1968: 42) argued that four goals explain why learners manifest a lack of discipline, namely attention seeking, power and superiority seeking, revenge seeking and social withdrawal. These goals are described as *mistaken* because the child seeks a place of being special rather than of belonging and contributing as an equal member of the group (Dreikurs-Ferguson 2001: 332)

Learners believe that attention is necessary for self-worth. They need to feel the ability to complete tasks, to have a sense of belonging and believe that they can connect with the educator and the other learners (Mohapi 2007: 39-40). The best way to gain attention is by misbehaving. They try to seek proof of acceptance through receiving attention. They may disrupt the class, ask special favours, refuse to work unless the educator hovers over them, show off, constantly asking questions, act tough and engage in minor mischief. Otherwise, because they may feel totally worthless and unlovable, they may withdraw and display inadequacy with the hope that others will leave them alone (Van Wyk 2000:

45).

Learners may also believe that control over others enhances feelings of self-worth and therefore to achieve this, they demonstrate power and superiority. A need for power is expressed by arguing, contradicting, lying, having temper tantrums, disobey rules, and bullying. Dreikurs and Cassel (1972: 14) add that learners misbehave because they gain freedom without learning an accompanying sense of responsibility.

When learners have failed to gain status through getting attention or establishing power, their mistaken goal becomes to seek revenge, and they believe that they can feel more significant by paying others back for hurting them. They may become cruel, vicious and violent. Moreover, they consider it a victory to be disliked (Bear 2005: 101).

These four mistaken goals are hierarchical and learners show a lack of discipline because they make mistakes in their choices and behaviour. This is consistent with Dreikurs and Soltz (1992: 58-67) who postulate that learners choose to misbehave because they are under the mistaken belief that it will get them the recognition they seek. They believe that misbehaviour motivates them to develop the need to belong to a group. However, when they fail to do so, they are discouraged and therefore they manifest a lack of behaviour (Lyons, Ford & Arthur-Kelly 2011: 7). When they do not have alternative appropriate ways to meet their needs, learners misbehave.

2.6.2 Glasser's control theory of discipline

William Glasser was born in 1925. In his book *Schools without Failure* he argues that discipline problems should be viewed as an outcome of school failure to recognise and meet the psychological needs of adolescents, namely relatedness and the need to feel worthwhile. He believes that an unhealthy quality of the educator-learner relationship would result into discipline problems. However, after 1985, Glasser came forward with a new theory, called the Control theory of discipline in which he argues that adolescents

have five basic needs: the need for survival, the need to belong and love, the need to gain, the need to be free and the need to have fun (Glasser and Dotson 1998: 48)

Glasser (1990: 5) asserts that when learners are encouraged, quality education occurs. Educators should provide encouragement, stimulation and unending willingness to help learners, instead of coercing, scolding or punishing the learner. They should not blame the latter when rules are broken. Instead they should treat them with respect and courtesy to avoid the manifestation of a lack of discipline. The Glasser model of discipline is based on non-coercion discipline, as Glasser (1993: 30) further states that "*the better we know someone and the more we like about what we know, the harder we will work for that person*".

2.6.2.1 The causes of a lack of discipline

Glasser's model of non-coercive discipline assumes that the learner's needs should be met, there should be quality learning and teaching and educators should shift from boss teaching to lead teaching, emphasise the role of choice and responsibility in behaviour of learners and help them develop self-discipline and problem-solving skills (Bear 2005: 126; Mohapi 2007: 36). An absence of these assumptions is likely to cause a lack of learner discipline. Based on this model, Kianipour and Hoseini (2012: 118) contend that when learners are not intrinsically motivated, they show unwanted behaviour.

Learners feel pleasure when their basic needs are met and feel frustration when they are not met. Education which does not give priority to these needs is bound to fail. Thus, they manifest a lack of discipline when the five needs are unmet (Bear 2005: 124; Loyd 2005: 10). Glasser (in Brandt 1988: 43) asserts that "*unless we pay attention to what learners need, we will continue to have trouble teaching the basics successfully*". Glasser (2001: 5) asserts that schools which are not inviting and which do not provide opportunities for success, happiness and intellectual growth for learners encourage the latter to choose to adopt inappropriate behaviour. When learners lack a positive self-concept or success identity, they are likely to misbehave (Zeeman 2006: 15).

Learners will not commit themselves to learning if they find their school experience boring, frustrating or dissatisfying (Glasser 1986: 53-56). If learning does not allow them to have fun and they do not realise the purpose of teaching and learning, they are likely to manifest a lack of discipline (Van Wyk 2000: 74). If the classroom and the school-wide environment do not align with the learners' 'quality worlds' in terms of memories of past people, places and events which together are perceived as the most satisfying and ideal worlds, the learners will manifest a lack of school discipline (Lyons *et al.* 2011: 9). Learners may also show undesirable behaviour when there is the absence of the seven caring habits in their relationships suggested by Glasser (2005) in Zeeman (2006: 15-16): supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting and negotiating differences.

The way the curriculum is presented to the learners and the methods of evaluation of learning is likely to affect the behaviour of the learners. When the school curriculum is not useful or relevant to the learner's life and the evaluation of the learner's performance is not properly done, then he/she may display a lack of discipline (Glasser 1998: 25).

The teaching style of educators may also influence learner behaviour. Glasser (2001: 15-22) distinguishes between a boss educator and a lead educator. A boss educator is one who sets the task and standards for learner learning, talks rather than demonstrates, grades learners without the learner's involvement in evaluation and uses coercion when learners resist. On the other hand, a lead educator is one who dedicates his/her teaching time to organising interesting activities and providing assistance to learners and who helps the latter develop self-motivation. Boss educators in classrooms are likely to make learners misbehave; the presence of lead educators will encourage them to behave (Bohmann 2003: 12). According to Brandt (1988: 39), when secondary school learners do not get the opportunities to feel that in class they can talk to and work with others, they demonstrate undesirable behaviour. Glasser (Mohapi 2007: 36) describes misbehaviour as a bad choice and appropriate behaviour as a good choice.

2.6.3 Patterson's social interactional stage model of discipline

Patterson, Reid, and Dishion (1992) came forward with this model in their book, *Antisocial boys*. They provide an interactive perspective that considers coercive and inappropriate parenting practices are the major causes of the emergence and development of severe indiscipline among children (Reinke & Herman 2002: 550).

2.6.3.1 The causes of a lack of discipline

In their "causal wheel", Patterson, Reid and Dishion (1992: 9-10) illustrate the following causes of antisocial behaviour: ineffective parental discipline, lack of parental supervision, parental use of physical punishment, academic failure, parental rejection, peer rejection, member of deviant group, low self-esteem, and social disadvantage. They studied the behaviour of children from the social interactional perspective since they believe that "parent-child and child-peer interactions are the key determinants for the socialisation process of the learner" (Patterson *et al.* 1992: 3). According to Patterson's model, children show a lack of discipline in their early childhood when their parents use parenting practices which are inconsistent, punitive and harsh rather than clearly defined, firm but warm responses when the former behave inappropriately (Patterson, Forgatch, Yoerger & Stoolmiller 1998: 140). From this pattern of coercive behaviour, Eddy, Leve, and Fagot (2001:17) argue that the negative behaviour of the child is reinforced and in turn he/she is likely to manifest oppositional and antisocial behaviour in the future. So, there is a reciprocal interaction of parental behaviour and child behaviour.

Reinke and Herman (2002: 551) postulate that the Patterson's coercion model implies that the child is likely to manifest a lack of discipline outside the family also as he/she grows in the sense that the characteristics of the relationships between the parents and the child such as coercive behaviour, anger escalation, reactivity and negative affect, shape the working models of relationships of that child. The child is likely to expect conflict with others, punishment from and onto others and rejection in relationships, hence developing a sense of mistrust towards others.

2.6.4 Albert's model of cooperative discipline

Linda Albert was influenced by the work of Rudolf Dreikurs on school discipline and she was convinced that learners' lack of discipline is a consequence of learners' attempts to meet certain needs. In her book, *A Teacher's Guide to Cooperative Discipline* (2003), she develops her model and claims that discipline occurs best when educators and learners work together in a genuinely cooperative way. Discipline is maintained when there is a positive classroom control through appropriate interventions and when learners' self-esteem is built through encouragement (Haider, Khan, Munir, Latif & Bari 2012: 117).

Albert asserts that learners choose their behaviour and therefore educators should not directly control learner behaviour but can only influence it (Albert 1995: 43). Moreover, educators should work cooperatively with learners to develop the code of conduct with the consequences for the classroom. Encouragement is the most powerful teaching tool for educators, implying that a democratic style of management best promotes good discipline (Charles 2002: 69).

2.6.4.1 The causes of a lack of discipline

Albert (UNESCO 2006: 39) contends that most behaviour problems occur because learners attempt unsuccessfully to meet a universal psychological need, namely the need to belong. When learners do not feel capable of completing tasks, of connecting successfully with their educators and other learners and do not know that they contribute to the group because the educator-learner relationship is not based on trust, mutual respect and understanding, they are not valued and when the classroom structure is not appropriate for this classroom climate, they are likely to misbehave. They will feel worthless (Albert 2003: 13). As explained in Dreikurs' Model of discipline, learners pursue four mistaken goals when they show a lack of discipline: attention-seeking, power-seeking, revenge-seeking and avoidance of failure (Albert 1996: 117).

Learners may also manifest a lack of discipline when they simply do not know the proper way to behave. According to Albert (1995: 44), cooperative discipline assumes that learners will misbehave again if the strategies are not accompanied by encouragement techniques that build self-esteem and strengthen the learners' motivation to cooperate and learn.

2.6.5 Curwin and Mendler's model of discipline with dignity

Richard Curwin was born in 1944 and specialises in school discipline. Allen Mendler was born in 1949. He was a school psychologist and psycho-educational consultant. The central focus of Curwin and Mendler's work is on helping all learners to have a better opportunity for success in school through building a sense of dignity and providing a sense of hope.

According to Curwin and Mendler's model of discipline with dignity (Van Wyk 2000: 86-88), chronically misbehaving learners lose hope of encountering anything worthwhile in school and they do all they can to prevent damage to their dignity. They come forward with five principles of effective discipline, namely discipline is a very important part of teaching, short term solutions are rarely effective, learners must always be treated with dignity, discipline must not interfere with motivation to learn and responsibility is more important than obedience. Curwin and Mendler (1997: 24-32) suggest a four-phase plan to help learners move towards value-guided behaviour. The principal may identify the core values that the school may wish to emphasise, creating rules and consequences based on the core values identified, model the core values during interactions with the educators and eliminate interventions that violate core values. So, this model encourages school wide approaches to a lack of learner discipline.

2.6.5.1 The causes of a lack of discipline

According to Curwin and Mendler's Model, many learners misbehave when their sense of personal dignity is threatened. Learners at risk break rules to gain a measure of control

over a system that has damaged their sense of dignity (Curwin 1992: 49). They protect themselves by withdrawing themselves or acting as if they do not care. They exert their control by refusing to comply with educator requests, arguing and talking back to the educator, tapping pencils and swopping books, withdrawing from class activities and by being aggressive. This is because when learners' dignity is damaged, motivation is reduced, resistance is increased and the desire for revenge is promoted (Mohapi 2007: 48). By manifesting a lack of discipline they try to satisfy their needs for attention and power. Also, those whose behaviour prevent their learning and are in danger of failing in school are unable to maintain dignity through achievement. Price (2008: 17) maintains that if educators treat learners in undignified manners, the latter will learn to hate school and learning. So, they misbehave to protect themselves as the educators have failed to articulate to them that schooling is to their benefit (Mohapi 2007: 47).

Curwin and Mendler (1999: 24) state that discipline problems may arise because of learner boredom, feelings of powerlessness, unclear limits, a lack of acceptable outlets for feelings, and attacks on dignity. Thus, learners manifest misbehaviour when they see themselves in a learning environment which is not effective (Haider *et al.* 2012: 117).

2.6.6 Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model of positive discipline

In 2000, Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott and Stephen Glenn came forward with an approach to discipline that puts faith in learners' ability to control themselves, cooperate, assume responsibility and behave in a dignified manner. In a learning climate that fosters these characteristics, it is clear that (i) learners never experience humiliation when they fail, (ii) learners learn how to cooperate with educators and fellow learners to find joint solutions to problems (iii) learners are provided with an environment that instils excitement for life and learning (Charles 2002: 104-105).

2.6.6.1 The causes of a lack of discipline

According to the Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model of positive discipline, it is crucial for

learners to develop skills of self-control, adaptability, cooperation and judgement; they should be given the opportunity to participate in class and in group resolution of problems and educators must show they truly care about the learners. They also assert that discipline problems are reduced in a climate of acceptance, dignity, respect and encouragement (Bohmann 2003: 7). Nelsen *et al.* (1997:24) assume that educator behaviour such as assuming, explaining, directing, expecting and suggesting to learners what they ought to do are barriers to good relationships. On the other hand, educator behaviour such as checking, exploring, encouraging, celebrating and respecting are builders of good relationships. According to Chadsey and McVittie (2006: 1) and UNESCO (2006: 6-7), this positive discipline approach is therefore the use of solution focused discipline to build a powerful learning community that models mutual respect and supports academic excellence.

The learner can have a behaviour problem when he/she does not have the perception of personal capabilities, significance in primary relationships, personal power to influence his/her life and when he/she does not have the intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, strategic skills and judgemental skills (Charles 2002: 106-107). These are the "significant seven".

According to Charles (2005: 114-115), the perception of personal capability refers to the learner's perception that he/she can express himself/herself and be listened to without concern about success or failure. The perception of significance in primary relationships refers to the learner's perception that others listen to his/her feelings, thoughts and ideas and take them seriously. The perception of personal power to influence one's life is the learner's perception that he/she may make mistakes in a safe atmosphere, take responsibility for the mistakes and learn from them without being judged negatively.

Intrapersonal skills are the abilities of the leaners to understand their personal emotions and behaviour by hearing feedbacks from classmates. Interpersonal skills are conflict resolution skills where the learners are able to dialogue, share, listen, empathise, cooperate and negotiate to solve problems. Strategic skills are the abilities of learners to

adapt to problems by responding to the limits and consequences imposed by everyday life. The judgemental skills are their abilities to evaluate situations and make good choices (Charles 2002: 107).

When learners cannot understand their feelings, communicate, cooperate and work with others, adapt to problems and evaluate situations and make good choices, then he/she may show a lack of discipline. A lack of discipline among learners may occur when they lack the above three empowering perceptions and the four essential skills. Educators and parents make a mistake in thinking that we have to make children worse in order to make them behave better (Nelsen, Lott & Glenn 2000: 120).

The various models of discipline discussed above have provided an insight into the various possible causes of a lack of discipline. The Dreikur's model and the Albert model postulate that learners show a lack of discipline in order to seek attention, power and superiority, revenge and to withdraw. In addition, the Albert's model also asserts that the learners choose to misbehave when they do not appreciate connectedness to the school. This is consistent with Glasser's model which also identifies unhealthy educator-learner relationships, teaching styles, curriculum and autocratic leadership as causes of a lack of discipline. Moreover, Nelson *et al.*'s model concurs with Curwin and Mendler's model and Glasser's model that learners misbehave when they are not held responsible for their mistakes. Patterson's model of discipline states that discipline should be non-coercive so that learners are treated with respect and dignity. This is also the basis of Nelsen *et al.*'s model as well as Albert's model. These models are likely to be of importance to the researcher for deeper analysis of the phenomenon of discipline.

These models serve as a basis to the researcher for better understanding the causes of indiscipline in general and they give him insights into the possible causes of a lack of learner's discipline in the Mauritian context. The Dreikur's model of democratic discipline and the Albert's model of cooperative discipline outline that the learner manifests a lack of discipline as he/she has the need for attention-seeking, power-sesking, revenge-sesking and social withdrawal as well as when he/she lacks a sense of belonging

to the school. Recent studies on learner discipline in Mauritius have found that learners manifest a lack of discipline at secondary schools becaue they have the desirte to seek revenge and they lack power (Govinda-Seenauth 2016: 49 & Seepaul 2016: 24). Moreover, Sookur (2016: 41) found that the family atmosphere and the type of parenting do have an impact on the learner's behaviour in schools wich are found in socially discadvantaged localities of Mauritius: violent parents who use corporal punishment on their children; indecent parents; and parents who are drug-addicted and criminals are badbehaviour models to their children. This is consistent with Patterson's social interactional change model of discipline. The Curwin and Mendler's model of discipline with dignity stipulates that when the learner's dignity is threatened, he/she is likely to manifest a lack of discipline at schools. Indeed, the attitudes of the educator and that of the principal may threaten the learner's self esteem. Seegopaul (2016: 53) found that 67% of learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius recognised that the negative school climate brings about a sense of non-belongingness to the learners and, as a matter of fact, they misbehave. Besides, educators who do not perform well or who manifest a lack of classroom management skills demotive learners who feel bored and therefore bunk their classes. Indeed, the Glasser's control model of discipline states that when educators fail to create an effective teaching and learning environment, do not create opportunities for learning success and presented a too much academic curriculum, learners manifest a lack of discipline. Obviously, following the discussion in paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.4.3, the elitism system of education with a knowledge-based education in Mauritius is likely to be sources of causes of a lack of learner's lack of discipline in the state secondary schools.

The above discussion of the various models of discipline enable the researcher to understand that the causes of learner indiscipline may arise from the family background, the parenting styles, attitudes of parents to discipline and their styles of life; the influence of peer pressure, the desire of learners for power, attention from others, for revenge and to withdraw from others; the educator's attitudes towards them which may have a negative impact on their dignity, self esteem, and self efficacy, and their sense of school connectedness; the nature of the learners'relationship with the educators and other learners at school; and the type of school curriculum presented to them.

2.7 SUMMARY

The phenomenon of discipline has been contextualised as a complex problem that is the result of a multiplicity of factors that are both within and around the learners in the learning and teaching process. A discussion of the current system of Mauritian education and the various theories of discipline have provided better insights into the problem of a lack of discipline in secondary schools in that country.

This chapter has served as a background for the analysis of the appropriate strategic role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in secondary schools. Without the principal's sincere support and commitment, school-based behaviour management strategies will not be successful. In the next chapter, the school-based behaviour management approach is discussed along with reactive and proactive strategies to school discipline.

CHAPTER THREE

BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The various internal and external factors influencing the learner behaviour in schools have been discussed and analysed in the literature review in chapter two. However, another objective of the researcher is to determine the various strategies that the principal, as the change agent in the school, should adopt to maintain or restore discipline in state secondary schools. In this third chapter, the researcher reviews some of the main behavioural management strategies that are pertinent in positive learner discipline models. He also examines the different research-based behaviour management interventions that are currently implemented in secondary schools. The role of the principal is emphasised in the implementation of the behavioural management strategies.

3.2 MODELS OF DISCIPLINE: BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Secondary schools have been ineffective in responding to learners' lack of discipline by punishing and criminalising learners, according to Ayadin (2010: 666). As a result, there has been a shift from the reactive, punitive approaches to discipline to the comprehensive, proactive and preventive positive approaches to discipline. Suvall (2009: 547) claims that when schools do not address behaviour problems in ways that promote positive norms, their discipline management strategies are not meeting the needs of their learners. In the same vein, it is fundamental to underline that positive discipline is held up as the most appropriate method of learner discipline management in the context of the twenty-first century's demand for respect for the inalienable rights of humanity in general, and of the child, in particular (Oosthuizen 2010: 20).

This chapter will provide an overview of various models of positive behaviour management. As pointed out by Tiwani (2010: 58) there is no single model that can

successfully work effectively for each and every learner with discipline problems at all times. The researcher considers it important to look into the models as they will help him have a deeper understanding and a wider insight into the applicability of the positive preventive and interventional discipline strategies (Wiersma & Jurs 2009: 20). The models discussed below examine classroom as well as school-wide preventive measures and interventions to discipline. The Jones' Tools for teaching model, Nelson, Lott and Glenn's model, the Responsive classroom model, Johnson's and Johnson's model, the Olweus' bullying prevention model, Canter's model, the school-wide positive behavioural support (SWPBS) model and the response to intervention and instruction (RTII) model are discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2.1 Jones's tools for teaching model: Discipline, instructions and motivation

Frederic Jones developed the positive classroom management theory to help improve educator effectiveness in motivating, managing and instructing learners. For learners to learn, they must enjoy learning (Jones 2007: 1). So, he developed positive techniques to promote discipline among learners. According to Jones (1987: 19), positive discipline "deals with the technology of managing *group* behaviour within the classroom in order to reduce disruptions and increase cooperative and responsible behaviour on the part of learners". The objective of positive discipline is "the internalisation of discipline or self-discipline" (Jones 1987: 19). Manning and Butcher (2013: 25) add that there should be emotions, self-esteem, values and relationship building that convey dignity, cooperation, respect, and demonstrate skills, caring and effort. It is obvious that educators and principals should not assume autocratic leadership, request strict obedience and attempt to control the learners through fear. Jones (1987: 25) also stresses that educators and principals should use positive and 'cheap' management techniques (i.e., techniques that are simple and that require the least planning, effort, time and paperwork). This is because he found massive time wasting in classrooms, and proposed a system of preferred activity time (Jones 1987: 161).

3.2.1.1 Jones's "Chair of discipline and management"

The Jones's model has four legs to its "Chair of discipline and management", namely (1) limit setting, (2) a backup system, (3) responsibility training and (4) omission training (Wolfgang 2009:58).

(1) Limit setting

Limit setting consist of actions taken by the educator to control the learner's natural reflexes and prompt them back to work while learners are doing classwork or the educator is teaching (Wolfgang 2009: 59). When educators use the skill of limit setting, they use their bodies to say what their mouths were about to say (Manning & Bucher 2013: 128). Limit setting is used "*to calm the learners and get them back on task*" (Jones 1987:86). Jones (1996: 26-32) maintains that "*Calm is strength. Upset is weakness.*" The educator should never be under stress and regress to a fight-flight position, and he/she should never use silly talk, that is saying words that mean nothing. According to Charles (2002: 56), Jones postulates specific body language such as physical proximity, eye contact, posture and facial expression. Van Wyk (2000: 64) claims that discipline is ninety percent effective body language.

Jones (Van Wyk 2000: 65) noted that most misbehaviour occurred some distance away from the educator. Wolfgang (2009: 63) postulates that the educator may use three space distances, namely proximity-far, for across the room; proximity-near, when he/she is three feet or at the edge of the learner's comfort bubble; and proximity-intimate when he/she is inches from the learner's face. This is a technique of signalling learners to desist and return to their work. "*Proximity is accountability. Distance is safety*" (Jones 1987: 57). The educator should keep an acceptable distance from the learner so that he or she may monitor each learner's behaviour. Additionally, Manning and Bucher (2013: 129) assert that the educator can engage in camping out, or standing either in front of or behind a learner, to encourage the misbehaving learner to correct the behaviour.

According to Jones (1987: 90), eye contact is one of the most sensitive barometers of emotional calm or upset on a body. It conveys the message that the educator is in control of the teaching-learning situation and is committed to discipline. Expanding on this view Van Wyk (2000: 65) postulates that learners avert their eyes when educators look directly at them. This implies that learners realise that the educator, by so doing, takes continual note of their behaviour, be it good or bad. However, eye contact should be used with care due to cultural sensitivities, and as consistently stated by Van Wyk (2000: 65); it must be practised before it can be used effectively.

Facial and body expressions communicate many messages to learners. Charles (2002: 57) asserts that facial expressions can convey enthusiasm, seriousness, enjoyment and appreciation which encourage good behaviour, but they may also reveal boredom, annoyance and resignation which may encourage a lack of learner discipline. Furthermore, Van Wyk (2000: 66) states that slight shakes of the head can stop misbehaviour before it gets underway and frowns show unmistaken disapproval.

Wolfgang (2009: 63-70) identifies eight steps in limit setting. First, the educator must have his/her eye in the back of his/her head (with-it-ness). In other words, he/she must "check it out." "Check it out" means the educator must keep his/her broad perceptions running even when he/she is focused on one learner or activity and he/she must 'surface' regularly to usually scan and check things out. Second, the educator should terminate instruction. Indeed, the Jones's model cardinal rule is discipline comes before instruction. In other words, when the educator notices a learner misbehaving while he/she is instructing, he/she should stop the instruction to deal with the misbehaviour. Third, the educator should turn, look and say the learner's name and ensure the latter has got the message and is not fooling him/her by the pseudo-compliance behaviour in the discipline poker game. Fourth, the educator must walk to the edge of the learner's desk, never breaking eye contact, without saying a word to avoid losing the confrontation with the learner who will capitulate and get back to work. Fifth, the educator breaks the "comfort bubble of omnipotence", that is he/she stands before the learner's desk and signals to the latter a prompt to the desirable behaviour or the behaviour the educator wants the learner

to do. Sixth, the educator places his/her palms on the learner's desk so that the latter realises that he/she is willing to camp out in front as long as it takes. Seventh, the educator camps out from behind. Finally, the educator's moves out by walking back to his/her original position.

 (2) The backup system

Jones (1987:256) defines a backup system as a series of responses designed to meet force with force so that the uglier the learner's behaviour becomes, the deeper he/she digs his/her hole with no escape. "*It is a carefully designed hierarchy of negative sanctions which is designed as part of a larger management system to be used as infrequently as possible and for as brief a period of time as possible*" (Jones 1987: 301). Manning and Bucher (2013: 131) add that an effective backup system consists of a series of discrete procedures or responses arranged in ascending order so that educators or principals can deal effectively with a wide range of unacceptable behaviours. Jones (1987: 257-259)) identifies three levels of back-up namely, level 1, which consists of small backup responses that take place in the classroom and are private between the educator and the learner; level 2, which consists of medium backup responses mostly carried out by the educator but are more public; and level 3, which consists of large backup responses that is a time-costly process involving high public visibility and the participation of others such as a counsellor, the principal or even the judicial system. Wolfgang (2009: 75) states that in the level 1 back-up system the educator may adopt ear warning, that is he/she issues a non-public warning in the ear of the misbehaving learner and quiet time when the learner is requested to go to an out-of-the-way area to reflect on his/her action and to decide to change. According to Jones (1987: 258-259), the level 2 refers to school policy that consists of a school discipline code and a hierarchy of consequences such as time out, public warning, threat, being sent to the hall, detention after school, loss of privilege, parent conference, lowering the learner's grade and extra homework. According to Manning and Bucher (2013: 132) the level 3 backup system requires the construction of a buffer between the school system and the legal authorities. Jones (1987: 281-301) recommends sending learners to the office (the office referral system) and corporal

punishment. Manning and Bucher (2013: 132) recommends psychological testing or therapy, a special remedial program, a rehabilitation program, referral to the child protection or social services or even prosecution in the juvenile court. Jones (1987: 301) even suggests more extreme strategies such as delivering a learner to a parent at work; accompanying the learner to school; calling the police; and expulsion.

(3) Responsibility training

Responsibility training is a tool for helping the educator to obtain positive or voluntary cooperation from the learner (Wolfgang 2009: 80). Jones (1987: 151) maintains that the goal of discipline is to train young people to become self-directing and to be responsible for their own behaviour. He adds that for the learners to demonstrate positive cooperation or responsible behaviour, these conditions must prevail, namely they are responsible for the time-currency that they earn, they are responsible for the control over the consumption of the time-currency, and they must be responsible for living with the consequences if they overcome and run out of time. The educator allocates learners a finite amount of time, the consumption or use of which depends on the learner's behaviour. Jones (1987: 159) developed a system of Preferred Activity Time (PAT) to help the educator manage time. The system uses time as the reinforcer (the bonuses are more PAT; the penalties are less PAT). By giving and taking time the educator can hold the class responsible for the way the time is consumed. As such, learners develop cooperative behaviour, as it is a group accountability system. PAT is not free time to "*kick back*" (Jones 1987: 161). Wolfgang (2009: 83) comments that PATs are full activities that hold interest for learners but have embedded in them a routine of drill and practice, or content review of the subject matter. Jones (2000: 94) maintains that educators can use PAT in preferred instructional activities that the learners are fond of doing such as an art project, music project, learning games, computer laboratory work, and journal writing. The educator should use the Grandma's Rule so as to hold them accountable for their behaviour; otherwise, there is the rule of penalties. A learner does not get his/her rewards or incentives until he/she demonstrates what the educator wants.

Put more clearly, "*You have to finish your dinner before you get the dessert*" (Jones 1987: 153). Yet, every penalty implies a corresponding bonus.

(4) Omission training

PAT bonuses and incentives are earned by the entire class. However, there may be some learners whose misbehaviour repeatedly ruins PAT for the rest of the class; and this may prevent positive cooperation. Omission training (OT) is an individualised program of incentives for the very defiant learner. "*It is a generic name given to an incentive program system that rewards the omission of an unwanted behaviour*" (Jones 1987: 219). When the learner misbehaves, the educator privately explains to him/her that he/she does not have to participate in PAT but he/she wants the learner to be successful with his/her own work and behaviour. The educator explains to the learner that he/she will use a timer and when he/she behaves well, he will earn time for himself/herself, and for PAT also for the class. Thus, he/she may be a hero and this is a strong incentive for good behaviour. When he/she misbehaves, he/she loses time for himself/herself, not for the class.

Jones (1987: 221-222) identifies the following steps for omission training: (a) abort the confrontation by removing the misbehaving learner from the responsibility training program, and deferring problem-solving to a non-public place at a future time; (b) estimate the OT time interval, that is the maximum duration of time in which the learner might reasonably be expected to act appropriately so as to earn rewards; (c) pinpoint target behaviours; (d) conference with the target learner; and (e) buying back into the responsibility.

Charles (2002: 64) suggests the following to introduce positive discipline in schools: (a) discuss limit setting with learners and formulate rules about behaviour; (b) explain to learners that when they violate rules, their behaviour will be corrected with body language; (c) discuss incentives and procedures for managing incentives, (d) discuss the backup system that will be used when learners misbehave seriously and refuse to comply with requests. However, Kohn (1996: 9) reports that secondary school learners may have

learned to rely on power rather than reason, to exhibit aggression rather than comparison, because they have seen adults doing this.

From the assumptions and principles of the Jones' tools teaching model, the principal must provide professional development opportunities to educators on learner discipline management strategies that adopt a positive approach to discipline. Educators in the modern school need to be well equipped and trained about limit setting, compliance techniques and the use of rewards and penalties to maintain discipline among the secondary school learners. From the researcher's teaching experience in secondary schools, it has been observed that educators with or without pre-service educator training do not have any training in effective classroom management. However, it is also obvious that the principal should also provide personal development opportunities to learners through the curriculum so that learners are equally concerned about their responsibilities as to their rights as learners of the school as an organisation.

3.2.2 The responsive classroom model

The responsive classroom model is a model for the entire school. It was developed in 1981, by classroom educators at Northeast Foundation for Children in the United States (US) to use "a set of practices that help educators create classroom environments that enhance the feelings of belonging of the child, foster his/her social skills, consider his/her developmental levels, connect the parents to his/her learning goals, and produce an environment that promotes academic learning" (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer 2004: 324-325). Dr. Sara Rimm-Kaufman undertook a three-year randomised controlled study between 2008 and 2011 to examine the effectiveness of the responsive classroom model. According to Brock, Nishida, Chiong, Grimm and Rimm-Kaufman (2008: 135), this model aims to promote self-reliance, build a sense of community, and helps learners to become engaged in their own learning. Rimm-Kaufman and Chiu (2007: 408) add that principals and educators take a proactive rather than a reactive stance towards discipline and provide a holistic support for learner growth and development as there are clear expectations for behaviour. Brock *et al.* (2008: 144) postulate, in the same vein, that the

model allows learners to anticipate consequences for transgressions, freeing the educators from constantly redirecting misbehaviour or negotiating punishment throughout the school year. Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer (2004: 324) point out that empathy helps educators understand learners and their needs and hence, they can provide a structure that provides guidelines and limits for learner behaviour as learners will develop self-control. In the responsive classroom model, the principal encourages educator collaboration, educators meeting to discuss teaching and problem-solving practices, and uses community groups and external resources for the educators' own professional growth and development. Also, Rimm-Kaufman, Storm, Sawyer, Pianta and LaParo (2006: 152-155) declare that responsive classroom practices focus on the process of learning, proactive approaches to discipline, opportunity for learner choice, collaboration and reflection, and the teaching of self-regulatory skills. According to Brock *et al.* (2008: 133) the seven principles of the responsive classroom model highlights the following, namely (a) provide equally emphasis on social and academic learning, (b) focus on the content of learning as well as the process of learning by the child; (c) understand the support of social growth to academic growth; (d) emphasise critical social skills such as responsibility, empathy, cooperation and self-control; (e) understand that not only academic content but also the cultural and developmental characteristics of the learner are important; (f) understand and work with his/her family, and (g) understand and support the ways in which educators may work in close collaboration.

The various practices of responsive classroom are: (1) morning meetings, (2) rules and logical consequences, (3) academic choice and grounded discovery, (4) classroom organisation, (5) communication with parents, and (6) teaching as a collective enterprise and a promoting tool for collaboration (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer 2004: 325). The morning meeting is a daily class meeting that provides time for educators and learners to share, plan and participate in group activities so that there is a positive start of the school day. During the morning meeting, learners and educators may greet each other; learners may interact, practise pro-social behaviour and use public speaking skills by sharing information on personal or national themes. Moreover, the educator and the learner work together at the beginning of the year to develop positively structured classroom rules

which the educator models. The educator will remind the learners about the rules and redirect behaviour rather than providing punishment or using tokens for behaviour modification reinforcement. As the consequence for breaking a rule is developmentally appropriate and individually relevant, they relate to the rule itself.

Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer (2004: 325) define academic choice as a choice-based approach to activity-based learning that increases children's investment in learning and creates a forum for reflection with peers. They illustrate academic choice by stating that an educator may design a spelling activity that allows learners to practise by using a computer, pen and pad, the whiteboard, or shaving cream. In contrast, when the educator uses guided discovery, he/she introduces classroom materials in a systematic way that builds a common vocabulary, creates clear expectations for use and establishes routines for their case (Rimm-Kaufman & Sawyer 2004: 337).

The educator should organise the classroom in such a way that encourages independence, cooperation and productivity. In other words, furniture should be arranged to meet both social and academic needs, and materials provided to learners who are allowed to use them independently. The interior loop desk arrangement is recommended by Manning and Bucher (2013: 140). This will allow the educator to reach any learner quickly and provide side walkways to allow movement.

The responsive classroom model also advocates a two-way flow of communication between parents and educators and parent involvement in goal setting for learners. Rimm-Kaufman and Sawyer (2004: 339) postulate that regular parent-educator conferences, materials sent home regularly and parent involvement in class activities help create a successful parent-educator partnership.

Lastly, the model encourages buddy educators who work together to support each other's efforts to discipline the most difficult learners (Sawyer & Rimm-Kaufman 2007: 212). Manning and Bucher (2013: 139) stress that home groups and network meetings are also used. Home groups comprise of educators from across grade levels in a particular school

who meet to discuss school goals, problems, issues and the successful implementation of responsive classroom practices. Network meetings include educators from various schools who use responsive classroom approaches.

Although the responsive classroom model's ultimate goal is to teach learners to discipline themselves, Gettinger and Kohler (2006: 90) point out that a "one-size-fit-all" approach is rarely effective. The responsive classroom model does not always reflect the dynamic nature of the classroom. This is because it is too structured. Also, Manning and Bucher (2013: 142) assert that though this model discourages punishment, punitive measures sometimes will be needed as the same discipline management strategies do not work with all learners in the classroom.

According to the responsive classroom model, it is obvious the principal's role is to promote a school culture of order and discipline through the establishment of positive relationships between the educator and the learners, the learners and the non-teaching staff, the learners and the school, and among the learners themselves. This model advocates a relationships-driven principalship where the principal's role is to establish an active partnership between the school and the parents. He/she promotes a more democratic approach to discipline in the sense that the educators work in close collaboration not only with their colleagues but also with parents and learners on whom school procedures, principles and practices are not imposed, but with whom they are discussed and implemented collaboratively and thus more effectively.

3.2.3 Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model: Positive discipline

This model was discussed in chapter two, paragraph 2.6.6 to underline the causes of a lack of discipline among secondary school learners. Carey (2009: 5) states that in the positive discipline model, principals and educators must teach learners to respect the rights of others and feel empathy and to learn how to behave. Nelsen et *al.* (2000: 27) state that the educator has to reach the heart before teaching the head. They add that any form of punishment or permissiveness is disrespectful and discouraging and should be

avoided. Expanding on this view, Nelsen (2006: 13) reasons that punishment may work on a short-term basis, but educators are often fooled by immediate results when the long term results are negative.

Nelsen *et al.* (1997: 9) identify the significant seven, consisting of three *empowering perceptions* and four *essential skills* that the principal and educators should impress on learners so as to maintain positive discipline in schools. The three empowering perceptions are (a) perceptions of personal capabilities, that is principals should create a safe climate where learners may experience learning and behaviour without judgments about success or failure; (b) perceptions of significance in primary relationships, that is principals listen to the feelings, thoughts and ideas of learners and take them seriously; and (c) perceptions of the personal power of influence in life, that is principals give learners the opportunity to contribute in useful manners and help them to accept their power to create positive environments. The four essential skills are (a) intrapersonal skills, that is principals give learners the opportunities to gain understanding of their emotions and behaviour by getting feedback from their classmates, and they become accountable, for their actions and the results of their behaviour; (b) interpersonal skills, that is learners can develop interpersonal skills through dialogue and sharing, listening and empathising, cooperation, negotiation, and conflict resolution; (c) systematic skills, that is learners respond to the limits and consequences of everyday life with responsibility, adaptability, flexibility, and integrity because they do not experience punishment or disapproval; and (d) judgment skills, that is principals give learners the opportunities and encouragement to practise making decisions in an environment that emphasises learning from mistakes rather than paying for mistakes through punishment.

Manning and Bucher (2013: 153) assert that respect and encouragement are two most important elements for ensuring positive discipline. Yet, Nelsen *et al.* (1997: 24) maintain that principals and educators may create barriers to their use. Educators and principals use five barriers with learners that show disrespect and discouragement and builders that show respect and encouragement. Instead of assuming they know what learners think and feel without asking them (Barrier 1: Assuming), principals and

educators should check with learners (Builder 1: Checking) to learn their unique perception and capabilities and to discover how learners are maturing in their ability to deal with problems. Instead of doing things for learners (Barrier 2: Rescuing/Explaining), they should allow them to learn from their own experiences (Builder 2: Exploring) and to help each other learn to make choices. Also, they often direct learners to do things in disrespectful manners (Barrier 3: Directing), that reinforce dependency, and eliminate passive-aggressive behaviour. Attentively, educators and principals should allow learners to be involved in planning and problem-solving activities that will help them become self-directed (Builder 3: Inviting/Encouraging). When educators and principals expect learners to do certain things (Barrier 4: Expecting), the potential becomes the standard and learners are judged to falling short. When the former demand too much in a relatively short period of time, learners may feel discouraged. The former should rather celebrate the direction of a learner's maturity or potential. Fifth, they may forget that learners are not mature adults and expect them to act and think like adults (Barrier 5: Adultism). But, Nelsen *et al.* (1997: 24) recommend that principals and educators should interact with learners to understand the differences in how people perceive things (Builder 5: Respecting).

Nelsen *et al.* (1997: 3) recognise the harmful effects of a lack of learner discipline in schools and therefore they maintain that class meetings can lessen discipline problems. This is because they meet the two basic human needs of learners, namely the need for belonging and the need for control over one's own life (Bohman 2003: 4). Pluchinsky (2010: 6) posits that the purpose of a class meeting in the secondary school setting is to collaboratively establish norms for behaviour, develop a sense of community, and maintain positive communication skills between all members of the school community. According to Nelsen *et al.* (2000: 60) and Manning and Bucher (2013: 152), the eight building blocks of class meetings can contribute to effective class meetings and help in a variety of classroom management situations such as understanding reasons for misbehaviour, developing communication skills, practising role-playing and focusing on non-punitive solutions. Nelsen and Lott (2006) in Charles (2008: 117) provide the following guidelines for holding effective class meetings: (a) form a circle which allows

face-to-face contact; (b) show appreciation instead of compliments in the case of secondary school learners, (c) create an agenda; (d) develop communication skills such as turn-taking to speak, attentive listening, and using I-statements without blaming others, showing respect for others, finding mutually acceptable solutions to problems, and framing conclusions as a team, (e) learn about separate realities, that is there is more than one way; it does not have to be "*my*" way (Nelsen, Lott and Glenn 1997:64, in Manning and Bucher 2013:154); (f) recognise the reasons people do what they do (in terms of Dreikur's four mistaken goals of misbehaviour); (g) practise role-playing and brainstorming; and (h) focus on non-punitive solutions, by considering the Three R's of solutions, namely, what the principal and educators will do to help learners will always be *related* to what they have done wrong, *respectful* of them as people, and *reasonable*, ensuring them that they will never be punished. For class meetings to be an effective strategy to ensure positive discipline, there should be both the educator control and the learner input (Pulchinsky 2010: 6).

Charles (2008: 116-117) remarks that the Nelsen, Lott and Glenn model of positive discipline depends on the successful implementation of class meetings as an essential part of the instructional program when learners are given the opportunity to discuss about their behaviour and participate in decision-making. According to Hytham (2015: 3) and Browning, Davis and Resta (2000: 2), class meetings such as open-ended meetings, problem-solving meetings and educational-diagnostic meetings boost learners to use prosocial skills in their daily lives. Learners are also able to develop rules and structures, trust and respect, the feeling of personal safety, common goals for exploring issues, social competence, motivation and higher order thinking (Pulchinsky 2010: 6-18). However, though it takes time to get the appropriate approach operating successfully, yet once it is being used it will help learners develop skills that they will need for successful lives in schools and society.

Based on the Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model of positive discipline, the principal must have an open-minded leadership approach where he/she communicates a participative approach to discipline to the educators and the learners. The learners should be given the

opportunity to think over and adjust their behaviour so that they have the right perceptions of the principal's and the educators' power and they understand fully the inter- and intra-personal skills as well as the systematic and the judgemental skills. The principal must therefore develop an invitational teaching and learning atmosphere that creates a conducive environment for character education of learners.

3.2.4 Johnson and Johnson's model

Roger Johnson and David Johnson investigated learner cooperation and its value, nature and procedures. They came forward with their three C's model to ensure safer schools and to provide a conducive learning environment. They focus on the three C's of cooperation, conflict resolution and civic values (Johnson & Johnson 1987: 10-12).

According to Manning and Bucher (2013: 132), cooperation calls for the principal, educators, learners, and community members of the school to work in close collaboration towards the common behavioural goals. Johnson and Johnson (1999: 125) describe cooperative learning as a group approach (Charles 2008: 123) that maximises the learners' own and each group member's learning. They have developed the Learning Together Cooperation Learning method which consists of five elements: (a) positive interdependence (learners believe they are responsible for their learning and their group's learning); (b) face-to-face interaction (learners explain how and what they learn and help others with their assigned tasks); (c) personal accountability (learners must show their mastery of materials); (d) social skills (learners communicate effectively by building and maintaining trust); and (e) group processing (groups of learners regularly do an assessment of their progress and how to effectively have an improvement). Johnson and Johnson (1993: 61) maintain that cooperative learning contributes to the welfare of diverse learners such as gifted learners, hearing disabled learners, mentally disabled learners and learners from culturally pluralistic backgrounds.

Johnson and Johnson (1999: 119-144) identify the following benefits of cooperative learning. It (a) ensures that all learners are actively involved in their learning; (b) ensures

that learners achieve up to their potential and experience psychological success so that they are motivated to learn further; (c) promotes caring and committed relationships for every learner; (d) helps learners to develop the interdependence and small-group skills to work effectively in a multicultural classroom; (e) provides learners opportunities to discuss and solve personal problems together; (f) ensures that learners can feel a sense of meaning, pride and esteem.

The second C is conflict resolution. Any violence-prevention program must include conflict resolution training for it to be effective (Johnson & Johnson 1995: 65). Manning and Bucher (2013: 134) insists that the principal and the educator must model the use of conflict resolution to solve problems and diffuse potential violence. Johnson and Johnson (1999: 139) mention six steps of conflict resolution that will help maintain discipline among learners. The principal or the educator must (a) describe what he/she wants, using effective skills of good communication and defining the conflict as a particular mutual problem with the learner, (b) communicate and describe his/her feelings openly and clearly; (c) describe the reasons for his/her wants and feelings, while expressing cooperative intentions and listening carefully; (d) take the learner's perspective and summarise his/her understanding of what he/she wants, how the other person feels and the reasons underlying both; (e) invent three optional plans to resolve the conflict that maximise joint benefits, and choose one and formalise the agreement with a handshake. Johnson and Johnson (2004: 72-73) put forward Teaching Learners to be Peacemakers Program as a conflict resolution program which exposes learners to practise role models for constructive conflict management and teaches them the procedures and skills they need to manage conflict effectively.

The third C refers to civic values. Johnson and Johnson (1987: 12) and Johnson and Johnson (1999: 139) assert that the principal, together with the educators, must create a community with shared goals and values with the learners. These shared goals and common values will help define appropriate behaviour in schools. The civic values should be posted on the school's and classroom's walls and discussed with learners and parents in class meetings.

Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (2001: 125) in Charles (2008: 124) make the difference between a cooperative classroom and a competitive classroom. In a competitive classroom, learners are more cautious about sharing information with their classmates and peers. They hoard their ideas. However, in a cooperative classroom, there is inclusion and caring for others as it is healthy psychologically and promotes the values that one needs to be a member of a community. According to the Social Interdependence Theory (Johnson, Johnson & Smith 2013: 4-5), positive interdependence and, hence, positive interactions among peers in schools such as mutual help and assistance, exchange of needed resources, effective communication, mutual influence, trust and constructive management of conflicts may result in learners' desirable behaviour. Roseth, Johnson and Johnson (2008: 225-226)) posit that there is a positive cathexis or emotional investment towards others' actions that have promoted one's success, and this leads to more positive social relationships among learners than competitive and individualistic goal structures. Rao (2015: 15) concurs that competition creates complications whereas collaboration creates camaraderie. Camaraderie helps to reduce the manifestation of a lack of discipline among learners in secondary schools. According to Carnegie's leadership principles, the principal should first praise the learners as praise increases compliant behaviour which encourages cooperative behaviour from them (Basford & Molberg 2013: 27).

The principal's role in maintaining discipline in secondary schools is to be an effective instructional leader who will attempt to strike a balance between the competition and cooperative elements in classrooms and the school. This seems to be very important in the context of Mauritius where the instruction is more academic and results-driven than values-driven (paragraph 2.4). Together with other types of leadership, he/she will have to adopt the moral leadership approach where he/she will have to transmit moral, spiritual, cultural and civic values to all learners in the assembly or through the artefacts and symbols of the school. In the context of the three Cs, he/she will have to use a multicultural approach to leadership by modelling a cross-cultural attitude that will instil school values such as respect, sharing, unity in diversity, and social justice among the learners.

3.2.5. Olweus' Bullying Prevention Model

This model identifies the bully as the learner whose purpose is to cause harm, his/her power is imbalanced as he/she is often older, bigger, stronger or can wield control over another learner and who makes a threat of future harm to the victim who must be preoccupied over his/her own safety each day (continual threat); whose actions are intentional, hurtful, persistent, with a power imbalance (Cornell & Cole: 2011: 290; Beane 2009: 176). So, bullying is associated with the acronym PIC (Purposeful, Imbalanced and Continual) (Wolfgang 2009: 284). Bullying behaviour manifests itself in three forms: verbal bullying such as name calling, taunting, cruel criticism, racist slurs and sexually suggestive remarks, extortion and gossip; physical bullying such as slapping, hitting, choking, poking, punching, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, twisting limbs, spitting or damaging or destroying clothes or property belonging to the victim; and relational bullying such as aggressive stares, rolling of eyes, sighs, frowns, snickers, and hostile body language (Olweus 1993: 9). Hinduja and Patchin (2011: 1) add cyber bullying as a common form of bullying in schools today. He defines cyber bullying as the wilful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. In a study carried out by Englander in 2011 in high schools for the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Centre, she found that 31 percent of subjects reported being victims of bullying and 41 percent reported being victims of cyber bullying (Englander 2013: 33). Wolfgang (2009: 287) points out that learners are bullying in cyber space through harassing and threatening emails or text messages and comments on internet social networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace. According to Cornell and Cole (2011: 293), because of rising numbers of secondary school learners identifying themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, there is the emerging type of bullying about sexual matters, which may range from overly aggressive flirtation to efforts to humiliate and threaten a learner because of his/her sexual orientation. Franklin, Harris and Allen-Meares (2008: 58) state that learners bully to gain power, get attention or become popular, to get material things, to act out problems at home or to copy another person they admire. However, it has been found that learners who bully their peers are more likely than other learners to be engaged in antisocial, violent and troubling behaviour (Limber 2011: 371).

The Olweus model recommends that school bullying should be addressed at three levels: the school-wide level, the classroom level and the individual level (Olweus 1993: 64-106). He stipulates that two conditions are necessary for reducing, eliminating and preventing bully/victim problems, namely (a) adults at school and at home should become aware of the extent of the bully/victim problems and (b) these adults should engage themselves in changing the situation.

At the school level, a questionnaire survey must be sent to the superintendent, parents, learners, and educators to determine the extent of the bullying problem, school conference days should be organised with school personnel and parents to share survey results, there should be a better supervision (lifeguarding at a distance) during recess and lunch time, a more attractive school playground, a staff discussion group must be established, a school coordinating group is formed, there should often be parent circles and the school should have the contact phone number of each parent (Wolfgang 2009: 295). The eight school wide components of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Approach are establishing a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee; conducting training and providing ongoing consultation, administering the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire; holding staff discussion group meetings; introducing and enforcing school rules about bullying such as "(a) we will not bully others, (b) we will try to help learners who are bullied, (c) we will try to include learners who are left out, and (d) we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home if we know that a learner is being bullied" (Limber 2011: 75); reviewing and refining the supervisory system to reduce opportunities for bullying among learners; holding a school-wide kick-off event to launch the program; and involving parents (Limber 2011: 372-373). The principal should coordinate all these eight components to ensure the effectiveness of the bullying program.

At the class level, class rules against bullying in terms of classifications, praise and sanctions should be presented and explained to learners. Other strategies include role-playing, literature, cooperative learning, common positive class activities and class meeting between the principal, the superintendent, the educator, parents and children.

The principal and the educator should talk seriously with the bullies and victims, with their parents, set up discussion groups for parents of bullies and victims, seek help from neutral learners and support from parents and assist in a change of class or school for the bullies. Limber (2011: 374) summarises that the principal and the educators should post, discuss and enforce the school-wide rules about bullying, hold regular class meetings about bullying and related topics, and hold class meetings with parents. These actions, together with the delivery of curriculum content and the provision of positive activities may help learners acquire relevant knowledge, attitudes and social skills that will help them in developing positive social relations and minimising the likelihood of their involvement in bullying (Rigby 2011: 400).

At the individual level, the principal or the class educator must talk seriously with the bully in private. Here, the principal or the educator adopts what Coloroso (2000: 229-231) calls the three R's of discipline: restitution, resolution and reconciliation. Restitution refers to determining what the learner did and involves repairing the physical damage and the personal damage. Resolution refers to determining a way not to let the behaviour happen again, through a behavioural contract developed by both the bully and the victim (Franklin *et al* 2008: 55). Reconciliation refers to the process of healing with the offender honouring the restitution plan and making a commitment to live up to the resolution. Moreover, the principal should seriously talk with bystanders, following a series of questions to pose to them. He/she repeats the rules and emphasises to them that their participation causes them to break the rule of "we must try to help children who others are being mean to" as their role is to stop bullying. The principal then finally reviews the events with all the learners at the end of the day.

Wolfgang (2009: 296) suggests the principal or the educator may also prevent bullying by presenting a video that shows children what bullying looks like and then help them understand the nature of bullying (that is purposeful, imbalanced and continual); puppetry simulations of bullying incidents may also be used. There may be a drop box giving learners a way to report bullying incidents. Moreover, he/she may use friendship maps or sociograms to gather data on children without friends who are likely to become victim. A

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friendship map is created by interviewing each learner in private and asking him/her to pick two friends with whom he/she wishes to share some activity. Soto, Campos and Morales (2011: 159) add that the principal, together with the community may adapt the curriculum by including assertive behaviour skills, effective solving of social problems, emphatic response and content-against bullying arts activities in order to increase the learners' knowledge of bullying and reduce the frequency of its occurrence in schools.

The principal should take into consideration the educators' feelings as bullying takes much of their attention, time and energy. They may develop the feelings of being defeated, annoyed or helpless. Wolfgang (2009: 297) points out that educators must be supported and motivated by the principal as they design and implement the strategies to deal with discipline behaviour.

The principal or educator should also empower and counsel the victim. Young and Holdorf (2003: 278) point out that solution-brief therapy and social skills training in groups involving the victims to enhance their understanding of social cues should be provided as well as better responses to threats of bullying to learners. To reduce social isolation of victims, the educator may also implement cooperative learning techniques in their teaching methods (Franklin *et al.* 2008: 56). Meyer and Evans (2012: 72-73) argue that regular use of cooperative learning by educators provides a positive context for increasing learners' interpersonal skills and understandings. Wolfgang (2009: 297) reports that the victim must be taught how to turn around bullying statements in a manner that does not return the insult but rather deflects it. Rigby (2011: 402) also suggests that learners may be taught the fogging technique, which involves the potential victim focusing on the perceptions of the aggressor, acknowledging that the bully may actually believe the negative things he/she may be saying, and refusing to be disturbed or intimidated. It is obvious from the above analysis that the principal is the key agent in empowering educators to implement the anti-bullying strategies. It is certainly good to have caring educators who may put in tremendous efforts to stop bullying but they cannot do so alone. The principal as the head of the school has to bring together the educators, the school superintendent, parents, school personnel, volunteers, learners, the school bus

drivers, the school prefects of each level of classes, cafeteria workers and key community representatives who work in close collaboration to meet on the anti-bullying objectives. He/she promotes team building and collaborative leadership in the school. The principal provides the leadership to this team through a training program on anti-bullying where he/she discusses the current situation of the bullying status in the school, develops the mission statement, objectives, slogan and logo of the anti-bullying programme, establishes the rules and behaviour expectations, develops a response plan to bullying, and assigns roles and responsibilities of each team member. The whole school staff should be trained about promoting pro-social attitudes, developing interpersonal skills among learners and selecting and applying appropriate methods of intervention when bullying cases take place. Community and parental involvement are essential in addressing the bullying problem in schools (Rigby 2011: 406). This is likely to make each individual involved, including the learners, in realising that resolving the bullying problem is a whole-school approach. So, the principal does his/her visioning about anti-bullying, and empowers the learners, parents and other stakeholders to be involved in the programme. The principal needs to establish a bully-free school climate that promotes teaching and learning in the most conducive environment.

Limber (2011: 378) points out the role of the principal in the successful implementation of any bullying intervention program: he/she should increase efforts to persuade educators about the critical roles they play in bullying prevention and to ensure that the program materials are user-friendly and utilised on a regular basis by all educators, increase the affective involvement of all educators and other school staff, increase opportunities for staff to communicate on a regular basis about their bullying prevention efforts. It is also obvious that the principal should promote social and moral education in the school instead of using rewards and punishment to modify behaviour. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a social-ecological approach. For it to be effective, it must have characteristics such as emphatic involvement and reducing isolation, and it must include program stages such as awareness building, policy development, skill development, continuing involvement, assessment, adjustment and recycling (Hazler & Carney 2011: 359). So, the school principal, according to Swearer, Espelage, Keoning,

Berry, Collins and Lembeck (2011: 350), must see to it that there is suicide awareness training, participation in "No Name-Calling" week, adult support for gay-straight alliance organisations, adult support or sponsorship of school-based clubs and activities, alcohol and drug use awareness training, an effective referral system, random acts of kindness activities, teaching of tolerance, school-community partnerships, creating academic connections and success for all learners, mentoring programmes, home-school communication, abuse awareness and education, volunteerism, youth sports activities, youth choir and music, community arts centres, and neighbourhood watch programmes.

3.2.6. Canter's Assertive Discipline Model

This model was originally the Canter's Assertive Discipline Model. Assertive discipline began with the premise that educators, like learners, have their rights: the right to establish and maintain discipline in the classroom, the right to demand appropriate behaviour from learners and the right to receive assistance from the principal, parents and others (Charles 2008: 130). Canter and Canter (1976: 9) asserts that to earn back learners respect, educators need to be empowered by the principal to take charge of their learners. Educators have to be firm and positive when necessary. According to Pagliaro (2011: 103), Canter and Canter believe that educators who are assertive get their needs met first, and in so doing, they are in a better position to help their learners. They assert their right to teach by setting up rules and consequences for obeying and not obeying the rules, and being consistent and persistent in implementing consequences. Malmgren, Trezek, and Paul (2005: 37) summarise the four components of the model. First, educators should develop a set of rules for the classroom. Second, they should determine a set of positive consequences for following the rules. Third, they should establish a set of negative consequences for not following the rules. Finally, educators should implement the model with the learners. So, this model is educator-centered (Bear 2005: 131) and more structured (Pagliaro 2011: 106). Punishment or unpleasant consequences should follow negative behaviour, with the penalty system having increasingly severe sanctions.

Martella *et al.* (2012: 10) mention the five steps of assertive discipline put forward by Canter and Canter (1992). First, educators must acknowledge that they can and do affect learner behaviour. Second, educators can learn to display an assertive response style. Third, they make a discipline plan that contains good rules and clear, effective consequences (a descriptive hierarchy). Fourth, they must provide learner instruction on the discipline plan. Finally, the principal and educators should instruct learners on how to behave responsibly. Smith (2001: 113) adds that they must be willing to work toward positive interactions with learners by creating an optimal learning environment within the classroom and in the school that allows learners to work and socialise together in a comfortable environment.

3.2.6.1 Criticism of the Take Charge version of assertive discipline

Bear (2005: 131) comments that assertiveness is valued among educators in the sense that they have the right to be assertive, but they do not teach learners to be assertive. Canter and Canter (1976: 8) themselves acknowledge that learners have the right to have an educator who is controlling and manipulating, and they have the right to choose how to behave and know the consequences that will follow. Moreover, Rendler, Padilla and Krank (1989: 620) remark that the model relies heavily on negative or inappropriate techniques, as rewards or reinforcements are of least importance. Wolfgang (2009: 96) concurs that practising educators often use mostly the negative aspects of the model as they forget to use positive reinforcement. This statement is in contrast with Porter (2007: 33) who argues that assertive discipline in the 1976 model is proactive rather than reactive. Furthermore as the assertive model is based on behaviour modification, Palardy (1996: 69) points out that this model devalues self-discipline in learners as an important goal in favour of management of learner discipline. Discipline is not taught but imposed by the educator on learners. Also, Martella *et al.* (2012: 10-11) suggest that threats and warnings tend to escalate problem behaviour and that Canter misuses the consequence to suggest it refers only to punishment. Canter and Canter (in Pagliaro 2011: 105) also recognise that rewards and praise are calculating, fostering dependency of learners on educators. Martella *et al.* (2012:11) conclude that assertive discipline is simply an

inappropriate behaviour reduction method that can work under certain circumstances; though it suppresses unwanted behaviour, the long-term problem of discipline may get worse.

On account of all these criticisms, Canter and Canter (2001) developed a more positive approach to discipline, known as the assertive discipline's positive behaviour management model.

3.2.6.2 Canter's assertive discipline: Positive behaviour management model

In this model, educators use many types of reinforcement such as material rewards, special privileges and social reinforcement from principals, educators, peers and parents. Instead of using punishment, principals and educators may use punitive corrective techniques. Canter and Canter (2001: 21) advise them to use punitive corrective techniques only in combination with reinforcement and only after more positive techniques fail. Wolfgang (2009:96) recommends that there should be a balance between structure (rules and limits) and caring. To achieve this balance, Canter and Canter (2001: 414) advise the principals and educators to adopt a three part-discipline plan which will help promote self-discipline among learners. The components are (a) clear rules, (b) supportive feedback, and (c) corrective actions. So, praise has become supportive feedback and verbal recognition, and punishment/consequences have become corrective actions. Bear (2005: 135) adds that principals and educators should teach the discipline plan directly using verbal instruction and modeling. Basford and Molberg (2013: 29) state that the principal should also follow Carnegie's (1998) advice to "Call attention to the learners' mistakes indirectly" using a constructive and developmental feedback delivery approach by showing interpersonal fairness, such as respect and showing consideration.

In the new (2001) version of the assertive discipline model, rules are immediate and observable, posted all day, are differentiated from routine procedures and general policies and are determined with learners' inputs or involvement (Pagliaro 2011: 106; Bear 2005: 136; Wolfgang 2009: 96). Canter and Canter (2001) in Porter (2007: 36) suggest three

rules, namely (a) follow directions, keep hands, feet and objects to yourself; (b) use appropriate school language; no put-downs, teasing, name-calling or screaming; and (c) for secondary school learners, to be in their seats when the bell rings.

Canter and Canter (2001: 41) define supportive feedback as sincere and meaningful attention the principal and his/her educators give a learner for behaving according to their expectations. Supportive feedback encourages appropriate behaviour and so reduces disruptive behaviour, increases learners' self-esteem, creates a positive classroom climate, and teaches and establishes positive relationships with the learners. By using behavioural narration or verbal recognition such as "Thanks Gustave, working quietly helps us all", every time they give a direction over weeks, ensure learners to adopt such positive behaviour (Porter 2007: 37). Bear (2005: 137) recommends that, in addition to behavioural narrations, the principal should recognise desirable behaviour with a positive note or phone call to the learner's parents, with special privileges or a tangible reward. Wolfgang (2009: 99) states that a positive parent communication log may be made available by the principal to allow educators record and keep track of supportive feedback, positive notes, and phone calls. However, phone calls are not always an effective means of school-home communication when a serious problem is concerned such as learner misbehaviour (Kimaro & Machumu 2015: 492).

Assertive discipline views corrective action for breaking a rule as a learner's choice (Wolfgang 2009: 100). Canter and Canter (2001, in Bear 2005: 139) recommend that the principal and the educators develop their hierarchy of corrective (punitive) actions and communicate it clearly to learners. They agree that corrective actions are necessary for developing self-discipline. Corrective actions are progressive in the discipline hierarchy, moving from a warning to a second violation which entails a minor corrective action like a change of seating. The third violation generally increases the action (wait for five minutes after class), but the fourth violation such as aggression may require calling parents or sending to the principal's office. This is called the severe clause (Canter & Canter 1992: 87).

Other classroom practices that Canter and Canter recommend are modeling, teaching and reteaching of the discipline plan and rules, scanning the classroom to maintain learners' working behaviour, circulating in the classroom and redirection strategies as used in the Jones model (Wolfgang 2009: 105-107).

From the Canter and Canter model, it is evident that the principal plays an important role in transmitting the values of the school so that the learners may establish their connectedness to the school. Instead of imposing the classroom and school rules, he/she should delegate this power to the learners who may form part of the school discipline committee where they actively participate in the drafting of the classroom and school rules as well as in the development of the classroom and school discipline policy and plans. This is consistent with the School Management Manual (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 33) in which it is stated that "*learners need to be involved in setting standards for and maintaining discipline so that they do not have the feeling that it is imposed on them*". Such learner leadership which allows the learners to voice out their views on school rules and expectations will give them the opportunity to take the right and positive choice when it comes to their own discipline. So, the principal has to adopt the distributed leadership approach in schools. Yet, in the same manual, it is also stipulated that the principal should inform the representatives of student bodies of the actions being taken at the school level and by the Ministry and communicate to them the time frame for the solution of the problems" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 20). It is obvious that learner participation is limited or there is a contrived collegiality at school where committees are formed but the principal has decision-making authority to overrule or ignore committee decisions (Glanz 2006: 2). Thus, learners may see their participation as tokenistic (Jeruto & Kiprop 2011: 97).

The principal should empower the educators in their role as learner discipline managers. The educator is the most immediate adult in the learner's social life and interactions in the classroom and on the school premise. He/she knows better the characteristics and needs of each and every learner under his/her supervision. Most often, the class educator is the role model for learners. So, it is of utmost importance that the educator is given the

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full authority and freedom to work collaboratively with the learners in establishing rules and consequences so that the constructive and supportive feedback and the most appropriate corrective actions are taken and accepted by the learner who manifests a lack of discipline at school. In addition to academic instruction, it is also the responsibility of the educator to teach rules, rights and responsibilities to learners so that the latter demonstrate desirable behaviours (Western Cape Education Department 2007: 2).

3.2.7 School-wide Positive Behavioural Support (SWPBS) model

Ideally, all schools need to have a model that provides significant support, clarity and structure for learners, educators, administrators, principals and the school-site support personnel (Lane, Menzies, Bruhn & Crnobori 2011: 9). Instead of targeting learners at risk of misbehaviour, Sugai and Horner (2006: 246) argue that schools should use whole school-wide management strategies. This is in line with Lane, Cook and Tankersley (2013: 9) who assert that schools need to establish a safe, non-violent environment to facilitate both instruction and the personal safety of all individuals. The Individuals with Disabilities and Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) (2004: 4) specifies incentives for whole school approaches, scientifically based early reading programs, positive behaviour interventions and support and early intervening services to reduce the need to label learners into various categories of disabilities to address behaviour problems.

The SWPBS model is a framework which is based on the premise that learners exhibit goal-directed behaviour in response to environmental events, social interactions and other internal emotional stress (Vaughn, Sheffield, Duchnowski & Kutash 2005: 87; Sugai & Horner 2002: 26). It is an integration of valued outcomes, empirically validated procedures and systems change to enhance quality of life and minimise problem behaviour (Carr, Dunlap, Horner, Koegel, Turnbull & Sailor 2002: 6; Hulac *et al.* 2011: 11). It is based on the hypothesis that when the principal, the educators, the non-teaching staff and other ancillary staff members actively teach, using modelling and role playing, and reward positive behaviour related to compliance with adult requests, academic effort, and safe behaviour, the proportion of learners with mild and serious behaviour problems

will be reduced and the school's overall climate will improve (Osher *et al.* 2010: 51). Without collegiality and synergy among educators and other non-teaching staff, the principal is likely to face many challenges and obstacles and therefore, he/she will not be able to effectively maintain learner discipline (Rampa 2014: 26; Bechuke & Debeila 2012: 241). The Michigan Department of Education (2010: 1) shares the view that this framework uses school-wide, classroom and individualised interventions. In brief, Martella *et al.* (2012: 312) acknowledge three goals of SWPBS, namely (a) to establish effective policies and procedures that create positive norms for behaviour, (b) improve the ecological arrangements of the school, and (c) identify and select a continuum of evidence-based behaviour practices and interventions.

SWPBS includes parental training, social skills training, proactive strategies, reactive strategies, individual behavioural intervention and academic restructuring to make the curriculum more relevant and appropriate for the learners (Lane *et al.* 2011: 9; Manning & Bucher 2013: 190; Lewis & Sugai 1999: 19-24). Behavioural expectations, rules and prosocial skills are taught as any subject in the curriculum with the aim of establishing both the overall social culture and intensive behaviour supports (Horner, Sugai, Smolkowski, Eber, Nakasato, Todd & Esperanza 2009: 139). Blonigen, Harbaugh, Singell, Horner, Irvin & Smolkowski 2008: 5-19; Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland 2004: 3-12; Luiselli, Putnam, Handler & Feinberg 2005: 185-189) outline the following components of the SWPBS model, namely (a) identify three to five school-wide behaviour expectations, (b) teach social skills and behaviour expectations, (c) provide reinforcement for appropriate behaviour, (d) correct misbehaviour by using a consistent set of consequences; (e) collect and analyse data on behaviour; (f) involve all stakeholders, (g) replace reactive discipline with proactive management and prevention, and (h) use administrative support and resources on both the school and district level to facilitate the implementation of SWPBS. Lane *et al.* (2013: 12) add that the district may help the school in terms of functional policies, staff training opportunities and data collection. The SWPBS model is based on three main tenets, namely prevention, evidence-based practice and systems implementation (Sugai & Horner 2006: 246).

3.2.7.1 Prevention

Prevention involves defining and teaching a common set of positive behavioural expectations, acknowledging and rewarding expected behaviour and establishing and using consistent consequences for problem behaviour, including teaching or reteaching alternative behaviour (Osher *et al.* 2010: 50). The goal is to establish a positive school and classroom climate in which expectations for learners are predictable, taught directly, acknowledged consistently and monitored actively. The SWPBS model emphasises a comprehensive three-tiered continuum of behaviour support and interventions that range from preventing the development of problem behaviour to reducing the impact or intensity of problem behaviour occurrences (Sugai & Horner 2008: 68; Horner *et al.* 2009: 134). Horner, Sugai and Vincent (2005: 4) add that it is more effective, cost-efficient and productive to focus on preventing the development and occurrence of problem behaviour.

The concept of the three-tiered model subscribes to a proactive, instructional approach to prove the necessary level of supports based on individual student needs within this large prevention framework (Lane, Robertson & Graham-Bailey 2006: 159). Rickert (2005: 45-46) adds that an effective school-wide system should not only be proactive and instructional but positive also since it should involve constructive, encouraging and affirmative interactions between learners and all the school staff.

3.2.7.2 The primary prevention

The primary prevention component is at the base of the three-tiered model. It focuses on instructions and behaviours on a school-wide basis so that learners do not become at risk for a lack of discipline (Martella *et al.* 2012: 312). In other words, there is no screening or eligibility determinations as all learners participate just by virtue of attending school (Lane, Kalberg & Edwards 2008: 259). Simonsen, Sugai, and Negro (2008: 34) assert that it supports all learners across all settings (classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, toilets, cafeterias, buses, bus terminal, playground, and in all assembly points). The principal involves the school, family and community members who will ensure the successful

implementation of the positive behaviour plan under the supervision of the leadership's team (Colvin 2007: 18; Lane *et al.* 2013:10). In fact, Horner *et al.* (2009: 134) point out that the emphasis is on defining, teaching, monitoring and rewarding a small set of behavioural expectations for all learners across non-classroom and classroom settings.

According to Hulac *et al.* (2011: 11-12), the primary prevention and behaviour management strategies must be effective at encouraging all learners to demonstrate positive school behaviour so as to reduce the number of learners who will require the tertiary intervention. About 85 percent of learners benefit from primary prevention. To implement the primary interventions effectively, the principal, together with the school management team, must (a) identify meaningful outcomes (that is identify what it plans to achieve), (b) establish and invest in school-wide systems that facilitate the implementation of interventions, (c) select and implement contextually appropriate, evidence-based practices; and (d) collect and use data to make decisions.

To establish the system for the primary tier readiness requirement, the representative SWPBS team, consisting of the principal as the coordinator of the implementation process, a selected group of educators, a representative of special services with behavioural expertise, a member of the support staff and of parents, identifies a team coach who should have social influence on other team members, secures 80 percent buy-in from the school staff, employs a data system that facilitates data entry and meaningful visual displays, and participates as a team in SWPBS training (Simonsen *et al.* 2008: 35). The selection and implementation of practices in implementing primary tier SWPBS interventions involve the following steps that the principal must initiate and monitor: (a) establish a small number of positively stated expectations; (b) define the expectations in the context of routines or settings; (c) develop scripted lesson plans to teach expectations; (d) increase active supervision in classroom and non-classroom settings; (e) establish a continuum of strategies to acknowledge appropriate behaviour; (f) develop a staff reinforcement system that recognises staff for the efforts involved in implementing SWPBS; and (g) develop an action plan to guide roll-out and implementation, that is specify how the expectations will be introduced, where problems

will be displayed, when and where social skills lessons will be taught, and when and how the school-wide reinforcement system will be implemented.

Finally, the data collected should be used to monitor the effectiveness and fidelity of the SWPBS model. Simonsen *et al.* (2008:37) recommend that the SWPBS team should make data review a priority at every regular meeting in terms of overall rates of office discipline referrals (ODRs), percentage of learners who have received multiple ODRs for major offences and potential supports required for those learners, typical locations where problems are occurring, the time(s) of the day where problem behaviours are occurring and the nature and type of behaviour. Secondly, the SWPBS team must share data with the faculty and model data-based decision-making in the school newsletter, bulletin board or in staff meetings. Third, the team should celebrate successes as a social recognition at the morning assembly, staff meeting or an activity reward such as a party, a lunch, or a fun item. Fourth, the SWPBS team should share success with parents and the boarder community who are key stakeholders in the implementation of a PBS.

While implementing the SWPBS model, aspects such as treatment integrity, social validity and learner performance should be mentioned by the principal and the team (Lane *et al.* 2013: 10). Lane, Kalberg, Bruhn, Mahoney and Driscoll (2008: 467) define treatment integrity as the extent to which the plan is implemented as intended. It reflects the accuracy and consistency with which each component of the plan is implemented (Wilkinson 2007: 420). The primary intervention plan should be a socially valid behaviour change intervention that is directed to a problem of verifiable importance, in which intervention is valued and used appropriately by designated target groups and has sufficient behavioural impact to reduce substantially the probability of the problem's occurrence among the target group (Winett, Moore & Anderson 1991: 216). In other words, the participants' perceptions of the goals, procedures and outcomes should be ascertained to be sure that the intervention plan is one that they support with ease. Lane *et al.* (2013: 12) recommend that the team administers and measures the social validity before implementing the SWPBS model so that the principal and educators can use the information to identify areas of concern and then modify the plan earlier. Finally,

the degree to which the new behaviour continues over time and in new settings or situations should be examined to determine how effective the intervention is. This is called generalisation (Lane *et al.* 2011: 7). This information is useful as it increases the participants' involvement in the SWPBS and the success of the implementation depends on the extent of the generalisation in the school.

It is obvious from the above discussion of the primary intervention plan of the SWPBS model that its hallmark is the emphasis on data to guide decision-making about the practices that should be in place to support learners' learning and social behaviour. Research findings indicate that SWPBS create an effective school environment where proactive behavioural practices can be successfully implemented (Bradshaw, Reinke, Brown, Bevans & Leaf 2008: 1-26; Horner, Sugai, Smolkowski, Todd, Natasata & Esperanza 2009: 133-144; Duda, Dunlap, Fox, Lentini & Clarke 2004: 143-155; Lewis & Sugai 2000: 109-121; Chapman & Hofweber 2000: 235-237; Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo & Leaf 2008: 462-473).

3.2.7.3 The secondary prevention

The global prevention effort and practices may not work to meet all learners' needs with an effective primary tier prevention plan. 26 percent and 29 percent of middle and high school learners respectively will require additional support (Simonsen *et al.* 2008: 33). The secondary tier is designed to support those learners who demonstrate too many specific risk factors like poverty, poor school attendance, low achievement, poor self-esteem or limited family support, or those who manifest limited social interactions like difficulty to interact with peers during unstructured activities or interfering behavioural problems such as verbal aggression towards peers and adults or even those with poor oral reading fluency (Martella *et al.* 2012: 312; Lane *et al.* 2013: 16; Manning & Bucher 2013: 192). The aim of the secondary prevention is to reverse harm. Outcomes are particular to the selective group of learners and focus on the prevention of problem behaviour from becoming severe. So, the secondary tier prevention is designed to support a targeted group of learners who are at risk of learning and behavioural difficulties or

who pose a serious risk to themselves or others in the school. Moreover, Manning and Bucher (2013: 192) declare that for learners who do not respond on the universal level, the SWPBS leadership team must move to the secondary prevention level and repeat the same process as used and implemented at the primary tier prevention.

Data are collected to measure progress towards outcomes; data sources may include office discipline referrals, points earned for desired behaviour if a point system is used in the intervention, attendance records, report cards and progress cards, counselling referrals, school wide education tools, among others (Lane, Kalberg & Menzies 2009: 105). Practices usually focus on intensification of the support that is provided in the primary tier prevention, that is improving structure, providing more instruction of social skills and delivering regularly reinforcement in terms of rewards and the token economy system (Simonsen, Sugai & Negro 2008:33; Hulac *et al.* 2011:26). Other secondary intervention strategies are choice making, pre-correction, self-management, increasing learner opportunities to respond, use of praise by the principal and educators, Good Behaviour Game, compliance training and high probability requests, replacement behaviour training, positive peer reporting, behaviour contracts, active supervision, effective instructional techniques such as proximity, with-it-ness, unstructured feedback, offering choice and preferred activities, check-in check-out, and daily behaviour report card (Hulac *et al.* 2011: 134-156; Lane *et al.* 2013:16-17; Lane *et al.* 2011: 101-148). Systems are established to ensure that adopted practices are implemented with fidelity and that data are regularly collected, reviewed and used to make decisions (Simonsen *et al.* 2008: 33-34). This confirms the argument of Hulac *et al.* (2011:12) who reason that most targeted learners should respond in a positive manner when empirically validated interventions or practices are administered consistently and with fidelity.

When designing, implementing and evaluating the secondary intervention plan, the principal should have a master list of all secondary supports available at the school site. Lane *et al.* (2013: 19) mention three such supports, namely the study skills group where the targeted group of learners meet three days weekly in which thirty minutes lessons are taught focusing on study skill strategies; the Behaviour Education Program which

provides a daily check-in, check-out system that helps educators provide learners with immediate feedback on their behaviour and additional opportunities for positive adult interactions; the Incredible Years Training for Children which is a curriculum building skill in anger management, school success and interpersonal problem-solving, and the social skills group where identified learners meet three days weekly with the school psychologist for thirty minutes lessons focusing on improving specific social skills deficits. Then, the school leadership team (a) describes the service, including who will implement the support, under what conditions and information regarding how long and how often the service is implemented; (b) identifies how learners will be identified for possible participation; (c) specifies how treatment integrity data will be monitored to ensure implementation; (d) delineates how data will be collected and monitored to determine how secondary support shapes learner performance; and (e) states the criteria for terminating the service. However, a team may fail in achieving learner discipline management if the principal does not see the importance of team working and does not change his/her thinking about learner discipline (Van der Mescht & Tyala 2008: 223).

3.2.7.4 Tertiary prevention

Tertiary prevention is the most individualised and intensive level of prevention or support offered within the three-tiered model. The SWPBS is directed at learners with emotional and behavioural challenges as well as at assisting the learners' families. Interventions are reserved for learners with complex, long term and resistant behavioural or academic issues (Kern & Menz 2004: 49). Approximately 5-7 percent of learners in the secondary school may need tertiary tier interventions. This level of intervention is highly extensive in terms of time, personal commitment and expertise and special educators, school psychologists, counselors, and behaviour interventionists must have specialised competence to develop a team-based and comprehensive individualised intervention plan (Sugai & Horner 2006: 247; Maphosa & Mammen 2011: 148). The aim of the tertiary prevention is to reduce harm. Tertiary prevention efforts are function-based interventions, the First Step to Success Program, the Multisystemic Therapy Program, cognitive

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behaviour therapy, anxiety management/relaxation training and pharmacological intervention (Lane *et al.* 2013: 20).

The designing, implementation and evaluation of the tertiary intervention plan follows the same procedures as with the primary and secondary plans. However, the tertiary interventions are based on functional behaviour assessment (Horner *et al.* 2010: 16). The functional behaviour assessment (FBA) identifies factors in the environment that affect a learner's behaviour; and it is necessary when learners exhibit serious or challenging behaviour that persist over time (Martella *et al.* 2012: 312; Vaughn, Duchnowski, Sheffield & Kutash 2005: 87).

The SWPBS model is an educator-centered approach (Osher *et al.* 2010: 50; Manning & Bucher 2013: 190) that is actually used across the US and it is defined as a promising approach to address problem behaviour in a positive and preventative manner (Sugai & Horner 2006: 246; Michigan Department of Education 2010: 1).

Obviously in the SWPBS model, the principal plays a pivotal role in the implementation process of the various preventative and interventional disciplinary strategies. He/she is the one who plans, coordinates, motivates and controls the prevention and intervention systems. His/her role is to ensure that every individual in the team buys into the systems so as to ensure implementation fidelity, social validity and learner performance. The educators, parents, social workers, school psychologists and other non-teaching staff will not be able to put into practice the various strategies until and unless the principal is leading and organising every aspect of the SWPBS (Nealis 2014: 13). He/ she needs to emphasise vision sharing to all individuals in the school, instill a school climate that is welcoming to all learners, irrespective of their intellectual, physical or cultural differences, train parents to be active participants not only in the schooling of their children but in their instructional and behavioural supports to positive discipline also. Moreover, the principal should organise activities and tasks in which learners are exposed to the development of social skills, values and behavioural expectations so that undesirable behaviours are replaced by positive behaviours. He/she should also monitor

closely the administration of behaviour contracts, the behaviour education plan, and the token economy system. The principal is really the one who ensures the effective implementation of the SWPBS model, and he/she needs to be an inspirational leader who may motivate all the school stakeholders to feel concerned and may drive them to working towards a safer school for the learners as well as for the whole school community.

3.2.8. Response to intervention and instruction (RTII) model

Response to Intervention and Instruction has its root in the 2004 reauthorisation of the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). The Act allows states in the US to use a process based on the learners' response to scientific research-based intervention in an attempt to identify learners with specific learning difficulties and/or behavioural difficulties (Vermont Department of Education 2013: 1). The RTII is "currently the recommended federal model" in the US (Lindstrom & Sayeski 2013: 8). It is a multi-tier prevention framework for delivering education resources in which educators implement evidence-based instruction with fidelity, regularly assess learners to gauge academic progress, and continually adjust instruction in order to meet learner's needs (Detgen, Yamashita, Davis & Wraight 2011: 1). According to Dawson (2013: 15) and the Vermont Department of Education (2013: 1), all learners receive high quality instruction within the general education setting. This is consistent with Benjamin (2011: 21) who asserts that RTII is non-categorical. Fletcher and Vaughn (2009: 34) and Rinaldi, Averill and Stuart (2011: 47) reason that, in the general education setting, educators deliver appropriate academic and behavioural interventions that prevent behaviour problems. This is inconsistent with the IQ-discrepancy model which categorises learners into special education settings in which behaviour problems increase with interventions (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster & Saunders 2010: 88). The RTII is a comprehensive integrated school improvement model that is proactive, based on standards, and includes prevention, assessment and intervention (Whitten, Esteves & Woodrow 2009: 10; Vermont Department of Education 2013: 1). It includes early

intervention and the prevention of social-emotional delays and the occurrence of challenging behaviour (Fox, Carla, Strain, Denlap & Hemmeter 2010: 13).

The primary goal of RTII is to maximise learning for all learners (McIntosh, Mackay, Andreou, Brown, Mathews, Gietz & Bennett 2011: 21). Throughout the US, state educational agencies are implementing RTII programmes not only to achieve this through school-wide and class wide instruction that supports all learners, (Vanghn, Linan-Thompson & Hickman 2003: 405), but also to address persistent achievement disparities by more accurately identifying, documenting and serving learners (Benjamin 2011: 2). So, preventing academic failure and challenging behaviour is the underlying premise of RTII (Fox *et al.* 2010: 5). Though RTII is a model for improving achievement that is rooted in special needs education (Cummings, Atkins, Allison & Cole 2008: 26), yet Fox *et al.* (2010: 3) add that this also helps to reduce unnecessary referrals to special education as high quality curriculum and instruction are provided to all learners in a cascade of intensity. Dawson (2013: 1) states that the general purpose of RTII is to assess data on how a learner responds to an instructional or behavioural intervention. The RTII is thus a model that identifies such a learner before he or she fails to meet grade-level expectations (Choi, Oh, Yoon & Hong 2012: 2).

Detgen *et al.* (2011: 3-7) identify many reasons for adopting RTII in the USA, namely to reduce the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic minority learners in special education; to better integrate general and special education; to boost achievement for all learners; to identify learners with learning difficulties; to build on experience with a problem-solving model; to assist struggling learners; to promote the use of data-based decision-making; and to address achievement gaps.

The RTII model is based on certain principles which secondary schools should adopt at the initial stage when they wish to implement RTII. The Vermont Statewide Steering Committee developed the following ten principles: educators should be committed; a successful multi-tier system begins with an instruction of highest quality that is informed by research and supported by a curriculum that is based on standards; there should be an

assessment system that is articulated, coherent and balanced and that guides teaching, informs educators and learners about their progress and so that effective decisions are taken; on-going performance data should be used and analysed for progress monitoring, inform decisions about effective instruction and refine highly-expected goal-setting results in acceleration of learner learning; the learner succeeds when expert personnel provide targeted and differentiated instruction as early as possible when the learner needs a level of intensity that is responsive to the need; the comprehensive system of instruction and intervention reflects fidelity to the research-based approach; there should be a productive, dynamic and positive collaboration among learners, families and experts; a distributed leadership for judging and sustaining the multi-tier system; continuous professional development is needed for all members of the school community for capacity building and to sustain progress; and there should be a coherent continuous improvement plan that recognises recursive assessment, reflection and adaptation (Vermont Department of Education 2013: 3; Hammond, Campbell & Ruble 2013: 39). In addition to these principles, Whitten *et al.* (2009: 18-19) found that RTII is designed on the principle that every learner can learn and achieve his/her potential; quality assessment informs instructional practice; positive relationships within the classroom maximises learning; and educators must work as a team with peer educators, learners and parents. It is clear that RTII uses evidence-based practice to promote social development and address challenging behaviour through a multi-levered system that requires the collaboration of all school stakeholders under the leadership of the school principal.

Yet, Lembke, Garman, Deno and Stecker (2010: 361-373) argue that for the model to be effective, there should also be support from administration and staff members, the formation of a problem-solving team in the school, an examination of the core academic program to make sure that it meets the needs of all learners, there should be a schedule of implementation on the tiered-interventions and the determination of professionals who monitor learner progress on a frequent basis, including goal setting, data collection, data decision-making and changes in instruction and intervention.

For the RTII model to be effective and successful the above features should be found and most importantly, the transdisciplinary team, the early intervention programme, the learner monitoring process, the use of data to make the most appropriate decisions for effective problem solving, and implementation fidelity should be there.

It is a systematic and comprehensive model that requires general education and special education educators to work together (Hoover, Baca, Wexler-Love & Saenz 2008: 3). Dawson (2013: 2) mentions that the RTII model may range from having two to seven tiers of intervention, and that the typical model displays three tiers. However, she illustrates the four-tiered model or Pyramid of interventions. This is consistent with Benjamin (2011: 2) who claims that the RTII process suggested by the Individuals with Disabilities Education and Improvement Act (IDEIA 2004) consists of four tiers of the intervention delivery. Fox *et al.* (2010: 8-9) claim that there are important assumptions underlying the Pyramid model as they may influence how the Pyramid model is used as an RTII. The assumptions are that the model is designed for implementation within the natural environment. This will promote interactions with the child's caregivers and peers. The model also offers opportunities for instruction with socially competent peers. Moreover, the model tiers have additive intervention value. Instructional precision and dosage increase as the implementation process moves up the Pyramid tier. This allows for efficiency and effectiveness of intervention as families are essential partners.

3.2.8.1 The four-tiered RTII model

The four tiers of the RTII model are (a) effective scientific research-based instructional practice in general education; (b) scientific research-based small group intervention and instruction in the general education classroom; (c) intensive individualised instruction in the general education; and (d) evaluation and qualification for special services (Benjamin 2011: 2). Whitten *et al.* (2009: 11) state that the model provides a problem-solving process for making decisions about instructions and interventions, through all the four tiers (Illinois Aspire 2009: 2 & Dawson 2013: 18).

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These four tiers are presented and analysed in the following paragraphs.

(1) Tier 1

The instruction in the general education classroom targets 80-90 percent of learners. The instruction and assessments serve as universal screening as all learners are given the same assessment and held to the same behavioural expectations during the same time (Dawson 2013: 18). McIntosh *et al.* (2011: 22-23) state that school-wide screening and universal screening are often conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the school year to prevent serious academic and behavioural problems from emerging. Data are collected to determine the effectiveness of the universal system of behavioural support. If a significant number of learners are not responding to the school-wide discipline plan, which is the behaviour benchmark, and to the state-mandated performance standards as per the standard core curriculum, then they are placed on Tier 2 intervention (Hawken *et al.* 2008: 220). Whitten *et al.* (2009: 14:15) postulate that Tier 1 instruction should include research-based curricular assessment of learner learning strengths, interests and academic performance, differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, and on-going professional development of general education educators. In fact, the comparison provides an academic or behavioural baseline for the class.

Methods that can help to identify which learners are not responding to Tier 1 behavioural interventions are the number of Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) the learner received within a given time-frame; direct observation; school attendance; tardies; and poor academic performance (Walker & Shinn 2002: 1-26). Horner *et al*. (2005: 376) and McIntosh, Chard, Boland and Horner (2006: 149) postulate that learners who receive 0 to 1 Office Discipline Referrals per year do not need behavioural support beyond universal school-wide discipline; learners with 2 to 5 Office Discipline Referrals are recommended for Tier 2 intervention whereas learners with 6 or more Office Discipline Referrals per year might require Tier 3.

(2) Tier 2

Tier 2 instruction and intervention addresses learning and behaviour challenges that emerge during the universal screening (Whitten *et al.* 2009: 15) and 15 to 20 per cent of the class receive extra or supplemental interventions (Torgesen 2000: 57). They represent those learners who scored below the 20th percentile on assessments in Tier 1 (Dawson 2013: 19). They need more comprehensive, frequent and intense instructions and interventions in a small group. More instructional minutes are allocated in the content area in which the learners have difficulties. The interventions are delivered following a standardised protocol intervention. According to Hawken *et al.* (2008: 214:215), a standardised protocol intervention is defined as an evidence-based intervention that is delivered systematically to a group of learners by using scripts.

Within the small group setting, learners' skill deficits are targeted in addition to the general instruction received daily. Tier 2 interventions may include diagnostic evaluation of learners' academic strengths and needs, collaborative problem-solving by the RTII team, parental intervention and small group instructions (Whitten *et al.* 2009: 15-17). Diamond (2006: 6) adds that the supplemental behavioural intervention is social skill training, anger control training, and counselling groups. The following interventions may be used: check-in, check-out intervention, and check, connect and expect (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, Lathrop 2007: 298-301). The methods that can be used to determine learners who need Tier 2 intervention and who are progressing daily are direct observation of problem behaviour and Daily Progress Reports (DPRs). In a Daily Progress Report, the school wide behaviour expectations are listed and each learner's problem behaviour may be further defined under the "list behaviour" paragraph. Learners are given a rating on predetermined behavioural goals during the school day. At the end of the day, the percentage of points is measured and the progress of the learners over time is monitored and measured to determine whether the learner is meeting the targeted goal (Fairbanks *et al.* 2007: 301). However, the guideline is not empirically validated (Hawken *et al.* 2008: 218). Vermont Department of Education (2013: 52) states that Tier 2 interventions do not supplement Tier 1 instructions and interventions but are provided

over and above what the learner receives at the first tier. The behavioural interventions are designed to match the needs of the learners and are provided by professionally trained and knowledgeable school professionals. Diamond (2006: 6) stipulates that Tier 2 interventions are continued when the collected data demonstrate that the behaviour of the target learner is moving closer to the benchmark or peer group expectations. They are discontinued when the data demonstrate that the target learner's behaviour is within peer expectations and is maintained by the universal interventions. According to Hale (2008: 4), if the learner is a non-responder to Tier 2, and he/she shows little progress, then he/she is recommended for more intensive interventions and instructions of Tier 3.

(3) Tier 3

In the RTII model used in Georgia State Tier 3 is called the school's student support team (SST) (Dawson 2013: 20). The SST uses the data collected on learners' behavioural and academic needs for an in-depth problem-solving analysis and reviews progress monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of intervention and to plan individualised support for the learners. Graphs and charts are drawn to analyse the trend in progress monitoring. They will help determine if there has been behaviour change (Wanzek & Vaughn 2008: 132). Dawson (2013: 20) asserts that the results from the data will either support that interventions are (i) successful, (ii) need to be more intense; or (iii) need to refer the learner for special education. If the learner has not made sufficient progress given the high quality instruction (Tier 1), the supplemental small group or individual instruction (Tier 2), then he/she is eligible to receive specialised instruction and behavioural interventions (Tier 4) subject to his/her evaluation by the school psychologist (Vermont Department of Education 2013: 52; Dawson 2013: 20; Hale 2008: 4).

(4) Tier 4

Learners at Tier 4 are identified as having a behavioural or learning disability. According to Diamond (2006: 6), Tier 4 interventions are developed with focus on the individual

learner who requires individually developed interventions which are delivered with a frequency and intensity that involve resources and personnel in addition to the general education educator. In other words, individualised comprehensive instructional and behavioural supports are added to the layers of intervention in Tiers 1, 2 and 3. Fox *et al.* (2010: 10) argue that Tier 4 interventions involve the implementation of an assessment-based behaviour support plan to address the environmental triggers of challenging behaviour, provide instruction of communication and social skills that serve as replacement to challenging behaviour, and to ensure that new skills are reinforced and problem behaviour is not being maintained by events or interactions with others. These interventions are provided within the general education classroom and/or within a separate setting or in both. Dawson (2013: 21) and Fairbanks *et al.* (2007: 294) maintain that an individualised education program (IEP) or a behaviour support program (BSP) based on functional assessments is designed by the SST which includes special education educators, general education educators, school psychologists and counsellors. The IEP or BSP specifies what interventions are needed and which setting is appropriate at Tier 4 (Hawken *et al.* 2008: 220). However, Hale (2008: 4) argues that Tier 4 special education services are not dramatically different from Tiers 1, 2 and 3 interventions and that IEP and BSP are based on peer-reviewed research as intensive progress monitoring continues (Hale 2008: 4). In the same vein, Dawson (2013: 21) asserts that the RTII model uses increasingly intensive interventions at each Tier before referring a learner to special education. This pertains to the RTII goal to match the intensity of the behaviour intervention with the behaviour problem (Gresham 2005: 338).

In the response to intervention and instruction (RTII) model, the principal's role is to facilitate the close collaboration between the general education educators and the special education educators towards the most efficient instructional strategies and behavioural interventions of learners. For the principal to achieve this, there should be adequate resources for counselling and mental health support to learners who manifest a lack of discipline at the school (Losen, Hewitt & Toldson 2014: 10). The principal has to coordinate all the various tiers to ensure that all learners needing interventions are catered for. So, he/she has to use collaborative leadership. Here also, he/she has to adopt

distributed leadership and set up a community of learners for all stakeholders so that team work and team building capacity are developed at the school level. He/she must also encourage parental involvement in the RTII process as well as the continuous professional development for all school members, but most importantly for the special education educators who are not initially trained for the general education curriculum. In the RTII model, the principal has also to manage the school by wandering around (MBWA) so as to ensure the effective implementation of treatment fidelity of behavioural interventions and successful curriculum strategies in the classroom as forms of early prevention.

From the above discussions, it is clear at the various models of discipline preventions and interventions that learner discipline is a complex process that needs to be tackled and restored by adopting discipline strategies that take into consideration the learner-environment mismatches rather than the child-within deficits. It is found that in the positive approach to discipline reactive strategies are not discussed, but emphasis is placed mostly on the relationships of the learner to his peers, the educator as well as the school as a whole. All these models have been selected by the researcher since they advocate positive discipline: they lay emphasis on methods that do not damage, but rather build the learner's self-image; make the learners feel important and appreciated; and encourages him/her to participate and cooperate in his/her own process of self-development (Oosthuizen 2010: 20).

3.3 A SUMMARY OF THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN MAINTAINING LEARNER DISCIPLINE FROM THE VARIOUS DISCIPLINE MODELS

Although the educator holds the key to disciplinary success, not only in the classroom but also in the entire school (Oosthuizen 2010: 3), yet the researcher is of the view that the principal as the school head and the main agent of change in the school has a major role to play in maintaining discipline among secondary school learners. He/she is at the decision level of the school and therefore he/she has the power and authority to ensure

that the educators successfully implement the various discipline management policies in practice.

According to Canter's positive discipline management model and the schoolwide positive behaviour support (SWPBS) model, the principal should be a model for acceptable behaviour and respect of school and classroom rules and regulations so that learners behave responsibly. He/she should lead by example (Mattoon 2015: 15). To achieve this, he/she must craft the school's vision and goals in terms of learner discipline, and communicate them to the learners in the morning assembly, educators' meetings and class meetings. The Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's positive discipline model suggests that the principal teaches learners to respect the rights of others, to feel empathy and to learn how to behave properly. The Johnson and Johnson's cooperative model recommends that the principal must teach them values such as care, the sense of pride and belongingness to the school community, the sense of self-esteem and the esteem for others to promote learner engagement and learner academic success. This is consistent with the responsive classroom model which suggests that the principal should enhance the learners' feelings of belongingness through the teaching of social skills, self-regulatory skills, problem-solving skills, responsibility, and rules and logical consequences in the morning meetings with learners and educators. Jones' Tools for Teaching model states that learners should not only be taught rules and rights, but also their responsibilities. This is likely to promote the social growth of learners which in turn supports academic growth.

The SWPBS model, the response to intervention and instruction (RTII) model, and the Olweus's bullying prevention model recommend that parent support is important in the principal's role of maintaining discipline among learners. For the principal to be successful in the effective implementation of learner discipline strategies and interventions, he/ she must encourage the school-home partnership. He/she should communicate the school's goals and vision about the ideal of a safe and bully-free school environment. These models are in line with the responsive classroom model which posits that the principal should connect families to the learners' learning goals as well as the

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school's goals and vision. However, the SWPBS model recommends that parents should be trained so that they may buy into the objectives and goals of the school behaviour management programme or intervention. The progress of the learners concerned is monitored at home and the interventions are strengthened by the parents' monitoring attitude.

The principal has also an important role to play in the professional development of the educators so that he/she may successfully implement the behavioural strategies or interventions that he/she plans to implement to monitor learner discipline. The Jones' tools for teaching model, the SWPBS model, the responsive classroom model and the Olweus's bullying prevention model propound the effective inclusion and engagement of educators in maintaining learner discipline. The principal should provide professional development opportunities to educators so that they are trained about limit setting, compliance techniques, collaboration skills, collegiality, team working, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills. Johnson and Johnson's cooperative learning model adds that educators should be taught constructive conflict management skills so that they may model them to the learners. According to the Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model, the principal should help learners develop interpersonal skills through dialogue, sharing, cooperation, negotiation and conflict resolution. This can only be achieved with the help and guidance of the educators who should demonstrate their expert leadership in skill development and teaching. By so doing, the principal supports them so that they do not develop the feelings of being defeated or helpless.

Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model and the responsive classroom model recommend that the principal listens to the learners' voice and choice so that the latter feel valued and accepted. He/she must listen to the feelings, thoughts, ideas and feedbacks of secondary school learners; take them seriously; and understand their emotions so that the learners are ready to choose to demonstrate acceptable behaviours as expected by him/her and the educators.

From the above paragraph on the different discipline models, it has become clear that the principal should play a pivotal role in the implementation of all the various strategies mentioned above and analysed in the following paragraph. He/she must be the coordinator of all the instructional strategies and the behavioural interventions at the various levels of the prevention and intervention. With the collaboration of educators in the school, he/she has to monitor the academic and behavioural progress of each and every learner, the successful one as well as the struggling one with instructional and behavioural challenges, by student profiling at class level and subject level. Moreover, he/she should motivate all the individuals concerned in the implementation process through shared visioning of school values and behaviour expectations so that the collaboration of all is obtained as from the early phase of prevention or intervention. Everyone should work towards the effective positive discipline programme under his/her supervision, guidance and behavioural recommendations.

The following paragraph overviews the general literature on the role of the principal in maintaining positive discipline among secondary school learners.

3.4 AN OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL LITERATURE ON THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN MAINTAINING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

As discussed in the previous paragraphs of this chapter, the secondary school principal plays a pivotal role in learner discipline. Particularly when learner discipline is a matter of great concern in the Mauritian education system, this seems important to note. When school principals do not focus on learner behaviour and discipline, they must take the responsibility for the loss of instructional time, and for the unsafe and ineffective learning environment (Boyd 2012: 66). Moreover, the overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the principal (Carr & Chearra 2004: 22). However, they cannot fail in this important role as Barr and Saltmarsh (2014: 2) assert that principals are nowadays accountable in an unprecedented manner, and they are enduring "the stress of working in a 'fishbowl' under the critical eye of parents and media"

(Watson 2009: 11). Principals are the major agents in the promotion of school effectiveness, and as such, according to Ibukun, Oyewole and Abe (2011: 248), they are the pillars of the education system in the maintenance of positive learner discipline. Principal leadership should not be seen as a role attached to a position, hierarchy or authority (Bush 2007: 395), but rather as an assemblage of behaviour and practices (Shantal, Halttunen & Pekka 2014: 35; Naicker & Mestry 2013: 1). Instead of commanding and controlling – the "hero-paradigm" of leadership (Lazaridou 2009: 10), they should connect and contribute in an attempt to meet the school's discipline goals (Hargreaves & Fink 2008: 232). Fox, Gong and Attoh (2015: 7) add that principals are increasingly called upon to be more open, collaborative and unguarded in an attempt to create a positive learning school community. This is rightly pointed out by McDargh (2015: 5) who says that the leader should be like "*a conductor or the principal performer in an orchestra*".

The following overview of the role of the principal in maintaining positive learner discipline in state secondary schools has its central focus on the seven '"P's" for leadership, namely People, Planning, Performance, Personality, Proficiencies, Persuasion, and Purpose (Sloan 2015: 53-54), and on the seven "F's" of leadership, namely Focus, Futuristic, Factual, Fairness, Flexible, Friendly, and Fearless (Mathew 2015: 13). The basis of this overview is also the ambidextrous leadership where the secondary school principal should strike a balance between the regular day-to-day administrative tasks and finding effective strategies to improve the school climate and culture in an attempt to maintain positive discipline among the learners (Smyth 2015: 29). In the following paragraph, the researcher presents an overview of the general literature on the role of the principal in terms of vision about learner discipline, role modeling, principal visibility, shared leadership, instructional leadership, values-based leadership (relationship building), educator empowerment, learner leadership, professional development, parent involvement, and team building in the context of school-wide discipline supports.

3.4.1 Visionary leadership of the principal

Principals should lead with purpose, meaning and values, and they should be mission-driven and outcome-focused (Bawany 2015b: 30). They must set their high positive expectations about learner discipline in the school, and inspire the superintendent, educators and learners to ensure acceptable behaviour. According to Basford and Molberg (2013: 36), positive expectations result in positive learner behaviour. In fact, the three main activities of the principal in an attempt to maintain positive discipline among secondary school learners are: (i) they must craft their vision about their goals regarding discipline, (ii) align all the educators, learners and the school superintendent with this vision by gaining their acceptance through effective communication, commitment, coalition-building, and empowerment, and (iii) inspire them by enlisting, supporting and recognising good and acceptable learner behaviour, as well as any slightest improvement in learner behaviour, through praise and constructive and developmental feedback (Wyatt 2015: 58; Teckchandani & Schultz 2014: 63-64; Macharia, Thinguri & Kiongo 2014: 208; Modiba 2015: 301). Maldonado (2015: 8) adds that vision serves to empower, develop, care for, and eventually inspire followers. As a result, there is likely to be a fair exchange between the principal, the superintendent, the educators and learners in which the principal gives a sense of direction, values and recognition to the learners who will in return give esteem and positive responsiveness to the former (Malakyan 2014: 19) in terms of positive discipline. The learners do so since through the authentic leadership of the principal, they develop an affective commitment, that is an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the school activities (Gardiner, Howard, Tenuto & Muzaliwa 2013: 17; Cheng, Jiang, Riley, Cheng & Jen 2014: 82; Wyatt 2015: 58). Vielmetter and Sell (2014: 42) and Barr and Saltmarsh (2014: 9) opine that by so doing, the principal takes the school through a highly effective process of meaning-making, giving each and every learner a reason to believe and be inspired to be part of the principal's endeavour to make the school progress as a professional learning community. The learners will thus feel connected to the school. According to Chafouleas (2013: 2), learners are more likely to engage in healthy and acceptable behaviour when they feel connected to the school.

Having a shared vision, from which flows clear expectations and clearly identified priorities, is essentially a factor for student success, which results into positive learner discipline (Leclerc, Moreau, Dumouchel & Sallafranque-St-Louis 2012:11). This is the Pygmalion effect whereby the learner acts in accordance with the principal's expectations about learner discipline; the former tends to raise his/her own self-expectations about his/her own behaviour when the principal sets higher expectations for them (Basford & Molberg 2013: 36). When the principal adopts the visionary leadership and the aligned leadership, his/her aim is not about "the wielding of power to foster authority but rather the welding" of the educators and the learners together to forge unity of purpose for a safer learning environment (Bell 2015: 18). This notion of principalship is based on Arneson's (2015: 46) definition of leadership as the practice of creating a vision that others want to be part of, building a positive environment where great things can happen, and developing people to reach their full potential. In other words, vision infuses meaning and facilitates the learners' and educators' involvement in the collective goal of promoting positive discipline among the learners (Berson, Halevy, Shamir & Erez 2015: 146)

3.4.2 The principal as an ethical role-model

The learners may change their behaviour positively by observing and imitating others in their immediate environment, especially their role-models. The principal is an ethical role-model to the learners (Gerstl-Pepin & Aiken 2014: 49), as he/she is the school head. Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014: 295) and Van den Akker, Heres, Lasthuizen, and Six (2009: 103) point out that the principal should, besides the educators and the school superintendent, approach the learners with honesty, trustworthiness and integrity, and by being exemplary of the desirable behaviour. He/she should cultivate and model self-discipline as well as respect (Temitayo, Nayaya & Lukman 2013: 18). Holloman and Yates (2012: 124-127) propound the Best Practices Language model to suggest that principals and superintendents as well as educators should use words of accountability, encouragement, grace, guidance, high expectations, hope, love, relationship, respect,

understanding and unity in an attempt to model respect and encourage mutual respect between learners and principals, learners and superintendents and between learners and educators. When the principal, the superintendent and the educators give respect the learners feel valued and empowered, and they will respect the people at school and the school organisation. This is consistent with Fox *et al*. (2015: 7) who state that principals elicit positive emotions from learners when they are authentic in their leadership approach at schools.

Principals should be fully committed to demonstrating the school values in everything they do, so that learners capture their authenticity and develop trust in the principal as their leader and themselves (Sehring 2015: 9). By trusting the principal in all he/she does and says to them, the learners will be influenced by him/her as far as his/her behaviour expectations from them, as the leader is credible. As such, principals are deliberate leaders. According to Keis (2015: 19) and Protheroe (2011: 6), deliberate leaders manifest their leadership by modelling the appropriate behaviours or ways of thinking that they expect of learners and educators while motivating them to be courageous to take the initiative for autonomous reasoning. They lead by setting the right examples of desirable behaviour to the learners, educators and the superintendent (Mattoon 2015: 15). Leading by example is in fact the practice of the principal that exemplifies the school's organisational values, objectives, expectations, pro-social and life skills. Authentic leaders exemplify high moral standards to ensure learner engagement which helps prevent lack of discipline (Walcott, Grimm & Konstan 2012: 2; Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans & May 2004: 810). By so doing, the principal transfers the ownership of positive learner behaviour and a safe conducive learning environment and the responsibilities therein by the learners to themselves. The learners become therefore autonomous and accountable for their own appropriate behaviour.

3.4.3 Instructional leadership role of the principal

The principal of the secondary school is an instructional leader since the basic aim of the school is the promotion of effective instruction. According to Protheroe (2011: 3),

effective management in schools is more an instructional than a disciplinary enterprise. Consistently, Boyd (2012: 65) concurs that the school principal's attention needs to be on instruction, not discipline. Yet, Ugboko and Adediwura (2012: 41) assert that instructional leadership is seldom practised by the principal.

As instructional leaders, principals are responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating changes in the instructional programmes or curriculum of the school. Moreover, the instructional aspect of an effective schoolwide discipline system is that the principal, together with the educators must prepare learners to behave responsibly and positively by teaching behaviour expectations and behaviour management strategies (Rickert 2005: 25-16). According to Olley, Cohn and Cowan (2010: 7), the principal must ensure the most suitable physical learning environment for the learners; clearly establish what is expected of them; organise the time of learners; make sure learning and teaching materials are available; design relevant activities that involve learners actively in their learning; give immediate feedback to learners regarding the meeting of the instructional and positive behavioural expectations; teach and reinforce particularly appropriate skills; use appropriate logical consequences for a lack of socially desirable behaviour, and use sanctions as an opportunity for learners to learn; monitor learners' work regularly through the class journal; and teach replacement behaviour. They argue that better behaviour leads to better academic success; and academic success supports positive behaviour.

Moreover, Shantal *et al.* (2014: 43) posit that principals must encourage educators to use modern interactive teaching methods such as ICT and the social media as an instructional tool so as to bring an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Such pedagogical leadership from the principal is likely to create a lively and stimulating classroom and school environment. This is a motivating factor in maintaining positive learner behaviour. This is consistent with Ugboko and Adediwura (2012: 47) who find that there is a significant positive relationship between effective instructional strategies used by secondary school principals and learners' positive behaviour at schools. Clearly,

learners show a lack of discipline when the curriculum that is offered by the school is not relevant to their interests and needs (Lukman & Hamadi 2014: 11).

3.4.4 Secondary educator empowerment and distributed leadership

Although the principal is the school head, yet leadership from all educators and the superintendent is equally essential (Leclerc *et al*. 2012: 3). Fox *et al*. (2015: 10) maintain that there is an asymmetrical relationship between the principal and the educators, which may be eliminated by bringing into it a trust relationship between them (O' Brien 2015: 22). The principal has to delegate some aspects of learner discipline management to the school superintendent and educators since according to Boyd (2012: 65), behaviour issues in schools are not occasional; they are daily, hourly and everywhere. She adds that though it is the principal's responsibility to ensure a consistent, school-wide system for preventing misbehaviour, for responding to a lack of learners' discipline in the classroom and elsewhere on the school grounds, yet behaviours such as defiance, disruption, disrespect, pranking, calling names, failure to work, and incessant talking should be dealt with by the educators. This is consistent with Sergiovanni (2005: 42) who asserts that school leadership should be viewed as "*a practice whose responsibilities, functions and actions are shared by principals and educators*", particularly when schooling is becoming more complex in structure, purpose, and organisational change and development are likely to require more the possibility of the educator as well as the learner to act as a leader (Naicker & Mestry 2013: 2-3). However, Lawson (2007: 4) views that delegation is ineffective when those to which tasks are delegated lack responsibility, authority and accountability.

The distributed or rotated leadership is the new paradigm in schools. To ensure teacher empowerment in establishing and maintaining high standards of behaviour and learner discipline, the principal must create a more collegial and collaborative school ethos or climate (Carr & Chearra 2004: 18). With shared leadership between the principal and the educators, there is likely to be collective efficacy (Nicholaides, LaPort, Chen, Tomassetti, Weis, Zaccaro & Cortina 2014: 925) or collective capacity (Fullan 2001: 136), that is a

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shared belief in the collective ability of all the stakeholders to organise and execute courses of action which are essential for attaining the given school goals or to challenge difficult circumstances. Principals should create the necessary conditions in the school as an organisation so that distributive leadership occurs. This entails the redistribution of power and authority about learner discipline by setting up collaborative meetings in which the school principal, superintendent and educators resolve problems concerning learner learning and behaviour. This is based on facts or data analysis (Leclerc *et al.* 2012: 11) or by setting up school discipline committees and trusting educators to take disciplinary actions (Naicker & Mestry 2013: 7) and building trust relationships (Malakyan 2014: 10). According to Hopkins and Jackson (2003: 101), this can "bring *unity and collegiality in the school around values and higher order purposes that are shared and understood by every stakeholder*". Gorder (2015: 7) and Berg-Panitz (2014: 26) propagate that the principal listens to educators to enrich and widen his/her perceptions, accepts to explore behaviour problems with the educators in a multidisciplinary dialogue and use his/her emotional intelligence to connect with them. The latter are likely to take more ownership of the decisions that are made or the positive behaviour preventions and interventions that are adopted and implemented at the schoolwide level.

Bawany (2015a: 25) and Kaufman (2014: 38) suggest that principals may create a coaching culture where they coach educators through change, and encourage them to take control of their instructional and behavioural targets. Educators have the opportunity to be part of teams by working towards a more effective learning discipline prevention and intervention programme, having the opportunity to learn new behavioural management strategies, the ability to exercise their creativity, the feeling that they have a "voice", and they are recognised privately and publicly by the principal (Witz 2014: 12). Educators and the school superintendent will tend to follow the principal in his/her vision to have a safe school environment. To have the full support of the educators, the principal must adopt a more inclusive, participative and consultative approach, and he/she must be a facilitator, mediator, coach and supporter to educators as well as to learners (Naicker & Mestry 2013: 9-12) This is the activity theory which emphasises consultation,

participation and inclusiveness of all stakeholders so that trust is built and leaders can unite the school around shared values and higher-order purposes (Hopkins & Jackson 2003: 101). In such circumstances the school environment is likely to be energising rather than intimidating for the learners, educators, superintendent and the principal (Pietler 2015: 3).

3.4.5 Learner leadership

The behaviour problem is not an administrative matter that the principals can solve on their own. They need to determine the causes of a lack of learner discipline so that they may come forward with effective learner discipline measures. Ugboko and Adediwura (2012: 48) state that the success of the principal in maintaining positive learner discipline depends on the degree of participatory leadership he/she has with the learners to solve discipline problems.

Though Carr and Chearra (2004: 18) assert that secondary school principals should consider consulting older learners about the relevance of rules and regulations, yet Walcott *et al.* (2012: 2) and Asiyai (2012: 46) maintain that the principal is expected to engage all learners in intervention and prevention strategies that address a lack of learner discipline. Consistently, Ibukun *et al.* (2011: 252) add that at the secondary school level, learner involvement in decisions about school matters related to them may be gradually initiated. In fact, Jeruto and Kiprop (2011: 97) opine that learners in secondary schools should be given full inclusion in matters such as rules, rewards and sanctions, curriculum, teaching and learning, management and development planning due to the alarming learner unrests. Principals have to listen to learners in the disciplinary procedures (Macharia *et al.* 2014: 199). This will motivate the latter to respond and abide by the school discipline policies (Ugboko & Adediwura 2012: 48).

The principal has a pivotal role to play in developing learner leadership among secondary school learners. The Murphy and Johnson (2011) model of youth leader development suggests that learners should be taught early development factors, leader identity, self-regulation, future development experiences and leadership effectiveness (Murphy &

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Johnson 2011: 461). Rehm (2014: 91) cites the Ricketts and Rudd (2002) model of youth leadership which suggests principals coach learners on leadership knowledge, leadership attitude, will and desire, decision-making, reasoning, critical thinking, oral and written communication, and intra and interpersonal relations. These models will help principals to develop self-discipline and positive discipline (Abidoye & Onweazu 2010: 12) so that learners live up to the behaviour standards set by the school.

The principal may also use the prefectship model so that learners have the opportunity to partake in the school matters and activities, which concern the school learners. This model helps maintain order and discipline in schools. A prefect is a learner who is given the authority over other learners in the governing of the school (Rehm 2014: 85). These prefect school leaders (Lilley 2010: 16) are included in any school improvement conversation. Yet, the principal remains the "leader of leaders" in the school (Harris & Lambert 2003: 45). The prefectship model is relevant in the context of the youth or learner voice put forward by Mitra (2006: 7). Dempster, Stevens and Keeffe (2011: 10) cite the Mitra's three-tiered pyramid of learner voice which ranges from the "*basic level where learners share their opinions and provide solutions*" in their schools, to "*ultimate recognition where learners take the lead on seeking change*". The principal, by taking various social, emotional, physical and age factors into account, may involve the learners in the tier which he/she considers the learners fit and can participate to an acceptable extent in the decision-making process of the school. This is consistent with Pedersen, Yager and Yager (2011: 23) who advocate that student-led leadership roles within the school have an impact on their own development, a positive influence on their peers, and help create a positive school-wide climate that is absent of threat.

3.4.6 The promotion of professional development and growth

Learner discipline is a complex school problem that needs to be analysed thoroughly in terms of its causes, possible effective strategies, the suitability of the disciplinary measures in terms of the seriousness of the misbehaviour, the learner's age and sex as well as emotional and physical characteristics. From the above themes it is evident that

the principal cannot maintain positive discipline among secondary school learners without the professional support of the educators who deal with the learners in the classroom. According to Maag (2012: 2096), educators themselves have consistently rated behaviour management as the main area of their professional development. Many research studies have recommended that the educators should be provided with professional development about supervision, relationships with learners, training in the use of the most appropriate instructional techniques, media and tools. Staff development workshops may also be organised by the principal with the help of resource persons that focus on learners' lack of discipline in schools (what are the causes, types, and preventive approaches to the management of learner discipline) (Magwa & Ngara 2014: 87; Abidoye & Onweazu 2010: 12; Ugboko & Adediwura 2012: 48). Moreover, the US Department of Education (2014: 16) recommends that educators should be trained to apply school policies and practices in a fair and equitable way in order not to disproportionately impact learners of colour, learners with disabilities or at-risk learners. Pedersen *et al.* (2011: 24) assert that it is the key role of the principal to support and encourage educators' professional development needs.

Manguvo *et al.* (2011: 159) found that uncertified educators face many behaviour problems from their learners. Supply educators in Mauritius are young undergraduates who are recruited by the Ministry of Education to replace appointed educators who are on a short school leave from one to three months (Ministry of Education and Human Resources (2014: 1). These young educators find a limit in their ability to deal with learner's misbehaviour (Ozben 2010: 292). The principal should provide short workshops or courses to such untrained educators on this problem of learner discipline.

The secondary school principals also need to undergo professional development about school discipline so that they may create a conducive and safe teaching and learning environment for the learners. The key sources of school principals' leadership practices in terms of learner discipline management in particular, and school management, in general, are theory, practice, networking and leadership (Shantal *et al.* 2014: 40). It is only through conferences, workshops, and professional development programmes that

principals may learn and practice, through a mentoring process, about responding to individual learner's needs, shared leadership, teamwork, leadership by listening, managing human resources, the use of ICT and social media and other interactive teaching and learning methods, and mentoring skills (Ibukun *et al.* 2011: 251-252). The outcome of such professional development programmes is that principals will be better equipped to maintain positive learner discipline as this is a multifaceted phenomenon that needs a holistic approach from the principal. Shantal *et al.* (2014: 29) and Govinda-Seenauth (2016: 61) state that professional development and training enhances the practices of principals as they engage in more collaboration and trust. With all the educators, learners, superintendent and the principal being involved in some form of leadership development programme, it is evident that a culture of enlightened accountability will be created in the secondary school. Chism (2015: 43) calls this type of leadership, the no-drama leadership, where every single person in the school organisation is accountable for each of their actions and behaviour.

3.4.7 The principal as the key agent between the school parents and the school

The principal is the leader of the school system who "*sets the terrain on which others are empowered to act within a shared vision and a core set of goals*" (Sheard & Avis 2011: 85). The principal's role is therefore to orient the whole school community towards shared goals and values. However, this can only be done with the help of parents (Barr & Saltmarsh 2014: 9), as there should be an effective school-home partnership for the principal to be able to successfully maintain positive discipline in the school. A parent participation deficit in schools is a matter of concern in the actual context of the alarming situation of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools (McNamara 2010: 10). Rigby (2011: 401) and Carr (2004: 20) opine that when the principal systematically informs parents about what the school is doing about learner discipline (the aims, values and disciplinary requirements of the school) they may become more involved in the development and implementation of school policies on positive discipline. As they are integral to schooling, Duma (2013: 104) and Steyn and Mashaba (2014: 388) maintain that parent involvement in the school governance ensures that learners attend school and

are more disciplined as schools fare better when they tap on the parents' expertise and assistance in school governance. In the same vein, the Mauritian Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (2016: 2) and Okeke (2014: 2) add that parents' involvement in the learner's educational development positively impacts on the child's cognitive and literacy abilities, and thus the learner is more psycho-social and behaviourally competent.

In an attempt to maintain effective learner discipline, the principal may invite parents to school when their children misbehave in school (Ugboko & Adediwura 2012: 48). However, Carr and Chearra (2004: 18-20) add that parents should also be informed when their children demonstrate desirable behaviour. Parents help alleviate learning and behaviour problems faced by learners when the principal gives them the right and the responsibility to actively participate in the school governing body and regularly involve them in the disciplinary committee and Parents Teacher Association meetings (Seegopaul 2016: 63; Duma 2013: 103; Ugboko & Adediwura 2012: 48; Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon 2014: 281; Macharia *et al.* 2014: 210; Okeke 2014: 5; Asiyai 2012: 46). Moreover, Carr and Charrea (2004: 18-20) and Okeke (2014: 5-7) recommend that principals play positive roles in fostering understanding and cooperation between parents, educators and learners by accommodating parents in the Board of Management so that parents may be involved in the process of drawing up a code of behaviour and learner discipline, and may support the teaching staff with regard to its implementation. The principal should invite parents to school to discuss the misbehaviour of their children with him/her and the class educator and the principal should also involve parents in curriculum matters, parents' evenings, parent-educator games, school debates and speech days. The principal may also organise home visits for pastoral care so that parents and educators may collaborate in dealing with the child's academic and behaviour problems (Panchoo 2016: 52). Rigby (2011: 401) adds that the principal may also involve parents through newsletters and periodic meetings. It is clear that the principal is adopting the instrumental leadership when he/she initiates school structures which focus on learner discipline and goal attainment by facilitating parent interactions with educators, other

parents, learners and other disciplinary experts, and by making clear what is expected of parents (Antonakis & House 2014: 748).

The principal should ensure that the school provides a welcoming atmosphere which encourages parental involvement in the school matters concerning their children, and the parents should be involved at an early stage (Carr & Chearra 2004: 22). He/she must be available to communicate an expectation of inclusivity to the parents as the latter consider the principal's visibility as very fundamental for them to be engaged in schools (Barr & Saltmarsh 2014: 7). Therefore, the principal, school management team, educators and parents must develop a culture of collaboration to ensure a climate conducive to teaching and learning.

3.4.8 Leadership by relationships

According to a Creative Center for Leadership study, relationship building ranked tenth out of sixteen leadership competencies (Rao 2015: 15). Gendron (2015: 27) and Perruci and McManus (2015: 15) add that the school principal aims to develop trust, relationship and rapport throughout the school.

The principal, as the school system leader, is at the centre of many human relationships: relationships with the learners, educators, parents, the outside school community, and educational psychologists or counsellors. Bates and Weighart (2015: 41) rightly point out that principal leadership occurs in the context of a social organisation. Therefore, he/she has a social or relational function with all the different groups of stakeholders (Shantal *et al.* 2014: 36). This function is fundamental as the "human touch of leadership" is essential for successful positive discipline preventive and interventional strategies with learners. It is person-centered (Freiberg & Lamb 2009: 102; Pedersen *et al.* 2011: 30). This is consistent with the social justice dimension of educational leadership where the principal values principles of equality and solidarity, understands and values human rights, and recognises the dignity of every human being through a practice built on respect, care, recognition and empathy (Mafora 2013: 3). Principal leadership, according

to Fox *et al.* (2015: 15) and Malakyan (2014: 10), is therefore intensely interpersonal. However, there should be a construal fit between the principal and the followers, that is, the more concrete the visions, goals and expectations of the principal about learner discipline management are, and the smaller the social and temporal distances between them are, the more collaborative and engaged the learners, educators, superintendent and parents will be in the school mission (Berson *et al.* 2015: 144). This construal fit is possible when the principal builds relationships of trust and a climate of respectfulness (Naicker & Mestry 2013: 9; Barr & Saltmarsh 2014: 11).

The principal should also be a servant leader in his/her relationships. His/her commitment to serve the learners, educators and the school community at large is at the heart of servant leadership (Cook 2015: 25). As such, he/she demonstrates the following characteristics: listening, fostering collaboration, empathy, persuasion, foresight, visible presence, discernment, integrity, moral development, humility, building community, capacity of reciprocity, developing people, providing leadership, valuing people, communication, influencing, encouraging, delegating, teaching, credibility, altruism, supporting and resourcing (Focht & Ponton 2015: 2-4). By demonstrating these characteristics, the principal should be able to care for and about learners and educators. Van der Vyyer, Van der Westhuizen and Meyer (2014: 2) claim that caring relationships enhance the learners' feeling of safety and security. Caring and mutually respectful relationships promote learner independence as a positive school ethos is created based on such relationships.

Supportive relationships enable learners from different backgrounds to bring their personal experiences into the school, discover their common humanity and have the feeling that they are considered as valuable assets to the school community so that they feel comfortable (Chadsey & McVittie 2006: 1). According to Carr and Chearra (2004: 18), a positive school ethos permeates all the school activities and helps forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school. Freire and Amado (2009: 95) assert that when the principal succeeds in creating a cohesive school ethos, learners show more acceptable behaviour and attitudes.

It is evident from the above overview of the general literature review about the principal's role in maintaining learner discipline that the principal cannot function effectively when he/she uses only positional leadership. He/ she must be a visionary leader, an authentic leader, an ambidextrous leader, a collaborative leader, an inspirational leader, a servant leader, an instructional leader, a moral leader and an ethical leader. These different forms of learner-centered leadership help him/her to solve the discipline problem from a holistic perspective, with the collaboration of all those concerned about discipline. The principal may even be more effective in achieving this leadership task of discipline management by using research-based strategies. The researcher describes these strategies that have proved successful in many different education settings.

3.5 RESEARCH-BASED DISCIPLINE PREVENTIONS, INTERVENTIONS AND STRATEGIES

Policy mandates place controls over teaching practices by dictating the use of research-based or evidence-based curriculum methods to address behaviour problems in the general education classroom (Benjamin 2011: 11). The Vermont Department of Education (2013: 51) and Chafouleas (2013: 1) define researched-based interventions as "*curriculum and educational interventions that have been proven to be effective for most learners based on scientific studies that use empirical methods, including rigorous and adequate data analysis, have been applied to a large study sample, are replicable, show direct co-relations between the interventions and learner progress and have been reported in a peer-reviewed journal*". Regardless of the size or scope of the intervention, Horner *et al*. (2010: 1-14) and Kulas (2013: 8) identify six criteria to define a research-based intervention, namely, the intervention is operationally defined; the qualifications of implementers or "alphas" are clearly defined; and the expected outcomes from using the intervention, the setting in which the intervention is expected to be effective, the target group of learners and the conceptual and basic intervention mechanisms are all defined. Hale (2008: 5) argues also that a research-based intervention must be provided as soon as

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it is clear that the learner has a behaviour problem; must provide the opportunity for explicit and systematic instruction and practice along with cumulative review to ensure mastery; must provide opportunities for immediate feedback and reward, must be guided by, and responsive to data on learner progress; and must significantly increase the intensity of instruction and practice. The US Department of Education (2014: 3) states that with evidence-based strategies, the principal may better manage learner discipline by providing different levels of interventions based on the learners' different needs. This is consistent with Chafouleas (2013: 1) who defines effective discipline as the implementation of those policies and practices that adhere to a multitiered model of service delivery which is framed within a positive, comprehensive and coordinated focus.

The various research-based interventions that may be used, such as those featuring in RTII and SWPBS, to prevent problem behaviour are pre-correction, choice making, self-management, compliance training, opportunity to respond, rules and behaviour expectations, differential curriculum, Good Behaviour Game, check-in/check-out, check and connect, First Step to Success and contingency contracting.

3.5.1 Pre-correction

Pre-correction involves active teaching supervision and effective instruction (Haydon & Scott 2008: 284) during which learners are taught expectations, rules and routines to prevent a misbehaviour from occurring. According to Martella *et al.* (2012: 226), this instructional intervention has three assumptions, namely problem behaviour is learnt through our interactions with environments; learners need to learn appropriate behaviour; and the teaching social skills must be emphasised. In fact, pre-corrections are brief prompts, often verbal questions, statements or gestures directed to a learner and that identify the desired replacement behaviour; just before the latter enters a context in which predictable problem behaviour may occur (Lane *et al.* 2013: 23). Because it is delivered shortly (Lane *et al.* 2011:76), learners are kept on track with positive behaviour. Educator attention is given freely to the learner. Colvin, Sugai and Patching (1993: 147-148) and Haydon and Scott (2008: 285-286) describe a seven step plan for pre-correction, namely

(a) the context of the predictable behaviour should be identified; (b) the predictable and expected behaviour should be specified; (c) educators should take into consideration how to change the context of the situation; (d) educators should rehearse the appropriate behaviour with learners; (e) educators should determine how they will reinforce appropriate learner behaviour; (f) expected behaviour should be prompted; and (g) the plan must be monitored. Pre-correction has shown to be a promising strategy in preventing the occurrence of problem behaviour as it is cost effective, easy to implement and requires minimum training of educators for implementation.

3.5.2 Choice-making

Shevin and Klein (1984: 160) define choice as the act of learners' selection of a preferred alternative from among several familiar options. The educator should teach learners how to make effective choices. When learners break rules or behave disruptively, they need both firm limits and real choices. Firm limits show that we mean business about what behaviour is accepted and real choices help learners realise that they can select better alternatives (Mendler 2008: 21). Lane *et al*. (2013: 26-28) propose six steps to implementing choice making as a prevention method, namely (a) the educator offers the learner or group of learners to make a choice of at least two options provided; (b) the educator asks the learner or group of learners to make a choice based on the options provided; (c) the educator waits for the learner or group to make a choice; (d) the learner responds; (e) the educator prompts the learner to make a choice if, after waiting for the pre-delimited amount of time, the learner has not yet made a choice; and (f) the educator reinforces the choice options, given the selected item to the learner. The provision of choice making is simple and easy as it does not cause any additional burden in time and preparation to those providing the choice (Carlson, Luiselli, Slyman & Markowski 2008: 87; Kern & State 2009: 9), and can be embedded within regular routines across environments (Cole & Levinson 2002: 33). McCormick, Jolivette and Ridgely (2003: 5) argue that embedding choice supports decision–making, social competence and autonomy while promoting engagement in tasks and activities selected by the learner. However, Lane *et al.* (2013: 30) recommend that for choice-making to be an efficient

prevention–focused intervention strategy, the educator should recognise and reinforce the learner initiated choices. Mendler (2008: 21) maintains that learners behave better and learn the value of responsibility for their behaviour when they have a say in what happens to them. When educators know learners' preferences and give them opportunity to make choices about their preferred curriculum activities, learning contexts, instructional methods and preferred nature of on-task activities, this acts as a powerful antecedent to increase academic engagement from an average of 57 to 89 per cent and reduces the probability of challenging behaviour from an average of 8 per cent to none (Martella *et al.* 2012: 168; Lane *et al.* 2011: 84).

3.5.3 Self-management

Self-management is defined as the personal application of behaviour change tactics that produce a desired change in behaviour (Cooper, Heron & Heward 2007: 578). It involves a consistent and predictable routine for providing immediate feedback for behaviour. Learners' lack of self-control may lead to either behaviour deficiencies or behaviour excesses which are causes of behaviour problems. Martella *et al.* (2012: 156) argue that to improve learner self-control, self-management skills must be taught to learners. According to Lane *et al.* (2013: 30), learners are expected to delay gratifications but are taught to reinforce their own behaviour through self-praise or tangible reinforcement according to a schedule and agreed-upon criteria for reinforcement which works to increase the likelihood of future desirable behaviour. The skills are goal-setting, self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-reinforcement and self-punishment (Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid & Epstein 2005: 205- 221).

3.6.3.1 Goal-setting

Goal-setting involves the methods of establishing performance criteria and how solutions are identified and used to meet an established goal (Martella *et al.* 2012: 157). The intent of establishing a goal is to structure the learner's effort, motivate him or her to move towards the goal completion and provide progress monitoring information to the learner (Menzies, Lane & Lee 2009: 31). An example of a goal setting intervention is the

educator-mediated self-evaluation in which learners compare self-monitoring checklist reports with reports of the educator paired with academic goal-setting (Lane *et al.* 2011: 135).

3.6.3.2 Self-monitoring

Cooper *et al.* (2007: 580) defined self-monitoring as a procedure in which a learner observes and records his or her own behaviour. In order for learners to effectively self-manage their behaviour, they must be taught the skills to monitor their own behaviour, namely (a) identifying the target behaviour of concern, and operationally define it; (b) developing a plan for how learners will be cued to record their behaviour and a schedule for monitoring; (c) meeting with the learner to explain the management plan, by discussing examples and non-examples of the expected behaviour; (d) developing a self-monitoring sheet for data collection; (e) teaching the learners how to use the self-management plan by first modeling for the learner the act of self-recording while verbalising the steps out loudly; (f) assessing for accuracy of recording while providing reinforcement for correct recording; and (g) fading the plan when the learner meets his or her performance goal for an extended period of time (Lane *et al.* 2013: 30-33). Cook, Tankersley and Landrum (2012: 6) postulate that self-monitoring is an effective means of increasing implementation of a targeted behaviour and as such it has the potential to be incorporated into a wide array of comprehensive interventions.

3.6.3.3 Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a process through which a learner is taught the method of evaluating his or her own progress or performance to a standard (Lane *et al.* 2011:133). For effective self-evaluation, the learner under the guidance of the educator should conduct a performance assessment; set observable and attainable goals; develop a schedule for evaluation after the learner reaches the agreed-upon performance goal; and compare the learner's performance to a goal for performance.

3.6.3.4 Self-instruction

Self-instruction is a form of training that involves the learner how to talk to himself or herself through a particular set of behaviour (Martella *et al.* 2012: 165). Learners are taught statements (academic, behavioural, social) to think or whisper to themselves that encourage engagement, work completion or solving a conflict (Lane *et al.* 2011: 134). Educators may teach learners self-instruction through the following steps: identify the problem; attend to the situation and plan during the phase (Lane *et al.* 2013: 32). Self-reinforcement and self-punishment involve teaching learners how to provide consequences for their own behaviour in the form of self-praise, a tangible item or an activity. Lane *et al.* (2011: 32) postulate that the educator should focus on the process of external reinforcement because it is more overt and within the educator's control to shape the steps associated with it. The educator should engage the learner in a discussion to determine desirable reinforcers for the learner; establish a schedule for reinforcement; and establish rules for reinforcement. Self-punishment involves self-reprimands or the removal of a potential reinforcer.

Self-management is the ultimate long-term goal of any intervention program for problem behaviour (Colvin 2010: 88) and it has proved to be effective at helping learners gain awareness of their present behaviour (Hulac *et al.* 2011: 32-33). Moreover, it has demonstrated positive results in terms of on-task behaviour, work completion and learners raise their hand when they have to say or do something (Lane *et al.* 2013: 31-33).

3.5.4 Compliance training

An interaction between the educator and the learner that results in non-compliance is considered as one of the most frequent trouble spots in behaviour management (Kapalka 2009: 45-46). Colvin (2010: 98) defines non-compliance as a failure from the learner to fulfill the request satisfactorily. It is synonymous to oppositional behaviour, insubordination, defiance, refusal to follow directions, resistance to directions, non-cooperative behaviour, wilfulness, stubbornness and non-conforming. Such a discipline

problem arises from those learners who are particularly resistant to the typical interventions that increase academic engagement. So, learners should be taught the skills of compliance.

Ducharme, Sanjuan and Drain (2007: 338) came forward with the errorless compliance training which structures instructional trials (i.e., the delivery of a request, learner compliance behaviour and the delivery of reinforcement) in phases that are categorised by the type of request. Errorless compliance training involves exposing the learner to increasingly and successively more challenging instructions at a pace that provides many opportunities for the learner to experience success and gain reinforcement. Lane *et al.* (2013: 58) suggest the following steps for effective implementation of errorless compliance training: (a) the educator identifies requests or instructions and categorise them in relation to the learner's ability to perform them (that is, easy, easy moderate, moderate and hard); (b) the educator delivers instruction for easy requests and gradually moves to the next level of requests; (c) he or she delivers reinforcement for instructions that are followed; and (f) then he or she provides many opportunities for the learner to succeed at responding appropriately to the request. Kotler and McMahon (2003: 508) state that when a learner follows the instructions, the educator may reinforce the behaviour through attention or specific praise; on the other hand, he or she may increase the likelihood of future compliance by implementing time-out, ignoring or physical guidance (the process of physically guiding the learning through the desired behaviour). Colvin (2010: 101-106) proposes six steps for addressing non-compliance in secondary schools namely, (a) assess the situation; (b) maintain the flow of instructions; (c) repeat the directions privately; (d) disengage or withdraw from the learner, respond to the class and monitor the learner who was not initially compliant; (e) provide focus on learner's decision-making; and (f) debrief with the learner at a later time.

3.5.5 Opportunities to respond

Improvements in learner academic engagement are likely to improve the classroom learning environment through both improvements in classroom behaviour and learning

opportunities as well as increased effective classroom-based instructional practices (Baker, Clark, Maier & Viger 2008: 1876). Opportunities to respond (OTR) to academic request is a strategy used to improve academic and social behaviour. Conroy, Sutherland, Snyder and Marsh (2008: 27) argue that as the educator increases OTR, learners' disruptive behaviour decreases.

An opportunity to respond is any chance that a learner has to correctly answer a question or to provide academic feedback (Hulac *et al.* 2011: 67). Lane *et al.* (2013: 36) add that it is an instructional strategy initiated and used by educators that serves as a prompt for learner academic responding. In fact, it is a questioning strategy that is used as a stimulus that begins or ends a learning trial, consisting of stimulus-response-consequent contingency sequence (Skinner, Fletcher & Henington 1996: 319). According to Lane *et al.* (2013: 36), the antecedent stimulus is followed by a verbal, written or physical learner response. The educator presents a question to a learner (stimulus), the learner answers to the question (response) and the educator delivers feedback or praise (consequence). Hulac *et al.* (2011: 67-68) mention that typically lessons should be short with only one or two new components followed by a mini review of the lesson whereby the learners are given the opportunities to give relevant responses related to the lesson.

When OTR is combined with other strategies such as praise, the educator creates a classroom environment that allows learners many opportunities to be well behaved and support them in displaying appropriate behaviour (Lane *et al.* 2011: 81-82). This helps initiate a constructive cycle interactions between the educator and the learners as well as between learners. Educator praise is widely recognised as an effective consequent strategy for promoting desirable learner behaviour (Gable, Hester, Rock & Hughes (2009: 196). Lane *et al.* (2013: 42) and Hulac *et al.* (2011: 67) stipulate that praise should be effective when it has the following components: (a) good praise adheres to the "*if-then*" rule, which states that if the learner is behaving in the desired manner, then the educator praises the learner; (b) good praise includes the learner's names; (c) it is descriptive; (d) it conveys that the educator really means what is said; and (e) it is varied and it does not interrupt the flow. Reider (2005: 96) adds that the educator should praise

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the deed to encourage the learner, not praise the learner. This is inconsistent with Bilmes (2012: 190) who asserts that instead of praising the learner's work, the educator should focus on the process. Dweck (2007: 36) reasons that process praise focuses on both the learners' efforts and strategies that are modifiable and on the process of behavioural responding. A learner's characteristics are not modifiable; so person praise should be avoided (Lane *et al.* 2013: 42). As such, effective praise may increase intrinsic motivation, promote appropriate behaviour and decrease disruptive behaviour (Stormont, Smith & Lewis 2007: 281).

A common mistake of educators' behaviour is that some educators only praise learners who demonstrate effective behaviour (Maag 2001: 175). However, Hulac *et al.* (2011: 66) and Lane *et al*. (2013: 41) concur that to improve learner behaviour learners prone to behavioural problems need to be praised more often than the other learners; they need the most positive attention. Moreover, Lane *et al.* (2011: 80) mention that the educator should determine the type of praise each learner responds to best, as some learners may feel embarrassed or may be targeted by the learner as the "educator pet" (Hulac *et al.* 2011: 67). Sutherland, Wehby and Copeland (2000: 6) recommend that the educator should use behaviour-specific praise to increase on-task behaviour.

3.5.6 Rules and behaviour expectations

Rules are statements that contain one or more of the following: an antecedent, a behaviour or a consequence. They provide learners with the expectations of the educator and the school (Martella *et al.* 2012: 220). In other words, they specify to the learners what should be done and what should not (Macharia *et al.* 2014: 201). According to Anderson and Spaulding (2007: 28), rules provide structure and consistency, allowing the principal and the educators to maintain a positive environment and provide legal, ethical and social accountability. This is in line with the statement of Ugboko and Adediwura (2012: 42) that the main objective of rules on learner discipline is to enhance a positive and constructive paradigm of values. It is imperative that there should be rule-governed behaviour in classrooms and in the school. Rule-governed behaviour is behaviour that is

controlled by verbal or written rules (Martella *et al.* 2012: 221). It is to everyone's benefit for learners to behave appropriately and avoid infringing on others' rights and property (Manning & Bucher 2013: 259). However, non-adherence to school rules by learners is a common challenge for the principal (Ngara & Magwa 2015: 132). Learners break rules when they think the rules are senseless or inappropriate, when they are either in need or have a limited fear of getting caught (Allen Queen & Algozzine 2010: 46). Rule infractions refer to those learner behaviour that are in direct opposition to procedures in the school (Colvin 2010: 48).

In order to establish effective classroom rules and defuse rule infractions, the school management team with the principal should set the school and classroom regulations, routines and procedures and behaviour expectations (Colvin 2010: 48). Regulations are concrete behaviours that are requested of all learners to ensure particular outcomes for learners and staff such as proper dress codes, civility and use of proper language; procedures are the manner in which an educator wants tasks and activities in transitions to be performed; and behaviour expectations are the several principles or guidelines for learner behaviour (Lane *et al.* 2011: 28; Colvin 2010: 48-49). Colvin (2010: 49-50) states four prerequisite conditions that relate to practices educators conduct to ensure learners are cognizant of the rules that are operative, namely (a) school rules must be taught and established by the faculty; (b) classroom rules and expectations are systematically taught; (c) learners are frequently acknowledged for following the rules; and (d) practices are in place to monitor and review the rules. Rules and behavioural expectations are taught within the first weeks of the school, called the honeymoon period (Manning & Bucher 2013: 259; Iverson 2003: 40). However, Colvin (2010:49) insists that they should be taught throughout the school year. Lane *et al.* (2011:28) add that they should be explicitly modeled, practised and reinforced, and if learners fail to behave properly, there should be a booster session to follow-up their behaviour through prompts and reinforcement until the behaviour is performed satisfactorily. They propose the following steps for designing a discipline plan with rules: (a) state positively a few rules (Carr & Chearra 2004: 2); (b) explain the expectations (c) positively reinforce the learners to follow them through behaviour-specific-praise; and (d) establish consequences for undesirable behaviour.

Strout (2005: 17) argues that expectations should be continuously taught and rehearsed on a daily basis to encourage learners' cooperation, and avoid confusion so that misbehaviour decreases (Reider 2005: 7).

Allen Queen and Algozzine (2010: 47) state that responsible educators must relay discipline through teaching and practice, while promoting learners' internal responsibility, accommodating their individual differences and respecting their dignity as human beings. A responsibility-oriented school environment should endorse the following three principles, namely (a) schools must be for learners, not for principals and educators; (b) learners must participate in the decisions made to keep their school safe, clean and inviting; (c) and school curricula must adequately place appropriate emphasis upon learning, problem solving and responsibility. Mendler, Curwin and Mendler (2008: 98-99) suggest problem-solving procedures when rules are broken, namely (a) ask learners what is good about the problem; (b) ask the learner what is bad about the problem; (c) list all possible solutions to the problem, through brainstorming techniques and (d) decide on the best possible solution to the problem, along with the learners, other educators, the principal, the superintendent and parents concerned. This implies that for rules to be effective and to reduce rules-infractions, learners should be engaged in the development of the classroom and school rules. There should be pupil voice, choice and participation in the process (Cole *et al*. 2013: 247; Mitra 2006: 8; Smit 2013: 353; Way 2011: 366). Cefai and Cooper (2010: 194-195) argue that a change in the power dynamics that exist between educators and learners is needed whereby pupil voice is not seen as learners taking over, but rather a collaborative and democratic process in learning and behaviour control. This is a restorative practice that establishes consensus through consultation with learners and parents, and it encourages shared understanding and ownership of rules by learners (Hendry 2009: 47). Iverson (2003: 39) asserts that educators use their attractive power to voluntarily involve learners to behave acceptably as per the code of conduct of the school and the classroom rules. Attractive power is relationship power, which makes them likeable and helps them know how to cultivate human relationships with learners.

Moreover, Allen Queen and Algozzine (2010: 9) state that educators should teach the three Rs (respect for yourself; responsibility for your actions; and remembering the rights of others) to all learners. They propose the responsible classroom management plan which includes three principles namely (a) responsibility is taught and incorporated instructionally within a warm and inviting classroom; (b) standards, guidelines and expected behaviour should replace rigid school and classroom rules; and (c) consequences teach learners to self-correct inappropriate behaviour and assume responsibility for their actions. In so doing, an alternative behaviour is selected to replace the challenging behaviour so that the learner is provided with alternative acceptable responses rather than merely eliminating behaviour (Zirpoli 2008: 400; Porter 2007: 61). This is the Fair-Pair Rule.

3.5.7 Differentiated curriculum

Inappropriate curricula contribute to learner disengagement and misbehaviour. In order to prevent behaviour problems in the classroom, the educator should present a differentiated curriculum. Martella *et al.* (2012: 271) define differentiated curriculum as the instruction in which the educator adjusts the instructional methods to meet the unique needs of learners. On the basis of this definition, Tomlinson (2000: 7) suggests the following characteristics of a differentiated curriculum: (a) learners differ in their readiness to learn, learning styles and interests; (b) learner differences affect the pace of learning and their need for educator support; (c) learners learn best when they can make a connection between the curriculum and their life experiences; (d) when schools and classrooms create a sense of community, learners are more effective learners; (e) the goal of education is to maximise each learner's capacity. Lane *et al.* (2011:46) state that educators should make choices about the content, process and product of the educational process. The content differentiation techniques are: (a) using critical curricular concepts and principles to guide planning; (b) using assessment data to excuse learners from previously learned content and to design activities to access new concepts; (c) using varied materials such as media, computer applications, video, magazines, audio files, and field trips; (d) discussing a learner contract with each learner to reach an agreement on its

goals and activities; (e) using mini-lessons; (f) using varied supports such as graphic organiser, peer buddies, and study sheets (Tomlinson 2005: 76). Educators must also examine the instructional activities so that learners can make sense of the content. Tomlinson (2005: 79) mentions cooperative learning, computer-assisted instruction, learning centres, writing activities and the creation of graphic organisers as the process activities. These activities are based on the learner's learning preference, skill levels and interests. Lane *et al.* (2011: 50) defines a product as the tangible evidence of a learner's understanding of a topic, skill or concept. Such products are power point presentations, models, demonstrations, experiments, brochures, simulations, musical performance, dance performance and game creation.

In the context of restorative practice to discipline, Hendry (2009: 55) mentions that the curriculum should include conflict-resolution skills through role-playing meaningful scenarios, sharing of real experiences and trying out different ways of thinking and responding, and emotional resilience through emotional, physical and social health, expressive arts, religious and moral education. However, the educator should adopt three main teaching behaviours that can help reduce behaviour problems in the instructional process, namely: (a) use of appropriate instructional statement that expresses a command succinctly without phrasing it as a question; (b) use specific praise statements in a neutral or positive tone of voice that reflect a positive response to a desired behaviour; and (c) appropriate correction procedures in a neutral tone of voice (Martella *et al.* 2012: 272-273). Hendry (2009: 57-58) also suggests the use of community building circles and the checking-in circles to prevent learner misbehaviour at schools.

3.5.8 Good Behaviour Game

Embry (2002: 274) describes Good Behaviour Game (GBG) as a behavioural vaccine that is a simple procedure that can dramatically change an adverse outcome. It is a group-oriented management strategy that involves consequences based on the behaviour of one member of a group. A small number of behaviour is targeted and defined. The general principles of the game are straightforward. Franklin *et al.* (2008: 34) propose the

following implementation steps: (a) the educator first leads a discussion about the way people like to see learners behave in the classroom, then indicates that they are going to play a game to try to make the classroom more like that; (b) the class identifies a list of unwanted behaviour that interfere in the class, which are posted; (c) learners are placed among two or three teams, which can be changed periodically; (d) during the week, using for one period of two to five days, the educator announces that they are now going to play the GBG or the Respect Game; (e) the educator sets the time for a brief interval; (f) if a learner displays a targeted undesirable behaviour, the educator immediately and without discussion, makes a small check mark on the scoreboard and moves on; (g) when the timer rings; every team with no fouls gets a point which is posted; (h) at the end of the period, the teams with the highest scores are proclaimed winners and receive special privileges like extra recess or computer time, listening to music, receiving a letter of praise to take home for parents or working on a special project. The team with the lowest score would not receive the positive reinforcer.

Manning and Bucher (2013: 71) state that the Good Behaviour Game uses behaviour modification to diminish negative behaviours by focusing on peer encouragement, following rules and demonstrating good learning skills. It also reinforces self-control by sharing group solidarity and cooperation and increases pre-social behaviour and diminishes instances of learners laughing at the disruptive behaviour of others. Moreover, Witvliet, Van Lier, Cuijpers and Koot (2009: 905) mention that positive peer relationships provide a social context in which learners can practice social skills, learn social norms and roles, experience social support and validate a sense of worth. However, peer influence may produce undue peer pressure such as harassment toward the learner who does not exhibit the defined and targeted behaviour (Tingstrom, Sterling-Turner & Wilczynski 2006: 247).

Franklin *et al.* (2008: 28) postulate that the GBG is used with different grade levels, different types of learners and in and outside classrooms. It has been used during physical education, in recess and in the cafeteria. Kleinman and Saigh (2011: 95), Tingstorm *et al.*

(2006: 248) and Leflot, Van Lier, Onghena and Colpin (2010: 880) claim that the GBG decreases disruptive behaviour, alcohol and drug dependence of males and aggression.

Martella *et al.* (2012: 232) recommend that the Good Behaviour Game should be considered with the token system and the response-cost system for it to be more effective in the sense that five to seven positive behaviours are targeted and can earn points and five to seven unwanted behaviours are targeted and can lose points. This is because the GBG may be set up to reduce disruptive behaviour rather than to increase desirable behaviour. In a token reinforcement system, the learners earn tokens or points when they display the targeted desired behaviour, and later they can trade these tokens in for pre-negotiated back-up reinforcers (rewards) such as tangibles, social activities, free time, and library time (Porter 2007: 57). A response-cost is a behaviour reduction procedure that attempts to reduce behaviour through the removal or withdrawal of a quantity of reinforcement contingent on a response (Wheeler *et al.* 2010: 340). It is a negative punishment as the learner behaviour is managed through the loss of privileges.

3.5.9 Check-in/check-out

The check-in/check-out system (CICO) includes a daily behaviour report card in conjunction with daily social skills training. It is also known as the behaviour education plan (Manning & Bucher 2013: 192). Martella *et al.* (2012: 385) assert that this system includes features such as (a) being readily available to implement; (b) there is better and continuous monitoring; (c) the disruptive learner is in contact with adults; (c) contingent feedback are frequently provided; and (d) more collaboration and coordination between the school and parental support. Its aim is to start the day on a positive note and establish and reinforce behavioural expectations for the learner (Kelly & Vaillancourt 2012: 14). Horner *et al.* (2010: 9) point out that it is designed to improve daily structure, social links with adults, access to academic support, and coordination between home and the school.

According to Hulac *et al.* (2011: 139), every morning, the check-in/check-out system (CICO) coordinator checks in with the learner to help make sure that the learner has the

necessary materials for the class and whether he or she shows the physical readiness to attend classes; the learner is provided with a form to use throughout the school day. The form provides a list of the learner's behavioural goals and a matrix showing classes or time periods. The check-in takes less than five minutes and includes prompts and encouragement. The CICO coordinator may provide a social skills training to help the learner understand the expectations or address necessary problems that arise. Educators continually monitor the learner's behaviour throughout the day. In each class period, the class educator gives a rating of the extent to which the learner met the expected behaviour goals. At the end of the school day (Check-out), the coordinator reviews the form and provides tangible rewards or access to preferred activities to learners reaching the goals. Finally, the learner takes the daily behaviour report card home to show to the parents. The form is returned to the school the next day. The coordinator keeps a record of the learner's progress and uses the collected data to decide about whether to maintain, fade or strengthen the intervention over time. Kelly and Vaillancourt (2012: 2) posit that this process provides an opportunity to correct problem behaviour and reinforce prosocial behaviour in secondary schools.

3.5.10 Check and connect

Check and connect is a secondary intervention that relies on a monitor to facilitate the learner's connection with the school. The monitor's role is to extend the school's outreach services to the learner and the family in order to better understand the circumstances affecting their connection to the school and works with them to overcome barriers that explain their learning and school disengagement (Martella *et al.* 2012: 282-283). Such disengagement is measured according to alternative indicators such as attendance in terms of tardiness, skipping classes and absenteeism; school and behaviour referrals, and academic performance. This is the check component. The connect component includes learner-focused interventions such as universal interventions and intensive interventions, and intensive interventions which are more individualised. The main components of check and connect are relationship building, routine monitoring, individual intervention, long-term commitment, persistent support, problem solving and

affiliation with school and learning (Horner *et al.* 2010: 9). Fairbanks *et al.* (2007: 308) found that most schools have difficulties to daily collect these types of data. So, Hawken *et al.* (2008: 221) mentions the Check, Connect and Expect intervention. They suggest that learners check in every morning with a para-professional, get feedback on a Daily Progress Report during the pre-specified periods of time throughout the day, and check out with the para-professional at the end of the school day. Moreover, the para-professional visits learners in classroom setting, at recess or lunch to provide supplementary support and mentoring.

3.5.11 Contingency contracting

It involves the establishment of a written behavioural contract between the learner and the educator regarding the performance of the specific target behaviour and the exchange or specific consequences (Henley 2010: 220). It also gives access to a specific reward (Cooper *et al.* 2007: 551). Kapalka (2009: 81) states that an effective behavioural contract requires a thorough understanding of the behavioural principles that drive it, along with careful preparation and that it should be personalised for each learner. In fact, it is an antecedent manipulation that makes it more likely that the learner will engage in the behaviour specified in the contract (Miltenberger 2007: 505). Lane *et al.* (2011: 110-112) stipulate the following principles for a behavioural contract: it involves the notion of rule-governed behaviour as it specifies a rule and indicates the specific behaviour that will occur and the specific consequence that will be delivered contingent upon completion of the target behaviour. Kapalka (2009: 88) adds that the contract between the learner and the educator should be a private matter to avoid the targeted learner's or other learners' frustration.

Martella *et al.* (2012: 169) assert that the behavioural contract involves three main components, namely the task, the consequence and the recording sheet. When specifying the behaviour, the educator indicates who is involved, what specific behaviour is performed, the time and day when the specific behaviour must be completed and the specific level of performance or standards. The reward is a positive consequence the

learner receives after performing the proper behaviour but it is not a bribe (Kapalka 2009: 80). The recording sheet is designed to serve as a prompt to remind all parties of the agreed-upon components and a method of recording performance in order to make accurate conclusions regarding the delivery of rewards (Lane *et al.* 2011: 105). Martella *et al.* (2012: 170) argue that this self-recording or self-monitoring can enhance the effectiveness of the contract. Iverson (2003: 138) and Rosen (2005: 34) add that a behavioural contract is more effective when it is written and done in a parent conference. The parent may reinforce the desired behaviour or strengthen negative consequences at home. Iverson (2003: 140) outlines that a contract should include: (a) a description of the desired behaviour; (b) a description of the home and school situations in which these behaviours are to occur; (c) the time span of the contract; (d) the positive and negative consequences that will occur at home or school; (e) the date on which the contract is written; (f) a place for the signature of the learner, parent, educator and, if necessary, the principal.

Hulac *et al.* (2011: 129) mention that a behavioural contract provides educators the opportunities to teach alternative replacement behaviour and reduces undesirable behaviour. It is also a preventive strategy as it defines the behaviours before the learners misbehave, and it gives learners a sense of ownership in what happens in the classroom and outside (Manning & Bucher 2013: 160). However, it is not appropriate for acquisition deficits (can't do problems) as it does not consider the learner's development level (Lane *et al.* 2011: 112-113).

3.5.12 First Step to Success

First step to Success is a manualised strategy used to interrupt the progression of antisocial externalising behaviour such as aggression and coercion (Cullinan & Sabornie 2004: 161). It consists of three components namely (a) proactive universal screening on initial school entry; (b) school intervention involving the target learner, peers and educators; and (c) training of parents in caregiving skills (Lane *et al.* 2013 : 75). In the screening stage, learners are nominated by the educators and/or principal, based on

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externalising and internalising behavioural characteristics. The nominated learner who is the FSS coach observes and follows the target learner and provides individual training in appropriate behaviour (Horner *et al.* 2010: 9). Cooper and Cefai (2013: 22) call it the buddying process. They are observed directly in the classroom and on the playground to determine the quality and duration of their social interactions with peers. Learners exceeding the normative criteria are typically identified as having severe behavioural adjustment problems and referred for early interventions.

After learners are identified, parents are brought into the process, and the school component is implemented. Martella *et al.* (2012: 386) mention that this component is an adapted version of the Contingencies for the Learning Academic and Social Skills (CLASS). The CLASS is divided into three phases. The consultant phase begins with a daily twenty-minute session with the learner (this is called the Green-Red card Game). This consultant sits by the learner to accomplish behavioural monitoring and to provide feedback. The green card is placed up when the learner performs appropriate behaviour and is turned over to the red side if the learner exhibits any inappropriate behaviour. Points are awarded and verbal praise provided during the predetermined intervals of the day. The consultant sits farther away from the learner once he/she demonstrates success. Learners can progress to the next programme day only after they have mastered the criteria; otherwise, the programme day is repeated. Learner performance goals progressively increase and reinforcements fade. Finally, there is a maintenance phase to fade out the use of the card and classroom reinforcement, typically around the 30th day.

Parents of targeted learners are trained by the consultant to teach their children important success skills such as accepting limits, cooperation and problem-solving (Lane *et al.* 2013: 76). Epstein and Walker (2002: 185) argue that parents teach and reinforce skills being taught in the school-based component ten to fifteen minutes daily. This helps to bring about a home-school partnership in managing effective learner discipline.

These strategies are evidence-based and therefore the principal may use them as effectively as possible depending on the education system, the nature and extent of

his/her empowerment as the school leader and the characteristics of the learners and other school stakeholders within the school setting. From the foregoing paragraph it is evident that they have proven to be successful in the developed world. Yet, the researcher is of the view that the state secondary school principals in the Mauritian context may make an attempt to adopt them. However, it is of utmost importance to have an adequate understanding of the leadership and authority of the state secondary school principals in the context of Mauritius based on the literature study of the available official documents from the Ministry of Education.

3.6. THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY IN THE MAURITIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The secondary school principal in Mauritius is very limited in his/her authority to maintain learner discipline. The limited authority originates from the policies and procedures laid down by the Ministry of Education. In the Mauritian education system, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (2015: 4) stipulates the role of the principal in maintaining learner discipline in the Student Behaviour Policy document as follows:

- Stimulate a school-wide approach in preventing and/or tackling indiscipline;

- Lead by example, be regular in attendance and punctual and be role models for the learners;

- Develop strategies in terms of the organisation, systems and school curriculum towards supporting the development of learners' social and emotional skills;

- Work in partnership with parents to develop and support the social and emotional skills that learners need within their school community and within the wider community outside school;

- Promote a positive school culture and well-ordered environment;

- Put in place effective monitoring and control mechanisms for the orderly running of their institutions;

- Act promptly against all forms of learner indiscipline by way of both preventive actions and restorative justice practices where learners assume responsibility for their actions;

- Work in partnership with parents and ensure that they are involved in discussions before any situation is allowed to deteriorate;

- Develop the sense of school-connectedness among their learners and staff;

- Provide all necessary support to educators in their endeavours to sustain high standards of behaviour;

- Identify performance gaps of staff and create conditions for improvement;

- Arrange for in-house sharing of experiences and good practices; and

- Organise and facilitate training of staff to enhance their capacity to manage challenging behaviour.

However, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources (2009: 4) revealed in the School Management Manual the limited authority and leadership of the school principal in maintaining learner discipline: "*the principal is responsible for the school under his or her responsibilities but he or she has to send reports to the Zone Director who is responsible for the proper functioning of all the state secondary schools in the Zone; the Director of Zone should keep the Ministry informed of all happenings and performance of schools; and the principal will report all the matters pertaining to the decentralisation of procedures and services…..*". This statement from the manual explains the degree of authority of the principal of the state secondary schools in Mauritius.

It is obvious from the School Management Manual that the principal's authority is limited. In the context of learner discipline management, the principal does not have

much leadership empowerment as the Education [Amendment] Act 2002 (Part V, 38) stipulates that the Minister of Education may make regulations, inter alia, for discipline in schools and methods of enforcement. This makes it obvious that the state secondary school principal has no or limited authority to take initiatives for learner discipline management since school policy making is the prerogative of the Minister; the principal is only a policy implementer. Moreover, in the Student Behaviour Policy, the Ministry stipulates that in the case of serious manifestations of a lack of learner discipline, the school may expel a learner only with the authorisation of the Minister of Education (Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015: 12). He/she has to follow the school protocols set by the Ministry for maintaining learner discipline. Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014: 134) maintains that if the principal should report each case of a lack of learner discipline and inform the Zone and the Ministry of the follow-up actions, he/she manifests a lack of authority and school leadership in terms of maintaining learner discipline, and consequently, the problem of learner indiscipline arises in the state secondary schools of Mauritius.

In addition, bureaucracy and administrative procedures bog down measures to deal with manifestations of a lack of learner discipline. The school protocols as stipulated in the School Behaviour Policy document are too centralised. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources and Scientific Research (2015: ii) gives the following guidelines in the Student Behaviour Policy, inter alia, to state secondary principals when dealing with this problem: "*...inform Zone and Ministry by phone....; report the incident by fax to Zone and Ministry...; send follow-up report to Zone and Ministry....; report updates about the disciplinary attitudes of the learner concerned to Zone and Ministry on a daily basis*." Furthermore, in case of reported serious lack of learner discipline, the school principal must inform the first aid and refer the case to the medical centre in case of injury; in case of possession of illegal weapons and drugs, he/she should isolate the learner, place him/her under supervision and inform the Anti-Drug Support Unit; in case of physical assault, he/she must inform the police; in case of suspected child abuse, he/she must inform the Child Development Unit; and in the case of cyber-bullying, he/she must inform the Cyber Unit and the Computer Emergency Response Team (Ministry of

Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015: i-ii). This stance is in line with Moyo *et al*. (2014: 8) who maintain that for serious and criminal acts the principal must refer the case to the higher authorities for decisions like a limited suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school. So, these administrative procedures are obstacles to the autonomy of the principal to adopt and implement disciplinary measures at the school level. Moreover, Ntombela (2014: 165) and Trevinio, Braley, Brown and Slate (2008: 107) pointed out that the principal and the school management team, including the school superintendent, have much paper work to compile to follow the school protocols in case of reporting a learner's lack of discipline and this is time-consuming for them. This explains the political context in which the school principal functions in Mauritius and argues that principals are restrained by the Ministry in their attempt to maintain effective learner discipline.

The literature study of the behavioural management strategies along with the literature study in chapter two are of fundamental importance as they both provide the theoretical background for the empirical investigation and the study as a whole. A discussion of the various strategies provide the researcher with the knowledge and required insights into what strategies have proved successful and guide him to contribute to the knowledge of learner discipline management in secondary schools in the specific context of Mauritian state secondary schools. The knowledge and insights gained from a discussion of the strategies in this chapter will show clearly through cross-referencing back to them in chapters 5 and 6. Indeed, the models and the strategies provide the researcher with the necessary relevant and well-grounded knowledge to collect information from the selected participants on the problem and carry out a thorough analysis of the findings of the study.

3.7 SUMMARY

The various models of behaviour prevention and intervention strategies provide an array of instructional and interventional approaches that may be adopted in secondary classrooms and schools. Emphasis has been laid more on those models that postulate and adopt the positive approaches to discipline. The most recent models such as the SWPBS

and the RTII suggest the implementation of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies and they recommend a school-wide approach rather than instructional approaches at the classroom level. The researcher has concluded that discipline among secondary school learners can only be restored and maintained when a holistic school-wide approach is adopted, having the collaboration of all the stakeholders, namely all the learners, the general educators as well as the special education educators, the parents, the school superintendent, the principal, the local community, the school psychologists and counsellors and the juvenile court.

From the above literature review, it is obvious that only research-based instructions and interventions should be adopted by schools to restore learner discipline as they have proved to be effective in practice in schools in the Western world. There is a lack of evidence as to the effectiveness of such instructions and interventions in the secondary schools of a developing country like Mauritius. The researcher considers it important to examine the strategies that are being used elsewhere, and based on the literature reviews of both chapters two and three and the empirical study, devise a behaviour management model that may be adopted in the Mauritian secondary schools.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology that the researcher used to examine these strategies.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The researcher uses a qualitative research approach in order to be able know, describe, interpret and analyse what is happening in state secondary schools and what these happenings mean to the people engaged in them with respect to the phenomenon of learner discipline. To ensure the appropriate application of the qualitative approach and to give importance to the centrality of meaning in such a research, the researcher gives an extensive exposition of the matters discussed in this chapter. A thorough methodological grounding is given and a detailed account of the measures taken to do in-depth qualitative research is presented. This will ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of the research findings in the following chapter. He also considers that the reader of this research should be informed thoroughly of the various approaches and steps that he has taken to gather the information from the participants. For him, the process of the research is as important as the product; and this should be made clear to the reader for the latter to understand the importance and relevance of the findings on learner discipline to this study in the Mauritian context.

4.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The focus of the study is on learner discipline and the role of the secondary school principals in maintaining effective learner discipline, using positive discipline approaches. The study is undertaken in selected state secondary schools in Mauritius, identified by the researcher. The main research problem statement, as formulated in paragraph 1.1, is as follows:

What is the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in selected Mauritian state secondary schools?

The main research question is subdivided into four sub-questions that pertain to school discipline and leadership of state secondary school principals, namely:

- What is meant by the concept 'school discipline'?
- Which factors determine the lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius?
- Which barriers prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius?
- Which strategies may be developed and employed by state secondary school principals to maintain discipline among learners in Mauritius?

The literature review clarified the concept 'learner discipline' within the context of school leadership and management and described some of the major internal and external causal factors of learners' lack of discipline. It also identified and analysed models of discipline interventions and strategies as well as research-based discipline interventions and strategies that may be adopted by secondary school principals. The literature review provided sufficient answers to the first sub-question. However, the second and third research sub-questions were partially answered, in that they were analysed mostly from the Western perspective. It is obvious that these discipline interventions and strategies are context-bound and their effectiveness in the Mauritian context is not known.

In the current empirical investigation, the second, third and fourth research sub-questions are answered from a Mauritian perspective with a particular focus on selected secondary schools. Data are collected from this setting to address the following three research sub-questions:

- Which factors determine the lack of discipline among learners in selected state secondary schools in Mauritius?
- Which barriers prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius?
- Which strategies may be developed and employed by state secondary school principals to maintain discipline among learners in Mauritius?

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4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a strategy for addressing a specific research question (Hartas 2010: 60; Bogopane 2013: 221-222). It is therefore a research process or approach that the researcher adopts to answer to the specific research question(s). The researcher is free to choose the approach, methods and procedures that best meet his/her purposes of the study. The qualitative research design was chosen for this study. The research problem and questions would determine the methods used (Bloomberg & Volpe 2014: 30). For this current study, the researcher used the deductive and exploratory approach to carry out the research inquiry. The research design offered him unique ways to collect data about people and social phenomena (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 35). There are quantitative designs and qualitative designs.

4.3.1 The qualitative research design

Qualitative research is based on the premise that reality is subjective as the social world focuses on the subjective views of research participants, thereby enabling the researcher to explain social reality as it is perceived and created by the research participants themselves (Basit 2010: 16). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2012: 6-7) as stated in Davies and Hughes (2014: 9), qualitative research consists of "*a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos*". At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Marshall and Rossman (2011: 2) consistently mention that a typical qualitative research is enacted in naturalistic settings, uses various methods that take into consideration and respect the humanity of the participants in the study, emphasises on context, is emergent and evolving and is essentially interpretive. It is an interactive, face-to-face research,

which necessitates much amount of time to conduct interview, systematically observe the participants, and record the emerging processes as they occur naturally (McMillan & Schumacher 2006: 340). Data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned while the study progresses (Flick 2014: 25). It is therefore obvious that qualitative research is a dynamic, flexible and interactive research.

The goal of qualitative research is to probe deeply into the research setting to obtain thorough understanding about the way things are, why they are that way, and what the perceptions of the participants are; the extent to which the findings are relevant to the researcher or the audience of the research determines its power, and its power is also not to find definite ultimate solutions to problems that can be transferred (Gay, Mills & Airasian 2011: 395). Babbie and Mouton (2010: 646) point out that its goal is also to describe and understand rather than explain and predict human behaviour. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011: 10) identify three primary qualitative research purposes, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Exploratory research is done to investigate an area in which there is a lack of studies; descriptive research aims at describing the aspect of social reality under study, that is, looking for thick descriptions of social interations from the perspective of the research participants; and explanatory research attempts to give explanations to social phenomena and the relationships between the various components. Silverman (2013: 118-120) and Basit (2010: 16) add that qualitative research studies the 'how and what' instead of 'how many', the 'depth' instead of the 'breath', by listening to 'stories' to understand 'another social world'.

Bloomberg and Volpe (2012:36) highlighted that in qualitative research, the researcher collects, analyses asnd interprets narrative and non-numerical data; he/she is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis; he/she attempts to describe the meaning of the findings of the research from the perspectives of the research participants; data is gathered directly from the participants; and as such, he/she is able to view the complex social phenomena holistically. The fundamental assumption underlying these features is that the participant's perspective on the research problem should emerge as the views of

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the participant, not as those of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 144). They add that qualitative research accepts the value of context and setting.

The researcher chose the qualitative research method as it is a method that would help him gain in-depth understanding of learners' behaviour to discipline in the school setting. Their behaviour is the result of their personal and social interactions with adults and among themselves. He had to observe the learners', the educators', the school superintendent's and the principals' behaviour in their daily real-life natural setting. For qualitative research, context matters (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 91). The researcher considers that the investigation must be conducted in the setting where norms, traditions, cultures, languages, values, and socioeconomic status operate and interact over time, as this may help him obtain rich information on the various versions of the reality of the phenomenon of learner discipline. Each learner, each educator, each parent, each superintendent, and each principal experience this phenomenon in a different manner. Therefore, because intangible factors such as thoughts, feelings, beliefs, family and cultural values, social norms and assumptions are involved in the study of the research problem, the researcher can only capture a deeper understanding through face-to-face interactions and observation in the selected schools. The study of all these aspects are more apparent when the researcher adopts the qualitative method (Tuckman & Harper 2012: 387).

4.3.2 A case study

The case study is a research strategy or process inquiry, as well as the result of inquiry, and it is an expansive field within the qualitative paradigm (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 275). Indeed, the emphasis of a case study is fundamentally the qualitative approach (Edmonds & Kennedy 2013: 113). According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2007: 447), as cited in Edmonds and Kennedy (2013: 114), a case study is described "*as the in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon.*" It should be noted that a case is a bounded system in which temporal, spatial, personal, organisational or other

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factors set the parameters of its particularity (Thomas 2013: 5). In other words, the unit of analysis of a case can consist of an individual, a group such as learners in a college, an institution such as the school, or a whole community of a school, a locality, a state or a nation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 258). The case, as a bounded system, consists of features, patterns and boundaries. Therefore, there are always boundaries to the case, so that what is to be studied or not within the case becomes obvious (Matthews & Ross 2010: 128). Therefore, the notion of boundedness gives a holistic approach to the research.

A case study can be particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. It is particularistic when the researcher chooses a particular instance of the phenomenon to understand a specific problem that arises from the daily practice; it is descriptive when the researcher focuses on thick descriptions (which, according to Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle (2010: 35), involves a comprehensive description of the individual, the social context, the social characteristics of the community, morals and values) of the study (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier 2013: 7); and it is heuristic when the narrative account of the study gives the researcher and the readers with new perspectives into the way things are and into the nature and kinds of social and personal interactions that exist among the participants of the research (Gay *et al.* 2011: 446). The researcher used the descriptive case study so that he might, at the very outset of the case study, identify the boundaries of the research and find reasons why the phenomenon occurs in the setting. His aim was to have a full description of the problem of learner discipline in state secondary schools within the specific natural setting. He focused on the exploration and description of the participants in the study. By so doing, he made a real-time analysis of the case study without trying to generalise his findings to other populations or contexts. The descriptive case study attempts to provide a thorough understanding of a current problem of study within the context of its authentic situations (Biggam 2011: 141).

The researcher focused on the problem of learner discipline which is one of the most common problems in all schools of the world. Moreover, discipline management is one of the instructional leadership tasks of the principal. So, the researcher used a multi-case

study which is instrumental. Such a case study is more concerned with the investigation of an aspect of the school (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier 2013: 14). He is not investigating the school as an entity, but only the phenomenon of learner discipline and the role of the principal therein.

The case under study for the empirical investigation is the study of the role of the principals in maintaining effective discipline among secondary school learners in the selected secondary schools. Therefore, the unit of inquiry and analysis is the secondary school. However, since the researcher aimed to investigate the case in-depth (not in breadth), and to probe its complexity, he used a multi-case study. A one-case study is focus largely on a particular representation given in context and understood within the parameters of that context (Thomas 2013: 31). A multi-case study design is used by the researcher as he chose four state secondary schools in the Educational Zone 2 of Mauritius. In a multi-case study, the researcher's aim is to focus his or her interest on a particular collection of cases. These individual cases have a common characteristic or condition. The cases in the collection are categorically bound together, to some extent (Stake 2013: 5). The selection of four cases also helps the researcher to avoid biases on his part or from the participants; any possible biasness in one case would be taken care of in the other case. Furthermore, the researcher may expect to obtain similar or different findings for particular reasons. As a case study design requires the researcher to use different data-collection techniques (Yin 2012: 224), the latter used the literature study, both focus group interview and individual interview, and observation. So, the multi-case strategy helped him to investigate learner discipline and the role of the principal from different angles and helped him to pay attention to different dimensions of the problem. He obtained detailed information by observing and interviewing learners, educators, parents, the superintendent and the principal in each case. The researcher used the observation method to probe deeply in an attempt to analyse the various phenomena that represent the life cycle of the unit (Biggam 2011: 140). He thus gained a holistic understanding of this research problem from the analysis and interpretation of the multidimensional information gathered in the inquiry to reach valid conclusions.

4.4 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

For the purpose of this study, a sample is defined as 'a group of individuals, items, events or entities that represents the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is drawn' (Gay *et al.* 2011: 129). Attention should be drawn to the fact that the researcher's primary concern is not representativeness that implies generalisability of the findings and conclusions of his research. His main aim is to study individuals in their natural context (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 134). However, to select the research participants, he chooses the same process as in the quantitative research, as suggested by Bhattacherjee (2012: 65), namely identifying the population, the sampling frame and the sample. The population refers to the set of people or entities with the characteristics that the researcher wishes to understand (Krishna & Naidu 2012: 101). The sampling frame is a comprehensive list of the units from which the sample is drawn (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 106). In fact, it is the reduced size of the population from which the researcher may realistically select participants (Gay *et al.* 2011: 130). The sampling frame is the accessible section of the target population from which the researcher selects his participants for the study.

The population of the study is represented by all the sixty-two state secondary schools in Mauritius. However, due to lack of financial resources and time as well as the willingness of the researcher to carry out all the data collection on his own, the sampling frame for the study was limited to the Educational Zone 2 of the country, that is the state secondary schools situated in the zone which was the most accessible to the researcher for data collection. The Educational Zone 2 consists of twelve state secondary schools.

All the learners admitted to the year one of state secondary schools were selected from the system of ranking at the Certificate of Primary Education examinations. These schools admit learners who obtain total grading between sixteen units to twenty five units out of the five examinable subjects. The actual grading system is as follows: A+ - 6 units (90 – 100 marks); A – 5 units (75 – 89 marks), B – 4 units (60 – 74 marks), C – 3 units (50 – 59 marks), D – 2 units (40 - 49 marks), E – 1 unit (30 – 39 marks), and U for ungraded (below 30 marks) (Mauritius Examinations Syndicate 2014: 10). So, the learners may have obtained a maximum of 5 A+s to a minimum of 4 Cs and 1 B. Those

learners who obtain the best results at the CPE exams are admitted to the national state secondary schools, and the others are admitted to the other state secondary schools which are known as the regional schools. There are fifteen national state secondary schools in Mauritius. In the sampling frame there are three, among which one is more accessible to the researcher. In addition to this one, the researcher selected three regional state secondary schools. Moreover, it should be noted that learners are admitted to the regional state secondary school nearest to their place of residence, and within their educational zone, but only those few, about 1 500 candidates out of approximately 27 000 who sit for the CPE examinations annually, who score twenty-five units, are admitted to a national state secondary school which may be located beyond their educational zone (UNESCO 2007: 82). This indicates that the state secondary schools admit successful learners for the Certificate of Primary Education Examinations with good grades. This helped the researcher to better understand the types of learners who manifest a lack of discipline and whether the intellectual and social capital of learners, and their family background had a bearing on the learners' behaviour in state secondary schools.

All the educators of state secondary schools are recruited by the Public Service Commission which is the only recruiting agent of educators for the Ministry of Education and other public officers. This implies that all of them have the same minimum teaching qualifications, and they are automatically transferred by the Ministry of Education within the Educational Zone 2 after a maximum of seven years of teaching in a particular school. So, it is clear that most educators in the sample frame had teaching experience in more than one school in the zone. One of the selection criteria was that the participants should have at least five years experience in the teaching profession in the zone.

The principals of all the state secondary schools are promoted from the grade of deputy principals after having served at least five years in the post. Deputy Principals are recruited from among state secondary school educators with at least sixteen years of teaching experience in state secondary schools. The principals are not necessarily transferred within the same educational zone.

Each of the four educational zones in Mauritius are almost identical in terms of the geographical features, with partly rural and partly urban areas; with almost the same population diversity representing the rainbow Mauritian nation: speaking Creole as mother-tongue, French and English; Hindus, Muslims, Creoles (slave-descendants), Whites and Chinese live in the same community though the number of each community may vary in a particular zone. People work in sugar-cane fields, in textile, construction and the tourism sectors and in the service sector. It should be noted that Whites and most of the Chinese go to the private fee-paying schools or the Catholic secondary schools, and the Creoles, Muslims, and Hindus are mostly admitted to the state secondary schools of the island. The learner population of each state secondary school is almost representative of the Mauritian population as is the teaching and non-teaching staff population.

4.4.1 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting people who will be part of the study as participants (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 106). The research objectives of the study and the characteristics of the study population (such as the size and diversity) determine how and how many participants to select (May 2011: 94). This research is primarily qualitative. Qualitative sampling is the process of selecting a small number of individuals for a study in such a way that the selected individuals will be information-rich informants who will enhance the researcher's understanding of the particular phenomenon (Gay *et al.* 2011: 142; Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 45). The researcher's aim is to have an in-depth knowledge about learner discipline and the role of the state secondary school principals therein. Moreover, to obtain the desired depth of information required on this topic, he must always deal with small samples which requires him to interact indirectly or directly with the participant over a long period of time (Gay *et al.* 2011:142). So, representativeness is secondary to this fundamental tenet of qualitative research. The sampling method of this study depends fundamentally on this main concern.

According to Davies and Hughes (2014: 168-169), small samples have value as ends in themselves as they enlighten the researcher on prejudices, feelings and subliminal ideas that are not easy to tap into by methods which are more structured. The theoretical advantages of using a small sample are that it allows the researcher to reflect deeply on the information gathered; the information gathered is in some way closer to the reality of the participant's life; the researcher is able to explore the participant's feelings and experiences through probes and prompts; the researcher may avoid the risk of setting his/her own background in the investigation process; and debriefing is easier with fewer participants, hence allowing greater validity and avoiding participant deception. Moreover, a practical advantage is that a small sample is more manageable because interviewing and case study inquiry generally take much of the researcher's time in planning, travelling, executing and transcribing prior to analysis (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 61). The researcher, who is employed full time and who sought in-depth insights into the strategies that principals implement in their schools, considered these advantages of a small sample as relevant.

4.4.2 Sampling methods

The researcher used non-probability sampling as it is the sampling strategy that is most commonly used in educational research (Creswell 2012: 145). It is a sampling technique in which some units of the population have no probability of selection or where the probability of selection cannot be determined with accuracy (Bhattacherjee 2012: 69). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010: 276), it is appropriate for a researcher who wishes to obtain informants rich in relevant information in a quick and inexpensive way. The non-probability sampling techniques used in qualitative research are purposive sampling, convenience sampling and quota sampling.

The researcher uses purposive sampling for his study. He does not need to work with a sample that is a statistical representation of the population; rather he selects people or cases 'with purpose' so that he may deeply explore the research questions (Matthews & Ross 2010: 167; Edmonds & Kennedy 2013: 16). In other words, the researcher selects

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the cases or people he will include in the study based on the degree of their typicality (Katrina 2012: 9). According to Patton (1990: 169) cited in Lodico *et al.* (2010: 134), "*the value of purposive sampling lies in the selection of information-rich cases for in-depth study. Information-rich cases are those cases which provide an individual with a through knowledge and information about issues which are fundamental to the purpose of the research*". Purposive sampling is used mostly in studies in the field of leadership since it takes researchers to the type of individuals they are looking for to participate in their studies (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 56).

In this study on effective learner discipline, the researcher intentionally used the purposive sampling of cases and participants. He selected four state secondary schools in the Educational Zone 2 because they could provide the most relevant information which will help better understand the problem of learner discipline and the strategies the principals are successfully implementing to maintain positive discipline among the learners. The researcher's previous experience in this zone (nine years as state secondary school educator) means he had had the opportunity to work with many of the educators who are now working separately in different schools in the zone, and he has worked with some of the principals who were previously deputy principals or secondary school educators in the zone. His experience led him to identify these four schools as information rich settings. Further, the researcher selected those participants in these schools whom he judged to be informative, thoughtful, articulate, experienced and at ease with the research topic and the school setting. He based his sample selection on his knowledge and experience of the sampling frame. This is in line with King and Horrocks (2010: 29) who state that the selection draws upon a mixture of the researcher's knowledge of academic, personal knowledge and anecdotal information from those who have some involvement with the topic.

The criteria for selecting the educators were their age, years of teaching experience, the possession of a professional teaching qualification, number of schools taught at, interest in the research topic, availability of the potential participants, and level of confidence and nature of the formal professional relationship with the researcher when he was a

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secondary school educator. This process is in line with Davies and Hughes (2014:62) who assert that purposive sampling calls for the researcher to identify and target individuals and cases who seem to be typical of the population, or to conduct interview with all individuals within a sub-population that is deemed to be representative of the population. The research considers participant diversity in terms of the mentioned characteristics to be an important criterion for this targeted sampling and allows light to be cast on meaningful differences in the experience of the participants on the topic (King & Horrocks 2010: 29).

The researcher used focus group interviews, individual interviews and observations for the investigation. Focus groups vary in size but typically consist of four to eight participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 178). For the focus group interview technique, the researcher identified and targeted six participants in each of the four selected state secondary schools for each focus group of learners, educators and parents. He selected educators who were at least thirty years old, who had worked for at least five years in at least two state secondary schools, held at least a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, were interested in learner discipline and willing to give at least one hour of their free time on a school day during their 'free teaching period' or on a Saturday morning in their school site or on another convenient school site for the interview. These educators were in a position to provide in-depth insights about the topic as they administer all types of discipline measures in the classroom when they observe learners' lack of discipline, and they were well informed of the reasons for the manifestation of the unacceptable learner behaviour in their daily interactions with their learners in the classroom, in the recess, in hallways and on the playground. They are also executors of the proposed discipline interventions of the principal in the school, and therefore, they may give their feelings, experiences and views about the effectiveness of the school disciplinary measures and suggest interventions that have proved to be successful in previous secondary schools where they have worked.

Focus group interviews were also carried out with learners of each of the four selected schools. Only learners who form part of the Student Council of the school were selected

for this study. The Council normally consists of the school head boy or girl and the school prefects who are empowered by the School Management Team (SMT) or the principal to ensure learner safety and discipline on the school premise and in the school bus, as well as when extra-curricular activities are organised by the school. The researcher selected the school head boy or girl and five prefects to provide him with rich information about the phenomenon of learner discipline and the causes of a lack of discipline among learners. They could voice their opinions, feelings and experience about the learner disciplinary interventions in practice in their schools.

Six parents were also selected in each school of the four selected schools to take part in a focus group interview. Parents who form part of the Parent-Teacher Association were selected as participants. As members of the association, they are fully aware of the discipline policy of the school and the ability of the principal and the educators to ensure that there is order on the school premises and children are safe. As parents, they are knowledgeable about the factors that encourage their children to manifest unacceptable behaviour at school, and may be not at home. By interacting with them, the researcher gauged the various factors which are home-related, school-related, biologically related, peer-related, culture-related, among others, as well as opinions about the nature of the interventions being implemented by the school principal.

The researcher carried out individual semi-structured interviews with the principal of each of the four selected secondary schools. Principals implement instructional leadership in their school and as such they are knowledgeable about the problem of learner discipline management educators face in their classroom and they are the most concerned about this phenomenon. They are the authority to design and implement discipline management interventions and strategies to maintain effective discipline in classrooms and in the school as a whole. They are more knowledgeable about what interventions and strategies are successfully implemented in their specific school, subject to the characteristics of the learners and the interactions of a multiplicity of factors that may contribute to or prevent the successful implementation of discipline interventions and strategies. They may even share their experience in implementing disciplinary

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interventions and strategies and what are the factors that prevent them from maintaining positive discipline in their school. So, school principals were considered key rich informants for the purpose of this investigation.

For the observation, the researcher selected two state secondary schools out of the sample of four using purposive sampling: one boys' school and one girls' school. The schools were selected based on his past teaching experience in Educational Zone 2 and on the experiences of former and current educators at these schools on the manifestation of a lack of learners' discipline. The researcher selected two regional secondary schools as three quarters of the state secondary schools are regional and there are ten such schools in Educational Zone 2. These two schools were purposefully selected as the causes of a lack of learner discipline, the extent of its manifestation as well as the discipline intervention and strategies implemented may not be the same with boys and girls, or the extent of the effectiveness of a particular intervention may vary. As non-participant observer in these two sites, the researcher gathered comprehensive findings about the phenomenon. It should be noted, however, that according to Yin (2009: 54) there is no logic for sampling to selection of cases in a multi-case study; rather he makes the suggestion that cases should be selected because either the researcher may have the expectation that they may lead to similar findings or to different findings for particular reasons. By selecting two cases, the researcher expects to obtain information about the particular reasons for the differences or similarities, if ever there are any. Moreover, Arthur *et al.* (2012: 102) maintain that a case study focuses on the inter-twining of many factors in a few cases rather than on a few variables in a large sample of cases.

From the foregoing paragraph, it has become obvious that the researcher also used convenience sampling for the study as it is mostly used in educational research. Convenience sampling is often used to gather participants or cases for a purposive sampling (Matthews & Ross 2010: 168). In fact, an important part of conducting qualitative research is having access to participants who can serve as key informants about the phenomenon under study concerning the research site (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 46). This sample selection is simple as it takes on whoever is available and

whoever can voluntarily participate in the study (Sekaran & Bougie 2010; Gay *et al.* 2011:141; Edmonds & Kennedy 2013: 16). The researcher visited the different schools and presented the aim, the research questions and the data collection methods of his study to those educators present in the staff room and selected those available and keen to participate freely on the topic. He selected the participants both on the basis of purposive and convenience sampling, following all the features and selection criteria discussed above. However, there is a danger with purposive and convenience sampling, namely the researcher's bias and the participant's bias (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 56). The researcher, by selecting those with whom he has previously worked with, may introduce a selection bias and involve his own expectations, experience and feelings about the school, the educators, the learners, the superintendent and the principal. Moreover, he may unknowingly select participants who may have grievances with the school or the learners, educators, superintendent and parents; this may introduce bias in his findings. This is in line with the findings of Gay *et al*. (2011: 140) who posit that convenience is the major source of sampling bias in educational research studies. In this study, the researcher used two cases instead of one case to avoid researcher or participant bias. This was also indicated in the findings. In other words, the researcher compared the behaviour, feelings, thoughts and perceptions of the participants in these two cases, so that more reliable findings could be reached. In addition, the researcher used various data-collection techniques as discussed in the following paragraph so that the same research questions and sub-questions were addressed by different research methods. The researcher also analysed the information gathered on the basis of the literature study. Because the participants or cases are not representative of the relevant population, the information obtained from them is not generalisable to any relevant population or context (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 122). However, the researcher's aim was not generalisation. The findings of the study are, however, limited to the rural perceptions of the phenomenon as the selected schools, the learners, the parents, the superintendents and the educators are all from rural areas. So, they are limited to the rural perceptions of the problem of a lack of learner discipline.

The researcher selected only two state secondary schools for observation purpose out of the four selected schools for the interviews due to time constraints. He considered it sufficient to collect the required information as the findings from the observation log allowed him to triangulate the findings from the interviews for a better understanding of the occurrence of learners' lack of discipline.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

The focus of this study is to collect in-depth information from key informants about learner discipline and the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among secondary school learners. The data collection methods capture the 'social meanings and ordinary activities' of informants in 'natural occurring settings'. The aim is to do information gathering in such a manner that the researcher does not bring any of his/her own bias on the information (Krishna & Naidu 2012: 125). When the researcher does qualitative data collection he spends considerable time in the school setting under study and immerses himself in the setting in an attempt to obtain relevant information unobtrusively (Gay *et al.* 2011: 396). The type of information collected by the researcher depends on the nature of the research problem, the research questions and objectives.

The researcher of this study used a mixture of data collection techniques such as focus group interview, observation and individual interview. This helped him seek rich outputs and profound results; hence promoting trustworthiness by increasing validity based on triangulation (Biggam 2011: 118; Rossman & Rallis 2012: 143). This data collection process was interactive as the three techniques involved the researcher and the different sets of participants such as educators, learners, superintendents, parents and principals. One cannot decide on a single instrument as it may limit rich information gathering. The research problem under study is a complex one as the participants may have multiple realities. Therefore, the researcher used multi data collection instruments. Saldana (2011: 76) opines that information gathered from various sources ensures broader perspectives for analysis and representation. According to Tuckman and Harper (2012: 387), multiple

instruments are used for collecting data, corroborating them and confirming the information obtained to increase the credibility of the study.

4.5.1 Observation

Observation is a holistic research tool that requires systematic examination of the phenomenon being studied (Lodico *et al*. 2010: 114). It covers many activities that range from hanging around in the social setting, encountering to know them, and getting to know the routines to allocating strict time sampling for discovering and recording actions and complex social interactions and using an observation schedule to tick off pre-established actions. The observer should systematically note and record all behaviour, events, and artefacts in the setting (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 139). Observation is a natural process (Briggs & Coleman 2007: 237) since it must always take place in a setting where the researcher is likely to gather the kind of data that he/she is seeking from the kind of participants he/she wishes to observe (Basit 2010: 120). In so doing, the researcher does not alter or manipulate the natural environment.

By using observation, the researcher was able to generate data about the topic on four settings, namely the physical setting (the physical environment of the organisation), the human setting (the organisation of people), the interactional setting (the nature and types of interactions and exchanges that occur and how they are planned), and the programme setting (learning resources, curriculum, teaching methods, or other pedagogical approaches) (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 93-94). In addition, the work habits of the targets of the observation, their movements, the meetings conducted and the statements made by them, their body language, and their facial expressions may be the subject of observation in a natural setting (Sekaran & Bougie 2010: 211). The observation of all these aspects of the daily life of the participants undoubtedly allowed the researcher to obtain the best explanations to the topic under study.

According to Mason (2002: 85-86), as cited in Basit (2010: 122), researchers use observation as a method of data collection for six reasons, namely (a) their ontological

perspective focuses on action, interactions and behaviour, and their interpretation and the way people act on them,; (b) their epistemological perspective suggests that observation, or participation in, or experiencing, natural or real life settings and social situations can generate knowledge and evidence of the social world (c) the researchers' view of the ways in which social explanations can be constructed lays emphasis on depth, complexity and roundness in data rather than surface analysis of broad patterns; (d) researchers can conceptualise themselves as reflective and active individuals in the research on account of the importance placed on the experiential nature of observation; (e) the data researchers want may not be feasibly available in any other form; and (f) researchers may have the feeling that it is more ethical to gain access into and become part and parcel of the social world of those they study to gain understandings of the phenomenon rather than to stand outside of the setting and use other data collection methods. This is in line with Saldana (2011: 76) who states that observation is the researcher's lens and filter which focuses on social action, reaction and interaction.

The researcher used the observation method since it is widely used by educational researchers. It is especially appropriate for examining educator-learner or learner-learner interactions in classroom or social situations, as well as educator-educator and educator-parent relationships (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 93). The researcher of this study aimed at understanding all these interactions in addition to the relationships and interactions between the principal and the educators, the superintendent and learners with regard to learner's lack of discipline and the principal's role therein. This is because learner discipline is a human behaviour to social or environmental factors. According to Briggs and Coleman (2007: 239), if the researcher asks educators, learners, superintendents, parents and principals about learner discipline they may find it difficult to separate feelings from their factual experience of the problem; there is thus the risk of obtaining biased information as they may also tell about their most successful disciplinary strategies. So, Gay et al (2011: 382) argue that by observing these participants and their daily work and interactions, the researcher will obtain information that are much more objective and can be used in comparison with the self-reports of the participants. This argument confirmed the researcher's decision to use both the observation method before

and after the interview sessions to obtain the most reliable findings and to have them validated through triangulation. Moreover, he conducted the observation at the start of the data gathering in order to gain initial insights into learner discipline and the role of the principal in this regard, and then used the themes or issues unearthed as a basis for refining the interview schedules (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 92). He then compared the collected data from the interviews with the second observation after the interview sessions.

The researcher as a non-participant observer was less intrusive and did not become emotionally involved with the participants. He was passive and focused on events, experiences, behaviour, emotions and interactions of the learners, educators, parents, superintendent and the principal in relation to learner discipline. He decided exactly who to observe, what to observe and for what purpose during the initial planning phase for the observation. These decisions were strictly based on the research aims and sub-questions, originating from the research topic. So, he used systematic observation for gathering the data in the two chosen schools during the sixty hours he spent in each of them (i.e., at least seven and a half days on one research site).

The researcher used a semi-structured observation schedule (Appendix H) in which he worked out the main issues that he wished to systematically observe. So, he entered the research site with knowledge of what he wanted to observe and for what purpose. The observation schedule provided him with a framework that is commonly used for field notes, making it easier to organise and categorise data across various sets of notes. According to Gay *et al.* (2011: 385), the schedule may include the following details: who are being observed? How many people are involved, who are they, and what individual roles and attitudes are evident? What is going on? What is the nature of the conversation? What are the people doing or saying? What is the physical setting like? How are the people seated and where? How do the participants interact with each other? Who leads, who follows? What is the tone of the conversation? What beliefs, values, attitudes and so on seem to emerge? What activities or interactions seem unusual or significant? What was the observer doing during the session, and what was the observer's level of

participation in the observation? It is obvious that the observer collects all contextualised information as the observation schedule contains a set of main issues to observe and a recording sheet.

The researcher jots down all his observations in the field notes. He gathers, records and compiles two types of information, namely descriptive and reflective. Descriptive field notes summarise what the researcher sees and hears in the setting in much detail with verbatim conversations and direct quotes, whereas reflective field notes include describe the observer's feelings, thoughts and reactions about what he/she observes (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 118). The researcher also keeps a log in which he does a running record of events, activities and interactions on a daily basis; the entries are brief. This makes it clear that the researcher conducts careful observations.

In order to successfully conduct the observations, Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013: 99-100) suggest that the researcher is friendly and polite to the targets of the observation; records field notes; measures component focus; considers the narrative elements; and gives detailed, non-judgemental, concrete descriptions of what he/she has observed. The researcher of this study followed these steps in the investigation. He used covert observation and observed learners manifesting a lack of discipline who did not wish to be observed; participants or observation targets may modify their behaviour towards school discipline if they are aware that they are being observed, particularly learners demonstrating disruptive behaviour and aggression in the school. This is in line with Basit (2010: 136) who states that informed consent of the participants, and even when they know they are being observed, makes the data generated become useless. Such covert observation constitutes an ethical dilemma to the researcher (Matthews & Ross 2010: 262), yet it is an acceptable strategy as long as it does not hurt or harm the learners (Basit 2010: 137). The researcher caused no emotional or physical harm to the learners as he focused only on the main issues in his observation schedule.

There is no better information gathering method than observation which enables the researcher to get himself involved in the research environment and correlatively in

drawing the reader of the findings into his world and that of those observed. This is the epistemological nature of observation as a research tool. Moreover, it is basically helpful in providing deep and rich data that give verisimilitude to the research process as it provides a degree of life experience (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 93). Also, the data obtained is generally more reliable and free from participant bias; it is easier to determine and identify the effects of the influences of the environment on specific outcomes; and it is easier to observe young children from which it is otherwise difficult to obtain information (Sekaran & Bougie 2010: 214). However, observation is time-consuming as the observer has to be physically present for a long time and data collection is not only slow but also tedious and expensive. Observer fatigue may easily set in, and therefore biases the recorded information. Moreover, the cognitive thought processes of participants may not be captured, though emotions, feelings and attitudes may be observed; and the observer may lack observation skills which may give rise to observer bias (Sekaran & Bougie 2010: 214-215). Moreover, observation requires much commitment from the observer and it may be susceptible to observer bias caused by the observer's assumptions about the topic under study (Briggs & Coleman 2007: 239). Furthermore, the observer needs to be aware of the Hawthorne effect (observer effects) which occurs when the participants know they are being observed and therefore there is a temporary behaviour shift from them; thus making the information obtained from observing them biased and unreliable (Matthews & Ross 2010: 262).

4.5.2 Interviews

Interviews are one of the most popular research instruments for those engaged in educational leadership as they allow the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation in the complex world of educational institutions (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 77). Matthews and Ross (2010: 219) define an interview as a method of collecting data; it usually facilitates direct communication between two individuals; the interviewer is able to elicit information, opinions and feelings from the interviewee through the use of questions and interactive dialogue. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 2), as cited in Marshall and Rossman (2011: 141), qualitative interviews are

described as 'a process of constructing knowledge where two or more persons discuss a theme which is of mutual interest to them'. The researcher considered interviewing as the most appropriate method for the purpose of gathering information for a thorough understanding of learner discipline and the role of the principals in maintaining positive discipline among learners in secondary schools in Mauritius. He used interviews to corroborate or verify the observation carried on in the two selected state secondary schools before he conducts the interview sessions with the selected participants.

Interviewing allows the researcher to gain large amounts of interesting and relevant information that would not be possible to establish through the use of questionnaires or observation alone. According to Brundrett and Rhodes (2014: 78), interviews are useful particularly in schools which have social context, and their activities relate to personal and human relationships that are formed in classrooms, staff rooms, meetings, offices, on the playgrounds and so on. As the researcher is to understand the dynamics of these situations, he considers interviews to be the best way to gather information by talking and listening to the people involved in order to ask them about the phenomenon. In this study, the researcher used interview as a method of data collection from selected educators, learners, parents, superintendents and principals who are involved daily in the school setting where the problem of a lack of learner discipline is manifested. Those concerned were mainly the learners but also the educators, superintendents and parents who have to contribute to the effective implementation of various discipline interventions and strategies devised under the guidance of the school principal. The researcher emphasises much value to the contact with these key people in the research field as a means of gathering information based on experiences, personal anecdotes, emotions, and reflections and feelings for the sake of a deep understanding of learner discipline in schools. So, interviewing is a conversational dialogue whereby there is an interchange about these important aspects. By interviewing, the researcher is able to co-construct the interview and co-create the meanings of the interview.

There are three types of interview that a qualitative researcher may use for data collection: structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather information from learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals. This is the most popular type of interview used in educational research (Basit 2010: 103). A semi-structured interview is an interview in which the researcher can alter the order of questions, omit some questions, or change the wording of the question; all depend on what may actually happen in the interview, when following the interview schedule. According to Lodico *et al*. (2010: 124), the researcher may also use additional questions in order to probe unexpected information that emerge during the interview. However, the interviewer should be knowledgeable about the following issues: what the key issues basically are in the research inquiry, and how to anticipate interview questions with the most appropriate answers (Gillham 2010: 65). Only the key themes of the study, based on the research questions and the literature study, are formulated as key questions on the interview schedule. In this study the researcher used an interview schedule to help him to gain understanding or explanations of learner behaviour and educators', parents', superintendents' and principals' experience of discipline in schools very swiftly.

He chose this type of interview as its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. With a semi-structured interview, the researcher can explore feelings and experiences in some depth as he communicates directly with the participant; he is sufficiently flexible to allow participants to talk freely about the research topic; the structure of the interview schedule ensures the coverage of the same research topic themes with all participants; the data is 'raw', meaning the gathered information is in the own words of the participants; with careful preparation, the researcher may explore sensitive or distressing issues in a conducive environment; besides, interviewing can be used in combination with other methods of data collection. However, gathering information through interview takes much time; the researcher must develop interviewing skills to be successful; there is the possibility of collecting too large 'raw' data; participants may divert from the central issues related to the phenomenon under study and focus on issues which are irrelevant to the researcher; and there may be a mismatch between the participant and the researcher that may have unexpected implications (Matthews & Ross 2010: 232-233).

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It should be noted that the researcher is the primary instrument when he uses semi-structured interviews. As the interviewer he is the main instrument for obtaining knowledge (Mathews & Ross 2010: 226; Kvale 2007: 29). He both asks questions and enables the participants to give the answers through probes and prompts so as to gain detailed narrative information from them. He therefore brings some skills and sensibilities to the interview (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 145). However, in so doing, there is the risk of the interviewer's bias, which may threaten the trustworthiness of the research conclusions. In an attempt to counter this type of bias and ensure the trustworthiness of the research, in this study the researcher triangulated the findings by using various research methods, different types of informants/participants and different sites. He used thick descriptions of the problem of learner discipline and behavioural strategies in his interpretations of the gathered information and member checks of the gathered information and the findings with some participants.

In this study the researcher used two types of interviewing: focus group interviews and individual interviews. Individual interviews were conducted with principals and superintendents; focus group interviews with learners, educators and parents respectively. In each of the four state secondary schools, the researcher carried out a focus group interview with the educators, learners, and parents respectively; an individual interview with each of the four principals; and an individual interview with the superintendents of the two state secondary schools where the observation took place. In total, twenty-four learners, twenty-four educators and twenty-four parents were involved in focus groups, in addition to the four principals and two school superintendents.

4.5.2.1 Focus group interview

A focus group interview is a data collection method used in qualitative research and which is defined as an organised discussion with a selected group of individuals to gather feelings, views and opinions about a topic of interest to both the interviewer and the participants (Arthur *et al.* 2012: 186). These selected participants share certain characteristics, experiences and knowledge relevant to the study. The interviewer creates

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an environment that is supportive to the interview process, asking questions that are focused on the discussion and the expression of different feelings, perspectives, conceptions and points of view, allowing the beliefs and attitudes of each individual participant to be socially constructed (Marshall & Rossman 2011:149). This is consistent with Krueger and Casey (2000: 5) who define the focus group as a "*carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment*". In so doing, the researcher collects the data, observes and records the interactions and group dynamics that unfolds. This process may give participants the opportunity to build on each other's views and opinions, giving rise to new ideas or information that would not emerge in individual interviews (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 123). So, the group opinion as well as the individual opinion are equally important. As a matter of fact, the group itself may develop a life of its own which is neither anticipated nor initiated by the researcher (Arthur *et al.* 2010: 186). The latter may figure out in an inductive manner what the main issues, ideas, and major concerns are; this will give him depth and breadth to a research problem about which there is actually a limited knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 164).

Focus group interviews are used for the following purposes: *exploratory*, when the researcher discovers the initial conclusions in a new social context; *pretest*, the researcher tests questionnaire items; *triangulation*, the researcher intends to provide additional data in an attempt to bring methodological rigour to individual interviews, questionnaire or observation data; and *phenomenological*, the data collected may be the only source of information which provides detailed insight about particular phenomenon (King & Horrocks 2010: 62). In the case of this study, the purpose was exploratory: the researcher's aim was to gather rich information from learners, educators and parents of state secondary schools to garner an in-depth knowledge and explanations about the current phenomenon of learner discipline in Mauritius. The researcher considered it appropriate to use the focus group interview to use the findings to meet this aim of the research. This is consistent with Creswell (2003: 212) who asserts that when the researcher collects qualitative data, his aim is to explore the problem with the participants

at the research sites. He also uses the focus group interviews' findings for triangulation purposes.

The researcher used focus group interviews separately with educators, learners and parents. He interviewed one focus group of six educators in each of the four selected state secondary schools (Appendix K). Though Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011: 179) maintain that qualitative researchers use homogeneous focus groups for interviewing in order to obtain in-depth understanding about how the members of the group experience or perceive the phenomenon, yet in this study the researcher used heterogeneous focus groups of educators. This is because in all state secondary schools there is a diverse staff of educators, multicultural classrooms of learners, and therefore parents from diverse ethnic groups, with different traditions, cultures, languages and values. Thus, he felt that each focus group should consist of the range of mixed characteristics so as to obtain the rich and varied information from the diverse experiences, feelings, conceptions, and reflections of the educators, the best possible explanation and the deepest insights into the problem of learner discipline which is a problem occurring in the multicultural school settings of Mauritius. This is consistent with the view of Arthur *et al.* (2012: 188) who assert that there may be diversity but the researcher must always be conscious of the influence of the status and power of each individual group member in group dynamics. Somehow, the focus group has certain common important characteristics in terms of the sampling criteria discussed in paragraph 4.4.2. The mixture of these common features and the diversity among the selected educators are likely to provide the most relevant explanations of the phenomenon.

The focus groups of learners were also diverse in terms of the aspects discussed in the previous paragraph. However, what was common to the group was their membership of the School Student Council: they had the same experiences, philosophies, values and perceptions of the problem of learner discipline. They could express their own views and opinions as learners about a topic that is important to them as manifested by their school mates. The representative from each Form (called the class prefect) forms part of the council, in addition to the head boy or head girl of the school. This implied that the

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learners in the focus group were of different age groups, varying from eleven years old to 18 years old. However, the researcher considered it relevant to select such learners as they may experience the phenomenon differently and therefore, there are diverse opinions and views about the causes of the lack of learner discipline, the interventions and strategies that the principal may take to maintain discipline among themselves, and potential barriers to the principal's leadership in so doing (Appendix L). The resulting data would provide the researcher with some insight into the different kinds of perceptions and attitudes prevalent in the school about this school problem (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011:178).

The focus groups of parents were diverse as the latter are from the various communities of Mauritius which are represented in the secondary school. They have some common basis for responding since they have children who have social, cultural, traditional, peer interactions in the school and their children form part of the same school community with the principal as the school authority who has the authority over discipline policy, together with them in the Parent-Teacher Association. The members of this association work in close collaboration with the parents and they are intermediaries between their responsibility of the effective execution and implementation of the school policies, principles and practices led by the principal and their children who are at the receiving end. The researcher felt that they had much information about learner discipline and the role of the principal in maintaining positive discipline among their children at school (Appendix M).

It was important to have these diverse focus groups of educators, learners, and parents, as they have the school and the discipline of the learners as their concern. Each set of participants being clusters of people who live, work, collaborate and socialise together already brings a level of confidence in the group's ability to discuss and interact. These people are already quite familiar with themselves as friends or colleagues, and so, they feel free to discuss, consider and examine ideas and issues of importance (King & Horrocks 2010: 67). It was deemed inappropriate to use focus groups constituted of educators, learners and parents to discuss learner discipline. Such a group would be too

diverse and these participants would not be willing to freely voice out their opinions about such a matter of concern. Educators would be reluctant to criticise parents about the unacceptable behaviour of their children. Moreover, learners may use different words to explain their attitudes, rather than the more academic terms used by educators (Lodico et al 2010: 124).

Interview guides, schedules or protocols were used for these three categories of focus group interviews. Interview protocols are only guidelines and they neither prevent the interviewer nor the participants from discussing other related issues that the researcher considers relevant to the research problem under investigation. The interview protocol is therefore not a list of questions (Matthews & Ross 2010: 227). It contributes to guide the gathering of information in a focused and systematic manner (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 124). However, unexpected issues are expected to emerge from the dynamic process of focus group interviewing. It outlines prompts (the main topics or themes) the researcher intends to cover. In the case of this study, he chose about three or four broad areas, with various themes on each area, that emerged from the literature study, and which reflect the aims of the study (King & Horrocks 2010: 36). The focus group interview was also semi-structured. Each group was asked a set of more or less similar questions (Appendices K, L and M). According to Bernard and Ryan (2010: 29), semi-structured interviews are characterised by flexibility since the interviewer can modify the order and details of how main issues or themes are covered.

According to Halcomb, Gholizadeh, DiGiacomo, Philips and Davidson (2007: 1008), as cited in Arthur *et al.* (2012: 187), focus group interviews have many benefits such as discovering of collective perspectives, synthesising and validating ideas and concepts, involving diverse groups of participants, having access to more participants, and their potential for change. However, they have potential for problems with confidentiality, conflicts may arise because of the inability of the researcher to manage group interactions, if the moderator is not sufficiently skilled the interview may be poorly run, and analysis and interpretation of information may become very challenging when complex verbal and non-verbal responses emerge. Masadeh (2012: 64) says that when the

group is properly organised and interactive, it is the most effective way to gather information from a small group of people. Moreover, focus group interview outputs may not be generalised (Matthews & Ross 2010: 250), and logistic problems may arise (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 150). Lodico *et al.* (2010: 123) add that there may be administrative challenges such as the arrangement for a convenient time and place for all the selected participants. Another important challenge of using focus group interviews is the extent to which the language of the interviewee and that of the researcher is sufficiently similar to allow meaningful inferences about the topic which is being researched (Gay *et al.* 2011: 387). This was an important challenge in the context of this research study as Mauritius is a multilingual country with English as the official language. To ensure the free flowing of meaningful information in terms of emotions, experiences and views, the researcher uses the mother-tongue of all Mauritians, namely Creole, which is spoken and understood by everyone. So, Creole is used in all focus group interviews with educators, learners, superintendents and parents.

4.5.2.2 Individual interview

A qualitative individual interview is a special kind of knowledge-producing conversation that takes place between the researcher as the interviewer and the participant/respondent as the interviewee (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 105). It follows a conversational interviewing style that encourages the participant to speak personally and at length about a specific issue which is of his/her concern (Silverman 2013: 203). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 18), it produces knowledge that is contextual, linguistic, narrative and pragmatic. This is because it lays emphasis on open-ended, non-leading questions, has a focus on the personal experiences of the participants, and tries to build a rapport with the individual being interviewed; this will allow the researcher to explore and probe the responses of the interviewee to gather thorough information about their feelings, attitudes, interests, values and concerns more easily than he can with any other methods of data collection (Gay *et al.* 2011: 386; King & Horrocks 2010: 2).

The researcher used individual interviewing with each principal of the four selected state secondary schools, which are the research sites, in the Educational Zone 2. He also did

individual interviewing with each of the two state secondary school superintendents of the schools in which he carried out his observation. It should be noted that there is only one superintendent in each state secondary school. Since the individual interview is intense and issue oriented, when the researcher interviewed the principal or the superintendent, he obtained exploratory and descriptive information about the participant's role in maintaining positive discipline in his/her school among the learners. The researcher selected to interview the principal of each selected state secondary school because the principal as the head of the school has unique and important knowledge and experiences about the school. The school is the entity in which learners and educators interact on a daily basis. The principal is in the best position to know about the school problem of learner discipline, namely the main causes of a lack of discipline among secondary school learners and what strategies they are successfully implementing to ensure positive discipline among them. The knowledge of these aspects of learner discipline are ascertainable and thus could be shared through verbal communication between the researcher and the principal in a semi-structured individual interview. The purpose of the individual interview with principals and school superintendents was to gather information on the personal and professional perceptions, practices and experiences, and the role of these participants with respect to positive learner discipline. So, the researcher was able to locate specific ideas with specifically one informant (Descombe 2010: 176). This is consistent also with the researcher's choice of interviewing the superintendent of each of the state secondary schools where he was an observer.

An interview protocol was designed for the individual interview. The themes or topics of the protocol pertained to the aim of the research. The areas were the main causes of a lack of learner discipline in secondary schools, and the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners. By using the interview protocol, the researcher prompted each principal (Appendix I) and each superintendent (Appendix J) to provide essential and relevant information about the main phenomenon of learner discipline and the two mentioned areas of the interview. The interview lasted for a maximum of one and a half hours.

4.5.2.3 Pilot interview

The researcher conducted a pilot study at the preparatory phase of data collection. There is a strong argument to do a pilot study even if the researcher uses qualitative methods (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 48). This is because the interview protocols for the focus group interviews and the individual interviews contain semi-structured prompts. Indeed, according to Sampson (2004: 383), as cited in Marshall and Rossman (2011: 95), pilots are used for the purpose of refining research instruments and interview schedules. According to Matthews and Ross (2010: 222), piloting gives a possibility to the researcher to do the data collection method on a small scale trial before he does the main research information gathering; this allows the researcher to try out question wording and the data collection procedures and determine whether the participants understand the research, and refines them if necessary before he starts with the main research stage.

The advantages of piloting the interview schedules are that the researcher may understand himself as a researcher, practise interviewing, look for strategies to eliminate potential barriers such as participants' resistance to the use of tape recorders and their mistrust of his agenda in doing the research, and find out whether substantially relevant data emerge from the participants. Marshall and Rossman (2011: 96) and Silverman (2013: 211) maintain that a description of initial observations from the pilot exercise will allow the researcher to show his ability to manage the research and the duration of the interview as well as the strengths of the instrument for providing enticing research questions. The pilot interview also allows the researcher to test the interview schedules, to think about possible ways to improve the research instruments, determine gaps and wastages in data collection, predict research problems that may arise and establish the feasibility of the study in focus as well as identify any other issues that may adversely affect the actual study; such an issue is the safety of the researcher (Basit 2010: 71-72). After the pilot interview, the researcher may continue to amend the research instrument until he is satisfied with the outcome of the data collection. The pilot helps him to plan the data collection phase with confidence.

The researcher conducted a pilot focus group interview and a pilot individual interview before he does the interview sessions with the selected participants. Neither the participants for the pilot focus group nor the participant for the pilot individual interview formed part of the selected participants for the research investigation although they work in the Educational Zone 2 of Mauritius. The same sampling criteria were used for their selection for the pilot interviews. This is in line with Gay *et al.* (2011: 387) who maintain that piloting should be done with a group of participants who share similar characteristics with the research participants to see if the prompts make sense. They provide the researcher with valuable advice on relevant techniques to ensure the proper flow of information. He is in a better position to refine possible probing questions and prepare for unexpected questions from the participants. He may also increase his time management skills during the interview. Therefore, following the pilot study, he may reflect on the interview process and review the interview protocols and more efficiently prepare the data collection process. In fact, there is no boundary between exploration, piloting and proper collection of data when the researcher conducts small sample interviewing (Davies & Hughes 2014: 183).

4.5.2.4 Conducting the interviews

Though interviews are like natural conversations (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 146) or 'conversations with a purpose' (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 119), yet they are actually not, as the researcher needs to have certain interview skills to conduct it in a successful manner. The most important skill to master is active listening. Active listening involves the interviewer must put aside or bracket his own presuppositions and listen carefully for meanings being expressed by the participant (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 128).

The researcher of this study followed the sequence of steps suggested by Lodico *et al.* (2010: 129-130) to conduct both the individual interviews with the principals and the focus group interviews successfully. The researcher must first begin the interview by reintroducing himself, the general topic that will be discussed and the purpose of the study which is already outlined in the interview protocol. He also thanks them for

precious time and willingness to participate in the interview. Then, he reminds the participants of the confidentiality of their responses. At this stage of the interview process, the participants have already signed the informed consent form about confidentiality and agreed to participate voluntarily in the study. However, the researcher reviews that information at the beginning of the actual interview. He proceeds by obtaining general descriptive information about the participants or the phenomenon under study. The researcher starts with the least sensitive questions or more general questions so as to build trust and rapport in the interaction and so that the participants may open up to him. He must show respect for the participants by showing his genuine interest in responses and use a professional tone so that he may probe responses more deeply. He probes for three reasons: for an elaboration purpose, that is to encourage participants to keep talking in order to gather more detail on the topic; for a clarification purpose, that is to seek explanation when he does not fully understand the interviewee; and for a completion purpose to ask the participant to put an end to an explanation that seems to the interviewer to have nothing to do with the phenomenon being studied (King & Horrocks 2010: 53). Throughout the interview the researcher strives for neutrality by only listening and being non-judgemental in his reactions; otherwise, the participants may question whether they should trust him or not, and this limits interaction. In this process, the researcher is conscious that his values and personal bias as well as those of the participants constitute a factor that relates to the information he gathers from them. The extent to which these may influence the data collected is considered. Moreover, he avoids interrupting the participants and posing leading questions, but rather uses open-ended questions (Gay *et al.* 2011: 387). He tolerates silence as it means the participant is thinking, and avoids any non-verbal behaviour that may distract the participant. Finally, he records the interview data during the interview. To preserve the integrity of the information gathered, the researcher uses a tape-recorder. Also, he intends to use verbatim responses in analysing the data. However, he does not take any notes during the interview so as not to disturb the flow of the conversations and thinking process of the participants.

On the date of the actual interview, the researcher considered the following arrangements to avoid any unexpected occurrences that might hamper the successful running of the interview. He arrived at the selected location earlier so as to ensure that the venue is available, free from noise and disturbances; he rearranged any furniture in the room to make it safe, private and comfortable (particularly for the focus group interviews); informed the participants of the approximate duration of the interview and that he would honour the time limit; he checked the informed consent forms or confirmed that he had received all of them duly signed; he asked for permission to make use of the tape recorder and tests it again to ensure that it is working; and at the end of the interview, he thanked the participants for their time for participation, but he kept the tape-recorder on so that additional valuable thoughts which crop up even after the actual interview could be recorded (Saldana, Leavy & Beretvas 2011: 49; De Vos 2002: 293; Turner 2010: 757).

4.5.2.5 The advantages and disadvantages of using interviews as a data collection method

As discussed in paragraph 4.5.2, interview is the most appropriate research instrument used in qualitative research. This is the main instrument of the research investigation on learner discipline.

The researcher used interviews because it was useful in conducting his investigation on exploring, understanding and explaining the problem of a lack of discipline among secondary school learners in state secondary schools and the role of the principal. Interviews allow the researcher to refine or individualise questions and probe responses. Extensively collected data provides in-depth information when the research is carried on a small sample, while immediate follow-up and clarification are possible (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 122; Marshall & Rossman 2011: 145). Moreover, the researcher may discover explanations that he would not find out through observation alone, or would not find out if he did not ask; and interviews tend to attract higher response rates (Hartas 2010: 227). Finally, interviews ensure information validity as direct contact with the informants in the interview means that the collected data can be checked for their accuracy and relevance (Descombe 2010: 192).

However, despite these benefits, the use of interviews has some weaknesses which the researcher should consider in conducting them. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011: 145), if the researcher is unsuccessful in building trust with the participants, the latter may not be willing nor comfortable to share what the interviewer hopes to discuss and explore; also, he may not ask questions that are likely to force them to give long narratives because he may not be fluent in or familiar with the participants' language; as a result, he may not sensitively understand and interpret responses. Brundrett and Rhodes (2014: 78) and Denscombe (2010: 193) add that, because of the intersubjectivity of interviews, both the conduct of the interviews and the process of analysis are inevitably biased by the researcher's own views and experiences, hence making the generalisability of the research findings impossible. Successful interviewing requires high interview skills from the interviewer. Lichtman (2006: 19) argues that interviewing requires the researcher to be patient, requires much time and energy, and also the researcher must coordinate his schedule with the participants' busy calendars. Finally, interview research is characterised by an emerging design, where data collection is an on-going process along with data analysis, unlimited hours for transcribing the interviews and not knowing exactly what constitutes sufficient data.

On account of these critics of interviews as reliable data collection methods on its own, the researcher also used observation in two of the four selected state secondary schools to increase the validity, credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data and subsequent conclusions of the research study. The observation method is used in this research as it is linked to other forms of data collection, inter alia interviewing (Hamilton & Whittier 2013: 99). The researcher adopted the combination proposed by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011: 177), namely individual interviews used as a follow-up to focus group interviews. According to this research design, the researcher first conducted the observation at the two selected schools, and then carried out the focus group interviews with the educators, learners and parents, and finally the individual interviews with the superintendents and principals. This qualitative multi-method design informed further information collection,

analysis and interpretation, which could provide the most reliable conclusions to the researcher about learner discipline and the role of the principals therein.

4.5.2.6 The role of the researcher

In all qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument, and as such, his or her presence in the lives of the selected participants or the selected cases is fundamental to the methodology. He/she intrudes to a varying extent in the natural setting of their daily experiences and activities. According to Patton (2002: 273), as cited in Marshall and Rossman (2011: 113), the researcher's role may be situated on continua of three dimensions: participant-ness, revealedness and the extent of intensiveness or extensiveness. For interviewing, the researcher is a participant researcher, and takes the traditional neutral stance whereby he does not influence the participants' perceptions, thoughts, and opinions. In such a role, he does his utmost not to act as an expert in the field of study; rather, he considers the participants as information rich experts about learner discipline and the role of the principal in maintaining positive discipline among secondary school learners. For the multi-case study, the researcher is a passive observer in the school setting. He assumes no responsibilities in the classroom or on the school premises, but rather focuses on data collection (Gay *et al.* 2011: 428). He is a non-participant observer in the sense that he does not become an integral part of the school organisation, but observes from a distance (Sekaran & Bougie 2010: 113). He is only considered by everyone in the school as a visitor who is there to observe. Brundrett & Rhodes (2014: 94) call this role of the researcher as 'observer-as-participant', where the researcher does not take part in any school activity but his role as an observer is known by the participants. In this study, the researcher raised issues or events he observed when he carried out the focus group interviews with educators, parents or learners at a later stage to have a deeper understanding of the events which he recorded in his field notes.

The researcher's participantness relates to the extent to which the researcher reveals the reasons of his/her presence in the school site to the participants. The researcher gives full disclosure of his presence at the school. This is in line with Patton (2002: 173), as cited in

Marshall and Rossman (2011: 113) who advises 'full and complete disclosure, people are seldom deceived or reassured by false or partial explanations'. However, in this study, the researcher did not reveal the purpose of the observation and what he focused on as an observer to the learners at the two research sites as this full disclosure might have undermined the qualitative research aims, and the researcher might not have obtained genuine explanations about the phenomenon from the learners, especially when the topic of a lack of learner discipline may be an embarrassing issue for them (the observer effect). This position of the researcher is in line with Basit (2010: 130) who argues that sometimes it is necessary not to brief the participants beforehand on account of the nature of the issues to be investigated. It should be noted also that during the observation the learners are not direct or selected participants. The researcher considered them as the subjects of observation. The researcher was very conscious of the ethical considerations that arose when he took such a position. However, he gave full and complete disclosure to the selected learners who are involved in the focus group interviews. Here, the researcher had no choice since he had to prevent deception on the part of the learners.

Thirdly, the researcher spent at least sixty hours in each of the two research sites for observation. He played an intensive role in the settings but he was minimally intrusive and present for a minimum period of time among the learners, educators, superintendent and the principal so as to be indirectly and passively part of their daily experiences, emotions, and actions. For the focus group interview and the individual interview, the dimension of intensity is not important. However, in the focus group interview, the researcher's role was also that of a moderator. As a moderator, the researcher coordinates the group, that is influences the flow of the conversation, the group dynamic and the manner of the group narrative (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 181). King and Horrocks (2010: 71-77) outline the characteristics of the moderator: he/she sets the ground rules; welcomes, and shares information and consent; selects the participants and introduces them in the interview; controls the discussion and asks questions; ensures the participants' confidentiality; and does the debriefing at the final stage of the interview.

The researcher of this study adopted a low level of moderation. He allowed the participants to do most of the communication so that he could obtain rich descriptions of their social life in the school and in-depth explanations of social processes regarding learner discipline. This implies that the researcher influences the group dynamic when he characterises his role as a moderator as described by King and Horrocks (2010: 71-77). However, in assuming these different roles during the different data collection activities, the researcher minimises the potential risk of 'researcher bias'. He does so by bracketing his own experiences, preconceptions, thoughts and opinions regarding learner discipline, and at the same time, he opens himself to interpretations, opinions, experiences of the participants that differ from his prior assumptions about the phenomenon under study.

4.5.2.7 Negotiating and gaining access to the research site

There were two research sites at which the researcher made his observations. The researcher selected participants for the focus group interview and those (principals) of the individual interviews from four research sites. Each focus group and each individual interview with the principal were conducted with participants from a particular school. The researcher had been employed as a secondary school educator in two state secondary schools in the Education Zone 2. Therefore, he had a good working knowledge about how a state secondary school is structured and how it functions. He is familiar with the zone, and knows the gatekeepers personally or professionally. This facilitated the researcher's access to the selected schools. A phone call to the principal was sufficient to to be provided access to the sites. However, to gain official access to the selected schools and the selected educators, learners, superintendents and parents for the investigation, the researcher sought permission from the Directorate of the Education Zone 2 of the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (Appendix A). The researcher was officially on leave without pay as a state secondary school educator and was actually working as lecturer at the Open University of Mauritius. So, a letter requesting permission for access to any school in the zone to collect data from the participants was sent through the principal of the researcher's institution to which he

is posted but on leave. The researcher gave an overview of the study, describing briefly its aims, methods, and the time commitment that the research may require from participants (King & Horrocks 2010: 31). He added also the importance of the study on the principals' role regarding the problem of a lack of learner discipline in secondary schools. Since learners constitute a form of vulnerable group, and they are minors and the principal acts *in loco parentis* to them, the researcher sent an informed consent form to the parents of the selected learners to gain permission to interview their children (Appendix C). He also requested the assent from the learners to have their participation in the empirical investigation (Appendix D).

The researcher started data collection only after having obtained the ethical clearance letter from the Unisa Ethics Committee (Appendix F) and the letter of approval from the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary education and Scientific Research (Appendix G). The first time the researcher entered the research site and prior to selecting the participants, he showed both the ethical clearance letter and the letter of approval from the Ministry so as to establish a professional first contact with the participants and the gatekeepers.

4.5.2.8 Building rapport with the participants

Building rapport with the selected participants is considered as a major factor for the researcher to succeed in using qualitative interviewing as well as in observation (King & Horrocks 2010: 48). The researcher should do everything possible to establish trust with the participants. He/she should develop and nurture honest and respectful relationships with gatekeepers and the participants (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 113). This gives much confidence to the latter to feel comfortable in expressing themselves freely on the topic to the researcher. This was very important for this investigation as the researcher used interviews and observation whereby he required close contact with the participants, although he obtained information unobtrusively for the observation.

The researcher obtained the consent form read, approved and signed by each participant (Appendix B) before he started the data collection phase. However, this was not sufficient for building rapport with them. This did not ensure that they share the researcher's understanding of the purpose of the study and the nature of the interview process. He also gave the participants a verbal explanation, before and after the interview, of the study aim and how the data would be eventually used. He telephoned the participants before the interview to talk about it and provided them with his telephone number and email address, requesting them to ask any query about their participation prior to the interview. Most importantly, he assured them of their anonymity and the confidentiality of the collected data. The participants of each focus group also ensured their anonymity and the confidentiality of the collected data from them as a group by acknowledging the content of, and signing, the focus group interview assent and confidentiality agreement form (Appendix E).

A qualitative researcher should also consider his self-presentation as important to building rapport with the participants. He is careful about what he wears, his nonverbal communication and the language he uses with the participants from the very first contact with them. He is not too formal, is conscious that his gestures are expressions of his personality and does not use any jargon related to the research topic that may hinder the communicative synergy between them. He does not show that he is an expert on the topic but rather shows that they have the expert knowledge to share with him.

4.6 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher collected much data from the observations in the schools, the focus group interviews with the educators, learners and parents, and the individual interviews with the each principal and superintendent. These raw data were processed into information that is meaningful and that could be interpreted to understand the phenomenon of learner discipline. This is the process of data analysis. According to Schwandt (2007: 6), as cited in Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2012: 3), 'data analysis is the breaking down of a

whole data into its constituent parts. Through the assembly of these parts, one realises and understands the integrity of the whole data.'

Basit (2010: 183) cites Patton (2002: 432) to better explain the process of data analysis, using the following metaphors:

'*Analysis begins during a larval stage, that if fully developed, metamorphoses from caterpillar-like beginnings into the splendour of the mature butterfly. The inquirer acts as catalyst on raw data, generating an interaction that synthesises new substance born alive from the catalytic conversion. Findings emerge like an artist mural created from collage-like pieces that make sense in new ways when seen and understood as part of a greater whole.*'

Data analysis involves many essential activities that the researcher must do concurrently. These activities are data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing and verification. Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) in Brundrett and Rhodes (2014: 142) define data reduction as the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and abstracting the collected data; data display as an organised, compressed assembly of information that allows the researcher to make inferences and draw conclusions; and conclusion drawing and verification as the process whereby the researcher notes regularities, discerns patterns, makes explanations, notes causal flows, and outlines propositions derived from the data.

4.6.1 Content analysis

The researcher used content analysis in the study. Basit (2010: 194) defines content analysis as the method of analysing qualitative data that can be carried out on transcribed data. The researcher collected information from key-informants through interviews and observations to get in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon through the experiences, feelings and daily life of the participants in the school context. The transcribed interviews and the observation logs served as documents and the content was analysed. The raw material for content analysis is typically text (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 161). The approach used here is content-driven, exploratory and inductive (Guest, Namey &

Mitchell 2013: 254). The researcher focused on the presence, meanings and relationships of words and concepts and then infered about the messages to have a better understanding of the discipline problem among secondary school learners in Mauritius. This means that the researcher analysed both the prominent manifest and the latent meaning of interviews and the observation log (Saldana 2011: 10).

From the interviews with the learners, educators, parents, school superintendents and the principals, the researcher collected huge amounts of information about the phenomenon under study. This approach to data analysis was appropriate as ascertained by Grbich (2007: 112) who claims that content analysis is an approach for systematic coding and categorising which researchers can adopt to unobtrusively explore an overflow of information from the text. This process contributes to discover trends and patterns of words, their frequency, their potential relationships and the structures and discourses of communication. The analysis of the focus group information about learner discipline required much judgement and care, and therefore, a thorough content analysis was needed. Sultan and Wong (2013: 74-75) is cited in Krippendorff (2004: 3-11) to show the appropriateness of the use of content analysis, "*content analysis is used when there is gathering of information in the form of answers to focus group conversation and open-ended questions*". The researcher used semi-structured individual and focus group interviews with various participants and analysed their words and expressions to interpret and better understand the causes of a lack of discipline among secondary school learners, and the strategies that principals may adopt to maintain effective discipline.

4.6.2 Steps in analysing qualitative data

When analysing qualitative data the researcher must show patience and reflection in the process of making sense of multiple data sources such as field notes from interviews and observations, questionnaires, pictures, maps, videotaped observations and audiotape transcripts (Gay *et al.* 2011: 465). In this investigation, the researcher used interviews and observations.

Since qualitative data analysis is a process, it involves a number of steps. The researcher follows the six steps of data analysis suggested by Lodico *et al.* (2010: 180-194), namely prepare and organise the data; review and explore the data; code data into categories; construct thick descriptions of people, places and activities; build themes; and report and interpret data.

4.6.2.1 Prepare and organise the data

The researcher had taped the interviews, so preparation involved transferring the recorded information into a written form. He chose to make a full transcription of the recorded interviews. Qualitative transcribing is an interactive process in which the researcher is involved in deep listening, analysis and interpretation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 304). The exact words of the participants are transcribed along with pauses, laughter, interruptions, and changes in emotions. This will give a clearer meaning and a greater value to their words and thus a better interpretation. By doing so, he becomes familiar with the data.

In the focus group interview transcriptions, the person who speaks was identified by using initials or code names to ensure confidentiality. Moreover, the audiotapes were labelled with identifying information such as date, setting, or group. The researcher also made backup copies of the transcribed data which were stored in a location known to the researcher only.

The researcher also organised the information gathered into the research site, from the individual person or the focused group, in chronological order, by the types of data, or types of events observed or issues (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 181-182). Moreover, the researcher carried out pre-coding of the collected data. He did simple mental reflections and note-taking about parts of the text that might fit within predetermined themes, and identified emergent themes by making margin notes, underlining the text or highlighting paragraphs that he considers relevant and important (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 145).

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4.6.2.2 Review and explore the data

During this stage the researcher immerses himself in the data while re-reading the transcribed text. The researcher reads the verbatim transcription. Basit (2010: 184) cites Mason (2002: 149) to recommend three reading approaches, namely literal reading, interpretive reading, and reflexive reading. Literal reading involves looking at the words and language, the sequence of interactions, and the form of structure of the conversation; interpretive reading determining how the interviewees make sense of the social world and how the researcher then interprets the interviewee's perceptions of the social world. He does so to get a good feel of the data and to be able to identify the 'big ideas' or the themes (Bloomberg & Volpe 2012: 139). A theme is a phrase or sentence that reveals what a unit of data is about and/or what its meaning is (Saldana 2009: 139). It is only through repetitive reading that themes are recognised. If a concept reoccurs throughout or across transcripts, the researcher is therefore identifying a theme. Data obtained from interviews or conversations may be viewed and reviewed in order to particularly analyse the ways in which each individual makes use of language, taking into account words or phrases that are essentially distinctive or analysing the audience that is targeted by the participant (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 182). All these steps were carried out in this study.

4.6.2.3 Code data into categories

A code in qualitative investigation is a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldana 2009: 3). Marshall and Rossman (2011: 211) identified two types of codes. Based on the literature review on learner discipline, the researcher identifies pre-set themes or categories which he expects to be present (theory-generated codes, and at the same time notes emergent themes or categories on memos (in vivo codes). Bloomberg and Volpe (2012: 142) define this concept of coding as a system of classification or a process of noting what is central and relevant to the study, identifying different segments of data, and labelling them for the organisation of the information gathered in the data. Coding is a relevant and the most appropriate process in a qualitative

study such as the one the researcher conducts on discipline. The researcher does his best to prevent existing theoretical concepts from over-defining and obscuring the potential emergence and development of new concepts and theories (Lewis & Silver 2007: 85). The aim of the researcher is to investigate about the phenomenon of learner discipline and the role of principals therein. So, the collected data should shed light on new causes of a lack of learner discipline and new strategies for maintaining discipline in secondary schools in the Mauritian context. This process of coding is a winnowing process, that is, a process of reducing all the collected data to a manageable database, grouping it into useful ways (Bloomberg & Volpe 2012: 141).

Once the data are coded and placed into themes or categories, the researcher looks for patterns between and across such categories, and even across cases, as is the case in this research, among the four state secondary schools. Coding is thus an analytical strategy (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 309).

After the satisfaction of the researcher that the major ideas and issues relating to learner discipline and the role of the principal therein in the data have been identified through the codes, then he uses the codes to organise data and construct thick descriptions of them.

4.6.2.4 Construct thick descriptions of people, places and attitudes

The aim of the researcher in selecting the qualitative research design is to obtain rich, in-depth and extensive descriptions and understandings of the learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals' perspectives and experiences of the phenomenon in the natural and social setting of the state secondary schools. So, he uses the collected coded data and themes or categories to write the thick descriptions that explain the causes of a lack of learner discipline and the strategies principals are adopting to maintain positive discipline in schools.

According to Lodico *et al.* (2010: 185), descriptions is the process whereby the researcher expands on his field notes and combine notes and interviews with the same

codes into a more integrated description of people, situations, and places. This is what the researcher did in this study; the field notes obtained from his observations from the two research sites and the interviews of learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals from all four selected schools were given the same codes and interpreted in the same way. This restorying process helped the researcher to interpret the data meaningfully.

4.6.2.5 Build themes

Themes provide the organising ideas that the researcher uses to give an explanation about what he/she has learnt from the study (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 185). The themes will help him to identify the major concepts that he uses to make interpretations and give explanations of the data. King and Horrocks (2010: 156) identify descriptive themes and interpretive themes. At this stage, the researcher identifies many overarching themes that characterise key concepts in the analysis, and that are built upon the interpretive themes.

The researcher re-examines the data by using the overarching themes, which provides him with tentative explanations of what has been observed (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 189). Then, the researcher triangulates these hypotheses to confirm or disconfirm evidence. In this study, he did triangulation basically by comparing the different sources of data, that is, from observations, focused group interviews and individual interviews as well as the perspectives of the different participants in the state secondary schools.

This iterative process of qualitative data analysis of coding, descriptions and theme building through the review of data is done again until the researcher is convinced that the research questions have been attended to adequately and he has obtained sufficient meanings from the data (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 192).

4.6.2.6 Report and interpret data

The writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the analytic process (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 222). Briggs and Coleman (2007: 362) state that some of the findings of qualitative research starts to emerge only when the researcher begins to draft the final report. The researcher includes an extensive use of quotes from the participants so as to contextualise the conclusions (to validate the epistemological perspective of the research). He also relates the conclusions of this current study to previous conclusions on the research problem of learner discipline as well as the theoretical framework of the study. Furthermore, because he spends much time in doing observations in schools, he may involve his personal reflections in the interpretation of the data. This is the dialogical process of analysis and interpreting data (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 151). In this study the researcher's interpretation of the data was the interplay of his theoretical knowledge and professional experience as a state secondary school educator, the literature study on learner discipline and the role of the principal therein, and the theoretical framework developed as backbone of the study.

4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND TRANSFERABILITY

The standard criteria for evaluating a quantitative research are reliability, objectivity and validity (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon 2003: 59). However, Northcote (2012:100) claims that we cannot use these three criteria to evaluate the soundness of a qualitative research since "we cannot judge a good apple by the criteria of a good orange", thereby meaning that researchers cannot blindly use the "holy trinity" to evaluate the effectiveness of a qualitative research. According to Briggs and Coleman (2007: 98), researchers cannot easily apply the concept of validity to qualitative methods, including observation and interviews, which are used in this current study on learner discipline. After a literature review on the assessment of the quality of qualitative research, it is obvious to the researcher that the most common criteria for evaluating qualitative studies are those proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985: 301-327), namely transferability,

credibility, confirmability and dependability. For the actual study to be true and therefore trustworthy, the researcher ensures that his study meets these fundamental criteria. According to Shenton (2004: 64), Guba's (1981: 71-90) constructs correspond to the criteria employed by the positivist investigator: (a) credibility (instead of internal validity); (b) transferability (instead of external validity/generalisability); (c) dependability (instead of reliability); and (d) confirmability (instead of objectivity).

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, the researcher adopted various strategies, in line with Lincoln and Guba's framework for assessing the soundness or goodness of his study. Moreover, he applied strategies aligned to the constructivist paradigm in that he attempted to construct knowledge which is never perfect, but which ensures the quality of the research and hence its acceptance by the research community (Loh 2013: 5). These strategies are discussed in the following paragraphs.

4.7.1 Credibility

Credibility involves establishing that the findings of the qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the research participants (Trochim & Donnelly 2007: 149). The researcher ensures that he accurately represents the participants' thoughts, feelings and actions, and the processes that influence what they think, feel and do. The various strategies that the researcher follows to ensure the credibility of the study are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The researcher engaged for quite some time in each of the two sites. He spent at least sixty hours in each of the two state secondary schools for observation. This allowed him to establish and nurture strong relationships with the research sites as well as with the learners, educators, parents, superintendent and the principal. Taking part in meaningful interactions with participants enhances credibility (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 170) as a prolonged engagement in schools allowed both the researcher and the learners, educators, superintendent and principal to establish trust among themselves. By so doing, he was also able to overcome distortions which are produced by his presence in the school.

Moreover, being among the participants for a prolonged period avoids the issue of social desirability which, according to Hartas (2010: 228), suggests that individuals like to present themselves in a favourable light. Social desirability is the result of research reactivity (Lietz & Zayas 2010: 192), which a researcher manages by choosing to be more of an observer than a participant in the schools in which he does the observation about the participants' reactions and attitudes to learner discipline. The researcher also persistently observed the participants, the events, interactions and attitudes to school discipline. This allowed him to identify pervasive qualities and atypical characteristics of the participants in order to have better insights into their behaviour (Gay *et al.* 2011: 392). Moreover, he was able to eliminate false associations and premature theories about learner discipline with repeated observations and interviews and his sustained presence in the schools (Luttrell 2010: 283). However, the researcher decided not to be so immersed in the natural social setting of the participants so that his professional judgment as an educational researcher was not influenced.

Moreover, the researcher conducted a pilot study before he embarked on the main study. The sample of the pilot was representative of the sample of the main study, and it followed the same approach, methodology and methods used in the study. The researcher conducted a pilot focus group interview with learners, educators and parents, and a pilot individual interview with a principal and a supeintendent. These participants were from a state secondary school which was not selected for the main study and the selection criteria are discussed in paragraph 4.5.2.1. This pilot improved the credibility of the study in that the researcher asked these participants to try out the instruments beforehand, which offers feedback opportunity so that the instruments are improved. Thus, any misleading, ambiguous, unintelligible or unnecessary elements are changed or ruled out (Brundrett & Rhodes 2014: 31).

The researcher used triangulation. Triangulation refers to the attempt by the researcher to get a 'true' fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at it (methodological triangulation) or different findings (data triangulation) (Silverman 2013: 280). He used the methodological triangulation in that the main strategies for data

collection in qualitative research, namely observation, focus groups and individual interviews, are used for the study. Moreover, focus group interviews were used in combination with individual interviews as a kind of credibility check (Berg & Lune 2012: 165). This allowed him to find the convergence as well as the divergence of the research findings and compensate for weaknesses of one method by the strengths of the other (Shenton 2004: 66). The researcher also looked for confirming and disconfirming evidence through negative case analysis. To enhance the credibility of the study, he had recourse to continuous reflexivity through his self-reflexive journal, from the initial stage of the data collection process to the data reporting phase. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 210), reflexivity is the process whereby the researcher critically reflects on himself as researcher, as "the human, being the instrument of his own research'.

To be able to achieve this credibility level, the researcher ensured that he had gathered adequate data on learner discipline and the role of the principal therein by using the same themes about learner discipline and the role of the principal in the different interview schedules with the learners (Appendix L), educators (Appendix K), parents (Appendix M), the superintendent (Appendix J) and the principal (Appendix I), though some themes were more oriented to the learners' perspectives in the interviews with them, more oriented to the educators' perspectives in the interview with them, and the same strategy with the parents, the superintendent and the principals. By adopting a reflexive approach to his research, he reduced his own bias and assumptions about learner discipline. The researcher, an experienced state secondary school educator, was conscious of the potential impact of his own life experiences and assumptions about the occurrence of the research problem in state secondary schools and the role of the principal therein. Researcher bias is a threat to trustworthiness (Luttrell 2010: 281; Hesse-Biber 2011: 48). So, he did his best to bracket these aspects by keeping the self-reflexive journal as well as by consulting peer debriefers.

According to Morrow (2005: 254), debriefers serve as devil's advocates in that they propose alternative interpretations to those of the researcher. The researcher of this study consulted a team of debriefers consisting of an Education Quality Assurance Officer of

the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research; the Head of the School of Education of the Mauritius Institute of Education; a state secondary school educator who was not a participant in the investigation with twenty years of teaching experience in secondary schools; and a critical friend who holds a Master in Education degree from the University of Brighton and who is a part-time lecturer in Education. They examined the field notes and the transcriptions prior to meeting with the researcher on a regular basis, and they helped the latter re-examine assumptions through reflections and questions throughout the process. This enabled the researcher to consider alternative ways of interpreting the collected data in schools.

The researcher also attempted to obtain the data corpus on learner discipline and the role of the principal therein through observations, focused group and individual interviews so that he was able to make a thorough and deep interpretation and understanding of them. He achieved this by repeated readings of the transcripts, listening to the audiotapes, and reviews of the observation field notes. He also kept analytic memos to systematically make meaning of the collected data. Memos are a collection of hunches, interpretations, queries, and notes made by the researcher throughout the investigation (Morrow 2005: 256). The researcher used these memos for reviews and he incorporated them in the data analysis.

The researcher also used both his own interpretations and supporting quotations from the participants. He used as many valuable and relevant quotes of the actual words of learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals as possible, but in a reasonable way in an attempt to convince the readers that his interpretations were grounded in the latter's lived experiences. He also validated his interpretations and findings by relating them to the literature study he made on learner discipline and the role of the principals therein in chapters two and three. In other words, he interpreted the collected information from the participants to a given theoretical framework to make it credible to the reader (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 48)

Member checking is another strategy that the researcher used to ensure the credibility of the current study. Member checking is a process whereby '*the researcher takes back the final report or specific description or themes' to the participants"* (Creswell 2009: 191). He met some of the learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals who were interviewed in order to give them the opportunity to review the transcribed interviews and the observation notes so that they could give feedback, context and alternative, more accurate and plausible interpretations to the conclusions he made from the findings. This also allowed him to avoid anecdotalism. Anecdotalism is the special temptation of using a few well-known or spectacular quotes from participants (Silverman 2013: 277; Briggs & Coleman 2007: 99). The researcher considered both the interview responses and the participants' feedback to be equally important for the research. This certainly improved the validity of the conclusions of the study as he was able to corroborate his research findings.

4.7.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the qualitative research can be replicated or applied to other contexts or settings in similar situations and with similar research questions (Trochim & Donnelly 2007; 149; Marshall & Rossman 2011: 252). Qualitative researchers believe that what they study is context-bounded and therefore they do not try to come to conclusions that can be generalised to a larger population (Gay *et al.* 2011: 392; Morgan 2007: 72). The goal of this research study was not to generalise, but to allow the reader to have enough information about the characteristics of the selected participants and the natural setting of the research so that he may experience a congruence of his own setting, experiences and characteristics with those found in the actual study. In fact, the researcher's epistemological stance ensures the transferability of his study on learner discipline. The researcher ensured the transferability of his study by adopting the following strategies.

The decision of the researcher to do a case study on learner discipline and the role of the principal to maintain positive discipline among secondary school learners is a measure of

the transferability of the study. The four selected state secondary schools are, to some extent, similar to all other state secondary schools not only in the Educational Zone 2, but to all the state secondary schools in all the four zones of Mauritius. All the characteristics of the research participants and the research context have been clearly described in detail in paragraph 4.4. The reader has a precise knowledge of the context in which the research is carried out and therefore can determine its transferability - whether the lessons and conclusions learnt in this context may be useful to other state secondary schools. It should be noted, however, caution is necessary when an attempt is made for transferability. This is one of the limitations of this study, as stated in paragraph 6.8.

Moreover, the researcher provided thick descriptions of the learner discipline and the role of secondary school principals therein. Thick descriptions are the detailed descriptions of the context and the actions situated within that context that makes it possible for the reader to judge about the extent to which the participants, schools, resources, culture, policies and other characteristics of the research sites are similar to the reader's own site (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 173). The interpretations of the themes in the following chapter are backed up by the thick descriptions and the direct quotes from the collected data in order to support the reported findings. By providing these thick descriptions, the researcher also allowed the study to 'ring true', that is to achieve verisimilitude; enabling the reader to have insights, deep empathy and sympathy in order to understand fully the subjective world of the participants (Loh 2013: 10). As such, thick descriptions help the study meets the criteria of instrumental utility, whereby the reader comprehends, anticipates and maps the future about the phenomenon under study (Loh 2013: 10). Therefore, by ensuring credibility, thick descriptions ensure transferability as well.

4.7.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to whether one can track the processes and procedures applied for data collection and interpretation (Lodico *et al.* 2010: 172). The researcher uses overlapping methods, namely focus group and individual interviews and observation to

triangulate the findings. Triangulation is explained in paragraph 4.7.1. These are different methods of data collection that makes the findings of the study more reliable.

In this study the researcher has also based the data analysis process on literature, as explained in Paragraph 4.6. If the study on learner discipline and the role of the secondary school principals therein is conducted again using the same step-by-step data analysis process, it is likely that the similar themes may emerge, though the results and conclusions of this study have, to some extent, been influenced by the researcher's nine year teaching experience in state secondary schools in the educational zone.

The dependability of this research is also ensured by the fact that the researcher has described in detail the research design and its implementation and the operational detail of data collection from learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals using interviews and observation. It is an audit trail whereby the researcher has elaborated each process involved in conducting the research instruments (in Paragraph 4.5) and in formulating the final themes (in Paragraph 4.6) on learner discipline. Such an audit allows any other person or future researcher to repeat the research, though he/she may not necessarily obtain the same results. The detailed description of the process of the formulation of the topic and the research questions, the preliminary work towards having access to the research sites and the selection of participants (in Paragraph 4.4) all help to improve the dependability of this study.

Moreover, the researcher used extensively an audio-tape as recording device to collect data which were transcribed for analysis. The audio-tape supported dependability as the collected data are stored.

4.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Trochim & Donnelly 2007: 149). Shenton (2004: 72) asserts that 'measures must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the findings of the

research are the results of the ideas and experiences of the participants, rather than the preferences and characteristics of the researcher'. To achieve confirmability, the researcher of this study ensured that the analysis and coding of the data obtained in the selected state secondary schools were based on the data. Moreover, the interpretation of the data and the generated themes were obtained and based on the transcribed data from the interviews and observation field notes. All the findings, inferences and conclusions reported from the study were drawn from the data collection and the theories discussed in the literature study on learner discipline and the role of the principals in maintaining positive discipline in secondary schools, examined in detail in chapters two and three. As such, he prevented himself from 'being native' (Kvale 2007: 29).

Member checking, the search for outliers or negative (deviant) cases, the audit trail, reflexivity and triangulation are all confirmability strategies that the researcher used to make his study reflect more objectivity. These strategies have been discussed in the above other three criteria for trustworthiness and transferability.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics are the standards of conduct of a given profession or group (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 54). Ethics is a central consideration for all education researchers. If the researcher conducts his/her study without care and moral and ethical consideration, he/she can potentially affect the participants (Burton & Bartlett 2009: 29). According to Love (2012: 135-136), the researcher may affect the normal operation of a school in three significant ways: affecting the behaviour of educators, parents, learners, the superintendent and the principal; detracting from the time educators and learners spend in, or preparing for, classroom activities; and becoming a logistic problem or a hindrance on the school's finite resources. In addition, the researcher takes much of the secondary school principal of the selected schools by way of negotiating access and giving his consent to using his/her school as a research site. So, the researcher must develop an ethical code to ensure protecting all those concerned directly or indirectly by his presence and research.

Prior to gaining access to the two research sites for the observation and to negotiate for pre-selection of participants in the four state secondary schools, including the two schools for observation, written permission was sought from the Directorate of the Educational Zone 2 of the Mauritian Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. The title of the research, the aims, the data collection methods, the data collection period for the research, the categories of the participants and the use of the collected data are provided in the permission letter to the Directorate (Appendix A). All the state secondary schools in the Educational Zone 2 operate under the authority and administration of the Directorate of the zone. Therefore, with the approval of the Directorate for the conduct of the study, the principal gave his/her consent for it as well. However, this does not imply that the educators, learners, superintendents and parents have given their consent.

A letter of information was also sent to the Director-General of the Open University of Mauritius, the current employer to inform him that the researcher was conducting a research inquiry and collecting data in selected secondary schools because the researcher took official leave from the university to carry out the various interviews and the observation during his working hours. The Open University of Mauritius was informed that the collected data and the findings of the research may not be used for any future research carried out by the researcher as its lecturer, unless the participants of the present study gave consent. For that future purpose, the researcher will seek such permission from them well in advance.

Participants were contacted personally or telephonically to participate in the study and their consent was sought. This facilitated rapport and trust with the participants, and hence created good opportunities for the research work (Love 2012: 138). They were orally briefed about the topic, the aims of the research, research methods and procedures, the current and future use of the collected data, the estimated length of time of the research, the interviews and the observations as well as the possible risks and benefits to the participants. Upon their verbal agreement, they were issued an informed consent form (Appendix B). This is in line with one of the Belmont principles, namely respect for

persons (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 56; Burton & Bartlett 2009: 31). An informed consent form covers three matters: making information available, understanding of that information by the participants, and the latter subsequently participate in a non-coerced manner (Farrimond 2013: 109; Silverman 2013: 153). In the written consent, the participants were informed that they may voluntarily participate, and that they may refuse or withdraw without penalty whenever and for whatever reason they wish. The participant accepted and signed the form only after having understood the content and implications of his/her participation. Moreover, the researcher did a briefing and a debriefing before and after the interviews; if additional information is required or a query arose from a participant, the researcher handled it to avoid deception of the participants (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 60; Kvale 2007: 27).

The researcher also ensured the participants of the anonymity and the confidentiality of their participation in the investigation. Confidentiality means that information shared with the researcher will not be disclosed in a way that publicly identifies a participant or source (Ogden 2008: 111). King and Horrocks (2010: 117) define anonymity as the act of concealing the identity of the participants of the research. In the findings of this study, the researcher does not mention the names, age, gender, level of education, community or the state school of the participants. He makes sure that the reader obtains no identifiable information about any participant in any part of the findings of the research. Moreover, he assured the participants that he would report their experiences, feelings and non-verbal communication verbatim in the findings, but guaranteed protection of their privacy. Since there is nothing that prevents focus group participants from talking about their participation and giving their opinions about what others in the focus group have said about learner discipline and the role of the secondary school principal therein, the researcher made each of them sign a statement of confidentiality (Appendix E). This ensures internal confidentiality (Berg & Lune 2012: 189) and the participants were then free to disclose information about their experiences during interviews (Matthews & Ross 2010: 243).

While promising confidentiality, the researcher also stated to the participants that he had a duty of care not to disclose any criminal or illegal activity raised during the interview to a third party. As discussed in the literature study, a lack of learner behaviour may be the result of criminal activities by parents or by the learners in the community. Moreover, he stated that the collected data were used only for the purpose of the study and that they had nothing to do with educator or principal's appraisal or evaluation in their profession; that the transcripts and the audiotapes would be stored in a secured place in the custody of the researcher, not for use by the Open University of Mauritius or the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research; that they would be stored for five years, after which they would be destroyed; and that the data gathered from them may be used by the researcher for a future study within a period of five years. He also stated that the research findings may be reported in conferences at the university level among academics in Mauritius or abroad.

The researcher also guaranteed the participants that they could have access to the findings of the research at any time through mail or a hard copy of them. In the briefing session, before the interview, the researcher provided the selected participants with his mail address and phone number. He also gave them the control of the recorder so that unexpected events or feelings from the participants could be controlled by the participants themselves; such as if they are upset or do not wish to have their personal experiences recorded. At the initial stage of negotiation while buying-in for selecting participants, the latter were informed that the interview would be audiotaped so that they might decide consciously and freely about their involvement and not feel the researcher had imposed the audio device after they had given their consent for their participation.

The researcher also took into account the diversity of the schools in Mauritius. The focus groups involved participants from all the communities in the selected schools so as to avoid racial sensitivities and to give voice to the diversity of the nation as well as to reflect a feeling of inclusion from the participants, as learner discipline is a school problem that is manifested by all learners of all communities. This was in line with another ethical principle called justice. Justice implies that all individuals or groups are treated in a fair manner (Abbott & McKinney 2013: 59). Also, to avoid language barriers

in a multicultural country like Mauritius, the interviews were conducted in the mother-tongue, Creole, which is understood and spoken by every Mauritian, irrespective of his/her community, religion, culture or ancestral language. According to Hartas (2010: 119), where English is an additional language for the participant, communication in the most appropriate language must be considered.

The researcher also does all that is possible in order not to harm the participants in the study, though, according to Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard (2013: 52), qualitative interviews do not directly produce physical harm to the participants. This is the principle called the beneficence, which addresses *primum non nocere,* that is first, do not harm (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 47). The researcher informs the participants they are not subject to any physical risk. There is no risk for emotional disturbance, and physical consequences. In this study the only expected risk was that the routine of the learners, educators, the superintendent and principal in their normal day-to-day business could be disturbed. However, the researcher assured them that the focus group interviews and the individual interviews would be conducted in the lunch time or on a Saturday in their school or any other school which was more convenient. This prevented any deflection from tasks. In addition, he avoided sensitive and intrusive questions to the participants, especially learners, who are the most vulnerable.

On account of the vulnerability of the learners as participants, they received special consideration in practices and principles for protecting human subjects (Marshall & Rossman 2011: 137). The researcher of this study considered the age of the participants. He was conscious of the needs, developmental issues, preferred mode of communication and flexibility which characterise adolescents. He used probes in the interview to redirect the dialogical process. He was ready to accept the fact that learners of the lower forms would not be too focused on the topic because they are self-conscious, and the learners in general may use a language of their own, and therefore, clarity might have to be sought. The researcher struck a balance between being an adult and a friend. He interacted with the learners on the basis of trust, without demonstrating any overt authority. This implied that he treated the learner participants of the study as adults, and listened attentively to

what they had to say about their experiences of learner discipline and the role of the principal therein (Hartas 2010: 146). In so doing, he showed his respect for them as knowledgeable people and struck a balance of power also between the learners and him. The ethical issues of voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and privacy also applied to the learner. Since they cannot make decisions for themselves, the researcher sought parental informed consent (Appendix C), and he explained the purpose, research design and processes, the use of the data, among others to the learners as well before having their assent (Appendix D).

4.9 SUMMARY

Chapter four presented a detailed description of the qualitative research design that the researcher used to investigate the research problem of learner discipline and the role of the principal therein. It focused on the theoretical purpose, the justification of the methodology used, the data collection strategies, the trustworthiness and transferability of this qualitative research and the ethical issues to which the researcher adhered to in order to ensure the soundness of the study.

In chapter five, the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the collected data from the focus group and individual interviews as well as the observations are discussed as research findings.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research design was explained, using the qualitative research paradigm, in chapter four. The current research is qualitative and its aim is to examine the role of the principals in maintaining effective discipline in selected state secondary schools in Mauritius.

In chapter five, the data analysis and interpretations of the qualitative research are discussed. The researcher presents the results obtained from a thorough analysis of the information gathered from the non-participant observation, the focus group interviews and individual interviews. The information gathered were processed using the Lodico method (paragraph 4.6.2). The results were analysed in relation to the research objectives and the research questions with a consideration of the recent relevant literature.

The three sub-research questions that the researcher used to gather the relevant information are:

(a) Which factors determine the lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius?
(b) Which barriers prevent principals from maintaining effective learner discipline in state secondary schools?
(c) Which strategies may be developed and employed by state secondary school principals to maintain effective learner discipline among learners in Mauritius?

The researcher used the same three questions to all the selected participants, namely principals (individual interview), school superintendents (individual interview), educators (focus group interview), learners (focus group interview), and parents (focus group interview). The observation in the two schools (A and C) was also carried on by the researcher using these research questions. For the purpose of data presentation and with a

consideration of confidentiality and fluent discussion and analysis of the research findings, the four state secondary schools were identified as School A, School B, School C and School D. Principals from each of the schools were identified as the principal of School A, the principal of School B, etc. The superintendent of Schools A and D were interviewed. The learners, educators and parents were identified as Learner 1, Learner 2 or Educator 1, Educator 2, or Parent 1, Parent 2 of School A, etc. There were six participants in each focus group of learners, educators and parents.

5. 2. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results obtained from an analysis of the information gathered from the interviews and observations were organised into categories and sub-categories. The three main categories with related sub-categories emerged from the information and served as main headings and related sub-headings for a discussion of the research findings. This is presented in the following three diagrams:

The causes of a lack of discipline among state secondary school learners in Mauritius are presented in the first diagram below:
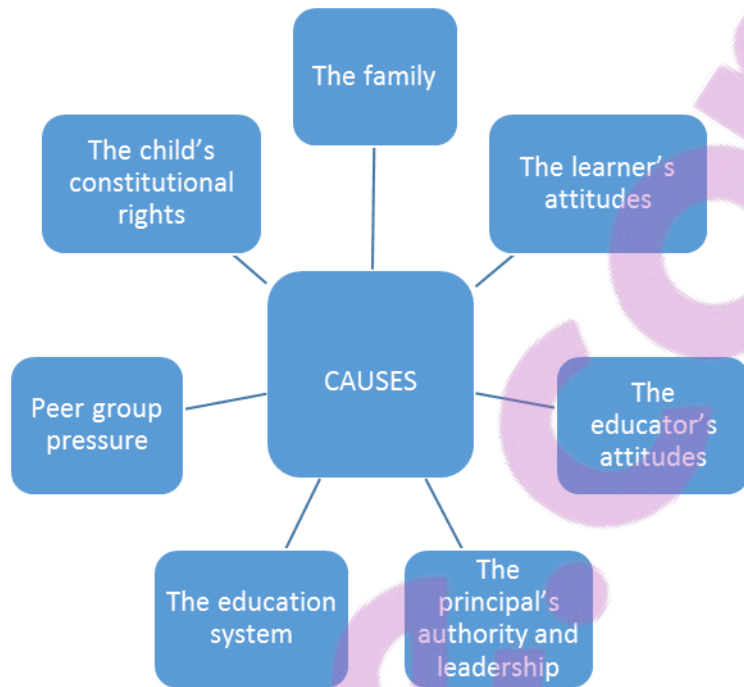
Figure 5.1: Causes of a lack of learner discipline

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The barriers which prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline among state secondary school learners in Mauritius are presented in the second diagram below:

Figure 5.2: Current barriers to the implementation of disciplinary strategies by principals

The current disciplinary strategies adopted by principals in state secondary schools in Mauritius are presented in the third diagram below:
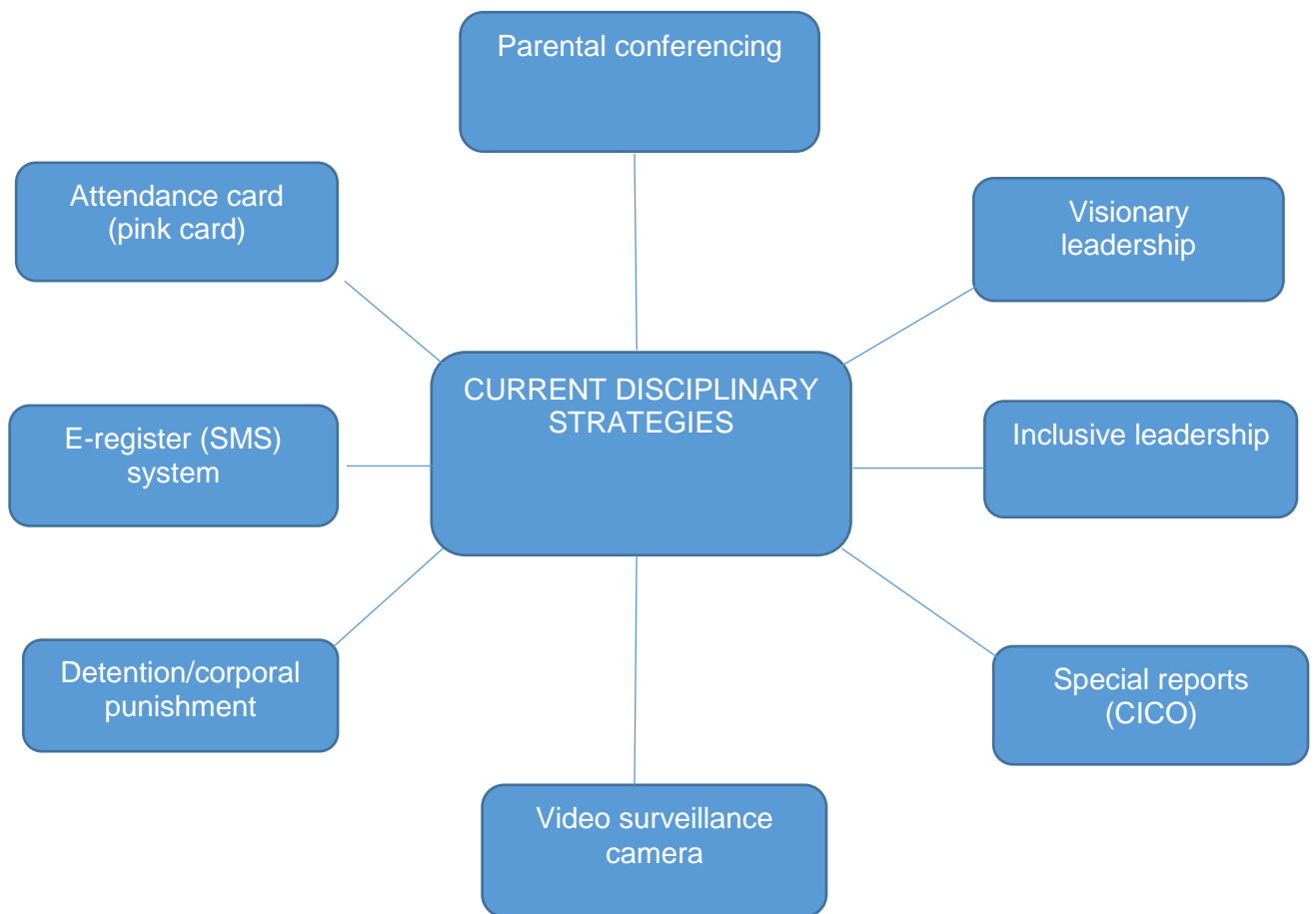
Figure 5.3: The current disciplinary strategies by principals in state secondary schools

Each of these themes is discussed in the ensuing paragraphs. In the discussions and interpretations, applicable verbatim quotations that are extracted from the raw data are used to illustrate and analyse important findings of this study. Since it is a qualitative research, verbatim quotations from the various participants are primarily used to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

As the researcher-as-instrument approach is adopted in this study, the researcher attempts to make sense of the actions, intentions and understandings of the various types of participants in this study. He also attempts to provide detailed narratives or thick descriptions that include their voices (paragraphs 4.3.2, 4.6.2.4 and 4.7). The qualitative report and analysis in this chapter build the case for the interpretation of the findings by including sufficient detail and actual information gathered to take the reader inside the social and natural setting involved in this study. In addition, the researcher has included references to further support the emerging themes and categories that emanated from the empirical research, especially through references to the literature study in chapters two and three.

5.2.1 Causes of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools

To gather information on the causes of a lack of learner discipline, the researcher used focus group interviews with learners, educators and parents, and individual interviews with principals and school superintendents. The researcher also used non-participant observation in two selected schools. The following paragraphs discuss the main findings of this study about the causes of a lack of learner discipline.

5.2.1.1 The family

The family is the most important component, before the school and the community, which shapes the adolescent's behaviour at school (Noum 2015: 31). According to Lewis (2009: 91), undesirable behaviour may occur as a normal pattern of life in any family; however, family situations may arise that may influence children's behaviour negatively. The findings of this research are consistent with Trembley *et al.* (2009: 118) and Oloyede

and Adesina (2013: 141) who assert that learners' lack of discipline at school have their roots in their homes (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

The researcher identified many manifestations of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius because of family problems. The principal of School D summarised well the influence of the family on the child's behaviour at school: "*Whatever he sees and lives in the family environment is translated to the school through his behaviour.*" Learner 5 from the focus group in School D mentioned: "*If the learner has family problems, when he is in the class, he will definitely be absent-minded or maybe he will be expressing his insecurity or vulnerability through acts of aggression on other children at school or against the educator.*" Educator 2 from the focus group in the same school concurred: "*They express their frustrations in various ways: they scratch the educators' car; break window panes and the ceiling fans; they damage school properties; scribble on tables and even the new whiteboards*". Through frustrations with their family situations, learners become aggressive and manifest a lack of discipline. There are many factors that may create a negative family climate, and which encourage learners to manifest such undesirable behaviour at schools. In this regard, four themes that are related to the impact of the family on the learner's behaviour are identified, namely the parenting style, working parents (particularly the mother), ineffective parental discipline and the dysfunctional family.

(a) The parenting style

One of the three dimensions of parenting put forward by Barber *et al.* (2005: 139), namely parenting style (Paragraph 2.5.2.1) was revealed in this research. In fact, the dimension of behavioural control influences the child's behaviour depending on whether the parents are authoritative, democratic or permissive in disciplining the child. When parents are too authoritative, learners manifest a lack of discipline at schools. The principal of School D pointed out: "*There are cases where family is too strict. This is of course the other side of the coin. You know that schooling is very important. It is so drilling as much as the mind of the kids that they crack down.*" In the same vein, the

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school superintendent of School A added: "*Also, surprisingly, learners who misbehave have a father who is a policeman. Out of ten learners who misbehave, eight of their fathers are a policeman. Why is that so? Even a learner whom we suspect is taking synthetic drugs is the son of a Superintendent of Police. You were talking about it to be a national school with learner discipline problem.*" This is consistent with Umo (2013: 88-89) who found that an autocratic parenting style produces significant indiscipline in children.

However, parents are conscious of the negative effect of their parenting style on their children. They accept that the society has changed and that children may challenge their behaviour. Parent 3 of School C argued: "*However, nowadays, the adult should not raise their voice with the learner who misbehaves; we should speak softly to them, else they will revolt against the adult or the authority*." By being authoritarian, parents ignore the parental support dimension of parenting and then their children show undesirable social behaviour. Parent 1 of School B succinctly commented: "*The parents do not give enough affection and love to their children. If the parents do so, the children will listen to their parents and will think about what his parents have talked and taught him about respectful behaviour. They have a feeling for their parents and for the sake of their caring and affectionate parents they will not manifest a lack of discipline*." This is consistent with the other two dimensions of parenting, namely the psychological control and parental support dimensions (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). The finding of this research is congruent with Patterson's social interactional stage model of discipline which stipulates that when parents use parenting practices that are harsh instead of firm but warm responses to socially undesirable behaviour of their children, the latter manifest a lack of discipline at schools (Paragraph 2.6.3.1).

In this study, parents, educators, superintendents and principals mentioned with conviction that parents are too permissive as they want to overprotect their children and therefore learners manifest a lack of discipline at school. When a learner uses his mobile phone in the class, the superintendent withholds it and informs the parents to come to take it from school. However, the school superintendent of School D complained of the

parents' attitudes: "*The problem is that I give back the mobile phone to the learner and the parent keeps on giving it to the learner to come to school. There is a laissez-faire attitude of the parent towards the learner.*" This is also the view of Educator 3 of School A who acknowledged the frustration of the superintendent and added: "*However, when the parents come, they show their fury as they do not agree that the educator has confiscated their child's mobile: they point out that they gave the mobile to their child so that she may use it for the afternoon tuition.*" This is because of the "necessary evil" of the Mauritian system of education, namely private tuition after the daily school hours (paragraph 2.4.2). Parent 1 of School C confirmed: "*Now, why do we give a mobile phone to our child when she goes to school? It is for her own security, especially when she has to go to the after-school tuition session far from home.*"

The use of mobile phones at schools is becoming a major cause of indiscipline as well as an emerging barrier for the principal to maintain effective learner discipline because of parents' overprotection and because of the phenomenon of private tuition among secondary school learners in Mauritius. The participants enumerated many manifestations of learner's lack of discipline due to the use of mobile phones on the school premise. One educator narrated: "*When learners are not interested to learn on a particular day or for the remaining periods for the day or they want to go home, they just call their parents using their mobile asking them to come to pick them up at school as they are ill. This is not the procedure.*" (Educator 5 of School A). Another said: "*A learner, who was a nice boy in lower forms, now brings pornographic films on his mob to show to classmates.*" (Educator 2 of School D); and added "*… learners from low-income families who do not have much money or do not have a mobile phone may be frustrated on seeing their rich classmates with the latest sophisticated mobile phones and rob them of their money or mobile phone or even take their kin's mobile phone to the school and misuse it.*" Thus, the socio-economic situation of the family which may have a permissive impact on the parenting style of the parents may also negatively influence the learners' behaviour at school. This finding is supported by Magwa and Ngara (2014: 84) who postulate that poor learners may steal from learners from families of high socio-economic status in order to meet their daily needs or steal out of frustration to meet basic needs or wants

(Paragraph 2.5.2.1). This is consistent with Mabitla (2006: 19) who argues that parents who adopt a permissive attitude in the family and towards their children inculcate anti-social behaviour in them who do not abide by the laws nor do they demonstrate positive behaviour (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

(b) Working parents

In Mauritius, most of the parents work, and in many families, there is a working mother. This implies that parents do not have much time left for parenting, and therefore there is a lack of parental guidance and responsibility, parental involvement and engagement in the learners' education. This exercises a negative impact on the learner behaviour at schools.

The findings from the interviews showed that there is a lack of parental guidance because parents are too busy working, sometimes doing overtime, in an attempt to cater for all the basic family needs and the children's material needs in terms of clothing, transport for private tuition and study materials. Parent 4 from School A lamented: "*I think parents do not have much time to take care of their child. They leave home early in the morning to go to work when the child is still sleeping and they come back home late in the afternoon: the child is free in between to do whatever, go wherever and behave however she wishes. The parents are not here to oversee their behaviour. They are left on their own, under no parental supervision. So, children these days have more freedom which they abuse of by manifesting a lack of discipline at schools.*" This finding is supported by Hung (2007: 116) who maintains that a lack of parental supervision may encourage learners to manifest a lack of discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Asiyai (2012: 46) agrees that some parents are so busy than they do not have the time to monitor their children, who thus go out at will and return home when they like. Moreover, they have much unsupervised time after school and this encourages truancy (Van Breda 2014: 1058). This state of affairs is a barrier to the principal's authority to maintain learner discipline in schools as the working parents do not call to his/her office when their children have manifested a lack of discipline. Therefore, this encourages the learners to misbehave without restrain. Parent 3 of School C was of the view: "*Their children may feel free to manifest a lack of discipline*

as they know that even when the school calls them to school they won't be able to come; parents won't know about their behaviour." Learner 1 of School B gave the same picture of the situation by agreeing to the comment of the parents: "*Often the school superintendent calls the parents of the learner who manifests a lack of discipline, they do not report to school. The parents never come to school to take cognizance of the learner's behaviour. So, such learners take advantage of the parents' indifference to their behaviour to freely and fearlessly misbehave at school.*" Learners who are left on their own manifest a lack of discipline at home due to the absence of parental guidance. As a result, they do not hesitate to misbehave at schools, despite the preventative and interventionist disciplinary strategies of the principal and educators. This finding concurs with Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 107) who reason that if the school does not get the support of parents in learner discipline, it becomes difficult for it to enforce the school discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

Parents have a significant influence on their children's behaviour if they are involved in their education (Victoire 2015: 23). However, working parents do not assume their responsibilities for their children's education at home and at school. This is supported by Watson and Bogotch (2015: 260) who posit that mothers who work have less time to support their children's academic efforts compared mothers who are at home (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Parent 2 of School B shared the view in this study: "*There is a lack of conversation between the parents and the child at home. Parents do not find the time to ask the child what work she has to do or what happened at school during the day.*" As a result, the learners are not interested in their studies. They do not feel accountable to their parents and they are likely to manifesting poor behaviour. Educator 1 of School A reasoned: "*Prevocational learners are not interested in education since at home their parents never told them the importance of education.*" The reasoning behind this learner attitude is better highlighted by the school superintendent of School D who pointed out: "*My observation is that those learners who are seriously learning and performing well academically they never manifest a lack of discipline. Only the below averaged learners who do so.*" The principal of School C, in the same vein, declared: "*Of course. Parents do not check the classwork and homework for the work done by their child when they are*

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back home nor do they check the child's journal for any report on his/her behaviour in class. They do not ask the child any question when they notice remark in red in his/her exercise books or journal. They do not come to school to inquire. Learners leave home in short skirt for school and come back late at home after school hours, they do not say anything to her. They give much money to her; they do not even know the whereabouts of their child nor who are her friends." All the various participants stressed the view that parents are not playing their principal role of being engaged in and having much concern for the education of their children, and this is a cause of their children's lack of discipline. Similarly, Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 107) found that parents abrogate their responsibilities as primary educators of their children. This finding supports the view of De Atouguia (2014: 95) who asserts that parents should take their responsibility in disciplining their children as it is becoming more difficult for the school to discipline learners (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

(c) Ineffective parental discipline

The findings showed that when parents are too busy elsewhere to participate actively in the learning and academic activities of their children because of their job and other commitments, they cannot discipline them because the latter do not recognise and accept their authority or they shift their parental responsibility in terms of their children's behaviour control to the school. This finding is consistent to that of Abidoye and Onweazu (2010: 12) who concluded that most parents are no longer concerned with the moral and academic performances of their children due to a lack of time (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Budhal (2006: 29) posits that children who perceive their parents as cold and distant are more likely to manifest a lack of discipline, especially aggression, than learners who perceive their relationships with their parents as warm and protective.

When parents are not serious about their role of disciplining their children, they lose their children who look for affection, attention and love elsewhere. Educator 2 of School A stated in this regard: "*When parents do not discipline their child; they are less severe and they think that when they give more freedom to their child, the latter will be able to*

express herself, and develop in a better way. But, rather, this is not the case; this child will do the wrong things and will make friends with unwanted people." The principal of School C is of the view that parents ignore the fact that they are spoiling their child. He commented accordingly: *"Today's parents were very much disciplined in a rigid way by their parents that now as parents they want to be more flexible, but they do not realise that indiscipline is a long process; allowing their children to wake up a bit late on one day at home when the latter say they want to stay a bit more in bed, and allowing them to do so on some other days, or even allowing them to stay at home on one, two or three occasions just because the children do not want to go to school, then the children will find other pretext not to go to school such as absenting on a Monday following a Hindu wedding or when there is religious festival."* This is consistent with Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 116) who state that some parents do so out of ignorance and that such parental discipline is ineffective.

However, the findings also revealed that parents compensate for a lack of love towards their children by giving them money. Educator 6 of School C lamented about this unreasonable attitude of parents by pointing out: "…*but they forget that their child rather needs their love, affection, attention, care and company, not money or valuable things.*" This negatively affects the learners who manifest severe misconduct, as clearly mentioned by the superintendent of School D: "*The principal reported a severe case of misbehaviour to the Child Development Unit and the learner left the school. We have heard that he was arrested for physical assault on a person in public. This learner got everything he asked from his parents; all the facilities. In Form four, he was already involved in drug and assault. He was social criminal already.*" The lack of parental discipline highlights the eventual negative effects on the learner behaviour at schools.

When parents use ineffective discipline, educators and principals consider that parents are only shifting their responsibility to them. Accordingly, to Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 102), parents leave the design and enforcement of disciplinary measures for learners to the principals and educators at school. Educator 2 of School B shared the same view: "*The parents keep the whole responsibility of teaching and guidance on the shoulder of*

the educators and the principal." Another educator from School C lamented the lack of parental discipline: "*Sometimes parents support the child instead of punishment. For example there was a girl who had bunked school; when the parent came to school, the latter instead of punishing her, he insulted the educator as well as the principal, stating that it is their duty to check whether the student has come to school or not.*" However, educator 4 of School D adamantly disagreed with the latter, stressing the necessity of parental discipline: "*If the parents are reaching home late in the afternoon or at night, the father is drunk, does not know if the child has done his homework or not, if the child has reached home safely and earlier, has not been spending time with classmates or a boyfriend or girlfriend after school hours, this indicates a failure or a lack of responsibility on the part of the parents. At the school, the educators and the principal's role is to guide the learners on the academic aspects; they will teach him how to read and write. A principal or an educator cannot tell a learner: "Girl, you must wear your blouse inside your skirt or button your blouse well". A parent should not expect this from other persons, be it the educator or the principal. The parents cannot shift their responsibility to discipline their children onto other people*".

The research results make it clear that parents should assume their responsibility to discipline their children, not to leave it to the principal and the educators who have to supervise and discipline many learners at a time, in addition to their teaching task. Otherwise, the learners manifest a lack of discipline.

The lack of parental responsibility acts as a barrier to the principal's authority to maintain learner discipline at schools. The principal of School A observed: "*At school, we may discipline learners; a learner arrives late, we may call her, talk to her about the importance of discipline, give a special report, scold her, but then this discipline should be applied at home also. The learner spends only six hours daily at school where we discipline them, but if there is no such discipline outside, at home, then how do you expect her to follow the rules and regulations at school? The indiscipline at home is more reinforced than the discipline at school.*" This finding reveals that the absence of parents' contribution to their children's discipline and the lack of consistency between the school

discipline and the home discipline is a cause of learners' lack of discipline at school. This is supported by Joubert and Bray (2007: 82) who stipulate that the parents or legal guardians have the ultimate responsibility for the child's or adolescent's behaviour at home and at school (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

(d) The dysfunctional family

This research revealed that parents of a dysfunctional family are bad models for their children as the latter often experience and witness their disputes, experience family breakup and are exposed to pornographic films and alcohol abuse by their parents at home.

Learners, parents, educators, superintendents and principals in the study have identified the dysfunctional family as the main cause of learners' lack of discipline at school. They argue that children of such a family lack character education and a proper up-bringing by their parents. Their parents ill-treat them by using foul language, are drunkards and are addicted smokers; often mothers are subject to spousal abuse. As a result, the children are emotionally and psychologically affected and, therefore, develop feelings of rejection by their parents and the feeling of insubordination over their educators. They imitate the violence they experience and witness at home against their classmates by being aggressive in an attempt to show their power to others.

This family situation and its impact on the children's behaviour at school are illustrated by the statement of Educator 6 of School A: *"Parents watch films with indecency or violence together with their children. The father may be drinking wines or beers with his friends at home and the children witness this scene where they drunk, talk nonsense and are delirious. The father may sometimes allow the little boy to join the group. Of course, as he grows up, the child will imitate his model – the father. When he/she comes to school, he/she does the same things that he/she sees often at home: drinking with friends, talking and swearing words. Such behaviour may be for him/her acceptable but not socially accepted in the school context. But he/she will never understand this."* Such a

family encourages the child to manifest a lack of discipline and even to challenge the principal's authority as there is a mismatch between the home discipline and the values and disciplinary measures and skills taught by the school. Learner 5 of School D claimed arrogantly: "*When a learner is reported to the principal for having brought them to school, they say their dads know they drink. Such learners see their parents drink at home, so they think and believe they can do same at school. They say to the principal that they have the right to drink and the school cannot prevent them from doing so because their parents know they drink at school.*" This is consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) (Paragraph 2.5.2.5), which emphasises that children learn through observation, or copying and watching the behaviour of adults as their role models (Adigeb & Mbua 2015: 36). Children from dysfunctional families often develop anti-social and criminal behaviour (Magwa & Ngara 2014: 84). This is likely to reduce the authority of the principal and the educators (Mtsweni 2008: 89), as the latter do not get the close collaboration of the parents. Without the parents, the principal alone cannot do much about learner discipline. The finding of this research is consistent with McNamara (2010: 10) who postulates that there is likely to be an alarming situation of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools where there is a lack of parents' active participation and support (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Du Preez and Roux (2010: 19) also observed that when there is a discrepancy between values taught at school and those that are nurtured at home, disciplinary problems arise, as revealed by interviews with learners and educators in the current study (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

This study revealed that the family is the most important socialising agent for children. Yet, the learners' lack of discipline is the result of ineffective family socialisation (Mugabe & Maposa 2013: 1; Leaman 2005: 3; Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon 2014: 263) (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Inappropriate parenting styles, ineffective parental discipline, working parents and parents who are bad role models in a dysfunctional family impact negatively on the children's behaviour at school in the form of a lack of learner discipline. These are the main factors originating from the family that cause a lack of learner discipline in the Mauritian context.

5.2.1.2 The learner's attitudes

This research found the learner is a cause of his/her own lack of discipline at schools. This is confirmed by Bezuidenhout (2013: 81) who mentions the learner as one of the school factors that constitutes the criminological risk factors (i.e., variables that predict a high probability of offending) (Walsh 2012: 150). From the field notes of the non-participant observer-researcher, there is no manifestation as such that makes of the learner a criminal, although detention, suspension and expulsion are considered as criminalising behavioural strategies forming part of the school-to-prison pipeline. From his observation, learners mainly manifest their lack of behaviour in the form of bunking classes because they are not interested in their learning and the school activities. This is consistent with the findings of Modiba (2015: 299) that secondary school learners in African countries are indifferent to schooling and to what it represents (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). From this study, learners bunk classes for many reasons, namely they lack knowledge about the importance of education and schooling, they are more interested in dating the opposite sex, they are not interested in a particular subject, they have not done their homework, and they do not like the face or the personality of the educator. This is supported by Mutemeri and Gudyanga (2008: 7) who mention Hakkar (2004) who posits that "learners attempt to avoid particular lessons in a subject they dislike or one taught by an educator they hate." They refer to such learners as "the unwilling learners" as they have lost interest in their learning. This is congruent with the report of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009: 3) which revealed that a lack of school connectedness leads to the manifestation of a lack of learner discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). The school superintendents, the principals, the educators, the parents and the learners acknowledge that the learners choose to misbehave for the reasons mentioned. The superintendent of School A justified the lack of discipline of learners as follows: "*I have also seen situations where the learner does not like to study or she may be tempted to misbehave at school, she may be attracted by a boy.*" Parent 4 of school B stated the following about learners' disinterest in the class: "*The child calls her parents on her mobile phone to come to take her home. This may be a pretext for the child to go home as she may not be interested in the subject or she had not done her homework.*" Learner 3 of

School D contributes by unhesitatingly elaborating: "*Many learners bunk classes. They do not like to do subject, so they go to play cards on the playground. The learners bunk classes separately to meet at a preplanned point outside the classroom.*" Learners complain that they are not interested because the teaching methods of the educator are not interesting. On this issue, Learner 4 of School C shared the following sentiment: "*Some teachers also do not teach effectively. Their methods of teaching are not motivating; learners lose their interest in learning. The educator just asks us to read, but we get no explanation from him*." This is consistent with Khalil and Saar (2009: 144) who argue that learners' behaviour is related to the educators' instructional strategies, and that they misbehave when teachers lack innovative teaching techniques (Manguvo *et al.* 2011: 157-159). This finding is related to the Glasser's control theory of discipline which propounds that when the educator's teaching style and the curriculum is boring and uninteresting, learners manifest a lack of discipline (Paragraph 2.6.2). This view is also supported by Khumalo (2011: 8) who mentions that when learners disregard schooling, educators are indirectly responsible. The researcher also observed that some learners unhesitatingly and easily leave the classroom to loiter around the school showing no interest in learning. Learners make the most of the disciplinary inactions by the class educator and the principal who delegates his instructional leadership role to the school caretakers; the latter have no idea about the school time-table and instruction. This attitude of learners is underscored by Thody (2011: 25) who posits that learners do not take the school as a place of learning but of whiling away time. These findings were examined in the literature study (Paragraph 2.5.2.2) where it was discussed how the school generates and shapes the learners' behaviour, attitudes and beliefs.

Moreover, learners manifest a lack of discipline in schools because from the very first day of their admission in the schools the older learners who are their role models do not set the right examples in terms of the manifestations of appropriate and desirable behaviour. Learners 3 and 6 of School A concurrently share the statement: "*Those in the upper Forms are also responsible for a lack of discipline among learners of the lower Forms. The latter try to imitate the former. The older girls often skip classes and play truants........jump often the school fence, and come back to school just before the last*

school bell to walk out the school gate to take the school gate as if they were in the school the whole day. Some are even present on the school attendance as they were in the Form master's class in the morning, yet absent from the school during the day. So, the learners in the lower Forms do the same as the older as the latter receive no sanctions from the school authority; they follow them." Educators share the same view that more senior learners influence the newly admitted children in the school. Educator 5 of School D supported the interviewed learners of school A by affirming: "*A newly admitted learner in January skips classes in February. This means that he is influenced by the elders who do so with no fear. A learner, who was a nice boy in lower Forms, now brings pornographic films on his mob to show to classmates. They smoke cigarettes and even synthetic drugs at school. This is because the little ones can see the elders doing so, or they may be friends with the elders.*" An incident of learner indiscipline in the field notes demonstrates this factor: when the principal of the School C noticed some learners on the school premises without the proper uniform, he reminded them of the school rules stipulated in their journal or handbook, and that they would be sent back home as a logical consequence. However, they showed some resistance and argued that some older learners do not wear the proper uniform every day and remain unpunished, so they may do so as well. The older learners therefore incite the others to manifest a lack of discipline. The attitudes of the older learners are imitated by the innocent little ones who are not mature enough to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

From the observer-researcher's field notes, it is found that learners who are in Forms three and four manifest to a greater extent a lack of discipline in the state secondary schools. Learner 2 of School C highlighted this situation to confirm the observation and the literature: "*The learners who are in Form three manifest to a greater extent a lack of discipline. This is because they are witnessing a lot of biological changes, they are growing into adolescents. They are a bit confused about whether they have to behave like a child or like an adult. Therefore, they lack maturity and do things that are not necessarily acceptable in the school context.*" Educator 5 of School B concurred: "*They face what we call the adolescent crisis: they want to draw attention to them, and therefore they do not concentrate in their studies*." Educator 6 of School D elaborated on

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the types of indiscipline and the learners' accompanying feelings: "*May be they do so because of some hormonal factors, they are biologically changing and so they just show their male feeling of growing into a man. They are living a critical age (13-16 years). For instance, when the girls of the nearby college walk in front of the school after school hours, our boys overact, they are overexcited; they make strange sounds like animals (monkeys) when they see the girls. They even do the same when the female educators of the nearby school pass by. They also do strange sounds when they see a male educator of this school who may be too lenient or effeminate*." Nealis (2014) and Kapalka (2009: 6) support this finding by maintaining that pre-adolescents and adolescents have an identity crisis and manifest immature reasoning skills and greater impulsivity, which may motivate them to make poor behaviour choices. Charles (2008: 20-23) reports the same finding by stating that learners are urged to transgress and use inappropriate habits to violate established standards and expectancies (Paragraph 2.5.1.2). However, the finding is not supported by Moye (2015: 85) who asserts that biological developmental changes signal increasing maturity which makes them misbehave by challenging school rules and regulations.

In the state secondary schools of Mauritius, out of this immaturity and curiosity, learners have recourse to drug dealing and sexual activities. This view is supported by parents, principals and learners themselves of the selected state secondary schools. The principal of School D did not hesitate to point out what other principals denied: "*They come up and try to assert themselves and in asserting themselves they will be doing things by talking bad to educators and talking among themselves using foul words, by also trying to be daring in classes about their attitudes and behaviour. But, we do have other cases of severe discipline problems such as bringing "weeds" or gandia to school, worst fabricating synthetic drugs in the school chemistry laboratory, selling and consuming them on the school premises. In some cases we do have boys doing some sexual activity. Without having the consent of parents, they are trying to explore the field. The question of sexuality, we have lots of learners meeting with girls; they sleep with the opposite sex or same sex also. This is not talked much in the state secondary schools. In the system in Mauritius, I don't know if we are deliberately shying away from this problem but*

homosexuality is also an issue. All those things come up and more visibly as from Form three, 15 to 17 years old learners." This illustration of lack of learner discipline due to age is alarming, and it needs to be addressed by all the stakeholders and higher authorities concerned. The finding of this study about immaturity and the manifestation of a lack of learner discipline is consistent with Naidu (2015: 29) who claims that teenagers love the sedative and groggy effects as well as the "feeling good factor" of drugs such as Pregabalin, Prothiaden, Actifed, Piriton, and Nova which are sold over the counter without prescriptions in local pharmacies, and synthetic drugs containing cannabinoids and which are widespread among learners in secondary schools in Mauritius. This is supported by Onderi and Makori (2013: 73) and Gitome, Katola and Nyabwari (2013: 6) who assert that drug abuse is associated with aggressive behaviour, irritability and overexcitement which lead to violence and vandalism at schools.

It is clear from the above discussion that the learners' intrinsic attitudes such as their lack of interest in learning, the attitudes of older children and the biological transformation and emotional changes in themselves may have a negative impact on their behaviour at school. This is mainly the result of their immaturity as they are growing adolescents still looking for their self-identity. This is in accordance with the statement of Oloyede and Adesina (2013: 142) who assert that in any situation and in any environment, the lack of self-judgment, self-correction and proper self-control from within the learner results in the manifestation of a lack of discipline.

5.2.1.3 The educator's attitudes

Educators hold an *in loco parentis* position since they have a duty of care to ensure the safety of learners who are under their supervision (Oosthuizen, Botha, Roos, Rossouw & Smit 2009: 62). Thus, they are responsible to ensure that learners are protected, manifest acceptable and desirable behaviour and avoid discipline-spoiling behaviour in schools. However, they often overlook the effects that their classroom conduct and attitudes may have on the learners' sense of connectedness with the school, learner school attendance and the ways learners view them (Van Breda 2014: 1056). In this research, it is found that

educators are bad models to learners, they have negative relationships with their learners, they lack classroom management skills, they are helpless in their endeavor to discipline learners and they do not feel responsible for learner discipline management.

Educators working in the state secondary schools do not lead by example and therefore they do not model acceptable behaviours to their learners. Many educators use their mobile phones in the class during the lesson, and female educators do their make-up in the classroom before the bell rings for home in the afternoon. The parents and learners are very critical of such behaviour. Parent 2 of School D disapproved this behaviour: "*There are female educators who come to the class and just sit to do her make-up while crossing their legs on the chair instead of teaching the lesson. How will you think that the learners will behave properly in such a class? Some educators even use their mobile phone in the class lesson. They do not set the good examples to the learners.*" The field notes also confirmed this attitude of educators: ten minutes before the end of the last teaching period of the school day, female educators rush to the wash room or toilets to do their make-up. Learner 5 of School A contributed by stating: "*The class educator allows the learners to leave the class. The learners and the educators are influenced by the learners of Form 1 who officially leave the class five minutes earlier for the school bus or the learners say they are bus prefect when they are not and the educators accept blindly their invented reasons. Some educators allows the learners to leave the class earlier so that they themselves may get into the bus before the other learners to secure a seating place in the bus. So, learners take the opportunity to leave the class earlier before the bell rings for the school bus, to avoid standing in the bus.*" It is therefore obvious that educators' irresponsible attitudes and behaviour are likely to encourage learners to challenge their authority, disobey orders and bunk classes in an attempt to make their life difficult in class. This finding revealed that educators are more concerned with themselves than with their responsibility to be a role model of acceptable and desirable behaviour to the learners who take them as adults to be their model. This finding is consistent with that of Khalsa (2007: 52) who asserts that the negative behaviour of educators contributes towards increasing discipline problems in the classroom (Paragraph 2.5.2.2).

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This study also showed that educators also lack the essential classroom management skills to discipline learners in their classroom. They lack the qualities to control and manage the class (Olyede & Adesina 2013: 140; Mutemeri & Gudyanga 2008: 5). Educators in the selected state secondary schools do not focus on their teaching and learning activities, treat learners as inferior, and are too permissive towards learners' manifestation of a lack of discipline. As a result, the learners do not accept their authority and they manifest their unhappiness and disagreement by misbehaving in their class. Educator 4 of School D confessed in this regard: "*It is true that learners' manifestations of misbehaviour depends to a greater extent on the educator's personality. Often when I am too kind to them they abuse of it by misbehaving in my class. I told them not to take my tolerance or leniency as my weakness but the learners they do not understand it as they should and they misbehave.*" The statement of the principal of School C showed the non-compliance of the learners to a disrespectful educator's authority: "*Arrogant educators treat their learners like inferior beings and they talk to them in a non-respected manner. As a result, learners will find ways to manifest a lack of discipline: they will not bring their books in the classroom, will bunk his/her class; will go in the rest room pretexting they are sick; find excuses not to follow his/her class.* The findings are supported by Van Breda (2014: 1062) who claims that when educators ill-treat and marginalise learners, the latter experience rejection, do not feel connected to the school and are less likely to attend classes and the school (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). The underlying principle in achieving positive relationships between the educator and the learner is to treat the latter with respect (Skager 2007: 3). This is consistent with Nelson, Lott and Glenn's positive model of discipline (Paragraphs 2.6.6.1 & Paragraph 3.2.3) which postulates disrespect as a barrier to good relationship between the educator and the learner. Rampa (2014: 22) supports the findings of this study by asserting that educators are ineffective in curbing learners' misbehaviour and ill-discipline mainly because schools and, in particular principals, fail to empower educators through continued professional development and training in disciplinary measures.

Educators have the moral authority to discipline learners (Arum & Ford 2012: 56). However, the state secondary school educators are helpless in their attempt to fulfil their role of instilling effective discipline among learners. This current study revealed that educators feel disempowered and therefore they disengage themselves, directly or indirectly, in the management of learner discipline. The participants, mainly the educators, mention a list of factors that discourage collaboration with the principal. The following list provides them: the principal does not take any actions when cases of misconduct are reported to him/her; there are no school disciplinary policies, except the rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Education and which are written in each learner's journal or handbook without any consistency in implementing the disciplinary measures; the learners keep on challenging the educator's authority due to the fact that their rights are legally protected by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Child Protection Act and the Ombudsperson for Children Act; and the educators' lack of training in effective discipline management strategies and interventions. Learner 3 from School A supported the educators' complaints by indicating: "*The principal is too kind with us; the learners know there will be no sanctions against them if they do that neither the principal nor educators will do something against them when they manifest an undesirable behaviour. They know that the worst measure that the educator may take is that he/she will either write a negative remark in the journal or when sent to the principal's office, the principal will only talk to them that they must not break the school rules and regulations.*" The field notes of the observer-researcher confirmed the inaction of the principal when the educator reports a case of misconduct: On a school outing, the head girl, instead of accompanying the other learners in the school bus, followed the bus in a private van along with her boyfriends and five other classmates, to the destination. The educators witnessed the unforeseen lack of learner discipline and reported the case to the principal. But, the latter took no actions on the ground that there were no unexpected incidents that happened. This discouraged the educators to collaborate in learner discipline. This is consistent with the views of Ali *et al.* (2014: 256) and Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014: 134) who state that educators most prominently feel that they have no more sufficient power to deal with cases of indiscipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.2) because the relevant authorities do not support them and the school administration is incapacitated.

Moreover, Lewis (2009: 26) supports the finding by claiming that educators manifest self-defeating attitudes on account of these reasons (Paragraph 2.5.2.2).

Learners often misbehave so frequently that the educator feels disempowered. Parent 6 of School B raised concerns about educators' helplessness: "*Often the educator tries his best to talk gently to the learners about positive discipline, but often the learners do not understand and do not accept the educator to give him advice about learner discipline. The learners often challenge the educator's authority as they show verbal aggression. Often, an educator just leaves the classroom to seek help from the administration or the principal so as to be able to maintain learner discipline in his classroom. He rushes through the principal's office complaining that he cannot work with these misbehaved learners, including learners of Form one. He just comes to report the unbearable classroom situation.*" In such an uncontrollable situation, some learners do not strive to learn seriously but persuade their classmates to follow their example (Lukman & Hamadi 2014: 13). Wolhuter and Russo (2013: 1) explain this feeling of disempowerment of educators as an act of their desperation in maintaining learners' discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.2.).

The study revealed also that the state secondary school educators do not feel responsible for collaborating with the principal to maintain effective learner discipline. This is inconsistent to the view of Way (2011: 366) that though the principal is responsible for formal discipline decisions (this is neither the case in Mauritian state secondary schools as is explained in the paragraph 5.2.2 on the barriers to the principal's authority), the educator is an important agent of authority who should strive to maintain order in the classroom and on the school premises. Educators of state schools develop a *laissez-faire* attitude to the occurrence of learners' lack of discipline to avoid taking any disciplinary actions against learners. This irresponsibility on the part of educators has been widely discussed by all the participants of the study.

The participants agreed that educators choose not to discipline learners for various reasons: to remain on good terms with the learners to avoid relational problems with them

and to be able to be acceptable by the school learners for private tuition. Parent 4 of School D attempted to justify the *laissez-faire* attitudes of educators in maintaining learner discipline at schools: "*You know, sometimes, the educators and principal think that when they adopt disciplinary measures against learners they will be seen as the "bad educators or principals". Educators are lenient with the learners who misbehave because they think that they give private tuitions and each learner represents Rs 400 as tuition fee that he/she may earn. So, he/she wants to be accepted and considered by the learners as resource persons from whom to take private tuition. He/she does his/her marketing by not being harsh to them by taking disciplinary actions against them. So, he/she thinks he/she must be cool with the learners and wants to have good relationships with the learners. A learner does not come to the class or loitering around in the school premises, he/she will say nothing to him since the learner either takes private tuition from him or is a potential client for his tuition. So, the educator does not have a professional consciousness.*" Educators develop a "don't-care attitude" (Lukman & Hamadi 2014: 13) and they come to the class to do their primary role of teaching, forgetting about educative teaching and learning as the core function of the school. This statement of learner 2 of School A exemplifies the feelings of parents and learners in general: "*Educators just do not take into consideration about whether the learners are understanding the lesson or not. They just come and teach, that is do their teaching job. Those who wish to follow and listen to his/her explanations, and he/she gives the necessary explanatory notes, whether the learners are actually taking the notes or not, that is none of his/her concern. If the academic results of the learners are not good or the learners misbehave, that is not his/her problem, they just don't care; he/she is getting the monthly salary.*" This shows that educators are no more concerned about the welfare and interests of their learners to which they are supposed to be dedicated, but they are rather selfish and lack professional commitment. Principal B shared the same sentiment of the learners and parents: "*Sometimes, the principal wants to implement disciplinary measures, but the educators do not collaborate with her. Educators consider only their personal interests and ignore their contribution to school effectiveness of which learner discipline is an important aspect. They want to have the lunch time for themselves or marking of exercise books, not to use it to monitor the learners' behaviour; at the last afternoon bell ring the educators*

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are the first ones to leave the school premises; they do not help in maintaining order when learners are leaving the classroom or the school. They just do not care about learner discipline." This is consistent with Rampa (2014: 26) who claims that when educators ignore their responsibility for learner discipline and leave this difficult and challenging task to parents and the principal, it creates a vacuum that allows shocking incidents of learner misconduct such as drinking alcohol, vandalism, and carrying dangerous weapons in the schools. Daly, Der-Martirosian, Ong-Dean, Park and Wishard-Guerra (2011: 178) concur that *laissez-faire* leaders like educators who reject taking responsibility, tend not to be when needed and do not do follow-up. In the same vein, Hoffman (2012: 91) adds that abdicating responsibility for providing the appropriate public education for learners who manifest a lack of discipline does not serve the public interest.

However, the situation described above is not the rule, nor the general current situation in all the selected state secondary schools. Collegiality among educators and educators' accountability and commitment to maintaining learner discipline does exist and function, and it is effective when implemented with the help of the school principal who adopts distributed leadership and empowers the educators (Paragraph 3.4.4). The principal of School D did not share the views of the learner and the parent mentioned and stated the following to highlight this possibility: "*I do have the full support of my team. If ever, there would be a barrier it would be the absence of support from my educators, learners and auxiliary or non-teaching staff. But, of course, you would understand that it is a give and take process and a win-win situation. They help me and they understand that this support gets onto them by having learners who behave well and there is fewer cases of lack of learners' discipline, which is in fact beneficial to themselves in their class. They would have a better life at school when the school environment is healthy and safety.*"

The field notes of the observer-researcher in Schools A and C, however, prove that educators do not collaborate with the principal: Educators are busy doing their own things: marking school and private tuition exercise books, playing dominoes in the staff

room, leaving the school premises for some errands, chatting under the shades of trees or in the staff room. They just enjoy their free times.

This study therefore demonstrated that in many state secondary schools educators are not involved in learner discipline management, except when there is a team spirit in the school under the leadership of an inclusive principal (Naicker & Mestry 2013: 12) (Paragraph 3.4.4). Sprick (2009: 22) and Kruger (2003: 207) also support this cause of learner indiscipline in the sense that educators manifest a lack of ownership, commitment, shared responsibility and accountability for learner discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.2), particularly in secondary schools with overcrowded classes (above thirty five learners per class) (Njoroge & Nyabuto 2014: 294). The findings of this study are also in accordance with Idu and Ojedapo (2011: 734) who reason that by ignoring learners' problems and complaints, educators prepare the ground for indiscipline among learners. Yet, Pietler (2015: 3) also supports the view of the principal of School D that when the school leader unifies secondary school educators and other staff in the school, the manifestations of learners' lack of discipline decrease (Paragraph 3.4.4).

5.2.1.4 The principal's leadership and authority

As discussed in Paragraph 3.4, the principal is the key agent of change, the driving force in the school to make positive changes towards the practices, principles and procedures in the day-to-day operation of the system. Principal leadership should not be seen as a role attached to a position, hierarchy or authority (Bush 2007: 395), but rather as an assemblage of behaviour and practices (Shantal, Halttunen & Pekka 2014: 35; Naicker & Mestry 2013: 1). Therefore, the principal's responsibility is to ensure a safer and saner school environment for all learners.

The results of this current study revealed that the principal's lack of authority is another major cause of learners' lack of discipline. All the learners, educators, parents and educators from the interviews agreed that the principal is not sufficiently empowered to be able to maintain discipline, and this lack of authority is causing a rise of learner

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indiscipline in the state secondary schools, contrary to the situation in the private secondary schools. Learners know that the principal cannot enforce discipline at schools, cannot expel them unless it is a criminal case and it is the Ministry of Education which gives its consent to approve for a suspension or an expulsion initiated by the principal and their rights are protected by Laws. The principal's disempowerment is demonstrated by the statement of the Principal of School C: "*I use rustication or suspension. In the case of a very severe case of a lack of learner behaviour, I make a report on the learner behaviour and send it to the Ministry of Education. I can do nothing more. I will have to wait for a reply from the Ministry. It is only the Ministry which gives the authorisation for rustication.* This procedure is congruent with procedures spelled out by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and Scientific Resources (2015: 12) which states that the principal may expel a learner only with the authorisation of the Minister of Education (Paragraphs 2.4.4 and 3.6). This has led to a general desperate outcry of principals of state secondary schools and on account of this constraint; they are often helpless in their attempt to maintain effective learner discipline at schools.

The lack of empowerment of the principal is summarised by the statement of the principal of School D: "*If ever there is a breakdown of discipline because sometimes the principal and the educators do not feel empowered enough, you can't go beyond rustication because it is getting the learner to stay at home for two days. Just imagine, you get the learner sanctioned and that rowdy learner, you are giving him a freaking time or a treat. And we at the level of the state schools we cannot go beyond the level of rustications. The learner knows what rustication is about: free time for himself away from school and he will go back to school. So, the ministry lacks the ability to fire learners who manifest frequent lack of discipline so that it may act as a deterrent about bad behaviour. That too applies to state schools. But if you are talking about the private secondary schools, that is a different story; the principals are empowered to fire the learners. The learners have the good reasons to be proper and well behave. School rules coming down from the Ministry also have to be reviewed. If we have the power to take severe sanctions, and with policy to provide better communication to parents and learners by informing them well in advance about the array of disciplinary measures that*

may be taken against the manifestations of a lack of discipline, then learners could play their good roles." This statement depicts the contrast between the degree of authority and autonomy of principals in the state secondary schools and the private secondary schools and explains the alarming and degenerating situation of learner discipline in the former, mainly due to the accountability of the principal of the state secondary school. As a result of this state of affairs which restrains the principal in their school leadership in terms of learner discipline, he/she often adopts leniency in implementing disciplinary policies.

Almost all the principals interviewed agreed that they adopt a soft policy so as to avoid a police case with parents or administrative problems with the Zone Directorate. The more experienced principal of School A lamented: "*Sanctions we rarely use because of implications on my job; there is the Ombudsperson; I know some principals who have got into a mess because of their discipline actions, frankly speaking. I'll show you a letter which the Director of Zone 2 sent to me. Because of having taken some disciplinary measures against learners at school, a principal had to reply to the ombudsperson, and he got a lot of problems.*" This is consistent with the administrative procedures laid down by the Ministry in the Student Behaviour Policy document (Paragraph 3.6). Principals prefer to play safe in their intervention in maintaining learner discipline. They risk being accountable and eventually being blamed for the lack of learner discipline or the undesirable consequences of his/her disciplinary actions. The statement of the principal of School A explains the lack of effective principal's authority and leadership which is a cause of a lack of learner discipline in state secondary schools.

Parents in the interviews complained about the absence of the application of disciplinary measures in the state secondary schools. This is the sentiment of parent 5 of School D: "*My son told me that last week, he was playing while he saw some other learners who were sniffing something during the recess. I told him not to report the case of gross indiscipline to the school principal. I warned him that if he does so to the principal, the latter will certainly take disciplinary actions but the learners who misbehaved may assault/bully him. They may even inject him with a syringe. You know when mild misbehaviour occurs and the principal does not take any disciplinary actions that*

learners do not hesitate to manifest severe misbehaviour at school. The children's behaviour will be beyond the principal's and educators' control, and the school situation worsens. The principal should be friendly but firm with the learners when they misbehave; there should be no excuse or leniency when a learner manifest a lack of discipline." The learners, on the other hand, witnessing the lack of authority and leniency of the principal, are at liberty to behave however they wish at schools. The field notes of the researcher confirmed the finding from the interviews: learners of School B do not wear the proper uniforms, they regularly come to school late in the morning, they use their mobile phones in class lessons and on the school premises, which is forbidden by the Ministry, they sometimes bunk classes and play truancy. Specifically, on the eve of the Music Day, thirteen learners of a Form two class were caught drinking wine in the classroom during the recess. The principal only informed the parents about the misconduct, through a note in the learners' journal or handbook for the parents to acknowledge having read the content by signing it. However, learner 6 of School A affirmed: "*Learners do not put into practice the school rules and regulations because the principal is not enough severe to oblige them to respect the rules and regulations*." Parents know that their children may forge their signature on an official communique from the principal or the educator. Learner 2 from School C averred: "*When the educators write a report about the learner's misbehaviour in class in the school journal, the learner either fakes the signature of her parents; the parents never know about the report*." Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014: 134) agrees that the disciplinary problems encountered by the staff of state secondary schools are mainly due to the lack of authority and power of both the management and the educators in Mauritius, and because each case of a lack of learner discipline has to be referred to the Ministry for follow-up. The principal must wait for orders from the Ministry of Education or the Zone Directorate for suspension and expulsion (Paragraph 3.6). These are the only two measures that are recommended in the Education Act 1957 of Mauritius. This lack of authority by the state secondary school principals as found in this study is supported by Bechuke and Debeila (2012: 252), Hilbert (2007: 3) and Le Defi Quotidien (2015: 7) who add that ad hoc disciplinary measures are sometimes taken by the principal or at the Ministerial level after an over-coverage of disciplinary problems in secondary schools at the national level.

However, there is no follow-up to ensure an improvement in the learners' behaviour or to prevent any future potential occurrence of the behaviour (Paragraphs 1.2.2, 1.2.3 and 3.6).

This study revealed that principals are helpless and even desperate due to the fact that the Ministry of Education gives them the responsibility to maintain learner discipline, through the School Management Manual. However, they are not given any specific behaviour strategy that they may adopt and implement in their school to successfully maintain discipline. The principal of School B shared his deep concerns about his disempowerment: "*In fact, there is a lot of contradiction in what you read in the Manual. It is written "the principal is there to maintain discipline". But what are the tools, what are the means? I give you an example: I am the principal of a school which is difficult to manage and I am directed to maintain learner discipline. How do I do that? I must have the collaboration of the educators also, but very often you will see it is not clear as educators do not want to maintain learner discipline when he is outside the class. Now when he is inside the class, the educator says he maintains discipline but I know they do not as it is difficult for them. The educators keep the role of discipline management for the principal for whom it becomes an additional task for the day. It is difficult for me as the principal to ensure physically that there is learner discipline in each class and everywhere on the school premises.*" This is supported by Rampa (2014: 26) who argues that the principal fails to establish effective disciplinary programs when there is a lack of collegiality and synergy among the educators. This is also consistent with Bechuke and Debeila (2012: 241) who assert that principals face many challenges when they are not provided with guidelines on how to maintain effective learner discipline, develop their self-discipline and how to correct and modify socially unacceptable behaviour (Paragraph 3.2.7). There are no school-wide behavioural measures that require the responsibility and assistance of all stakeholders.

However, the principal of School C completely disagreed with the principal of School B in that there is team work with his educators and collegiality among them that helps him

successfully maintain learner discipline in his school. He highlighted: "*I have to get some educators to have special roles above and beyond their responsibilities of teaching. I have got the senior educators to take care of Forms 1 and 2 in group, Form 3 and 4 and then the upper Forms. For each of the group, I call the senior educator as Dean of Studies, that means I have put one educator who will be responsible for each group. So what are their roles? They take feedback from the school administration and being the senior educators they relate the feedback to educators. We have to understand the learners' actual behaviour in particular situations to get the learners to behave properly; so, I have meetings with the parents once per term. I have a group of dedicated parents whom I call "les parents flambeaux". So, I call the "parents flambeaux" once a month, meeting with the "group de parole" reflecting on those sensitive issues like socio-economic problems, problems coming from peers, pedagogical issues. We take up all these issues on board. Getting to understand that the principal has his leadership to talk with parents and we have a collegiality to look together. Having the Deans of Studies/ "groups des parents flambeaux", having a structure for school discipline policy done at the level of the school, taking force on the Education Act 1957, that says the principal is empowered to have arrangements at his school to manage the school and help to delivery of service.*"

This principal's approach to dealing with discipline problems revealed that despite the absence of guidelines from the Ministry, and the legal framework, that according to many of the participants, disempowers the principal to maintain learner discipline, it is possible to do so depending on the leadership of the principal. This supports the view of Govinda-Seenauth (2016: 61) and Shantal Halttunen and Pekka (2014: 29) who assert that educators and the principal should be given adequate training in identifying disciplinary problems so that they may collectively reduce the manifestation of a lack of learner discipline (Paragraph 3.4.6). This is consistent with Congo-Poottaren and Sohawon (2014: 6) who maintain that school leaders are taught how to manage learner discipline in schools at the Mauritius Institute of Education. The findings of this research is in congruence with the ten principles of the Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) model which specify the need for team working and professional development for both

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the educators and the principal (Paragraph 3.2.8) and the School Wide Positive Behavioural Support (SWPBS) model (Paragraph 3.2.7) which recommends the inspirational leadership of the principal to prevent the manifestations of a lack of learner discipline.

5.2.1.5 The education system of Mauritius

Paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 examined and critically analysed the current education system of Mauritius. In this current study and following the interviews with the participants and the observation, the researcher finds that the education system of the country is a cause of a lack of discipline among secondary school learners, in general, and those of the state secondary schools, in particular. Aspects of the system that influence the behaviour of learners in Mauritius are: private tuition, the recruitment of "supply educators", and an excessively examination based curriculum which is objectives-based, and which implies a lack of extra-curricular activities for learners.

(a) Private tuition

In Paragraph 2.4, it was found that education at primary and secondary levels are so academic, theory based and examination-oriented that learners prefer private tuition to the formal education at school and the rate of learner absenteeism is very high because of private tuition. This current study revealed that private tuition has negative influences on learner discipline at school.

Learners are not interested in the class lessons because they have already learned the concepts in the private tuition classes and they dispose of the huge sums of money that their parents give them as tuition fees to pay the private tuition educators. The principals of the selected state secondary schools shared the view that private tuition is an additional external factor that is worsening the situation of learner discipline. This is highlighted in the statement of the principal of School B: "*Learners do not come to school to learn now because they have already learnt what is taught in the class in their private tuition.*

Instead of the private tuition, now it is the school which is supplementing private tuition. The school educator should be a very innovative educator and should be able to show to the learners that what they are learning at school is more than what you learnt in tuition classes. When this is not the case and the class educator does not use innovative teaching methods to teach the lesson, learners just don't bother or care about the class lesson and they waste their time manifesting a lack of discipline. They consider it a waste of time to follow the class. So, they free themselves from learning and start disturbing the whole class or doing some undesirable behaviour." Parents also are delegating their anxiety about the academic success of their children onto the private tuition educator by paying huge fees, and therefore they are not keen to monitor their children's behaviour at school. Parent 2 of School D criticised this laissez-faire attitude of parents which promote learner indiscipline by stating: "*The parents' attitude is to be blamed: They consider that they are sending their children to the private tuition and paying for it so that their children perform well academically, so they do not bother about whether their children are well behaving or are self-disciplined at school*." Since learners go to private tuition, they are often absent from school, they use the tuition fees to consume alcoholic drinks at school, bunk classes of educators who do not use innovative pedagogical practices, and they disturb the school classes. This is supported by Dindyal and Besoondyal (2007: 16), Etienne (2007a: 12), Ramharai *et al.* (2006: 157) and Mahadeo (2013: 5-6) who report that learners who take private tuition neglect their school work, and the work done by the private tutors are taking precedence over the work done by regular educators in schools (Paragraphs 1.2.2 and 2.4.2). The parents' *laissez-faire* attitude sends a clear message to the learners that they are supported by them to manifest a lack of misbehaviour. This is in accordance with the findings of Beebeejaun-Muslum (2014: 133) which mentions that private tuition is a barrier to the principal's authority to manage learner behaviour during the school hours as detention after school hours or on Saturdays prevent the children from their freedom to private tuition. Because of this, parents support their children and do not collaborate with the principal to implement this particular disciplinary action against their children who manifest a lack of discipline.

(b) The recruitment of supply educators

Supply educators are educators who have just completed their undergraduate or postgraduate university degree and who are recruited on a purely temporary basis, as and when the Ministry of Education requires their services to temporarily replace employed practicing educators (Ministry of Education and Human Resources 2013: 4) who are on maternity leave or vacation leave. Such recruitment is done only for the state secondary schools.

The field notes of observation indicated that there is an average of twenty percent supply educators teaching in each of the state secondary schools. They are very young (most of them females), do not have a dress code, show no interest in the school activities as they do not have a sense of belonging to the school, they travel a long distance to the school, and they are normally posted in two schools, which are geographically separated. On observation in School A, an event occurred which manifestly showed a lack of management skills of supply educators: "*A learner was disturbing the class of the French supply educator by chatting at the back of the classroom; to restore discipline in her class, she shouted at the girl, 'You lesbian, will you shut up immediately!'* " The parents of the learner reported the supply educator to the Ministry of Education, and the Zone Director visited the school the following day to settle the matter between the parents, the educator and the school principal. The school superintendent of School D supported the parents by lamenting about the lack of teaching experience and of pre-service training in dealing with adolescents: "*Also, most of the educators are ladies here and when they are on leave, often we have supply educators who come to replace them for one or two months. Supply educators are educators who have not received any pre-service training from the Mauritius Institute of Education. They are fresh graduates who just left the university and who find themselves dealing with adolescents without knowing how to treat such learners who are growing physically. We have got a lot of discipline problems from learners in their class because they lack classroom management skills. Moreover, most of the supply educators are ladies, rather young ladies. Young ladies in a boys' school!*"

The incident of indiscipline that happened between the learner and the educator and the view of the principal is further clarified by Coetzee (2010: 481) who posits that an educator who has to shout and threaten learners to establish or maintain discipline will struggle to get the learners to respect him or her. This principal also confirmed the field notes of the researcher in School A about the presence of young female supply educators. It is obvious from the statements of the superintendent and the principal of the school that the supply educators cannot show their authority to the learners. This is supported by Way (2011: 365) who states that learners do not consider the legitimacy of the authority of the supply educators who, according to Mutemeri and Gudyanga (2008: 7), are inexperienced and do not treat all learners equally. This is in congruence with the Best Practice Language model put forward by Holloman and Yates (2012: 124-127) who suggests that the principal should be an ethical role model by adopting words of encouragement, hope, grace, guidance, accountability, respect, high expectations, love, relationship, unity and understanding in an attempt to model and encourage mutual respect between the learners and the supply educator (Paragraph 3.4.2). The current findings are also in accordance with Manguvo *et al.* (2011: 159) and Ozben (2010: 592) who observe that professionally uncertified educators encounter more behaviour problems as they have a limited ability to deal with learner behaviour (Paragraphs 3.2.6 & 2.2.5.2).

(c) Excessively examination-based curriculum

The highly competitive education system of Mauritius and the "rat race" for parents and learners to get the most outstanding examination results were examined in Paragraph 2.4. Parents, educators, learners and principals lay more emphasis on the academia and certification of schooling. From the interviews with the participants of this study, the principals, parents, learners and educators agreed to this particularity of the Mauritian education system and they argued that this negatively influences the behaviour of state secondary school learners who are deprived of extra-curricular activities.

This study revealed that state secondary school learners are under too much parental pressure to produce an excellent academic performance in the Form three National Assessment, which parents claimed to be very tough since it was introduced in 2011. Because their children are learning in state schools based on their outstanding results in the Certificate of Primary Education examinations, they expect them to keep the academic standards throughout their secondary education. This is highlighted by the statement of Learner 4 of School C: "*Some learners cannot bear the parental or home pressure on them to pass the exams with high flying colors to the expectations of the parents; so they come to school and express their frustrations either by misbehaving or by being aggressive with other children or even the educator. The children are weaker than them, so they may dominate them as their parents do, or the educator is an adult like their parents. They express their feelings of rejection of insubordination over the educator.*" Parent 2 of School D confirmed this sentiment of learners and the pressure of parents on their children: "*Also, when parents have too high expectations about the academic performance of their child, the latter becomes frustrated when he starts thinking he cannot meet his parents' expectations. By being frustrated, the child may find in manifesting a lack of discipline as a means to show his frustrations.*" The principal of School D shares the deep concern about this situation: "*When learners are pressurised and are forced to study hard, by going through private tuition and being deprived of extra-curricular activities, they are stressed and frustrated.*" This is supported by Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014: 294-295), Pane *et al.* (2014: 300) and Panchoo (2016: 13) who point out that when schools tend to be examination oriented with a banking education and does not take into consideration the promotion for the holistic development of the learner, there are more cases of learner indiscipline; extra-curricular activities are not examinable, as the education system is more academic and knowledge-based in Mauritius (Paragraphs 2.4.1, 2.4.3 and 2.5.2.2). The only way for learners to manifest their frustrations and stress is through poor behaviour at school. Mutemeri and Gudyanga (2008: 3) add that stressed adolescents show signs of aggressive behaviour, emotional disabilities, social phobia and shyness, and they rarely show interest in activities that are otherwise enjoyable (Paragraph 2.5.1.2).

The field notes confirmed that the two weekly scheduled activity periods for learners are useless as educators do not organise any leisure activity for the learners. Educators come into the classes with their learners' subject exercise books to be marked. Many manifestations of a lack of learner discipline occur during the activity periods when learners are left on their own. Learner 6 of School A lamented about this absence of school activities for learners: "*The school does not provide them with leisure or extra-curricular activities. In fact, it is during the activity periods, when educators are supposed to give us opportunities to actively involved in activities that learners use the free time to drink alcoholic drinks, break the school fire alarm or smoke, or even do make-up in the classroom. The educators themselves encourage the learners to do their make–up in the classroom; this is often done in the absence of the educator.*" The field notes of the observation showed that learners in School A used mobile phones excessively during the activity periods due to a lack of organised extracurricular activities in these periods. This is supported by Dupper (2010: 31) who states that schools that have higher rates of learner participation in extra-curricular activities tend to have higher levels of school connectedness and therefore fewer cases of learners' lack of discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). It is also supported by Gitome *et al.* (2013: 5), Bissoondoyal (2009: 5) and Atchia (2007: 12) who found that discipline declines among secondary school learners because parents, educators and other stakeholders place too much emphasis on the curriculum. Therefore, the teaching of the academic subjects gives precedence of extra-curricular, artistic and musical and sport activities, guidance and counselling sessions (Paragraph 2.4.3).

5.2.1.6 Peer group pressure

Peer pressure among learners is considered as a significant cause of disruptive behaviour and truancy (Van Breda 2014: 1058; Njoroge & Nyabuto 2014: 293).

The participants of this study agreed that peers mostly influence each other negatively so that the cases of learner indiscipline increase. This is the leader-follower relationship that occurs among peers in secondary schools. Educator 6 of School A argued: "*The parents may show the learners self-respect for one's body by dressing decently. When she/he is at*

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home with the parents, he/she dresses very well, but when he/she leaves the home and is away from the parents' eyes, he/she dresses differently to feel "in" his/her peer group at schools. He/she does not want to be excluded from his/her friends who dress differently. He/she may behave like an angel at home, with his/her family, but when he/she is with his/her friends, he/she behaves differently. At school, he/she feels free to do whatever he/she wants. It is a way for him/her to express himself/herself in ways that he cannot at home." This is consistent with Bezuidenhout (2013: 81) and Fosco *et al.* (2011: 70) who postulate that adolescents in secondary schools have a potential urge to be around their friends (the process called contagion), particularly when they want to reduce their relationships with their parents. Thus, leader-follower relationships among the peers keep them together. Learners develop the feeling of togetherness so as to avoid peer exclusion or rejection and be accepted in the group (Paragraph 2.5.2.6). This is in line with the reasoning of Learner 1 of School A: "*A child may be influenced by her peer group which manifests undesirable behaviour. She may follow her friends doing misbehaviour so that she may prove herself or identify herself with others and be accepted by them.*" Moreover, the principal of School C enumerated the motive behind their lack of learner discipline: "*They think that when they have been successful in talking "man to man" with the educator, they have a higher esteem from their friends at school or in the classroom. Sometimes, learners get involved into problems of misbehaviour, then later when we take sanctions against them, they say that they were influenced by other classmates or learners. They may want to show their guts so that other learners respect their authority; they can behave in ways to challenge the educator's authority.*" Educator 3 of School D indicated the different manifestations of learners who are in a peer group: "*A learner who was a nice boy when newly admitted to this school now brings pornographic films on his mob to show to classmates. They smoke cigarettes and even "grass" (gandia or marijuana) at school. This is because they may be friends with the elders.*" This is consistent with Gitome *et al.* (2013:6) and Gasa (2012: 148) who maintain that peer pressure sometimes brings about risky behaviour due to the feeling of irresponsibility, and a learner's personal moral standards may be violated. The findings of this study are also supported by Yahaya *et al.* (2009: 667) and Seegopaul (2016: 52) who found that learners feel free to misbehave when they are with friends who may push them to

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manifest undesirable behaviour (Paragraphs 2.5.2.3 and 2.5.2.6). In extreme cases, as is the case of consuming marijuana or synthetic drugs in schools in Mauritius, criminality is socio-culturally learnt in the process of interacting with peers in small intimate groups (Temitayo *et al.* 2013: 11) (Paragraphs 2.5.2.3 and 2.5.2.6).

5.2.1.7 The child's constitutional rights

In this current study, parents, educators and principals complained that there is much learner indiscipline because children have now many constitutional rights which disempower them to control the latter at home and at school and the children are well informed of their rights which are taught to them by educators in primary schools.

This study showed that the existence of the constitutional rights have worsened the disciplinary situation among learners in the state secondary schools. Parents, educators, principals and even the learners of the study all considered that with the Child's rights, they have lost their disciplinary authority on the child and as such, they cannot control his/her behaviour.

Parent 4 of School A was very critical of the legal protection of the Child's rights and her resultant disempowerment as a parent to discipline her child who misbehaves: "*Parents cannot beat or punish their child, not even a simple slap. Me, when my child manifests a misconduct, I punish her; but many parents do not use physical punishment because of the "Brigade des Mineurs" and the laws which protect the Children's rights. Because of these, young children misbehave and even dare say to their parents that if they punish them, they will make a report to the police or sue them to the court in the case of adolescents. It is true that there are parents who make an abuse of their authority to physically aggress their child, but when the parents are using their authority to change the behaviour of their child, then they should be allowed to do so. Not just prevent them from doing so by law; else the children will abuse of the law by not displaying the*

appropriate behaviour at home and at school. A little child of five years old can say to his parents that if you reprimand me or slap me I will call the number 103 for the police to come to fetch you. So, such types of children will grow and misbehave or manifest unsociably acceptable behaviour and parents as well as the educators and principal will not be able to take any disciplinary actions against them." This statement clearly depicts the extent to which parents, educators and principals are helpless when children manifest a lack of discipline. This same desperate feeling is expressed by the principal of School C: "*With the respect of Children's rights and other such child protection laws, reprimanding the misbehaved learner, shouting etc are not possible. You know, once the learners know the school cannot take any sanctions against them then they believe they can do anything.* Following the annual campaign of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family welfare for the sensitisation of the children in school about their constitutional rights, learners take advantage of their rights to misbehave, knowing that the parents, educators, and principals do not have much legitimate authority on them. This is confirmed by Learner 5 of School B: "*We know our rights are protected by law. Our parents, our educators and even the principal should respect our rights as children and therefore they cannot violate the Children's rights. So, we do not respect the school rules and regulations as these people cannot do anything against us that will prevent us from misbehaving if we wish to do so.*" The authority of the principals and educators is undermined by the Article 37(a) of the Convention of the Rights of the Child which stipulates: "*State parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or moral violence, injury, or abuse....*" So, it is obvious that such a legal context is likely to hamper the maintenance of learner discipline in schools. Learners do not have any incentive to be self-disciplined if its value is not taught and inculcated in them by the principals, educators and parents since their early age. Learners are informed about their rights, but according to Ramharai *et al.* (2006: 204-205) and Joubert and Bray (2007: 81), they are not taught their duties and responsibilities towards their family, school and society. Joubert and Bray (2007: 81) add that the emphasis on children's rights has empowered learners and has adversely disempowered educators and principals (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). The findings of this study is also supported by Maphosa and Shumba

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(2010: 397) who assert that the thrust on children's rights and the abolishment of corporal punishment has given rise to an era of licentiousness in which learners no longer respect educators and principal (Schimmel 2006: 1006). However, Coetzee (2010: 479) contradicts the findings of this study by arguing that it is not the human rights culture that disempowers educators and principals, but a lack of knowledge and skills to create a disciplined school climate within a human rights framework. Moreover, the educators and principal do not promote the legitimacy of their authority because of the absence of parental support to them in maintaining learner discipline, There is no healthy social and human relationships between the educators and the learners, and there is no learner voice and choice in the crafting and implementation of the school behaviour policy with its rules and logical consequences (Way 2011: 365; Focht & Ponton 2015: 2-4; Van der Vyyer *et al.* (2014: 2) (Paragraphs 2.5.2.2 and 3.4.8).

Clearly, the constitutional rights of learners contribute to learner indiscipline but their existence may also be a fundamental legal context that may help the principal to maintain learner discipline. All depend on the principal's effective use of his/her authority and inclusive leadership towards the learners at school when implementing the school disciplinary policy.

From the foregoing discussion, it is obvious that the main factors impacting on a lack of learner discipline in the state secondary schools in Mauritius are the family, the learner's attitudes, the educator's attitudes, the principal's leadership and authority, the education system of the country, peer pressure and the child's constitutional rights.

It should be noted that some of the factors have not been discussed in the literature review of this study as they have emerged in the particular context of the Mauritian education system which has its unique characteristics originated through the colonisation process in its history as presented in chapter two. The researcher found it necessary to use

new references to support some of the findings and relate them to literature as far as possible.

5.2.2 Barriers to the effective implementation of behavioural strategies by the principals of state secondary schools in Mauritius

While interpreting the causes of a lack of learner discipline and the current disciplinary strategies that are implemented by the principals in the state secondary schools, the barriers to the implementation of effective discipline in Mauritius have been revealed. A study of the barriers is important as it helps the researcher to do a better assessment of the effectiveness of the behavioural strategies being used and implemented in the selected state secondary schools in Mauritius. It also contributes to the compilation of the most appropriate strategies that may be implemented in these schools for a safer and saner school environment for the learners, the educators, school superintendents and the principals. The barriers to the implementation of effective discipline by principals in state secondary schools are discussed in the following paragraphs. They are the political interference of parents in the implementation of disciplinary measures by the principal, the free transport system, frustrated acting principals and deputy principals in state secondary schools, too much bureaucracy when reporting a case of a lack of learner discipline, a lack of collaboration between the educators, school superintendent, senior educators and the principal, a lack of parental involvement in learner discipline management at schools, and a lack of governmental initiatives to restore learner discipline.

5.2.2.1 The political interference of parents in the implementation of disciplinary measures by the principal

The state secondary schools are public-owned. As discussed in Paragraph 5.2.1.1, parents do not sufficiently involve themselves in the education of the child nor in school activities. Yet, when the principal adopts disciplinary strategies to correct their child's

undesirable behaviour at school, the affluent parents who are civil servants working in the government sector, trade-unionists, and those who have political contacts with political agents or an elected member of the parliament interfere in the way the principal deals with a lack of learner discipline. This is a common barrier to the principal's authority and leadership's objective of maintaining effective discipline among the secondary school learners. Often, principals have to backpedal or avoid taking a disciplinary measure that would not please the parents and that may create administrative or professional problems for them.

Politicians intervene directly or indirectly in the daily running of the school, as and when the local people of their electoral constituency resort to their political intervention in their favour to change the principal's disciplinary actions about their children at school. This barrier to the principal authority and empowerment is illustrated by the anecdotal statement of the principal of School C: "*I give you a case to show how much we have constraints regarding the implementation of behavioural interventions: A principal in another school suspended a learner. His parent went to the Ministry which called the principal concerned to ask him from where he got the authorisation to suspend the learner. In fact, the parent did not agree his child's rustication and so he went to talk about it to an elected member of the Parliament who interfered at the level of the Ministry so that the parent's child was not suspended. When parents are unhappy they look for political interference.*" On account of this constraint, principals of state secondary schools are often helpless in their attempt to maintain effective learner discipline at schools. In addition to the political contacts of parents, learners whose parents are trade-unionists, civil servants and police officers may abuse the professional status of their parents to feel free to manifest a lack of discipline. Parents in the interviews agreed that this is a barrier to the principal's authority and a pretext for children to misbehave. Parent 2 of School D raised his concern and lamented: "*Also, if the parent happens to be a trade-unionist and that I have used a sanction against his child, then surely I will be sued as it will be a police case against me. He knows his rights and may have vested interests in the school. In this case, the learner knowing the position of his parent may abuse of it and manifest a lack of discipline as he knows he will not be*

corrected or even given a negative behaviour report. This may encourage indiscipline. Well, of course, we do not have many such parents, hopefully and therefore we may often have recourse to more severe sanctions without being bothered by the higher authorities, yet the risk is here." This is also an indication that these parents are preventing the principal from maintaining learner discipline and they are encouraging undesirable behaviour in their children, thus spoiling their individual character and personal growth in their social interactions with others. Educator 4 of School B recognised the harm that such parents are doing to their own learners and other learners at school: "*Sometimes parents represent a barrier – They do have political power or connection: any disciplinary action taken by the principal against their child for the manifestation of a lack of discipline, they contact the higher authority (Ministry) to protect their child from being punished. This is a wrong signal to other learners who see that there are learners who are protected and therefore do not have to face negative consequences of their actions.*" White (2010: 18) asserts that politicians are often involved in decisions about school matters and this is in conflict with the technical plans of school managers. Smit (2013: 364) adds that schools must never be politicised, practise party politics or promote sectarian political interests of politicians and parents; else democratic values such as the achievement of equality, the respect for human dignity, the advancement of freedom, responsiveness, tolerance and accountability are not inculcated in learners who in turn may manifest a lack of discipline at schools. The finding is also congruent with the view of Pascal (2015: 26) who reports that principals and educators have lost their power to deal with cases of indiscipline because of political interference (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

5.2.2.2 The free transport system

As an extension of the introduction of free education in Mauritius in 1977, the government of Mauritius provides free public transport to all learners of the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions since 2005 (Government of the Republic of Mauritius 2012: 3). All learners are provided with public transport at different pick-up points for different schools and are dropped off at their respective schools in the locality. However, this study revealed that the system is causing havoc to the disciplinary issues of schools:

learners are reaching school late in the morning and they blame the school bus for their latecoming. Moreover, due to the high rates of secondary school learners taking private tuition in the afternoon after the school hours, principals cannot implement detention, which is a prescribed disciplinary action by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources in the School Management Manual for principals.

The principal of School B complained about his inability to adopt detention due to the state provision of free bus transport to learners: "*I cannot even give arrest classes or detention to learners who misbehave. If I give arrest to a learner who misbehaved during the day at the end of the school day, I will have to consider many aspects so as not to be blamed by the Authority or parents: what will happen if she encounters a problem on her way home? The government provides free transport to all learners. Why should the principal deprive a learner of this facility to give her an arrest class? The learner will not get the free school bus and will have to pay for a bus to go home because I keep her at school! So, there are serious implications for me if I use arrest as a measure. For girls, arrest class is almost risky for the principal to take*." The principal of School D shared the same feeling of failure and frustration as the person responsible for learner discipline management in his school: "*I am proud to tell you that the number of latecoming by learners this year compared to last year has decreased as at today by 700. Of course, we would wish to eliminate this problem but we cannot, given the free school bus system we actually have in Mauritius*." From the statements of these two principals, the findings reveal that principals are trying their best to maintain learner discipline by implementing the official disciplinary policies that guide them. However, the introduction of the free public transport to learners is hampering them in successfully monitoring learner discipline at schools. Principals can neither prevent latecoming nor can they take disciplinary measures such as detention. Thus, they are helpless in their task to maintain learner discipline at schools. This finding is pertinent to the Mauritian context as private tuition is widespread (Paragraph 2.4.2), there is fierce competition at the secondary education level (Paragraphs 2.4.1 and 2.4.3) and the free transport system is universally provided to all learners to and from the school premises. The findings of this study is supported by Seegopaul (2016: 54) who argues that principals of state secondary schools

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in Mauritius admit that learners are late in the morning due to transport problems: certain buses refuse to take learners at the bus stop, and therefore they cannot take any disciplinary measures as it is an external factor, out of their control.

5.2.2.3 Frustrated acting principals and deputy principals in state secondary schools

The principal's attitudes in school determine the prevalence of indiscipline in secondary schools (Moye 2015: 84). In the Pay Research Bureau Reports 2003 and 2008, it was stipulated that the educators with at least five years' experience could apply for the post of Deputy Principal: "*Deputy Principals are appointed by selection from among Education Officers now restyled Educator (Secondary); they should be holders of a Postgraduate Certificate in Education and have taught for at least five years or Education Officers now restyled Educator (Secondary) who have taught for eight years'. Senior Educators (Secondary) may also compete for the promotion to the grade of Deputy Rector*" (Pay Research Bureau 2008: 285).

From 2003 to 2015, fifty deputy principals were recruited and posted in the state secondary schools. However, due to legal protest against the selection of some of them, there was a court case which prevented all of them to be confirmed in their post. Over ten years, selected deputy principals were working for the monthly salary of an Educator (Secondary) and a monthly responsibility allowance. This judicial situation undermined the authority and commitment of these deputy principals most of whom were in charge of a state secondary school after five years in the post.

This situation has had a negative impact on the attitudes of these principals in their responsibilities to maintain learner discipline in their school. Their frustration which results in the principal's lack of responsibility to do his/her best to maintain learner discipline was commented on by Educator 5 of School D: "*Another obstacle to the principal of this school is that the principal is not a full-fledged principal; he is only an acting principal. So, he is afraid to take disciplinary measures. If he is too severe with learners, if he takes a measure that is not accepted or approved by the Ministry, later on*

when the time for promotion arises, he may be blamed for that and not promoted. So, an acting principal will not dare take decisions that may undermine his promotion to principal. Another principal who is drawing the top salary and who knows all the do's and don'ts of the Ministry and who has already reached the highest position in the school and aspires to no higher position can take decision wisely and most appropriately. Such a principal may even take decisions not approved by the Ministry and he will be taking no risk against his professional career." The non-confirmation of these Deputy Principals who have been in the post for over five to ten years creates fertile ground for learner indiscipline without the implementation of effective disciplinary measures by these deputy principals who are officers-in-charge of 50 state secondary schools. This is confirmed by Educator 6 of School B: "*The principal is also afraid to take severe actions against students who manifest a lack of discipline, as she is feared they will go to the social media and defame the school as well the principal herself.*" Thus, the principal's inaction regarding discipline exacerbates the problem in the state secondary schools of Mauritius. The inaction is due to the fact that they are not full-fledged deputy principals or principals although they were in charge of schools; they were also not ready to perform their job effectively given the bad working conditions in terms of salary and non-confirmation in their post or to take risks to put their confirmation in the post at stake. This is consistent with Macharia *et al.* (2014: 210) who posit that when the level of preparedness of the deputy principal is below expectations, a lack of learner discipline increases. This finding is also supported by Pascal (2015: 26) who reports that there is a rise in the number of occurrences of a lack of learner discipline because of an incapacitated school principal and administration in terms of the implementation of the available disciplinary guidelines and actions.

5.2.2.4 Too much bureaucracy when reporting a case of a lack of learner discipline

As per the School Management Manual, the principal must make a case against the learner with severe misconduct to the Zone Directorate; he/she must submit a detailed history of the case in an attempt to justify with evidence of all actions that have been taken to solve the problem (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009:

35; Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research 2015: ii).

All the participants of this study came to the consensus that the principal's authority to discipline learners is limited and is subject to too many administrative tasks. As a result the principal is not committed to report cases of learner indiscipline to the Ministry or Zone Directorate. A case of learner indiscipline necessitates an urgent disciplinary measure, but the procedures, processes and practices imposed by the Ministry of Education make it a difficult task to deal with it with immediate effect (Paragraph 3.6).

The current study revealed that the state secondary school principals, in contrast to principals in the private secondary schools, cannot do much in terms of learner discipline management because of their accountability to the Ministry of Education. Educator 3 of School A highlighted this time-consuming administrative procedure: "*We are too restricted by the policies of the Ministry. For example, we cannot shout at a learner, else she reports us to the Child Development Unit or educational psychologists. I can do nothing more than abide by the rules and regulations set by the Ministry. Every disciplinary measure must be approved by the Ministry first. It's a very big problem in a girl's school. We cannot do much about girls' behaviour here. We cannot even suspend a learner. The principal must compile a big file about the learner's behaviour reporting all the manifestations of her lack of discipline to be sent to the Ministry which can take the final decision about whether the school may intervene or not about the lack of behaviour of the learner. On the contrary, if this same case of indiscipline happens in a private school, the school principal would take sanctions immediately against the learner; they do not send any report to the Ministry nor wait for it to come with a discipline policy.*" The Student Behaviour Policy document of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (2015: ii) as well as the School Management Manual of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources (2009: 29-30) highlight the long school protocol in dealing with each type of manifestation of learner indiscipline. This is supported by Moyo *et al*. (2014: 8) who maintain that for serious and criminal acts the principal must refer the case to the higher authorities for

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decisions like a limited suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school (Paragraph 3.6). The statement of Educator 3 clearly showed the incapacity of the principal to successfully implement disciplinary strategies in the state secondary schools.

Moreover, the principal does not dare take a disciplinary action which will prove him/her wrong in the eyes of the parents or the learner concerned as this will put at stake his/her authority at school. This was commented on with much desperation by the principal of School C: "*We are restricted by the Ministry's policies and protocol for suspension which takes a long time before it is approved or not. We are accountable to the Ministry and this is a constraint for the principal. If you really want disciplinary actions to be taken against a learner who demonstrates serious behaviour offence, but the Ministry does not approve your request, then it defeats the purpose implementing discipline.*" The deep concerns of the principal and the educator give an insight into the helpless attitude of the principal towards his/her leadership role of instilling effective discipline among learners in schools on account of the cumbersome paperwork required for reporting cases of learner indiscipline to the higher authorities. This is in congruence with the views of Ntombela (2014: 165) who asserts that the principal and the school management team have a huge amount of paper work and the directives from the higher authorities concerning the submission thereof is problematic as it is time-consuming (Paragraph 3.6).

5.2.2.5 A lack of collaboration between the educators, the school superintendent, the senior educator and the principal

The principal alone cannot accomplish much in terms of learner discipline management. Belle (2007: 140) asserts that managing school discipline is one of the various instructional leadership functions of the secondary school principals in Mauritius. However, on account of the accountability of the principal to the Ministry of Education, Jenkins (2009: 34) states that only one-tenth of his/her time is left to instructional leadership. Belle (2015: 59) postulates that principals often also have to attend meetings or workshops organised by the educational authorities during school hours and to submit

administrative issues to the Ministry within one school day. To do this, the principal needs the support and collaboration of the educators, school superintendent and the senior educator. The current findings revealed that the state secondary school principals do not have the collaboration of these stakeholders. Principals therefore have less control of their professional task, including learner discipline management (Boris-Schachter 2006: 20).

On one hand, principals complain that educators do not help much in dealing with learner discipline outside the classroom (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen 2010: 6), and they are skeptical about the effectiveness of classroom management inside the classrooms (Paragraph 5.2.1.4). Educators, on the other hand, make use of their mobile phones and do their make-up in the class itself, leave the class five minutes before the bell rings for home, and are afraid to take disciplinary measures against learner misconduct for their own personal and professional security. Moreover, the principal adopts a soft policy and a *laissez-faire* approach to learner discipline to avoid conflicts with parents and the Ministry of Education (Paragraph 5.2.1.3). Educators develop a carefree attitude (Moye 2015: 84), whereby they do not share the responsibility of learner discipline management with the principal even if they are empowered to do so, but rather neglect their moral responsibility to discipline learners (Paragraph 5.2.1.3). Thus, a blame culture has developed in the state secondary schools and this is hampering school effectiveness. This is supported by Educator 2 of School D who commented: "*When he empowers me, it means he delegates his authority on me to take sanctions against those who misbehave. I will have to know whether any sanction I may take is within the laws, is it accepted by the Ministry, will I not be blamed by the Ministry, will I not be accused by the parents or worse will I not be transferred in case the Ministry finds that I should not have taken a particular discipline strategy? Is the intervention "legally approved"? Today people talk about the sixteen children rights, the Convention of Children's Rights, Children Protection Act, and the Education Act.*" The educators therefore work in an insecure school environment in which they are afraid of unintended consequences of their disciplinary actions. To illustrate this blame culture, the principal of School B attempted to justify the lack of educator's collaboration which discourages effective learner

discipline: "*I am the principal of a school which is difficult to manage and I am directed to maintain learner discipline. How do I do that? I must have the collaboration of the educators also, but very often you will see it is not clear as educators do not want to maintain learner discipline when he is outside the class. The educators keep the role of discipline management for the principal for whom it becomes an additional task for the day. It is difficult for me as the principal to ensure physically that there is learner discipline in each class and everywhere on the school premises.*" The educators, on one hand, and the principal, on the other hand, are shifting their responsibility of maintaining learner discipline because of the unintended consequences from parents, the Ministry or from the law.

Principals also do not get the support of the school superintendent. According to the School Management Manual, the school superintendent must "walk around the school premises regularly, during breaks and between periods, to ensure that learners are in classes and do not manifest socially unacceptable behaviour. The Ministry expects the same role of the superintendent during the morning assembly, staff meetings and other school functions and activities." (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 33). However, the superintendent neither monitors learner attendance on the school premises, nor supervises the movement of learners before they board the school bus in the afternoon. This is clearly explained by the Educator 6 of School D: "*I can note that there is a clash about decision-making between the principal and the superintendent. The latter does not really report all cases of a lack of discipline to the principal. He rather lets go over discipline issues at his own level. The principal however is very strict. When the educators report disciplinary problems, the superintendent does not do the follow-up and this encourages learner misbehaviour. He is himself overloaded with administrative and paper work, so he cannot follow on the discipline problems that arise in the school. There are one thousand learners in this school, now if there are one hundred cases of indiscipline among learners weekly, do you think the superintendent will be able to do the follow-up to restore learner discipline? Let's say he may not be able to follow all of them, but then there are major discipline problems that should at all cost be dealt with.*" The school superintendent's collaboration with the principal and the educators is limited.

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According to the School Management Manual, he/she must inform the principal when a learner violates the school's code of discipline. This is consistent with Ntombela (2014: 165) and Trevinio *et al.* (2008: 107) who postulate that the superintendent has too many administrative tasks to do (Paragraph 3.6).

5.2.2.6 A lack of parental involvement in the management of learner discipline at schools

Parents like any other role players in the child's education have an essential function in the school governance, in particular, and in the school, in general. This is because parental involvement in secondary schools implies parents' attendance and participation in school's functions and activities, parents' volunteering at school, communication with the principal and the educators, checking of their children's homework, home rules and supervision, discussion between the parent and the child about school at home, the extent to which the parents demonstrate a helpful and supportive parenting approach (Porumbu & Necsoi 2013: 707-708).

This study revealed that the parents do not involve themselves actively in state secondary schools. Principals and educators complain about this lack of parental involvement because they claim that this contributes to the learners' lack of discipline, and the learners' freedom to manifest ill-discipline at school. The parents of this study do not participate in schools mainly because they are working parents and therefore they do not have time to visit the school, they are themselves living in a dysfunctional family in which a parent might be a drunkard, the mother might be a battered wife, there is drug-addiction and the parents are very bad models for the children (Paragraphs 5.2.1.2 and 5.2.1.4). These unfavorable family conditions are hindrances to the parents to take an important part in the education of their children. They are themselves financially, psychologically and personally stressed and therefore they have other worries to find solutions to in their daily life. Such parents can only shift their parental responsibility to the school. They are fed up with life and with their inability to discipline their children at home. This is consistent with Okeke (2014:3), Asiyai (2012: 46), Van Breda (2014:

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1058) and Bogotch (2015: 260) who support that most parents complain of a lack of time, difficulties in attending meetings at school, and the feeling of having nothing to contribute. This is also supported by Mouton (2015: 143) and Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 116) who claim that parents ignore the educative reasons of the presence of their children at school and do not know how to contribute to the welfare of their children at school (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). However, Kimaro and Machumu (2015: 492) claim that parent-educator conferences and parent-educator face-to-face contact improve not only children's school outcomes but also learner discipline, attitudes and attendance rates. This is consistent with Jones' tools for teaching model which recommends parent conferencing in its level 2 back-up system (Paragraph 3.2.1), the responsive classroom model which advocates that there should be a two-way communication between the school and parents about the learner discipline at school (Paragraph 3.2.2) and the Olweus' bullying prevention model which requires the help of parents to address effectively the problem of bullying at schools (Paragraph 3.2.5).

Other parents who are very concerned with the education of their children and who are willing to be involved in the school hesitate to come to school because they feel they are not welcomed by the educators and the principal. This is explained by Parent 6 of School B who shared her disappointing experience: "*But, I don't believe that all educators would welcome the parents at school at any time to talk about the child's behaviour at school. It happened to me that I was near the school, so I thought to pop up in the school to go to meet my child's educator to talk about my child. But, the school principal told me that educator was teaching in his class and I had to wait till lunch or to take an appointment for the coming day. So, I could not talk to him*." State secondary schools are not welcoming and inviting places for parents. This is supported by Strickland (2015: 75) and Carr & Chearra (2004: 22) who assert that invitations by the school for parental involvement have an effect on home-based involvement behaviour and on school-based involvement behaviour. The statement of parent 6 implies that the state secondary schools do not have a parental involvement plan to spell out the processes and procedures for parental involvement in the school. For proper parent involvement, the principal should have communicated his/her vision of and procedures for parental involvement so

that parents may feel welcomed by the principal and educators within the school parent involvement plan (Barr & Saltmarsh 2014: 7) (Paragraph 3.4.7). This plan should be discussed, crafted and implemented in the context of an effective home-school partnership. This is likely to help the principal in maintaining effective learner discipline at school.

The only structure that these schools have is the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) which represents the parent community of the school. However, this school structure is powerless in terms of active parental involvement in school matters, including learner discipline. From the field notes, the PTA holds an annual general meeting in April when some executive members are elected. The elected members meet once a month to discuss the income and expenditure of the school. The findings of this study revealed that discipline issues are never discussed as it concerns the school policy, not the local administrative policy. The principal of School B demonstrated the inability of the PTA to communicate the shared values of the school among all the parents and therefore the absence of parental involvement in the school: "*You know, in the school PTA there are only ten parents who are representative of nine hundred learners. So, you can imagine how parents are not attainable and we cannot really have their collaboration on any school matter. The PTA is only for administrative purpose. The ten parents only decide about how the school funds should be allocated for school projects and may be about some school activities.*" Jodut (2015: 13) supports this finding by asserting that the school's efforts to include parents are limited to orientations, fundraising and voluntary social events (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Moreover, this is consistent with Chikudo (2016: 40) who claims that parents in schools in Mauritius are involved only in fundraising activities and they are not involved in decision-making at the school level (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). This is inconsistent with the Canter's assertive discipline: positive discipline management model which states that educators and principals expect to have the assistance of parents in their attempt to discipline learners (Paragraph 3.2.6). Also, the findings of Duma (2013: 103), Ugboko & Adediwura (2012: 48), Ali *et al.* (2014: 281), Macharia *et al.* (2014: 210), Okeke (2014: 5) and Asiyai (2012: 46) view that the principal should give parents the right and responsibility to actively participate in the school governing body or

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the Parents Teachers Association of the school (Paragraph 3.4.7). Additionally, the field notes in Schools A and C indicated that the other parents show their minimum involvement by signing the child's journal weekly in which the Form Master enters his/her weekly remarks about homework done, the lessons covered and the child's conduct in classes. This finding is consistent with Watson and Bogotch (2015: 272) who report that many parents only sign the report cards and attend the school's telephone calls. It is also supported by Maponya (2015: 182) who found that the members of the School Governing Body do not support the principal in the planning and implementation of the school discipline plan. Lack of parental involvement hinders the principal and educators from appropriately managing learner discipline (Whitelock 2012: 65; McNamara (2010: 10) (Paragraphs 2.5.2.1 & 3.4.7). The lack of parental involvement at the level of the PTA in the selected Mauritian secondary schools is, however, inconsistent with the views of Steyn and Mashaba (2014: 388) and Duma (2013: 104) who maintain that the school governing bodies (SGBs) in South Africa contribute significantly to the maintenance of learner discipline and order in schools (Paragraph 3.4.7).

The PTA is therefore a limited formal school structure in terms of its authority in contributing to school effectiveness. However, this does not prevent the principal of School D to set up many other informal structures in which as many parents as possible are given an opportunity to be part of decision-making in school matters as partners. He was delighted to share his experience, enthusiasm and leadership initiatives in promoting parent involvement in his school, as opposed to the other principals in this study: "*I have meetings with the parents once per term. I have a group of dedicated parents whom I call "les parents flambeaux". So, I call the "parents flambeaux" once a month, meeting with the "group de parole" reflecting on those sensitive issues like socio-economic problems, problems coming from peers, pedagogical issues. We take up all these issues on board. They will be tiptoed about certain issues but also we are encouraging parents to come forward as now there is a forum for them for that. Having the Deans of Studies/ "group of parent flambeaux", having a structure for school discipline policy done at the level of the school, taking force on the Education Act 1957, that says the principal is empowered to have arrangements at his school to manage the school and help to delivery of service.*"

With additional structures involving parents in the school matters, including learner discipline, parents see that they are welcomed and accepted on an equal footing as the educators of their children. This is consistent with the views of Watson and Bogotch (2015: 273) who claim that there should be shared efforts, advocacy and activism between the school and parents, which however seem to be missing in many schools (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). The importance of active parental involvement is supported by Bennett (2015: 8) who posits that parents are part of the solution to learner discipline, not the problem in the sense that often the principal and educators view them as inconveniences (Paragraph 2.5.2.1).

5.2.2.7 A lack of government initiatives to restore learner discipline in state secondary schools

The education system of Mauritius is centralised, with the Minister of Education as the sole person responsible to initiate and approve all policy decisions concerning education at the national level (Paragraph 2.4). National policies on education are made at the level of the Ministry and principals are only policy implementers.

The findings of this study confirmed that principals must always show accountability to the Ministry of Education and they depend to a large extent on the Minister of Education to devise effective disciplinary strategies to restore or maintain learner discipline at schools. However, because of their dependence on the Ministry of Education and because they are not fully empowered to take decisions at the school level, principals are not in a position to effectively manage learner discipline. This constitutes a barrier to the principals in maintaining learner discipline. Despite the fact that learner discipline is a matter of concern in the state secondary schools, there is a lack of political will at the level of the Ministry and the central government to design a national discipline policy that may be implemented by all principals in the state secondary schools or to decentralise discipline policy decisions to the school level.

The inaction by the government is causing much harm to the state of learner discipline among learners of state secondary schools in Mauritius. The government does not take any initiatives concerning learner discipline and this is the deep concern of the principal of School B who commented: "*Everybody acknowledges that there is an alarming state of learner indiscipline at schools, but what to do? The government is not willing to legislate in this respect to change the situation. Each time there is a major problem or issue in schools, all the various stakeholders from the Ministry level to the school level meet to discuss about it, but then nothing concrete comes out of it as immediate actions.*" All the principals and educators interviewed agreed that they can bring forward no disciplinary strategies unless they are prescribed by the Ministry; this situation is making them helpless to the growing rise in the manifestations of learners' lack of discipline. This is due to the lax attitude of the Ministry of Education. This sentiment was highlighted by the principal of School C: "*Principals just do what the Zone Directorate tells us to do. When the Ministry talks of leadership, I don't understand where we lead. We are some bastard leaders: we have our opinions but we have also to follow what the government tells us to do.*" Learner 5 of School D agreed and recognised that the principal has no power to implement disciplinary strategies, unless the measures are taken by the higher authorities: "*The principal does according to the Ministry's advice and policies about learner discipline.*" Principals consider this inaction of the government as transmitting its responsibility to them; however in no way it encourages the latter to adopt disciplinary strategies. Principal A shared this frustrating sentiment by commenting: "*The Ministry says the principals of the state secondary schools must take disciplinary actions. I don't know how the principal should take actions. Because if the government can't take disciplinary actions, what can the principals do? Only ad hoc committees are held to look into the discipline problems, but then there is no follow up nor any policy to be implemented.*" This is consistent with Le Defi Quotidien (2015: 7) and Bechuke and Debeila (2012: 252) who confirm the absence of follow-up after the manifestations of a lack of learner discipline apart from an ad hoc or a Fact-finding committee which is organised at the outset (Paragraph 1.2.2). It is obvious that if the Ministry does not make any disciplinary policy, then the principals are not in a position to implement disciplinary strategies that they feel effective to implement. The Ministry of

Education gives the impression to the principals that learner discipline is not a matter of serious concern when the situation in some state secondary schools seems to have reached an alarming state (Paragraph 1.2.2). This was the feelings of the principal of School D: "*So there is some slackness on behalf of the ministry. I doubt the seriousness of the Ministry of handling the case.*" He adds: "*Nobody is able to solve the problem of learner discipline because no government till now has been able to legislate on learner discipline at school. The Ministry says it is the responsibility of the principal to maintain discipline but I do not have the means nor the Ministry give them to us.*" These statements show that the principals are helpless and are urging the government to provide them with the authority to take disciplinary actions at their level if the Ministry of Education or the government is so reluctant to make policy decisions about learner discipline (Paragraphs 1.2.3 & 2.2.1).

This study revealed that there is a general view among the principals mainly, but also among the educators, parents and learners that despite the worsening situation in schools, the Ministry of Education is taking no initiatives to improve learner discipline in schools. Meanwhile the principals are forced to implement disciplinary measures that they consider safe in order not to incur blame from the Ministry or parents. This implies no suspension and no expulsion. They give only a verbal warning or detention. This is highlighted by the statement of Learner 3 of School A: "*We are not afraid of any disciplinary actions against us as when the educator sends us to the principal's office for having misbehaved the principal just gives us one warning. This in fact motivates other learners to misbehave.*" Still, this also implies that the principals in state secondary schools are trying their best not to use reactive punishment measures, but at the same time they are not taking any positive discipline strategies as they are not familiar with any of the research-based behavioural strategies (Paragraph 3.5). This explains the chaotic situation of learner discipline in some state secondary schools where learner indiscipline is exacerbated due to a powerless principal.

The barriers to the implementation of disciplinary strategies by the principals in state secondary schools are therefore related to the attitudes of the stakeholders who are

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important to the successful implementation of disciplinary strategies, namely the parents, educators, superintendents, senior educators; the nature of the education system; the free transport system which is a government policy; and the government's attitudes and lack of commitment to put an end to the problem of a lack of learner discipline. The principal may have the willingness to monitor learner discipline, but if he/she does not get the help and support of stakeholders, he/she will fail, as is the situation currently in schools in Mauritius.

5.2.3 A critical analysis of the current implementation of learner disciplinary strategies in the selected state secondary schools

The ultimate aim of the researcher is to develop behaviour management strategies that may be adopted by the state secondary school principals in maintaining learner discipline effectively. It is of great importance that the researcher critically assesses the effectiveness of the behaviour management strategies that the principals are implementing in the schools so that he may propose strategies that may be used by the principals to ensure effective discipline among secondary school learners. The participants of this study were interviewed about the strategies they are implementing, given the existing barriers that hamper them in their attempt to maintain learner discipline. Based on the opinions, feelings, criticism, and views of the participants, the researcher discusses and analyses some of the strategies that are most frequently used in the selected state secondary schools of Mauritius. The study revealed that principals are mostly using the following disciplinary strategies, namely calling parents of learners who manifest a lack of discipline to the office (parental conferencing), counselling learners with behaviour problems and do counselling and guidance with all the learners at school, special reports, the school disciplinary committee, give warnings to learners, inclusive leadership, visionary leadership, management by walking around (MBWA) the school, use of the video surveillance cameras on the school premises, reactive punitive measures such as corporal punishment and detention, and the attendance card.

5.2.3.1 The principal calls parents to school (parental conferencing)

The parents are the main partners of the principal and the school and there should always be a two-way communication between parents and the school as both have the interests of the child as their primary educational objective. The School Management Manual for principals of state secondary schools stipulates that the principal may take the decision to organise parental meetings to take up particular issues such as subject combinations, absenteeism, latecoming or other discipline or behaviour problems of their children (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 25). From this study, it is obvious that the principals are fulfilling their discipline management task as per this guideline of the Ministry of Education.

All the participants of the four state schools, with no exception, maintained that the principal's first step is to phone the parents immediately once a learner has manifested a lack of discipline at school. Principal D explained well this first step: "*I call the learner and his Form master; we give the learner the opportunity to explain the situation, about why he manifested a lack of discipline. He has to talk. If he misbehaved for a genuine reason, I will understand him and attend to the problem; but most often, it is not genuine, and I call the parent to my office. In the meeting I will talk to the parent in the presence of the child about his behaviour. After the official meeting in my office when the parent has moved away, I will use a sheet of paper on which we write down the manifestation of the lack of discipline. It is like a behavioural contract which the learner signs. It is not always to talk severe measures but I think talking and explaining with the learner in front of the parent is important. I deal with a lack of learner discipline by getting the parents to be in. The school cannot work alone in the process of educating the child. We have parents as the first partner of the school in educating the child.*" They all agreed also that this is the only strategy the principal can adopt within the legal and political framework governed by the Child's rights, as discussed in paragraph 5.2.1.7, as the principal has to apply school rules and regulations by respecting the constitutional rights of the learner. Calling parents to discuss the learner lack of discipline is consistent with Canter's assertive discipline: positive behaviour management model (Paragraph 3.2.6.2) and the

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monitoring of learner behaviour modification through a behavioural contract (Iverson 2003: 138; Rosen 2005: 34) (Paragraph 3.5.11).

Learner 3 of School D, the superintendent of School A and Parent 5 of School C shared clearly the opinion of Learner 1 of School B who acknowledged the ineffectiveness of parental conferencing by the principal: "*Their parents are called at school, but no concrete actions are taken by the principal, except a simple verbal warning.*" This is inconsistent with the superintendent of School D who affirmed authoritative position of his principal: *"The principal we have in this school is very powerful; he immediately informs the Brigade de Mineurs, the parents of the learner and the Ministry of Education, and convene all of them to his office. A representative of the Ministry, the sergeant of the Brigade and the parents were here at school the following day. The school principal discussed about the behaviour problem of the learner. The parties agreed to give the learners a rustication of three days from school. We also often have cases of assault of school mates and class mates. In such cases, we take the same steps: Brigade des Mineurs, the Ministry of Education, the Zone 2 Director, the school psychologist, and a social worker. We need the services of these people.*" This is supported by Losen, Hewitt and Toldson (2014: 10) who state that there should be adequate resources in place for counselling and mental health support (Paragraph 3.2.8). However, the findings of this study revealed that off-site resource persons are called for help only when the learner manifests a lack of discipline. This is inconsistent with the School Wide Positive Behavioural Support model and the view of Nealis (2014: 13) who asserts that each school should have a school-based social worker, a school psychologist as well as a school nurse to promote positive learner mental health and behaviour (Paragraphs 3.2.7 & 3.4.8). In Mauritius, the educational psychologists and the educational social worker are posted at the Ministry of Education, and the *Brigade des Mineurs* are posted at the District Head Quarters of the Police Force. However, in the absence of a school-based school psychologist, School D has a Student Care Counselling desk, as the principal indicated: *"This desk is making a wonderful job in this school. Learners who have behaviour problems are counselled by a group of educators. These learners are released two times during the first two periods so that these educators may listen to their*

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problems, give them advice and possible solutions. These educators meet me in my office where they give me a report about each learner progress about her behaviour. Then we do a follow-up." Despite this statement, it is clear that schools need to have expert counsellors to successfully monitor and change learner behaviour and to give the appropriate referrals. Educators do not have training in counselling. This confirms the studies by Sugai & Horner (2006:247) and Maphosa and Mammen (2011: 148) which reveal that referrals to educational psychologists, guidance and counselling as well as stress and anger management are effective in dealing with severe manifestations of a lack of discipline (Paragraph 3.2.7).

Moreover, calling parents is not always a successful strategy for the principal. The study revealed that when parents are called to the school, they are engaged in personal business or commitments and therefore they do not turn up to collaborate with the principal in an attempt to correct the learner's behaviour (Paragraph 5.2.2.6). As a result, learners take advantage of the lack of parental support in disciplining them at school, and the principal may fail in his/her endeavor to maintain learner discipline. Learner 6 of School B highlighted this unsuccessful situation: "*Often the school superintendent or the principal calls the parents of the learner who manifested a lack of discipline, they do not come to school. The parents never come to meet the principal or the superintendent to take cognizance of the learner's behaviour. So, such learners take advantage of the parents' indifference to their behaviour to freely and fearlessly misbehave at school.*" This is consistent with Kimaro and Machumu (2015: 492) who assert that phone calls by the principal and educators to parents are not the most desirable means of communication about the children's attitudes and behaviour at school (Paragraph 3.2.6.2).

5.2.3.2 Visionary leadership

Paragraph 3.4 of this study highlighted the three main activities that principals must do in an attempt to maintain learner discipline, namely (i) they must craft their vision about their goals of discipline, (ii) align all the educators and learners with this vision by gaining their acceptance through effective communication, commitment, coalition-

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building, and empowerment, and (iii) inspire them by enlisting, supporting and recognising good and acceptable learner behaviour, as well as any slightest improvement in learner behaviour, through praise and constructive and developmental feedback (Wyatt 2015: 58; Teckchandani & Schultz 2014: 63-64; Macharia *et al.* 2014: 208).

According to Belle (2007: 75), vision is a process which the principal is responsible to communicate to the school. All the four principals are doing their best to communicate their mission, vision and goals regarding learner discipline in their respective schools. They do visioning as a preventive measure in order to avoid the need to have recourse to interventionist measures which, according to them, they cannot implement due to the various barriers mentioned in the previous paragraph of this chapter. They share their philosophy of learner discipline with learners throughout the year to avoid problems with parents and so that learners know the precise consequences of each manifestation of a lack of discipline. Principal C admitted: "*Parents and the authority will always find an excuse and blame you when you do your best to maintain learner discipline: they will say their learners have the National Examinations of Form three to take part in, or the "O" Level Cambridge exams or the "A" Cambridge Exams, and they will lose important teaching and learning days if you give learners some days of rustication; that children cannot be denied free education; they are missing important revision by forcing them to stay at home. Finally, the principal will be blamed by the parents when their children fail the exams. So, I should say that we have to be very careful when taking disciplinary measures at schools to avoid having to face problems at the parents' level, the Ministry level and the media level. The principal should do awareness about the importance of good learner discipline by talking to the learners at school*." The principal, therefore, emphasises prevention rather than intervention. He/she does so as a measure to encourage self-discipline and to make the learners responsible for their behaviour. Thus, the principal avoids problems with or negative reactions from parents about the disciplinary measures he/she adopts to maintain learner discipline.

The field notes in School A confirmed that the principal carries out an everyday morning visit in the maximum of classes possible during the Form Master's periods. At these, he talks to the learners about the importance of wearing the appropriate school uniform, the

need to be punctual and regular at school every morning, the importance of education for their future, the importance of respect for moral values of the society so as to be a role model for others. It is a way for him to show his physical visibility on the school premises and that he cares for the learners' behaviour and education. This is consistent with the Best Practice Model of Holloman and Yates (2012: 124-127) who proposes the principal to use an ethical, authentic and servant leadership approach by caring for the learners to prevent learner indiscipline (Fox *et al.* 2015: 7; Cook 2015: 25; Focht & Ponton 2015: 2-4) (Paragraph 3.4.2). Modiba (2015: 301), Wyatt (2015: 58), Teckchandani and Schultz (2014: 63-64) and Macharia *et al.* (2014: 208) support the finding of this study when they posit that the principal has the responsibility to talk to learners to inspire them to occupy positions of prominence in life in the future, to embrace schooling and to learn positive behaviour (Paragraph 3.4.1). This is congruent with the view of Gerstl-Pepin and Aiken (2014: 49) who maintain that the principal should have an ethic of care for the learners in that everyone should have a right to be cared for and that the principal should be moved by the needs, social ills and problems of the learners (Paragraph 3.4.2).

There are, however, around one thousand learners in each state secondary school in Mauritius, and the principal has additional instructional tasks to perform, namely the mobilisation and management of resources, the support and empowerment of educators, the establishment and maintainance of positive relationships with educators and learners, the monitoring the school curriculum and instruction, and the provision of professional staff development (Belle 2007: 73) He/she therefore very often delegates the task of talking about learner behaviour and maintaining learner discipline to the school superintendent, the senior educator and the deputy principal. Parent 5 of School B stated in this regard: "*Sometimes it is also the Deputy Principal or an educator who come to talk about the importance of discipline at school. Sometimes, even learners come to the assembly to talk about desirable behaviour from learners at school. This is a good approach as learners would reflect on their own behaviour and they may see modeled behaviour from their school mates. They may be motivated to behave well.*" The finding of this study revealed that the principal is constrained by time; this was pointed out by the superintendent of School A: "*However, due to lack of time and excessive paperwork, we*

(the principal and the superintendent) *cannot do counselling all times. However, for some learners, counselling does not work; they only listen to you, but when they turn their back to you they start again having the same misbehaviour.*" Although the principal should follow an integrative leadership approach through delegation (Barbour & Hickman 2011: 161), yet the superintendent, the deputy principal and the educators find it difficult to fulfil the delegated role of visioning about learner discipline. This finding is in congruence with the views of Ntombela (2014: 165) and Trevinio *et al.* (2008: 107) who posit that superintendents have too many administrative tasks and work stress to do additional tasks (Paragraph 3.6). Nevertheless, it is incongruent with the view of Lawson (2007: 4) that maintains that delegates cannot help the principal in managing learner discipline because they lack the three important aspects and practices of effective delegation, namely responsibility, authority and accountability (Paragraph 3.4.4).

Due to the lack of time, the principals do the morning assembly, as they are required by the School Management Manual which stipulates that the principal should hold the morning assembly almost every day for not more than fifteen minutes to "*remind learners and staff of the vision, mission, objectives of the school and the values taught by the school such as discipline, hardwork, spirit of service and sense of school-connectedness and of responsibility*" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 19). The principal or the delegated person in the selected state secondary schools uses the morning assembly as a platform to praise learners with good and acceptable behaviour, to encourage, motivate and congratulate learners who have improved their behaviour and to rehearse the school's rules, behaviour rules and the logical consequences. Learner 3 of School B attested to this strategy: "*The principal talks about it in the morning assembly so as to sensitive the whole school about the discipline matter and what have been the consequences. This makes other learners reflect on their behaviour before misbehaving*". However, the findings of the current study revealed that late-coming and bunking classes are the main manifestations of learner indiscipline in state secondary schools. The principal of School D lamented the situation: "*Some learners do not come to the morning assembly but instead go to the school canteen.*" This implies that the principal does not reach all the learners with this vision, and therefore,

latecomers do not take cognizance of the principal's vision and philosophy about learner discipline. Thus, learner discipline is not likely to be successfully maintained.

Moreover, despite the visioning of the leadership and his/her attempt to communicate the rules and regulations as well as the logical consequences in the morning assembly and in the Form Master's periods, the principal may not be successful in maintaining discipline. The finding of this study revealed that talking discipline to learners is not always effective. Educator 4 of School C desperately commented: "*What we can also do is talk to them about the importance of education for their own future life and success. Sometimes this work effectively, sometimes it does not. This is because learners get everything on a plate, easily from their parents. So, she does not realise the importance of education and having exemplary behaviour at school.*" This is because learners do not realise that becoming indifferent to schooling is commensurate with self-subjugation and self-oppression (Yukl 2006: 8). Also, when there is no learner leadership and pupil voice and choice in the crafting and implementation of the school rules and regulations, learners do not establish any ownership of the rules, nor do they find any legitimacy in the principal's and educator's authority to make them comply with them. Learners naturally resist, revolt and challenge the principal's authority (Maphosa & Mammen 2011: 144). Learner 2 of School A rightly and proudly commented: "*Yes, indeed, we know them* (the school rules and regulations). *They are written in the school handbook, which every learner has in his possession from the very first day of the school. But no one takes them into consideration.*" This is also supported by Smit (2013: 353), Cole *et al.* (2013: 247), Miltra (2006: 8) and Way (2011: 366) who state that only when school and classroom rules are mutually agreed upon by means of a participatory process, will learners consider the rules and regulations as moderately strict but fair and legitimate and that perception will help produce a school environment that is characterised by safety and order, thereby making it conducive to learning and good discipline (Paragraphs 2.6.4 & 3.5.6). Moreover, the findings of this study on the selected Mauritian schools is in line with Canter's assertive behaviour model which is educator-centered (Bear 2005: 131) and more structured (Pagliaro 2011: 106) with the educator drafting the rules and imposing them onto the learners who have to abide by them, otherwise they are punished (Paragraph 3.2.6).

The findings of this study are not in line with the responsive classroom model (Paragraph 3.2.2) and the view of Gendron (2015: 27) and Perruci and McManus (2015: 15) who define leadership as the process whereby the leader (principal) and the followers (learners) develop a relation and work together towards a goal (crafting and implementing a learner behaviour policy) within an environmental context (the school) shaped by cultural values and norms, which are specific to the particular school, not prescribed by the school administration (Paragraph 3.4.8). In Mauritius, the rules and regulations of the state secondary schools are prescribed and imposed; learners are thus likely to show non-compliance to the authority of the principals and educators.

5.2.3.3 Inclusive leadership

The school principal should provide learners with the opportunities to actively participate in school decisions relating to matters of their concern. This helps in promoting effective school leadership as the principal and the learners will be collaborating together towards a specific set goal of having a safer and saner school environment (Schleicher 2015: 21). The current study revealed that inclusive leadership is practised by the principals of state secondary schools in Mauritius. The principals interviewed involve learners in prefectship, the School Student council, in the organisation of important school events like the annual Music Day, the Sports Day, the Prize-giving Day and the national Independence Day celebration. This is in accordance with Jeruto and Kiprop (2011: 92) who refer to student participation in decision-making through student representative bodies such as school councils, student parliaments and the prefect body.

In this regard, the principal of School C expressed his opinion of inclusive leadership: "*We have the student council, class prefect body, and bus prefect body. The learners who are members of these bodies are assigned the responsibility to report any manifestation of the lack of learner discipline. The bus prefects ensure good and acceptable behaviour in the school bus. The SMT is informed of any serious offence or behaviour in the bus. Then we take actions to correct their behaviour. They do so in collaboration with the SMT.*" This person-centered approach helps build trust and develops shared relationships for better learner discipline management (Freiberg & Lamb 2009: 102; Pedersen *et al.*

2011: 30; Naicker & Mestry 2013: 9; Barr & Saltmarsh 2014: 11) (Paragraph 3.4.8). The principal of School D acknowledged this sharing of responsibility or distributed leadership approach to learners in his school and added the following to indicate the enthusiasm of learners for participation in such school structures: "*We have to give them some roles or functions. You have to see for the price giving ceremony, the independence celebration, the Music Day. Those looking for the representatives recognise them, to given some responsibilities from the school administration to get the students in orderly, distributing the cake, welcoming the guests, and directing the guests to the seating place for the ceremony. They are dressed with a tie, different from their daily school uniform. As such they get an enhanced consideration from the school administration. We foster an understanding of the students by having the peer student counseling among themselves through the body of student council, class captain, vice-captain and the perfect body.*" This authentic leadership of the principal is consistent with the view of Gardiner, Howard, Tenuto & Muzaliwa (2013: 17), Cheng, Jiang, Riley, Cheng & Jen (2014: 82) and Wyatt (2015: 58) who state that in this way he/she helps learners get connected to the school by using the participatory approach through unifying them (Paragraph 3.4.1). However, the findings of this study indicate that the learners are only collaborating and there is no indication that they participate actively in decision-making. Contrary to the student-led leadership roles advocated by Pedersen *et al.* (2011: 23) in Paragraph 3.4.5, the findings show that the learners in Mauritius are not given the opportunity to have their opinions and perspectives heard by the principal or the School Management Team. This is in accordance with the definition of learner participation at schools in the School Management Manual, which recommends that "the principal should meet the school prefects and the Student Council twice an academic term to inform them of the specific problems in the school and of the actions being taken by the School Management Team and by the Ministry. The principal should communicate to them the time frame for the implementation of the solutions to the problems" (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 20). Thus, the Ministry of Education gives a very limited role to learners in decision-making; the learners are at schools only as the recipients of final decisions with no voice and choice (Paragraph 3.2.6.2). The findings revealed that the principal and the Ministry of Education of Mauritius ignore the pyramid of learner voice

put forward by Mitra (2006: 7). This pyramid illustrates that school personnel must first listen to learners about their experiences and expectations in school; then, learners should work with the principals and educators to make changes in the school to bring forward solutions to possible school problems; and finally, the principal should help build the learner capacity for leadership through educator-focused activities and learner-focused activities (Dempster, Stevens and Keeffe 2011: 10) (Paragraph 3.4.5).

Moreover, learner participation in the school structures like the Student Council and the prefect body, among others, are not effective in maintaining learner discipline. The findings revealed that those learners involved in these structures are themselves victims of poor discipline shown by other learners in their school. Learner A shared her experience of travelling with learners who manifest a lack of discipline in the free school bus after school hours: "*We have bus prefects, but they do not have much authority to monitor learners who misconduct in the school bus. They are afraid of bullying or being victims of aggression or verbal attack by group of learners. So, the bus prefect prefers to stay calm in her seat, and not interfere when a group of learners are misbehaving in the bus.*" Parent 4 of School B shared her regrets of having her daughter serve as class captain to help the principal in maintaining learner discipline: "*My daughter was once the class captain of the class, and in the absence of the class educator, one learner was using her mobile phone to talk to a stranger. When the educator was back to the classroom, she reported the girl's lack of discipline. But, after the school bell ring in the afternoon, the girl who misbehaved physically assaulted my daughter. Even the mother of that girl came to physically attack my daughter after school hours.*" So, learners who are given the opportunity to take the lead and help in maintaining learner discipline for a healthy school environment and who voluntarily accept this leadership role are subject to threats from classmates and even bullied. Learners involved in these structures are neither empowered nor protected by the principal. This is consistent with Glanz (2006: 2) who found that principals appear to be practising "contrived collegiality" (Paragraph 3.2.6.2). This practice of contrived collegiality is incompatible with choice-making as a method of positive discipline which gives learners the opportunities to make choices about the school's discipline policy among other relevant school matters (Lane *et al*. (2013:30) (Paragraph 3.5.2). Also, the learner participation as it is practised in Mauritius, supports

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the findings of Jeruto and Kiprop (2011: 97) which reveal that this limited learner participation gives learners the impression and the feeling that the commitment of the school is tokenistic and that the principal does not take them seriously (Paragraph 3.2.6.2).

The current study also indicated a disciplinary committee in each state secondary school. The disciplinary committee is composed of the Deputy Principal or the Senior Educator, the School Superintendent, one member of the Student Council or the Perfect Body, the Form Master of the learners concerned, and three other members of the teaching staff. According to the School Management Manual, the purpose of the disciplinary committee is to help the principal to address the problems of a lack of learner discipline (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 34). Educators and principals point out the benefits of having such a committee in the school for learner discipline management. This is a formal structure to which educators may refer cases of a lack of discipline in their classroom; this committee does counselling as and when required and uses logical consequences, such as a special report or detention, after the learner explains his/her deed. Educator 3 of School A highlighted the *raison-d'être* of the disciplinary committee in this regard: "*This committee will discuss about the possible reasons for a learner to misbehave and decide on the corrective measures or interventions required to make the learner change his/her behaviour. Instead of one educator dealing with a learner who manifests a lack of discipline, in the committee there are many educators and the disciplinary committee of educators dealing with cases of misbehaviour is more effective. Once a learner faces such a committee, he/she will not repeat the same undesirable behaviour to avoid the disciplinary committee.*"

However, the participants emphasise the ineffectiveness of the disciplinary committee as a structure to maintain learner discipline at schools. Firstly, despite its composition, the disciplinary measures that are taken against a learner are never a collective decision. Educator 2 of School C raised concern regarding this type of decision-making process about discipline: "*The members who take decisions in the disciplinary committee are the principal and some senior staffs.*" This is inconsistent with Ugboko and Adediwura (2012: 48) and Naicker and Mestry (2013: 12) who maintain that participative leadership

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emphasises collective decision-making, principles based on democracy and the leadership of all stakeholders in the context of school-based management (Paragraphs 3.4.4 and 3.4.5). This explains its weakness and failure to take the most appropriate disciplinary measures in cases of indiscipline in Mauritius. This is supported by Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008: 223) who assert that a so-called team is easily formed, and maintain that the school structures operate collaboratively, but there will be no concrete results to the discipline problem if the principal does not change his/her thinking (Paragraph 3.2.7.2). Unless this takes place, educators and learners will not be encouraged to be part of the committee. This is clearly stated by Educator 2 of School D: "*The principal may set up a disciplinary committee. But, I will not be part of such committee unless he gives me all my prerogatives about what I may do or not in terms of the implementation of learner discipline formally on paper and signed by him. Also, the duties of the members of a school disciplinary committee are not defined by the principal. I think that a disciplinary committee is rather a white elephant and educators just say they are in the committee but they can do nothing about successfully maintain discipline in the school. In such a situation, with a white elephant committee, educators like me will never be keen to be one of its members*." Only the principal and the senior staff of the committee decide about the disciplinary policy and this discourages educators and learners to help in maintaining learner discipline through the school disciplinary committee. This is inconsistent with the Activity Theory which emphasises consultation, participation and inclusiveness of all stakeholders so that trust is built and leaders can involve the school in unity around commonly shared values and higher-order purposes (Naicker & Mestry 2013: 9; Hopkins & Jackson 2003: 101) (Paragraph 3.4.4).

However, even the authority of the disciplinary committee is limited in terms of decision-making and implementation of behavioural strategies to be adopted when a learner manifests a lack of discipline as the principal, the school head, faces the same constraints such as the protection of the child's rights, accountability to the Ministry of Education, and political intervention as analysed in Paragraph 5.2.2 in this chapter. As the researcher has found in this study and as per the Education Act 1957 and the School Management

Manual, school-based planning and strategies should be approved by the Ministry of Education first, and this is a long process.

5.2.3.4 Special report

The special report is not in the prescribed list of disciplinary actions proposed in the School Management Manual, but the study revealed that principals in the selected state secondary schools are using it as the most common behavioural strategy. It is a reactive strategy as it is adopted and put into practice once a learner is accused of a manifestation of a lack of discipline.

From the field notes, the researcher describes the special report as a form or a booklet designed by the Ministry of Education for all state secondary schools in which the name of the learner, his/her class and the effective date of the disciplinary measure are written. It contains a daily grid in which the learner writes the name of each subject and the name of the educator on a daily basis; and each educator who works with him/her writes about his/her behaviour in the class and signs the report. The learner takes the report from the superintendent or the Senior Educator's office when he/she reaches the school in the morning and keeps it with him/her to be filled by the educators on a daily basis for one week. At the end of the school day, he/she returns it to the superintendent or senior educator who monitors the learner's behaviour progress. By the end of the week, the learner takes it home to make his/her parents aware of the progress made. If there is an observed behaviour improvement, the disciplinary measure is waived; if there is any manifestation of the undesirable behaviour over the week, the learner gets a detention or suspension. In either situation, the special report is not effective. This is confirmed by Educator 5 of School B who states: "*When a learner gets a special report for a week for having misbehaved, she will behave properly during that period so that all educators insert good report about her behaviour in their class. With good reports about her behaviour for a week, the measure is waived. But, she will restart to manifest a lack of discipline after some times.*" Another comment by Learner 3 of School A supported the ineffectiveness of this disciplinary measure: "*But, with no improvement, the learner gets*

a maximum of one week off school (a suspension). However, this is not efficient as the learner who misbehaved is happy to get one week "holidays" from the principal. Instead of a deterrent, it encourages learners who do not like school to misbehave so that they are kept away from school for some days." This is supported by Zaslaw (2010: 58) who claims that some learners consider out-of-school detention and suspension as a vacation. In addition to encouraging a learner with behaviour problems to keep misbehaving due to a limited repertoire of effective disciplinary measures, and encouraging learners to have "authorised" free time away from school, the principal feels disempowered when he/she has to take more effective disciplinary measures. The superintendent of School A illustrated the principal's lack of empowerment to apply fully the special reports in an attempt to use measures spelled out in the School Management Manual, namely suspension of privileges, issue of severe warning, detention and rustication by stating: "*When the learner misbehaves, she knows the principal will give her a special report, I will call her parents, what next? She knows she will not be rusticated. Why? We do not rusticate because we cannot accept the fact that she will miss her classes. We does this for the benefit of the child. However, the child who misbehaved seize this opportunity or lack of sanctions. So, you see, it is better to take severe actions against the learner. However, this is not at my level. I will have to inform the principal, who is not empowered to take the decision to rusticate, suspend or expulse a learner from the school. So the principal will have to consult the Ministry who must then give its consent for such a disciplinary measure. It's a long process.*"

Thus, all the participants agreed about the ineffectiveness of the special report as a disciplinary measure most commonly used by the principal to maintain learner discipline. This system of monitoring learner behaviour as it is practised in the state secondary schools is in disagreement with Kelly and Vaillancourt (2012: 2) who posit that special reports or the check-in/check-out system provides an opportunity to correct problem behaviour and reinforce prosocial behaviour in secondary schools (Paragraph 3.5.9).

5.2.3.5 Video surveillance cameras

Video surveillance cameras have been installed in all state secondary schools over the last five years following the rising incidence of indiscipline. The use of such cameras in schools has been recommended as a method for deterring vandalism (Skiba 2000: 8). Video surveillance cameras as a disciplinary measure form part of a zero-tolerance policy. A zero-tolerance practice is referred to the practice of using more severe penalties such as suspension and expulsion, for both major and minor violations of the school disciplinary code; this will definitely send a message to the learners that the school will not tolerate certain behaviour (Skiba 2010: 28).

The current study revealed that all the cameras in the selected secondary schools are operational and function according to purpose, although not necessarily reducing the manifestations of indiscipline. Parent 4 of School A explained the procedures following the identification of a learner found guilty of misconduct on the video surveillance camera: "*The principal reviews the scene in the school surveillance camera and calls the learner to the office. He calls his parents to explain his lack of discipline and what actions will be taken against him. The principal takes no actions but asks the parents to deal with their child to ensure that the child does not repeat the same misconduct again at school. The principal cannot report such a case to the police.*" This implies that the video surveillance cameras are only used for identification of the learner who violates the school rules, but no disciplinary measures as such follow the learner's deed. Thus zero-tolerance as defined by Skiba (2010) above is not evident; there is no school-to-prison pipeline in the case of learners of the state secondary schools. The findings are therefore inconsistent with Nance's findings (2014: 83) who defines the school-to-prison pipeline as an outcome of the practice of having video surveillance cameras which, through the use of suspension and/or expulsion as reactive and punitive disciplinary measures, remove learners from the school temporarily or permanently, thereby creating conditions under which these learners are more likely to end in prison. They are also inconsistent with Skiba's ideas (2014: 28), who argues that the philosophy of the use of video

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surveillance must be based on the "broken window theory", that is strict punitive disciplinary measures must be taken to indicate to other learners that misconduct is not tolerated in the school. Video camera surveillance has not been examined in chapters two and three. It emanated as an important preventive discipline measure from the empirical study in the Mauritian context.

Moreover, all the learners, educators, parents, superintendents and principals agreed that the video surveillance cameras are ineffective in reducing a lack of learner discipline, though they may act as a deterrent to prevent learners to misbehave in the "black spots", that is high risk areas. Learners avoid these spots and manifest a lack of discipline in areas where their right to privacy should be respected. To the question about the effectiveness of the CCTVs on his school premises, the principal of School D with much hesitation commented: "*(with hesitation) Yes, it is effective, because the students know that they are constantly under scrutiny. But is it a major deterrent? That is debatable, because you see living with it in everyday setting eventually the students will get used to it and adopt it. But the students are wise enough to know where the cameras are on the school compound in areas we may call the blinds spots. The cameras are there. They are fitting their purposes, but students do not fear them. It is like a reality show; the cameras are there. I can tell you that the students know that the cameras do not cover the areas at the side of the school yard, so they have attempted to run away from school from there. So, though it is serving its purpose, yet it is not a major deterrent. When you ask principals they will tell you "yes it is a major deterrent." But, this is because they have spent money on the purchase of these cameras, so they cannot say they are not working. You know there is another issue with the cameras: we chose the cheapest one in the market and the pixel of the images is not strong enough to be able to recognise from far who is actually manifesting a lack of discipline. It is fine; we can see that there is a fight going on, and so I have to go quickly on site. But, to actually identify the learners, I doubt.*" This statement is consistent with Amos, White and Trader (2015: 2) who support that spaces out of the camera range, including bathrooms, supply closets and any other area behind or away from the camera range, leave the learners vulnerable to a lack of discipline. Video surveillance cameras are unreliable and easy to circumvent due to the

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quality of the equipment, lighting or viewing area range, leaving no or little chance for the principal or parents to enforce law against the learner. The findings revealed that instead of an additional officer specifically employed for monitoring of the learners through the cameras, the caretaker is given the additional responsibility to do so. This measure is ineffective as demonstrated by the desperate feelings of the principal of School C: "*Another thing is that the government provides every school with the CCTV but does not give them the personnel to monitor them. The principal has to beg the existing anciliary personnel to monitor the screens in the office on a roaster basis. Do you think that person will dedicate himself to this additional job that is not his fundamentally?* Neither the caretaker nor the school superintendent does the monitoring of learners' movement and behaviour after two o'clock daily as they both do their specific task as per their scheme of service, which does not include monitoring of the screens. Skiba (2000: 8) states that in order for cameras to be effective, additional staff must be hired to monitor them. Amos *et al.* (2015: 2) maintain that unless video feed from cameras are monitored in real time, cameras will only be able to capture potential evidence of violence already been perpetuated, not prevent poor discipline. Thus, the use of security cameras helps to monitor the school without preventing the occurrences of a lack of learner discipline in the state secondary schools.

5.2.3.6 Reactive and punitive disciplinary strategies

Reactive and punitive disciplinary strategies are measures that the school may take after the lack of learner discipline has occurred. This current study revealed that corporal punishment and detention are two such techniques which principals in state secondary schools are currently adopting to maintain learner discipline.

(a) Corporal punishment

This was discussed in Paragraph 5.2.1.7. Learners, parents and educators of this study shared the opinion that corporal punishment is still being used in the state secondary

schools of Mauritius. Surprisingly, educators, learners and even parents of School D unhesitatingly accept the fact that corporal punishment is sometimes useful to modify the learner's behaviour, especially in a case of severe misconduct. This is consistent with Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 112) who state that many educators, administrators and parents believe that corporal punishment is necessary to teach learners a lesson and discourage them from similar practices in future (Paragraph 2.5.2.2).

Corporal punishment occurs in one state secondary school in the study which is a national state secondary school. Those learners who obtain the best results (five A+) at the Certificate in Primary Education exams are admitted to the national state secondary schools. The study revealed that the only form of corporal punishment that is used by educators and the principal of School D is slapping: the learner is slapped on his face or on the upper part of the body. As long as the punishment takes into consideration the Child's Rights and it does not cause any physical injury, parents accept it. It is used in case of severe misconduct, when the learner has not improved his/her behaviour after the principal has talked to him about his unacceptable behaviour and a first verbal warning has been given. Learner 2 of School D clearly explained the situation when corporal punishment is used: "*In case of severe manifestation of misbehaviour, the principal may even have recourse to corporal punishment such as slapping the learner in his office, after which the learner is suspended for three days. In case of minor behaviour problems, the principal often calls parents to talk to them about the possible procedures that will be applied when his learner repeats misbehaviour. A first warning is given to the learner in front of the parents*." The use of this type of punishment by the principal is confirmed by Educator 6 of the same School D: *"Moreover, our principal is strict enough about the rules and regulations of the school. He does not hesitate to slap a learner who misbehaves."* The argument of Parent 2 of the school denoted the general opinions of the parents and their approval: "*Of course, he should not use corporal punishment but punishment that is acceptable and that protect the child's rights.*" The particular reason for the general acceptance of the adoption of corporal punishment by educators and the principal is the location of the school and the fact the parents were themselves victims of such a reactive disciplinary strategy. Parent 5 of School D supported this reasoning: "*I*

should say that in the rural areas, corporal punishment is rather accepted by parents since we parents were ourselves physically punished by our parents to correct our behaviour. So, corporal punishment is found to be an acceptable means for correcting behaviour. It is also obvious that I sometimes have recourse to corporal punishment as I am convinced that it is effective when used. Even doctors and other well educated parents may accept it in the rural areas. So, I believe that when some correctional measures are taken to maintain learner discipline, it is effective. Else, the learners will keep on misbehaving. This is consistent with Tshalala (2012: 48-49) who states that some parents view corporal punishment as the traditional way of modifying the behaviour of children. Yet, Erkman and Rohner (2006: 252) disapprove of the fact that doctors and well-educated parents accept their children to be slapped by the principal and educators (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). Thus, corporal punishment is considered as an effective strategy in this national school. However, Parent 1 of School B commented that even if corporal punishment is re-introduced, the educators and principals would hesitate to use it due to the existing legal framework; educators are averse to run the risk of a police case at the expense of their job security: "*Nowadays, educators only talk to the learners about discipline. If the learner does not listen and behave properly, they only ignore the child. Even if the educators were given the right to use corporal punishment they would not do so, so as to avoid problems with the police and the Ministry of Education, their employer. The educator thinks this way: "Why should I do my best to discipline the child if I would have to go to the Court of Justice to respond to the Judge about an allegation of punishment; learners and parents may sue me in the Court for any unfounded allegation if they do not like my way of disciplining their child?*" This expression of risk aversion from the principal and educators with regard to corporal punishment is supported by Maynes, Mottonen and Sharpe (2015: 23) who assert that though they feel the need to intervene verbally and physically to maintain learner discipline, yet they fear the consequences of acting in response to this need (Paragraphs 1.2.2 & 2.5.2.2).

According to the other principals and parents, corporal punishment does not work, as is indicated by the principal of School C: "*We tried to use punishment to correct the learners' behaviour, but it does not work. Better we talk to the learners, try to understand*

them, give them warnings when they misbehave. Anyhow, we should give them the necessary guidance." The principal attempts to modify the behaviour of the disruptive learner, yet behaviour modification is not effective to maintain learner discipline (Paragraph 2.6.2). The finding is consistent with Glasser's control theory of discipline which recommends the teaching of self-discipline instead of punishment. However, this is not supported by Jones' tools teaching model which recommends punishment in its level 3 back-up system (Paragraph 3.2.1). According to Glasser (2009: 2), the strategy is two-fold: first, to stop the undesirable behaviour, and second, to teach self-discipline to the learners. Also, according to the Dreikur's model of democratic discipline, discipline is not punishment and punishment should never be used (Paragraph 2.6.1). Moreover, in the context of positive discipline, Govender and Sookrajh (2014: 7) maintain that avoidance of corporal punishment teaches learners greater self-discipline (Paragraph 2.5.2.2). The finding of this research is also consistent with Nelsen, Lott and Glen's model which stipulates that punishment has negative long term effects, though educators and principals may be fooled by the immediate effects on maintaining effective learner discipline (Paragraph 3.2.3).

(b) Detention

Detention is the supervised retention of a learner beyond the regular school schedule; an educator requests the learner to show an improvement following a violation of the school rules and regulations (Chen 2008: 3). It is a disciplinary strategy which the Ministry of Education recommends principals in the state secondary schools to adopt (Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources 2009: 36). However, it stipulates:

"*The principal should* give *a 24 hrs' notice to the Responsible Party before his/her child is kept in detention. He/she should submit a detention form to the Responsible Party. This form should specify the reason(s) for the detention and the day and time when the student will be in detention. The educator of the child should hand over the work that the student will have to do during detention class and ensure that the assigned task has been completed to his/ her satisfaction*".

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From the field notes, it was observed that after the principals have given a verbal warning to a learner who manifests a lack of discipline, and used the special report as a disciplinary strategy, they normally give a detention to him/her. Thus, it is used in cases of repeated manifestations of indiscipline. A principal gives a detention mainly on Saturdays. On the weekday afternoons, it does not work due to parents who complain about their children missing the free bus service provided by the state. This is in accordance with practice in the UK Department for Education (2014: 10) which stipulates that a detention should not compromise the learner's safety. This is also why principals do not give a detention on the weekday afternoon. The school officer responsible for supervising the learner who is on detention is the school superintendent or the usher. Mugabe and Maposa (2013: 115) support the view that the supervising officer has more and more difficulty to enforce attendance of detentions.

The findings of this study showed that detention is the most effective reactive and punitive disciplinary strategy that is implemented by principals in state secondary schools. The private tuition on Saturdays is a major contributing factor to its success in the Mauritian education system. This is confirmed by all the participants in the study. The superintendent of School D shared the same opinion about the effectiveness of detention with Parent 3 of School B: "*When we inform the parent that the learner is subject to Saturday detention, the parent says that his child has private tuition classes to attend on Saturdays, and that it is not good for him to miss them. This proves that learners do not like to miss their private tuitions. So, in order not to miss their private tuition classes on Saturdays, learners do not misbehave to avoid Saturday detention.*" Moreover, the principal of School C considered the fact that the recalcitrant learner has to attend school on a non-school day in uniform, which is an effective deterrent not only to the learner concerned but to other learners who do not want to have the same punitive and humiliating consequence. He mentioned: "*The learner will come to school on a Saturday in school uniform to do some academic work. I have noticed that the same learners do not get Saturday detention. This is because children are ashamed of having to come to school in school uniform on a Saturday which is not a school day. The others having*

heard or seeing their friend who manifested a lack of discipline going to school in school uniform is a deterrent to them from misbehaving." The fact that the same learners do not get a detention also proves that it works. However, some learners who are poor performers and do not take private tuition consider the detention as a period of time to have fun, especially when a group of learners have to come to school. Principal D manifested his despair and anger about the uselessness or ineffectiveness of this disciplinary strategy by commenting: "*It is freaking time!*" Skiba (2014: 30) supports this view when he posits that detention may act more as a reward than as a punishment for many learners. Leaners may even commit more acts of indiscipline when they are on detention (Maphosa & Mammen 2011:147). The Jones' tools for teaching model does not support this finding as it suggests that detention is an effective negative consequence in the school's level 2 back-up system (Paragraph 3.2.1). For this principal, it is of utmost importance to have recourse to more drastic measures, such as seeking help from the police trainers of the Police Training School to teach learners with serious misconduct how to properly behave in society and schools. This is in accordance with the deterrence theory which advocates more severe discipline to reduce misbehaviour through social compliance (Way 2011: 346). However, this is inconsistent with the view of Gasa (2012: 148) who postulates that the more severe the punishment is, the more undisciplined the learner will be, as the latter becomes a frustrated person with negative feelings about the principals, the educators and himself/herself (Paragraph 2.5.2.1). Moreover, punishment-based disciplinary measures take away responsibility from learners (Maphosa 2011: 242).

5.2.3.7 E-register (SMS) system

The e-register (SMS) system was introduced in all state secondary schools of Mauritius in 2011. The aim of this system was to control truancy, unjustified absences and continued latecoming of learners so that the school may inform parents, on a daily basis, of their child's absence at school or time of arrival in case of latecoming (Ministry of Education and Human Resources 2014: 60). The Ministry of Information Technology and Information provided all the schools with such a system because of the ineffectiveness of using the learner's journal to inform parents of their child's absence or latecoming. The

Minister of ICT claims that many learners sign their report cards or journal without their parents' knowledge or without getting the school notification of their absence or latecoming at school (Business Mega 2012: 25). This is confirmed by Learner 4 of School A: "*When the educators write a report about the learner's misbehaviour in class in the school journal, the learner either fakes the signature of her parents; the parents never know about the report. Else, they may tear the page from the journal so that parents do not see the behaviour report, and rewrite the time table in the new space.*"

The field notes revealed that once the Form Master's period is over every morning, the school superintendent and the senior educator cross-check the attendance register book of the learners of each class with the latecoming register book. Once this is done, they send an SMS before half past nine to the parents of all learners who are absent to inform them of their child's absence.

The study revealed that this specific strategy is serving its purpose. The superintendent of School D shared his observation of the effectiveness of this system in his school: "*The effectiveness of this system is obvious when it happens that we wrongfully send a SMS to a parent to inform about his child's absence while his child is in fact at school. The parent immediately calls back the school to query about this state of affairs.*" However, it would be interesting to determine the number of responses from parents after the superintendent sends the SMS alert to parents on their mobile phone. This would give a clear indication of how effective the e-register (SMS) alert system is in reducing the rate of absenteeism in state secondary schools. The extent of the effectiveness of this system is questioned by the learners. Learner 3 of School A argued: "*However, this strategy does not work as the learners often give their own mobile phone number or that of their boyfriend or friend. So, parents are never aware when their child is absent from school.*" On one hand, the superintendent is doing his job by implementing this disciplinary strategy, which he claims, is time-consuming and is in congruence with the view of Ntombela (2014: 165) and Trevinio *et al.* (2008: 107) (Paragraph 3.6), yet on the other hand, the learners find ways and means to circumvent it. Learners who have the motive to

misbehave for the reasons discussed in Paragraph 5.2.1 are likely to be frequently absent or late at school.

5.2.3.8 The attendance card

The attendance card is also known as the pink card in state secondary schools in Mauritius. It is an official document, which is the property of the Ministry of Education. The rules and regulations of School D stipulate that "disciplinary actions will be taken against the learner responsible for the pink card on that particular day, in case of irregularities".

From the field notes, when the bell rings in the morning at eight o'clock, the Form Master proceeds to the class where he/she does the attendance register and inserts the number and name of all learners who are absent in this period till ten minutes past eight. Once the Form Master leaves the class, the class captain becomes responsible for the monitoring of the pink card. He/she ensures that each subject educator signs it and verifies that the learners who are recorded present on the card are actually present in his/her class. Any discrepancy in absences is recorded by the subject educator. The class captain submits the pink card before the end of the last teaching period to the school superintendent who examines it the next morning and takes actions of any unofficial or unauthorised absences in the class.

The findings of this study revealed that the pink card is an effective method for monitoring learners' punctuality and regularity at school. Once the class captain has done the monitoring of the card during the day, the superintendent follows up by calling regular latecomers or absentees. The superintendent does the counselling, but if the learner does not change his/her behaviour, he/she is given an early warning and the parents are called at school. Learner 2 of School C shared her feeling about the effective use of the pink card: "*To decrease latecoming of learners, the principal sensitises them about the importance of being on time so as not lose important teaching and learning time. The superintendent reprimands those learners who are late, the next day the*

superintendent views the pink card on which all the names of all latecomers are written by the class teacher. The superintendent sends SMS to parents to inform them that their child is not absent at school today." This is consistent with Ginsburg, Jordan and Chang (2014: 1) who posit that the attendance card is of critical importance for early intervention as soon as the absences begin to add up. Moreover, this is supported by the Schoolwide Positive Behavioural Support model which requires the parents to be active participants in the school and to provide instructional and behavioural support to support positive discipline of their children at schools (Paragraph 3.2.7).

However, this specific strategy is dependent on the follow-up by the superintendent. In the context of the huge paperwork and other administrative tasks that must be done by the superintendent of state secondary schools and the high number of learners (a learner enrolment of around one thousand in most schools) (Paragraph 5.2.3.2), some learners take advantage of the situation by neglecting to return the pink card to the superintendent who fails to do the monitoring of the card closely enough to determine which class captain has not submitted it to him/her. Learner 5 of School A explained how learners find ways not to submit it to the superintendent: "*The name of absentees and latecomers are supposed to be monitored by the class captain, class subject educator and the superintendent. However, a learner may bunk a class and throw the pink card in the bin or steal it, or they may cut their name off the list of learners who were late, meaning she was not late. Also, there was not a close monitoring of the pink card by the class subject educators and the superintendent; for example, last year, all the daily pink cards of a class were seen at the home of the class captain by the end of the school year. The superintendent does not monitor the card on a daily basis and no one attempts to query about the missing of the pink card from the superintendent's office. No one, neither the class educator nor the superintendent requests or claims the pink card of the class; the daily pink card remains in the class drawer or cupboard for a whole year. Because a learner knows she recorded absent on the attendance, but because is not recorded late on the pink card or it is not closely monitored, she may leave the school premise earlier and she will not be sanctioned as she is officially absent.*" In this way, learners keep manifesting their lack of discipline without any disciplinary actions taken against them,

with the help of the class captain as well as all the classmates. This also indicates that the principal does not closely supervise the tasks of the superintendent who is accountable to him/her on a daily basis for the smooth running of the school.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that principals in the selected state secondary schools perform to their best to ensure that learner discipline is maintained, but their ability to do so effectively is subjected to the various internal and external factors that limit their leadership and authority. Steyn and Mashaba (2014: 390) concur that, despite their intrinsic motivation to ensure effective teaching and learning, principals have to confront various challenges from the external environment which may impact negatively on their motivation. However, for them to effectively maintain learner discipline, they have to redouble their leadership efforts and counteract the challenges and barriers examined in paragraph 5.2.2.

5.3 DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES IN THE MAURITIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM: A MISCONCEPTION

The interviews with the participants of this study and the field notes from observation indicate that the concept of discipline is viewed from the custodial perspective and not from the humanistic perspective (Paragraph 1.8.4).

There is thus a huge gap in the conceptualisation of learner discipline management in terms of disciplinary strategies, and this indicates the traditional standpoint of principals, educators, parents and superintendents in the approaches to learner discipline in state secondary schools. They define learner discipline as any activity that is planned and implemented to modify learner behaviour and to ensure that learners are compliant and order is maintained, to a view of freedom where any external intervention or prevention from an adult is considered as restricting the autonomy of the learner (Bechuke & Debeila 2012: 243). The researcher considers it of fundamental importance to understand the context of the education system of Mauritius so that the most appropriate disciplinary strategies and interventions may be proposed for successful implementation of learner

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discipline in the state secondary schools. The discussion on the principal's authority in the foregoing paragraphs as well from the other causes of a lack of learner discipline in this chapter indicate that reactive and punitive disciplinary measures are recommended by the Ministry of Education and by the participants of this study. However, school discipline is more than punishment; it includes developing learners' self-discipline (Canter & Canter 2001: 414; Abidoye & Onweazu 2010: 12; Skiba 2010: 28; Bear 2010: 1-3; Serame, Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Zulu 2013: 3) (Paragraphs 3.2.6.6 and 3.4.5). This particular context determines the most appropriate course of action with respect to learner discipline.

On the basis of this traditional conceptualisation of discipline, principals and educators of this study use the reactive and punitive disciplinary measures. When they conceptualise discipline as adults exerting control over the learners, they use the traditional disciplinary measures (Maphosa 2011: 241). The findings revealed that the main disciplinary strategies that are currently being implemented in the selected Mauritian state secondary schools are parental conferencing, visionary leadership, inclusive leadership, the disciplinary committee, special reports or check-in/check-out, video surveillance cameras, e-register (SMS) system, detention and corporal punishment, and the attendance card or pink card. Most of these disciplinary strategies are categorised as traditional disciplinary strategies. Parental conferencing, reprimanding and warning which form part of the parental conferencing, the disciplinary committee, special reports, video surveillance camera, detention and corporal punishment are reactive and punitive disciplinary strategies (Jacobs, de Wet & Ferreira 2013: 332-333). The e-register (SMS) system may also be considered as a reactive disciplinary measure as the parent is informed by the school when the learner is absent from school on a particular day.

In addition to the current punitive and reactive disciplinary strategies that the principals are using, the participants proposed the following strategies that they view should be implemented for the principals to be more effective in maintaining learner discipline:

(a) Enforcement of laws and school rules in state secondary schools: "*If the laws and rules are to be applied as they should, there should not be any cases of a lack of learner discipline. For example, the school is a public space and smoking in a public space is prohibited and liable to persecution. So, tell me why this law is not applied in the school for learners who smoke? But, in the school when you see a learner smoking, you cannot take any action against him. The rule should have been for the learners, "the first learner who is caught smoking on the school premise will be sent back home or will be liable to an expulsion".*" (Principal of School B)

(b) Calling the *Brigade des Mineurs* to talk to the learners who have misbehaved and to threaten them with rehabilitation centers for juvenile delinquency: "*But why does the Brigade des Mineurs not come to school to talk to this particular learner who misbehaves so that the latter is afraid of police actions against him if he repeats the same unacceptable behaviour in the future? This will give a good signal to other learners so that they do not manifest a lack of discipline…The Brigade may talk to the child and warn him or her that if the misconduct is repeated she or he will be sent to a rehabilitation center so that the behaviour is changed.*" (Parent 3 of School C)

(c) Referral to the Police Division or the Police Academy: "*The Republic of Mauritius is mandated to respect the Convention… If we have to respect all these children's rights, then we will be creating "Ecole de la Criminalite", that is schools of crimes. So, we should respect the rights of the child, but the police should be in the picture, in any discipline system that the Ministry should put in place…I have made a proposal to the Police Eastern Division that once a month they come to my school fully dressed in their outfit and get my students to do training during activity periods. The two weekly activity periods are dedicated to the teaching of themes of life. So, there could be a rotation for the teaching of proper and socially acceptable behaviour through drilling in schools by the police officers in all the classes. Even if it is once a month, it works on the child's psyche. We have to integrate this kind of training to our students on the school compound itself. It's high time.*" (Principal of School D)

(d) No flexibility on the implementation of rules: "*I am not pessimistic about school improvement, but the rules should be there and applied as they are to give a right signal to the learners that the school means business and will not be flexible when the rules are not respected by any learner.*" (Principal of School B)

(e) Authoritative leadership from the principal: "*He* (the principal) *must be more severe, shows more authority to the learners; however, our principal is too kind to us. Learners who show a lack of discipline should have detention classes on Saturdays or Sundays. Ask learners to stay at school to do some community services such as cleaning the school yard or the classes as a form of punishment.*" (Learner 1 of School C). The parent 2 of School D shared the feelings of the learner and complained that the situation of learner discipline may worsen if authoritative strategies are not used by the principal: "*At school, the school principal should take drastic disciplinary measures against learners who manifest a lack of discipline. You know, we parents, should not play a blame game. If urgent disciplinary measures are not taken, the situation will be too uncontrollable or unmanageable and disastrous.*"

(f) More video surveillance cameras: "*The government once announced that there would be video camera in the school bus. But they are not yet installed in school buses. Learners are too indecent in the bus even when the general public is travelling on board. They do not respect elders or elderly people. So, you see even the government can not take concrete effective disciplinary actions to prevent learner's lack of behaviour. The video cameras would have acted as a deterrent to learners' misconduct. So, how will the children change their behaviour?*" (Parent 6 of School B)

(g) Additional homework: "*The class educator should punish them in class itself by giving them a lot more classwork or homework.*" (Learner 5 of School A)

(h) The power to expel poorly behaved learners: "*And also, the Ministry of Education should delegate some power to the Head of school to properly expel such learners. But, we have to understand why the Ministry will not go to that extreme; otherwise some*

principals who are not well-trained in management and conflict resolutions will make an abuse of the expulsion procedures against learners they do not want to stay in the school, without due consideration to the Child's Rights Convention." (Principal of School D)

(i) More strict disciplinary actions: "… *it is better to take severe actions against the learner. However, this is not at my level. The severe actions exist and I believe if the principal may take such measures, the state of learner discipline in state secondary schools will improve. If this is possible, then the learners will know the consequences of their lack of discipline and therefore they will behave in such a way to avoid the negative consequences.*" (Superintendent of School A).

It should be noted, however, that only the principal of School A recognised that punishment-based disciplinary measures are not effective; he believed that visionary leadership and moral leadership are the only disciplinary approaches that may prevent learners from manifesting a lack of discipline: "*I talk to the learners about discipline until they buy-in the disciplinary measures or the importance of discipline. I would rather use a Stop-Go policy, as too tight discipline does not work… I prefer to use soft policy on the basis that the child can improve his behaviour, without taking drastic policy measures.*" This principal adopts such an approach mainly because of his limited authority due to his accountability to the Ministry as discussed in paragraph 5.2.2.4, not because of his belief in the use of preventive and proactive disciplinary measures. This is confirmed by the following statement which he averred with much diplomacy and humility: "*The Ministry always blames the principal when he/she takes disciplinary actions and learners complain. The Ministry will ask us to review the action.*"

So, it is clear from the foregoing paragraphs that principals rely heavily on the reactive and punitive disciplinary strategies to maintain learner discipline in the selected state secondary schools in Mauritius. The findings of this study are in congruence with the view of Sprick (2009: 19) and Canter's assertive discipline - the positive behaviour management model, which indicates that such disciplinary approaches are common in secondary schools (Paragraph 3.2.6.2). However, they do not improve learner behaviour

or ensure safety in and outside the schools. Research has shown that punitive and reactive disciplinary measures have never been effective in reducing a lack of learner discipline in secondary schools.

Such types of disciplinary strategies are based on behaviourism and, as such, discipline is educator-centered rather than learner-centered; the principal uses fear of predetermined consequences to keep learners compliant and obedient (Freiberg & Lamb 2009: 99-100; Maphosa & Mammen 2011: 143). This is the common dynamic in schools (i.e., adults have all the power and learners must obey and be respectful even when they are right and righteous in the face of injustice) nowadays, that leads to so many learners blowing up incidents that begin small (Gardner 2014: 10). Rigid discipline policies have not proven to be effective in schools (Zaslaw 2010: 59). However, according to Pushpa (2014: 58), for effective discipline, principals should be liked and respected, not feared.

5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter examined the main causes of a lack of learner discipline in the selected state secondary schools of Mauritius, the various barriers that prevent the principals from implementing disciplinary strategies in a more effectively manner and the strategies that they are currently implementing to maintain learner discipline. The findings of this study revealed that most principals implement punitive and reactive disciplinary strategies which have proved to be ineffective in other school settings. The interviews and the observation indicate an urgent need to shift from the traditional approaches which are exclusionary to preventative, proactive and positive approaches to discipline. This is likely to help principals in maintaining discipline more effectively.

The final chapter summarises the findings of the empirical study based on the literature, the interviews and the observation. It also provides a model of learner discipline management with recommendations for the improvement of disciplinary practices in the selected state secondary schools of Mauritius.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter six focuses on a summary of the literature study (Chapters two and three) and the empirical investigation (Chapter 5) in the light of the problem formulation and research aim and objectives. The researcher provides an educational model for learner discipline management based on the findings and the literature study and makes recommendations for maintaining effective learner discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius. He also proposes avenues for further research, outlines the limitations of the study and gives the conclusions.

The researcher formulated the research problem (Paragraph 1.4) and highlighted the aim and objectives of the current research in chapter one (Paragraph 1.5). The research aim was to determine the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in selected state secondary schools in Mauritius (Paragraph 1.4). The expected outcome of the study was the possible strategies that the principal may adopt to effectively maintain learner discipline (Paragraph 5.2.3). The sub-objectives derived from the main aim of the study (Paragraph 1.5) were very specific and helped the researcher focus on the study. The researcher studies the causes of a lack of learner discipline in chapters 2 and 5 (Paragraphs 2.5 and 5.2) and critically analyses the current behavioural strategies in the Mauritian education system by highlighting the possible barriers to effective learner discipline management in chapter 5 (Paragraph 5.3). The researcher gathered information about this phenomenon by using the qualitative approach. Based on the findings of the literature study and the findings of the empirical investigation, he also provides a model of learner discipline management which gives an insight into the possible behavioural strategies that would help the principal of state secondary schools with the same contextual factors to maintain learner discipline.

6.2 A SUMMARY OF LITERATURE RESEARCH ON THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN LEARNER DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

The successful implementation of the disciplinary strategies recommended by the models so far discussed requires the principal to play a pivotal role in state secondary schools.

6.2.1 The principal as a leader in learner discipline management

In paragraph 3.4.1, it was discussed that the principal should be a visionary school leader who does purposing by sharing the school meanings and values and by being mission-driven and outcome-focused in an attempt to facilitate the learners' and educators' involvement in the collective goal of promoting positive discipline among the learners. The principal is an ethical role model in the school and a deliberate leader who approaches the learners with integrity, honesty, trustworthiness and respect, and by being a model of desirable behaviour and self-discipline to them. He/she must address learners with value-based words as suggested by the Best Practice Language model (Paragraph 3.4.2). Moreover, the principal, as an effective instructional leader of an effective school wide disciplinary system, must prepare learners to behave responsibly and positively by teaching behaviour expectations and behaviour management strategies. He/she needs to encourage educators to use modern interactive teaching methods, such as those integrating ICT and the social media, as an instructional tool so as to bring an improvement the quality of teaching and learning (Paragraph 3.4.3). For effective learner discipline management, the principal must also empower the educators and adopt distributed leadership (Paragraph 3.4.4). The principal should build trust relationships with the educators so that the latter may feel empowered to contribute towards the learner discipline and safety. The principal should delegate some aspects of his/her responsibility for discipline management so as to encourage collegiality among all the school stakeholders. He/she should set up organisational conditions such as a disciplinary committee and collaborative meetings for discussing learner discipline. This is in line with the Activity theory which emphasises consultation, participation and

inclusiveness of all stakeholders so that trust is built and the principal can bring the school into unity around values that are commonly shared and higher-order purposes.

Furthermore, participatory leadership may be adopted in order to encourage learner leadership in learner discipline management at school. Opportunities can be given to learners to learn about early development factors, leader identity, self-regulation, future development experiences, leadership effectiveness (Murphy & Johnson (2011) model of youth leader development), and leadership attitudes, leadership knowledge, reasoning, will and desire, critical thinking, decision-making, intra and interpersonal relations, and oral and written communication (Ricketts & Rudd (2002) model of youth leadership). This gives significance to Mitra's three-tiered pyramid of learner voice which gives value to student-led leadership (Paragraph 3.4.5). In order to help the principal effectively in maintaining learner discipline, educators need to be provided with professional growth and development about effective learner discipline management strategies. The principal may organise, for example, regular workshops to train them to apply school policies and practices in a fair and equitable way in order not to disproportionately impact learners of colour, learners with disabilities or at-risk learners. Most importantly, however, is that principals themselves need to undergo professional training in effective learner discipline management, responding to individual learner's needs, shared leadership, teamwork, leadership by listening, managing human resources, the use of ICT and social media and other interactive teaching and learning methods, and mentoring skills (Paragraph 3.4.6).

Moreover, the principal, as a key change agent and as a transformational leader, encourages an effective school-home partnership to ensure effective learner discipline at school. By creating an invitational school climate, the principal gives parents the right and the responsibility to actively participate in the School Governing Body and regularly involves them in the disciplinary committee and Parents Teacher Association meetings (Paragraph 3.4.7). Finally, the school principal leads by creating positive relationships among all stakeholders as he/she adopts a person-centered approach, based on interpersonal leadership, to addressing learner discipline at schools. In addition, he/she

can be a servant leader who encourages caring, mutually respectful and supportive relationships with learners, educators and the school community at large (Paragraph 3.4.8).

The literature study of the role of the secondary school principal in maintaining effective learner discipline in Mauritius (Paragraph 3.6), however, revealed that the principal has a limited authority to initiate behaviour management strategies. The Education [Amendment] Act 2002 (Part V, 38), the School Management Manual (2009) and the Student Behaviour Policy (2015) stipulate that the Minister of Education may make regulations, inter alia, for discipline in schools and methods of enforcement; and that in the case of serious manifestations of a lack of learner discipline, the school may expel a learner only with the authorisation of the Minister of Education. The principal cannot expel a learner unless he/she gets the authorisation of the Minister of Education. Disciplinary actions such as suspension, expulsion or transfer to another school are taken by the higher educational authorities. Moreover, the authority of the principal to adopt disciplinary measures at the school level is time-consuming and long school protocols prescribed by the Ministry of Education must be followed by him/her to inform and report cases of learner's lack of discipline. It was pointed out that this creates a problematic situation for principals in maintaining discipline.

6.2.2 Alternative strategies to learner discipline management

Paragraph 3.5 of chapter three examined the research-based strategies. These strategies are curriculum and pedagogical strategies or instructional interventions that have been successfully implemented for discipline purpose for most learners based on scientific studies that use empirical methods, which include rigorous and adequate data analysis. They have been applied to a large study sample, are replicable, show that there are direct co-relations between these alternative behaviour management strategies and learner progress and they have been widely reported in journals that are peer-reviewed..

Pre-correction is a preventive research-based disciplinary strategy which involves active teaching supervision and effective instruction during which learners are taught expectations, rules and routines. They are brief prompts, often verbal questions, statements or gestures directed to a learner and that identify the desired replacement behaviour; just before the latter enters a context in which predictable problem behaviour may occur (Paragraph 3.5.1). Moreover, the principal and the educator should teach learners how to make effective choices. Learners need both firm limits and real choices when they manifest a lack of discipline. Indeed, learners behave better and learn the value of responsibility for their behaviour when they have a say in what happens to them (Paragraph 3.5.2).

Self-management involves a consistent and predictable routine for providing immediate feedback for behaviour. By teaching learners self-management skills, they may have better self-control. These skills are goal-setting, self-evaluation, and self-instruction, self-reinforcement and self-punishment (Paragraph 3.5.3). The principal can also teach learners compliance skills. In the errorless compliance training, the learner is exposed to increasingly and successively more challenging instructions at a pace that provides many opportunities for the learner to experience success and gain reinforcement for positive behaviour. In the context of secondary schools, six steps for addressing non-compliance are: (a) assess the situation; (b) maintain the flow of instructions; (c) repeat the directions privately; (d) disengage or withdraw from the learner, respond to the class and monitor the learner who was not initially compliant; (e) provide focus on learner's decision-making; and (f) debrief with the learner at a later time (Paragraph 3.5.4). Moreover, the principal may provide learners with opportunities to respond (OTR) which is a questioning strategy that is used as a stimulus that begins or ends a learning trial, consisting of a stimulus-response-consequent contingency sequence. It should be used with praise to be more effective (Paragraph 3.5.5).

The principal may also teach learners rules and behaviour expectations in order to defuse rule infractions. These are taught within the honeymoon period. In addition, they should be explicitly modeled, practiced and reinforced, and if learners do not behave properly, a

booster session should be set up to follow-up their behaviour through prompts, and reinforcement until the behaviour is performed satisfactorily. The rules should not be imposed but rather there should be pupil voice, choice and participation in the process of crafting and implementing them. In the process, the principal and educators should teach the three Rs (respect for yourself; responsibility for your actions; and remembering the rights of others) to all learners (Paragraph 3.5.6). The principal may also encourage educators to use a differentiated curriculum. Educators should use instructional activities such as cooperative learning, computer-assisted instruction, learning centres, writing activities and the creation of graphic organisers which are based on the learner's learning preference, skill levels and interests. The curriculum should also include conflict-resolution skills through role-playing meaningful scenarios, sharing of real experiences and trying out different ways of thinking and responding, and emotional resilience through emotional, physical and social health, expressive arts, religious and moral education so as to reduce the manifestations of a lack of learner discipline. By so doing, the educator may create a culturally responsive classroom (Paragraph 3.5.7).

The Good Behaviour Game (GBG) is a group-oriented management strategy that involves consequences based on the behaviour of one member of a group. It focuses on peer encouragement, following rules and demonstrating good learning skills, reinforces self-control by sharing group solidarity and cooperation, increases pre-social behaviour as well as diminishes instances of learners laughing at the disruptive behaviour of others. However, it should be used with the token system and the response-cost system for it to be more effective since five to seven positive behaviours are targeted that can earn points and five to seven unwanted behaviours are targeted that can lose points (Paragraph 3.5.8). In paragraph 3.5.9, the check-in/check-out system (CICO) which includes a daily behaviour report card in conjunction with daily social skills training is discussed. It provides an opportunity to correct problem behaviour and reinforce prosocial behaviour in secondary schools. The check and connect strategy helps the principal and educators to measure the learner's learning and school engagement in terms of tardiness, skipping classes and absenteeism; school and behaviour referrals, and academic performance. It emphasises relationship building capacity, monitoring of the routine activities and tasks,

individual intervention into learner problems, sustainable commitment to the school's code of discipline, persistent support by the leaders to learners with learning and behavioural difficulties, effective problem solving and school-connectedness by the learners (Paragraph 3.5.10). A behavioural contract involves the notion of rule-governed behaviour as it specifies a rule and indicates the specific behaviour that will occur and the specific consequence that will be delivered contingent upon completion of the target behaviour. It is more effective when it is written and done in a parent conference. The parent may reinforce the desired behaviour or strengthen negative consequences at home. It provides educators the opportunities to teach alternative replacement behaviour and reduce undesirable behaviour. It is also a preventive strategy as it defines the behaviours before the learners misbehave (Paragraph 3.5.11). The First to Step Process is an interventionist strategy that prevents the progression of antisocial externalising behaviour such as aggression and coercion. Parents of targeted learners are trained by the consultant to teach their children important success skills such as accepting limits, cooperation and problem-solving. This helps to bring about an effective home-school partnership in managing learner discipline (Paragraph 3.5.12).

Though it is only possible here to highlight matters discussed in greater depth in the literature study, the literature study indeed enabled the researcher to get an overview on the various approaches to learner discipline management and the role of the principal in maintaining learner discipline. The principal may successfully maintain effective learner discipline by implementing a combination of evidence-based learner discipline management strategies only by adopting a mixture of leadership approaches in the school. However, the extent of the success in doing so depends significantly on the autonomy of the leader in practicing them within the political and legal framework of the education system, as revealed by the findings of the empirical study about learner discipline management in the state secondary schools of Mauritius.

6.3 A SUMMARY OF KEY EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The aim of the empirical investigation was to determine the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in selected Mauritian state secondary schools. Utilising the knowledge gained from the empirical study, and what was learnt from the literature study, the intention of the researcher was to come up with an education management model that would highlight the most appropriate behavioural guidelines that the principal may adopt to maintain effective learner discipline.

Chapter 4 focuses on the research design and methodology for the empirical investigation. The research approach and the research methods applicable to this investigation about learner discipline were also described. The researcher used the qualitative approach with individual interviews with principals and superintendents and focused interviews with learners, educators and parents. The researcher also used non-participant observation to gather information to meet the research objectives about learner discipline. The findings of the chapter 4 are summarised in the foregoing paragraphs.

6.3.1 Factors that determine a lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius

The main findings of the study with regard to the research question, "*Which factors determine the lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius?* (Paragraphs 1.4 and 4.2), are that the following factors are relevant: the family, the learners' attitudes, the educators' attitudes, the principal's authority and leadership, the Mauritian education system, peer group influence and the child's constitutional rights.

6.3.1.1 The family

Four themes relating to the impact of the family on the learner's behaviour are identified, namely the parenting style, working parents (particularly the mother), ineffective parental discipline and the dysfunctional family.

All the participants explained that a learner of authoritative parents manifest a lack of discipline at school because the latter ignore their parental support to their child in terms of love, affection and attention. A learner of permissive parents also manifests a lack of discipline in the sense that the parents are overprotective, for instance by giving a mobile phone to the child to bring to school. On account of private tuition after school hours, parents give learners a mobile phone as a sign of parental protection and this gives to the child and the parents a feeling of security. However, learners misuse the phones during the class lesson when it is prohibited. The participants emphasised the fact that the mobile has become a subject of theft and fighting among learners of different socio-economic backgrounds.

Based on the fact that most mothers work, parents are so busy working that they do not have time for parenting and for them to actively participate in their child's education at school and at home. To compensate for this lack of attention, affection and love to their children, parents give much money to them and this spoils them in terms of appropriate behaviour at school. This is ineffective discipline. Moreover, they shift their parental responsibility in terms of their children's behaviour control to the school. This lack of parental supervision leave learners unsupervised and therefore they have much freedom to behave inappropriately. They do not recognise and accept their parents' authority. They do not feel accountable to the parents and the school. When the principal calls the parents to school in case of their child's misbehaviour, some do not turn up; this encourages the child to misbehave and the principal finds himself or herself disempowered to maintain discipline. Parents are also bad models for their child's behaviour. The inconsistency between school discipline and home discipline is a factor

that discourages positive learner discipline.

Furthermore, a dysfunctional family is a cause of the manifestation of a lack of learner discipline at school. Children live in families in which parents drink excessively, who drink at home with friends, use foul language or watch indecent or pornographic films. As a result, learners lack character education and learn and easily accept values at home that are not consistent with the school's socially acceptable values that are taught to them. Such learners may challenge the principal's authority at school by arrogantly rejecting the school discipline. The authority of the principal and educators is less meaningful to the learners when the former do not get the parents' active participation, collaboration and support for learner discipline at school.

6.3.1.2 The learner's attitudes

Learners in the selected state secondary schools are mostly not interested in their learning and in schooling. The study showed that learners manifest a lack of such interest for various reasons, namely they ignore the importance of education and schooling, the subject is not interesting, they do not like the face or personality of the educator, the educator does not use effective innovative teaching methods, boring curriculum, and learners are more interested in dating the opposite sex. Learners choose to misbehave by loitering around the school and enter the classroom after the bell rings, and they bunk classes. They also use their mobile phone to call parents to leave school as they do not want to be there.

The attitudes of the elder learners are imitated by the younger innocent ones who are not mature enough to distinguish between desirable and undesirable behaviour. The elders use their mobile phones to view pornographic films, smoke cigarettes and take synthetic drugs on the school premises, and the principal and educators do nothing to modify such bad examples of unacceptable behaviour. Indeed, elder learners feel free to misbehave due to disciplinary inactions by the class educators and the principal who delegates this responsibility to the helpless school caretakers.

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The study also revealed that Form 3 and 4 learners manifest a lack of discipline to a greater extent on account of biological or hormonal changes and they are subject to the adolescent crisis. They are of the critical age (13 to 16 years old) and therefore they lack maturity. They want to draw the attention of others to them. They are impulsive and involved in drug dealing and sexual activities, and they even fabricate synthetic drugs in the school chemistry laboratory. Indeed, such behaviours make them more aggressive, easily irritable and overexcited leading to manifesting a lack of discipline at school.

6.3.1.3 The educator's attitudes

The educators manifest irresponsible attitudes towards their profession; they lack professional ethics by for instance using their mobile phones during the class lesson in front of the learners, and female educators do their make-up ten minutes before the bell goes for afternoon dismissal either in the classroom or they rush to the washroom or toilet to do it. This allows the learners to misbehave in their brief absence or may encourage some learners moving secretly to the school bus. Therefore, educators are bad models of desirable behaviour to their learners.

Moreover, educators demonstrated a lack of essential management skills to discipline learners. They do not focus on the teaching and learning activities, are too permissive towards disruptive learners and they even treat learners as inferior. Learners do not accept such educators' authority and they manifest their unhappiness and disagreement by misbehaving in the class. Participants assert that it is a manner to show their non-compliance to the disrespectful educator's authority.

Educators feel disempowered and disengage themselves in the management of learner discipline. Such educators' attitude is the result of a combination of factors, namely the principal's disciplinary inactions, the absence of a school-based disciplinary policy, the constitutional rights of learners and the educators' lack of training in effective discipline management. Educators sometimes rush to the principal's office for help but are

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disappointed with an incapacitated school administration. Moreover, learners often use verbal aggression. This situation demotivates educators to collaborate with the principal to maintain effective discipline and they adopt self-defeating attitudes.

Some educators also adopt a laissez-faire attitude to the occurrences of learner indiscipline. They prefer to remain on good terms with learners in order to avoid relationship problems with them and hence to be selected by learners as resource persons for private tuition. They rather shift their responsibility to the principal and parents. However, the study showed that when there is distributed leadership and educator empowerment by an inclusive principal, there is much collegiality, accountability and commitment of educators to learner discipline.

6.3.1.4 The principal's leadership and authority

Principals are helpless and feel desperate as they are not provided with the possible effective disciplinary strategies nor the autonomy to take the most appropriate school-based disciplinary measures. They are only prescribed to follow the school protocols in specific cases of learner indiscipline in the Student Behaviour Policy document. They cannot enforce learner discipline as it is the Ministry of Education which gives its approval for a suspension, an expulsion or a learner transfer initiated by the school principal. Each case of learner indiscipline must be reported to the higher authorities for follow-up actions. This is a cause of the principal's lack of authority and disempowerment to maintain learner discipline effectively. In this study, it is found that principals prefer to adopt leniency and play safe in their interventions, and they even often do not apply disciplinary measures to avoid police cases or allegations by parents or administrative problems with the Zone Directorate. They just inform parents about their child's misbehaviour at school. Hence, learners feel free to manifest a lack of discipline at schools.

6.3.1.5 The education system

The teaching lesson done by the private tutors, outside the school premises, takes precedence over the lesson of the regular educator at the school. Learners do not bother about the class lessons and are convinced they will succeed in their examinations: their parents pay much money for the private tuition. On the other hand, by paying for the tuition of their child, parents delegate their anxiety about their academic success to the private tutor; so they do not monitor the child's behaviour at school. Learners seize this situation to be absent from school, to use the private tuition fees to buy and consume alcoholic drinks at school, and to disturb the class lessons. Moreover, young supply educators do not have a sense of belonging to the school and they lack teaching experience and pre-service training in understanding adolescents and effectively managing them in a classroom situation. The learners often do not accept the legitimacy of their authority and therefore they do not respect these educators: they often manifest a lack of discipline in their classes. Also, in the context of the excessively examination-oriented education system, learners are pressurised by their parents to produce excellent academic performance in exams. In addition, the two activities periods per week are not being used for providing learners with activities and leisure, but for learners to feel free to use their mobile phones or for educators to do their private work. Therefore, learners develop frustrations, desperation and hopelessness when they cannot cope with the academic standards required from them. They manifest a feeling of rejection or inferiority and so, they become aggressive and display insubordination to the educators and school mates.

6.3.1.6 Peer group pressure

Learners behave differently when they are at home than at school in peer groups. They are influenced by the leader-follower relationships established in a peer group. They express themselves in ways that they cannot in the presence of their parents at home. This study revealed that peer pressure influences an innocent learner to manifest a lack of

discipline as manifested by his/her peers in order to identify with the group and be accepted by them. Also, when learners are among peers they dare show their power so that others respect their authority and they even challenge the educator's authority to get others' attention.

6.3.1.7 The child's constitutional rights

The principals, superintendents, educators and parents' authority to discipline learners is restrained by the child's constitutional rights. They feel disempowered and are helpless when learners manifest a lack of discipline as the latter take advantage of their rights to misbehave, knowing that adults do not have much authority over them. So, the emphasis on the child's constitutional rights has empowered learners to manifest undesirable behaviour and disempowered the principal, educators and the superintendent to initiate disciplinary interventions that may lead to their prosecution by law, in case they hamper with the child's constitutional rights to protection.

6.3.2 Barriers that prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline in state secondary schools in Mauritius

With regard to the research question, "*Which barriers prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline in selected state secondary schools?*" (Paragraphs 1.4 and 4.2), the main findings are given below.

6.3.2.1 The political interference of parents in the implementation of disciplinary measures by the principal

The principal and educator's authority to take disciplinary measures and interventions in the case of learner indiscipline is undermined by affluent parents' ability to resort to political agents or the elected Member of Parliament of their constituency who may intervene at the level of the Ministry of Education to oblige the principal to backpedal or

avoid taking the principal-led disciplinary intervention against the particular learner. Indeed, when some parents are unhappy with the principal's corrective disciplinary action they resort to political interference. So, it is clear that some learners abuse the existing political system of the school and the professional and social status of their parents to feel free to manifest a lack of discipline at school.

6.3.2.2 The free transport system

The universally provided free bus transport to all learners to and from the school in Mauritius is causing much havoc regarding disciplinary issues in schools. The principal is helpless with regard to learners' tardiness in the morning as he/she cannot blame learners of their latecoming since the school bus reaches school late. He/she cannot take disciplinary measures such as detention after school hours due to the learners' need to take the school bus to go to private tuition on their way back home.

6.3.2.3 Frustrated acting principals and deputy principals in state secondary schools

Acting principals and deputy principals who are actually working as school head are contributing to the prevalence of learner indiscipline. These school heads are frustrated and reluctant to take the risk of being demoted or not appointed to the post on the basis of ineffectively tackling learner discipline and the possibility of being blamed by learners and parents through allegations. Moreover, these school heads do not take their responsibility to maintain discipline as it is an additional responsibility that they are not ready to assume given their bad working conditions with a lower salary compared to appointed school heads. Moreover, they are waiting for their eventual appointment in the post; so, they do not undermine their promotion.

6.3.2.4 Too much administrative paperwork in reporting learner indiscipline

State secondary school principals develop a helpless attitude and do not take initiatives to maintain discipline among learners as the administrative procedures and policies are too

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time-consuming and the school protocols for different types of cases of learner indiscipline are set by the Ministry of Education. These protocols require the principal to inform the Zone Directorate and the Ministry of Education about the case, to do the follow-up and contact different higher authorities such as the police, the Cyber Crime Unit, the Ombudsperson, the Anti-drug Smuggling Unit among others as well as compile a file for the disruptive learner. The principal is accountable to all these authorities and must abide by procedures to avoid being blamed for not following the correct procedures. Moreover, the principal does not dare take disciplinary interventions and strategies that may prove him/her wrong in the eyes of parents and learners concerned and that may put his/her authority at stake at school.

6.3.2.5 A lack of collaboration between the educators, the school superintendent and the principal

Educators do not collaborate with the principal as they are afraid for their own personal and professional security in terms of unintended consequences of their disciplinary actions from parents, the Ministry of Education and the laws. They rather develop a care free attitude as they step away from their moral responsibility of learner discipline management. Moreover, the school superintendents do not monitor learner attendance on the school premises and do not supervise the learners' movement at the time of the afternoon dismissal. He/she does not do the follow-up when an educator reports a case of learner indiscipline. This is because he/she is overloaded with administrative and paperwork and he/she neglects his/her function as specified in the School Management Manual in terms of assisting the school principal in learner discipline management.

6.3.2.6 A lack of parental involvement

Working parents do not involve themselves in learner discipline management as they do not have time for this issue; they sometimes live in a dysfunctional family; they are themselves financially, psychologically and personally stressed by their own daily life problems; and they may also feel unwelcomed by educators and the principal as the

school climate is uninviting. They shift their parental responsibility to the school. Parents may be members of the PTA committee, but their participation is limited to fundraising and voluntary social events. There is the contrived collegiality whereby the principal takes all the school decisions and the parents are just informed of them. Moreover, parents only sign the learner journal on a weekly basis. Yet, when the principal is enthusiastic, dynamic and demonstrates an inclusive leadership, he/she creates informal school structures such as the "*parents de parole*" and the "*parents flambeaux*" whereby parents reflect actively on sensitive issues like socio-economic problems, emerging problems from peers, pedagogical issues and learner discipline.

6.3.2.7 The absence of government's responsibility to restore learner discipline

Due to the centralisation of decision-making and policy-making concerning all school issues, the principal of state secondary schools cannot do much at the school level to effectively manage learner discipline. The Ministry of Education manifests a lax attitude and only sets up an ad hoc committee after a serious case of learner indiscipline has echoed in the local newspaper and the social network. There are hardly any follow-up actions by the officers of the Ministry. The absence of government initiatives to tackle the problem of learner discipline at the national level constitutes a disincentive and a feeling of disempowerment for the school principal to take disciplinary initiatives and/or implement the prescribed disciplinary measures such as suspension and expulsion. Principals limit their interventions to giving verbal warnings repeatedly or rare detention; and they talk about the problem and how to promote positive discipline at school in the morning assembly and staff meetings.

6.3.3 Disciplinary strategies currently implemented in state secondary schools

Principals and educators in the selected state secondary schools are currently using mostly reactive and punitive disciplinary measures. Parental conferencing, reprimanding and warning which form part of the parental conferencing, the disciplinary committee,

special reports, video surveillance camera, detention and corporal punishment are reactive and punitive disciplinary strategies. The e-register (SMS) system may also be considered as a reactive disciplinary measure as the parent is informed by the school when the learner is absent from school on a particular day. Only visionary leadership and inclusive leadership are approaches that are proactive and that promote positive and effective learner discipline (Paragraph 5.3).

The use of these traditional reactionary disciplinary strategies implies that the principals, educators, superintendents and even parents view learner discipline as adults exerting control over the learners. They view the concept of discipline from the custodial perspective and not from the humanistic perspective (Paragraph 1.8.4). It should be noted that they are all, except corporal punishment, recommended by the Ministry of Education in the School Management Manual, the Education Act 1957 and the Student Behaviour Policy document. However, from the conceptual framework of this study, school discipline is more than punishment; it includes developing learners' self-discipline (Paragraphs 2.5.2.2, 2.6.2, 3.2.6.6 & 3.4.5).

This misconception of learner discipline was further illustrated by the proposals from the participants of the study about the disciplinary strategies that should be introduced to effectively maintain learner discipline, namely enforcement of laws and school rules in state secondary schools; calling the "*Brigade des Mineurs*" to come to talk to the learners who have misbehaved and to threaten them that they would be sent to the rehabilitation centres for juvenile delinquency; no flexibility on the implementation of rules; authoritative leadership from the principal; more video surveillance cameras; additional homework; the power to expel learners who manifest a lack of discipline; and more strict disciplinary actions (Paragraph 5.3).

The principals of state secondary schools have been using such traditional approaches to discipline over the years and the few studies done about learner discipline in Mauritius have indeed proved that they are ineffective. In fact, punishment-based disciplinary strategies may only help to discourage unacceptable behaviour in the sense that they instil fear in learners; learners do not necessarily understand the reason(s) why their behaviour was considered as wrong or how the way they behave adversely impacts other learners at

school or in the classroom (Paragraph 5.3). They produce only short-term results as they aim at reducing undesirable behaviour but not at increasing more appropriate learner behaviour. They may also reinforce rather than reduce or eliminate negative learner behaviour. The state of the phenomenon of learners' lack of discipline in state secondary schools has worsened over the years, mostly over the last decade, instead of having the expected result of reducing learner discipline in schools, as propounded by the deterrence theory (paragraph 5.2.3.6).

6.3.4 A shift from the traditional disciplinary approaches to alternatives to punitive and reactive approaches

The findings of this study revealed that most school discipline focuses on punishment, yet Kelly and Vaillancourt (2012: 12) maintain that promoting prosocial behaviour processes, which aim at preventing wrongdoing, is often the best way to ensure a healthy school environment (Paragraph 3.5.9). There should be a shift away from the punitive and reactive disciplinary strategies towards prevention of misbehaviour before it occurs and intervention to support learners so as to keep them in school and actively engaged in instruction (Paragraphs 1.2.3 & 3.2). The principal should rethink the traditional disciplinary policies and practices and develop a new culture based on values such as conflict resolution, self-discipline, non-violence, an increased sense of responsibility, self-confidence, problem-solving, sense of belongingness to the school, the ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and behaviour accountability in an attempt to reduce the need for external punitive control. He/she must create a school environment based on open communication, mutual understanding and respect as well as positive relationships. He/she should do things and manage learner discipline *with* the learners, educators and parents, rather than *to* or *for* them, in order for them to be happier, more cooperative and productive.

The principal should therefore adopt more positive, preventative and more learner-friendly disciplinary strategies. In fact, effective approaches to overcoming learner

indiscipline in schools are those that focus on prevention, and that the principal may effectively deal with this problem by adopting these strategies. Discipline must rely on constructive, corrective, rights-based educative practices and not punishment or specific disciplinary actions that are perceived as punitive, destructive and negative.

More importantly, state secondary school principals should implement research- and evidence-based disciplinary practices that have proved to be effective for schools and learners. These disciplinary practices aim at keeping learners in the classroom, instead of weeding out those principals and educators deem undesirable, and modify learner behaviour by equipping them with knowledge and support systems. Such practices help learners to reconnect to their learning as they address the root causes of learners' lack of discipline. The research- and evidence-based disciplinary strategies are discussed in paragraphs 3.5 and 6.2. Other such strategies which are alternatives to punitive and reactive behavioural strategies are restorative justice practices, positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS), and social emotional learning (SEL). These disciplinary strategies may be used within the framework of the School wide Positive Behavioural Support (SWPBS) model or the Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII) model or any other disciplinary model that may promote effective and positive discipline among learners.

6.4 RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions for this study were deduced after the literature study (Chapters two and three) and the findings of the empirical investigation were analysed (chapter 5). These were based on the research questions (Paragraphs 1.4 and 4.2), as presented in the next subparagraphs. As the conclusions to research questions 2 and 3 were presented under paragraph 6.3, the focus will here only be on Research question 1 and 4.

6.4.1 Research question 1

What is meant by the concept 'school discipline'?

It is clear from the study findings that the Ministry of Education, state secondary school principals, school superintendents, educators, learners and parents are of the view that school discipline is a matter of behaviourial control of learners by adults. They have therefore a custodial perspective rather than a humanistic perspective of the concept. In the Mauritian education system, learner discipline does not mean self-discipline, but punishment, correcting the learner instead of modifying the behaviour of the learner.

6.4.2 Research question 2

Which factors determine the lack of discipline among learners in secondary schools in Mauritius?

This was already summarised under paragraph 6.3.1.

6.4.3 Research question 3

Which barriers prevent principals from maintaining effective discipline in secondary schools in Mauritius?

This was already summarised under paragraph 6.3.2.

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6.4.4 Research question 4

Which strategies may be developed and employed by state secondary school principals to maintain learner discipline among learners in Mauritius?

Based on the literature review and specifically the findings of the empirical investigation, this study determined that state secondary school principals are currently using the following reactive and punitive learner discipline strategies: calling parents of learners who manifest a lack of discipline to the office (parent conferencing), counselling learners with behaviour problems and do counselling and guidance with all the learners at school, special reports, the school disciplinary committee, give warnings to learners, inclusive leadership, visionary leadership, management by walking around the school, use of the video surveillance cameras on the school premises, reactive punitive measures such as corporal punishment and detention, and the attendance card. A school wide learner discipline management model is presented in the following paragraph to recommend strategies that the school principal may adopt to maintain effective discipline among learners in state secondary schools in Mauritius, which provides an answer to research question 4.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY: A PROPOSED MODEL FOR LEARNER DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT IN MAURITIAN STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Based on the conceptual framework of this study and its findings on the causes of learner discipline and the current disciplinary strategies being implemented in the selected state secondary schools, the researcher proposes the comprehensive school wide learner behaviour management model below which is a mixture of research-based behaviour management strategies discussed in the literature study (chapter three) and the findings of

the empirical investigation on the current strategies being used in state secondary schools (Paragraphs 5.2 and 6.3).

Figure 6.1: A proposed school principal model of learner discipline management
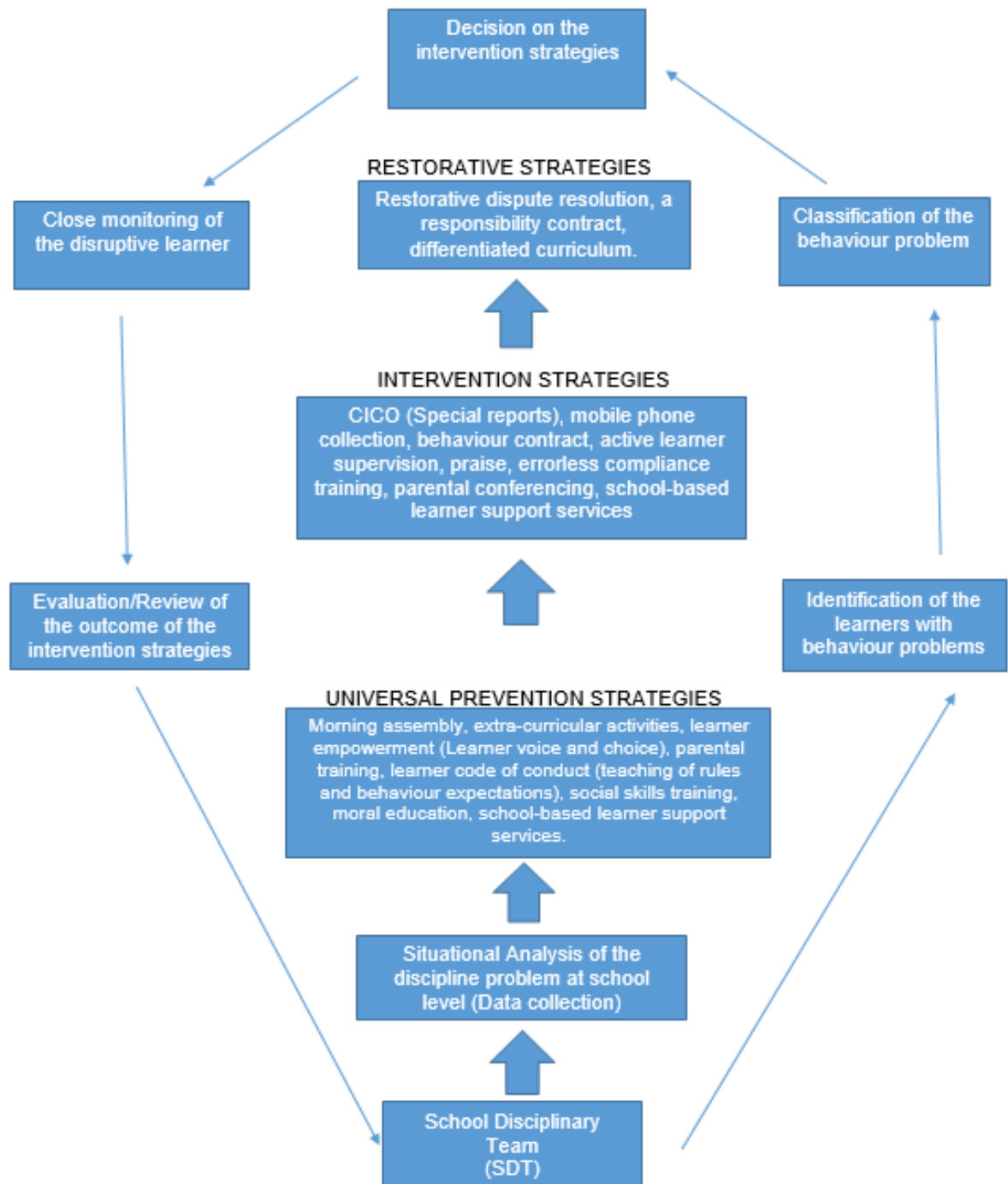
The proposed model is explained in the following subparagraph. The concepts used are clarified so as to make its implementation meaningful. To facilitate the implementation of the model, the learner discipline management cycle is described in an attempt to highlight the different stages in the implementation process. This process is on-going and it starts from the point of departure which is the identification of the learners with discipline problems by the School Disciplinary Team (SDT) and ends with an evaluation or review of the outcomes of the implementation by this team, which may lead to improvements in the strategies adopted to maintain effective learner discipline in the school.

6.5.1 The universal prevention strategies

Universal prevention strategies are strategies that are aimed at defining, teaching and monitoring the behaviour of all learners. They ensure that learners do not manifest a lack of discipline and minimise the number of learners who may require intervention strategies (Paragraph 3.2.7.1) and restorative strategies as presented in the proposed model. Research-based universal prevention strategies are pre-correction, parenting training, teaching of social and prosocial skills, teaching of rules and behaviour expectations and a differentiated curriculum (Paragraph 3.5). They are proactive strategies.

In this model, the principal uses the morning assembly. This strategy is currently being used in the state secondary schools in Mauritius only for vision's sharing about learner discipline. However, it is the primary intervention strategy used in the School wide Positive Behavioural System model whereby the principal may communicate the school vision about the rules and behaviour expectations of learners as well as praise learners who model desirable behaviour so as to promote positive learner discipline (Paragraphs 3.2.7.2, 3.3 & 5.2.3.2). This model proposes that the morning assembly is used as a platform for learners to show their academic and social abilities and creative talents to the whole school. The principal should also give learners the opportunities in a morning school assembly to express themselves on school matters relating to their appreciation about how the school meets their needs and expectations. It is also an ideal and effective platform for the SDT to inform, educate and reinforce learners and the whole school

community about the importance of learner discipline for the school to be effective in terms of its core function, the negative impact of a lack of learner behaviour on the safety and healthy learning environment of the school and on the learners' academic performance. Each day, one or more representatives of the SDT may intervene in the morning assembly to advocate and counsel about the manifestations of a lack of learner discipline on a weekly basis, and the prevention of learner indiscipline in the school.

Extra-curricular activities should be monitored closely by the school principal by requesting educators to submit a weekly plan for the officially scheduled two periods per week for this purpose, and ensure that such activities are organised every week. At the beginning of each term, the principal together with educators and learners in the Student Council should discuss and establish a calendar of extra-curricular activities, which may include creative writing; talent discovery activities such as cooking, broidery, role playing, the French-originated expressive writing called "slam"; indoor games such as handball, football six asides, volley-ball, basketball, table tennis, badminton, mini-volley, *footsalle*, and chess. Educators should give equal importance to weekly planning for teaching of subject content and organising of extra-curricular activities (Paragraphs 1.2.2, 2.5.2.2 & 5.2.1.5). The Head of Department can monitor them by checking the weekly plan of activities at the same time he/she monitors the educators' weekly plan for the teaching subject. The principal may manage the implementation by walking around the classes and specific recreational areas of the school during the activity periods. As a resource provider, he/she must also provide educators and learners with all the necessary facilities and equipment to facilitate the organisation of such activities.

Learner empowerment is an important strategy for learners to feel empowered, committed and to have a sense of belonging to the school, and hence contributes actively to maintaining a positive school climate which is safe and sane for all stakeholders. This strategy takes into account the perception of significance in primary relationships put forward by the Nelsen, Lott and Glenn's model of discipline (Paragraph 2.6.6). The principal should give them the opportunities to participate in all school decisions that relate to their interests. Learners should be active members of the different school structures such as the prefect body, the student council, the PTA, the different school

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clubs, such as environment club, reading club, sports club, literary club, as well as the learner discipline committee, be involved actively in school events such as Prize-Giving ceremonies, Sports Day, Cross-country, school outings, and Music Day among others. The principal could give learners the voice and choice in the making of rules at the beginning of each school term and in monitoring those learners who are not compliant to them on a weekly basis. Learners may also be allowed to be involved in peer review of learner behaviour at the class level (Paragraphs 2.5.2.2, 3.3, 3.4.4, 3.4.5, 3.5.6, 3.5.7, 5.2.1.7 & 5.2.3.2).

The educators should teach the school rules and behaviour expectations in their class lessons in an integrated manner and should remind the learners of them in the morning during Form Master's periods. Principals will be encouraging learner empowerment by crafting the school rules and regulations (code of conduct) that is characteristic of the school context and culture in a participatory way, and rejecting the one prescribed by the Ministry of Education (Paragraph 3.5.7 & 5.2.3.2).

The principal should train parents about the development of adolescents and how to deal with their problems, effective parental involvement in the child's education and in school matters, the importance of education to social upliftment, effective parenting, the use of positive children's behaviour management, and the value and importance of effective home-school partnerships (Paragraphs 3.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.2.7, 3.4.7, 3.5.12 & 5.2.2.6).

The principal, as an instructional leader, must make sure that educators teach social skills to all learners. This teaching should be integrated in the curriculum. Social skill training and teaching should include the teaching of cooperation, self-control, empathy, effective communication, trust-building and responsibility (Paragraphs 2.5.1.2, 2.5.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.2.5, 3.27, 2.2.8, 3.4.3, 3.5.2, 3.5.8 & 3.5.12).

Instead of having educational psychologists and social workers posted in offices at the Ministry of Education as is the case actually in Mauritius, this model recommends that these resource persons be based on the school premises. The principal should set up a school-based learner support service, including them, counsellors and educators and health officers so as to support learners' health and wellness as well as academic

achievement. Learner discipline problems are indeed interlinked with public health problems. These support services should be used by educators to refer learners when they notice a learner with behaviour problems, but it should also have a preventive approach in the sense that its officers should sensitise all learners by organising talks, workshops, curricular and extra-curricular activities related to the promotion of positive behaviour and the prevention of undesirable behaviour (Paragraphs 3.2.7, 3.2.8, 3.4.8 & 5.2.3.1).

The principal should also request from the Ministry the permission to teach moral education to all the learners of the school. Moral education may be taught as a subject on its own, as it is currently done in the private catholic secondary schools in Mauritius or integrated in the teaching of academic subjects. This will help shape their character and hence equip them to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, between right and wrong in social and interpersonal relationships at school (Paragraphs 1.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.5.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.5.7 & 5.2.1.1).

When the universal prevention strategies do not work to meet all learners' needs and some of the learners start manifesting a lack of discipline, then additional disciplinary supports known as the intervention strategies, are employed by the school principal.

6.5.2 The intervention strategies

These strategies are appropriate when learners demonstrate a lack of discipline due to risk factors such as poverty, poor school attendance, low academic performance, poor self-esteem, lack of family support, peer group pressure, poor oral reading and who manifest much aggression towards others. The aim is to reverse harm. The intervention strategies are choice-making, opportunities to respond (OTR), praise, compliance training, replacement behaviour, positive peer reporting, behaviour contract, active learner supervision, effective instructional techniques, Check-in/Check-out, self-management, Good Behaviour Game, attendance records and counselling referrals (Paragraphs 2.5.2, 2.6, 3.2.7.2 & 3.5).

In this model, the principal should use the Check-in/Check-out system or the Special Report system in order to modify learner behaviour. He/she should monitor the

cumulative manifestations of a lack of discipline of the learner and the number of times the latter got special reports. This will facilitate a close monitoring of the learner who repeats a lack of discipline so that more intensive disciplinary strategies may be taken such as referral to the school based learner support services (Paragraphs 3.5.9, 5.2.1.1, 5.2.3.1, 5.2.3.4, 5.3.3.6 & 5.3).

The principal should empower the superintendent and the Form Masters to collect the mobile phone of all learners who have it in their possession at school in the Form Master's period when the learner attendance register is done every morning. Each mobile phone is tagged with the name of the learner and kept in a safe custody in the superintendent's office. In the afternoon, the class captain collects them safely from the office for redistribution to the learners at the time he/she comes to deposit the signed attendance card or pink card. This is likely to ensure fewer manifestations of indiscipline related to mobile phones in the class lessons (Paragraphs 2.5.2.5, 5.2.1.1 & 5.2.1.5).

The principal should craft a behaviour contract for learners who manifest a lack of discipline repeatedly, but before they are referred to the school-based learner support services. The contract should be discussed, crafted and approved by the learners too so that they know the logical consequences of the manifestation of a lack of discipline. After repeated cases of indiscipline, the parents will be called to the principal's office for a conference in which the situation of the manifestation is described, the cause of it is discussed and the logical consequence is reminded. The contract is completed and signed in a parent conference between the principal, the educator, the learner and the parents (Paragraphs 3.2, 3.5.11 & 5.2.2.6).

The principal should constitute a team of educators, caretakers and elder learners who from part of the school structures to monitor the behaviour of learners in the different playing corners of the school during the recess by wandering around the school premises. This is both a preventive measure as well as a strategy that allows these people to intervene as and when a case of learner indiscipline starts off among a group of learners. This ensures active learner supervision (Paragraphs 2.5.2.2, 3.2.5, 3.2.7 & 5.2.1.3).

The principal sets up the errorless compliance training for learners who manifest a lack of discipline. This strategy should be implemented with the help the educators who must be trained how to make learners compliant through this technique (Paragraphs 3.5.4, 5.2.3.6 & 5.3).

These universal strategies and the intervention strategies are not always sufficient as previous studies have shown that at least five to seven per cent of the learners of a school may have emotional and behavioural disabilities related to a lack of emotional and social capital and to personal or family issues (Paragraphs 3.2.7.4 & 3.2.8.1). The model, therefore, proposes the restorative strategies which teach learners to be responsible for repairing the harm they make to others and to reconnect positively to the victims.

6.5.3 The restorative strategies

Restorative strategies are strategies that are taken to make learners assume responsibility for their (mis)behaviour and that encourage shared understanding and ownership of rules by learners. Such strategies are teaching of conflict resolution skills, role-playing, emotional resilience programmes, responsible contract, differentiated curriculum, restorative dispute resolution, restorative circles, problem-solving circles and restorative conferences (Paragraph 3.5.6, 3.5.7 & 3.6).

Instead of using suspension, the principal may use restorative dispute resolution (RDR) to bring together the learner who manifested the lack of discipline and those who were harmed by his/her indiscipline to determine the consequences. The learner is given the responsibility to repair the harm caused by being accountable for it and rebuilding the damaged relationships. The principal organises a reparative conference to bring together the victims of the learner's misbehaviour and his/her parents, the offending learner and his/her parents, and a trained facilitator or moderator. The consequences that the principal may give to the offender and that may be meaningful to the victim and the school community are community services, and the offender may mentor other learners, tutor peers and/or participate in formal school structures (Paragraphs 3.5.6, 3.5.7 & 3.6).

The principal must create a written responsibility contract in which all the responsibilities of the offender to the victim for reparation of the harm caused and to the school community are indicated. Through this responsibility contract, the learner who manifested the lack of discipline is provided with the opportunity to develop empathy for the victim and a new type of caring relationship arises through the respect and understanding that he/she has for the victim and the school.

The principal may also encourage educators to use a differentiated curriculum to cater for the varying needs and interests of all learners. The educator uses innovative teaching and learning techniques such as the learning blog created by and for the learners, peer tutoring, field trips, discovery methods, audio files, use of interactive boards such as the Sankore introduced in primary schools in collaboration with the French Government, and cooperative learning to enhance effective teaching and learning and to prevent boredom. Moreover, the educator should integrate conflict resolution skills such as listening, empathy, turn taking, negotiating, and being assertive and compromising through role playing. He/she may also teach about the consequences of a manifestation of a lack of learner discipline and how it impacts on other learners' learning and safety and emotional intelligence of learners through emotional, physical and social health (Paragraphs 3.5.6, 3.5.7, 3.6, 5.2.1.2 & 5.2.1.5). The principal uses also the community building circles and the checking-in circles which may take place in the registration or Form master's period daily at the start of the school day as proactive strategies (Paragraph 2.6.7).

6.5.4 The proposed learner discipline management model cycle

The School Disciplinary Team (SDT) plays a vital role from the inception of the model at the beginning of the academic year through the school term. The model functions as behaviour management cycle, where the principal initially communicates the school vision for learner discipline to all the learners, educators, parents and non-teaching staff in a first PTA meeting and in the first morning assemblies (the honey-moon period). The objective is to develop an inclusive approach to learner discipline management. Once the purposing is done, the principal sets up the SDT which consists of representatives of the school stakeholders, the school management team, the PTA, the school prefect body, the

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student council, and the school-based learner support services. The SDT consists of two senior members of the SMT, two parents of the PTA, two prefects from the higher Forms, two members of the student council, the school-based educational psychologist and the social worker, and the principal who leads the team.

The SDT, with the collaboration of Form masters and other class educators, will do a situational analysis of learner discipline at the class level and the school level. This is the data collection phase which may last over the first two weeks of the school term. These persons use the discipline observation form, developed by the SDT, to input information about the name of the disruptive learner, the nature of the misbehaviour, the circumstances of the occurrence, the harm caused to third parties or any property damage, the name of the victim (if any) and the date of the occurrence. It should be noted that irrespective of the outcome of the situational analysis, the principal advocates the implementation of the universal prevention strategies in the school. These strategies are implemented on a daily basis and integrated in the school daily practices and teaching and learning process by educators and learners as explained in paragraph 6.5.1. All learners of the school are subject to these strategies in a proactive and preventive approach to learner discipline.

The data collection phase helps the SDT to identify the disruptive learners and the forms of the manifestation of a lack of learner discipline. Based on the identification phase, the SDT classifies the behaviour problem as mild, moderate or a severe problem. Next, the team may decide on the intervention strategies that the principal may adopt to maintain effective learner discipline at the school. For a mild manifestation of a lack of discipline, the SDT reminds the learner of the importance of positive and acceptable learner behaviour within the framework of the school-based disciplinary policy. Management by talking is sufficient. There is no need for behaviour intervention strategies. However, for modest and severe disruptive behaviour, the SDT adopts one or a combination of the intervention strategies. When there is physical harm of other learners due to the disruptive behaviour, the SDT necessarily adopts the restorative approaches, following the parental conferencing strategy.

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There is no priority list of strategies. The three groups of strategies in the proposed model are research- and evidence-based, and they have been scientifically proved to be effective behaviour management strategies (Paragraph 3.5).

Moreover, the principal, along with the SDT, monitors the behaviour after the intervention to determine any positive progress or deterioration of behaviour. The evaluation/review process is very important so that the SDT may determine the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented strategies and come up with other disciplinary strategies from the model to more effectively correct the disruptive behaviour.

The proposed model is not a multilevel model as the restorative strategies may be taken along with the intervention strategies in cases of a modest manifestation of a lack of learner discipline, as the aim is to effectively manage learner discipline. The principal is free to use whatever strategies are required depending on the evaluation of the seriousness of the learner indiscipline and he/she deems appropriate for positively changing the learner behaviour.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

The selected secondary schools are state-funded, and managed by the Zone Directorates which are all operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Education. So, many other state secondary schools are likely to have almost the same characteristics and circumstances in terms of the learner profile, the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the immediate school environment, the school infrastructure, the teaching staff and even the school principal who are all trained by the Mauritius Institute of Education. Based on the literature study and the findings of the empirical investigation, the following are recommendations that may help improve learner discipline in the studied state secondary schools, as well as other state secondary schools where similar circumstances prevail:

(a) The principal alone cannot maintain effective learner discipline. At the very outset, he/she must have a team which shares his/her vision and goals to achieve this management task: the proposed model requires the setting up of a school disciplinary

team (SDT) of very dedicated staff who will ensure a school wide approach to learner discipline management.

(b) The principal should organise end-of-term workshops for the whole school staff on the current status of learner indiscipline and work as a community of practice to collaborate on finding the most appropriate disciplinary strategies to maintain effective learner discipline (do a situational analysis of the problem; set up the short term and long term strategies and how to reach the goal of learner discipline; the effectiveness of the strategies are assessed and reviewed at the end of each term for improvement). This is also a platform for the principal to sensitise educators on their role of assisting him/her with more commitment, accountability and responsibility in learner discipline management.

(c) All principals of a particular educational zone should create a network for discussing and sharing of good learner discipline management practices so that they feel empowered to use the best and most appropriate strategies that are working effectively in a sister school. Such collegiality may allow them to recommend the Ministry to review the transport schedules of the free transport system of learners to ensure that learners reach school on time to eliminate the manifestation of learner indiscipline related to the latecoming of school buses.

(d) The principal should be given the authority to initiate disciplinary measures in extreme cases of learner indiscipline, in collaboration with the SMT and the Disciplinary Committee at the school level, without any political interference in the day-to-day management policies, practices and procedures. The officers at the Ministry of Education should not only condemn the political interference in schools by some parents with political power and contact but should also report it to the police and the Senior Chief Executive and Directors at the Ministry of Education.

(e) Parents' parenting is inappropriate for promoting positive behaviour. Therefore, the principal should organise parent education programmes to teach them more appropriate ways of parenting as well as of dealing with their children's lack of discipline at home

and at school so as to synchronise the school values and discipline policies and the family values and disciplinary methods.

(f) The principal, together with the School Management Team (SMT), should craft a school invitational plan for parents in order to encourage parents, in a welcoming manner, to actively participate in the school activities as well as serving on the different boards and formal structures. Parents, as such, will be given more voice and choice in the school matters, including learner discipline management.

(g) Principals complain that they have no guidelines on how to manage effective learner discipline. So, the Ministry of Education, the Mauritius Institute of Education or the Open University of Mauritius may organise professional training of principals, deputy principals and school superintendents on the administrative aspects of learner discipline management as well as on the human development of adolescents to develop an awareness of how adolescent learners perceive life issues and how they act and react in their immediate environment. They should also be trained on the alternative approaches to punitive and reactive methods of learner discipline.

(h) The Mauritius Institute of Education or the Open University of Mauritius should provide continuous and in-service training to all educators on innovative pedagogies and the appropriate use of a differentiated curriculum which integrates moral values education, character education and responsible citizenship as well as the teaching of social values and emotional intelligence in order to motivate learners to learn instead of manifesting a lack of discipline.

(i) The Ministry of Education should decentralise decision-making and policy-making related to learner discipline management to the local school so that more appropriate pro-active and preventive disciplinary measures are taken by considering the social context of the school which has unique characteristics.

(j) The Ministry of Education should review its conceptualisation of the learner discipline problem from the reactive and punitive perspective of discipline to the positive, proactive and preventive perspective.

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(k) The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare should not only do sensitisation campaigns on the Constitutional rights of children in primary schools but should also sensitise them on their duties and responsibilities as a citizen of the country and as a social human being in the school community in both primary and secondary schools.

(l) As the proposed model is based on researched-based strategies and is the outcome of this current study in the Mauritian context, though generalisation is not possible, yet the Ministry of Education may consider it for implementation in state secondary schools with the same characteristics as the schools in the study sample to maintain effective learner discipline. The extent of its effectiveness may then allow the Ministry to see how it may be implemented in other state secondary schools.

6.7 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study on the role of the principal in maintaining effective discipline among learners in selected Mauritian state secondary schools suggest that further research may be carried out in the following areas:

(a) A comparison of the role of the principal in maintaining discipline among learners in state secondary schools and private secondary schools in Mauritius. This is because there is decentralisation of authority in such schools.

(b) An investigation into the school internal causes of learner indiscipline and the possible school-based strategies that the principal may adopt to maintain discipline. The internal causes are contextual and different in nature and therefore it is important to know how the principal can prevent and intervene to maintain learner discipline.

(c) The effectiveness of the proposed model of this study in the selected state secondary schools. It would be interesting to determine to what extent the proposed model is effective and determine its weaknesses to improve it in practice.

(d) An investigation into the safer and saner school climate of private confessional secondary schools with their better learner discipline.

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(e) The leadership of the principal and its impact on learner discipline. A thorough investigation into how the type of leadership may influence learner discipline and which type of leadership contributes to positive learner behaviour.

6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study reflect the specific aims and objectives of the research which have been achieved, yet the study has the following limitations:

(a) It has considered only a few selected state secondary schools. So, it is a limited sample. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to other state secondary schools, though it gives an in-depth insight and understanding of the learner discipline problem in the selected schools.

(b) All the selected state secondary schools are from the rural areas, and therefore they do not replicate the learner discipline state in state schools in the urban areas of Mauritius. This is because the cultural, contextual, political, environmental and social dimensions are different in both areas and so the opinions, reflections and perspectives of the participants vary between those in rural and those in urban areas. The findings are limited to rural area perceptions.

(c) The use of purposive convenience sampling also may have generated some biases, though the researcher did his best to counter them, as discussed in chapter four. The choice of this sampling also makes the findings geographically limited.

6.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has enlightened the researcher about the current situation of learner discipline management by principals in selected state secondary school in Mauritius. It has allowed him to change his conception of this problem, his perception of disruptive learners and attitudes to them when they manifest a lack of discipline. He has developed an

understanding of the lack of discipline. The development of the learner discipline management model that principals may adopt to maintain learner discipline is the most important part of the study, though the data collection process has been the more enriching stage: observing what is actually happening, is being implemented and finding possible explanations for the problem through the insights, perceptions and realities of all the stakeholders of each school contributed much to the personal and professional growth of the researcher. The researcher himself used to be an educator who used punitive disciplinary measures but this study has helped him to change into a proactive leader taking preventive and positive learner discipline management initiatives, as he views the learner now as an individual being living in a social, psychological, political, environmental and family context that may have a significant impact on learner behaviour. It is the duty of the principal and the educator to teach learners to be self-disciplined and to consider their behaviour. For the individual principal or educators to change their mindset and disciplinary approaches to learners' lack of discipline, they need to be functioning as part and parcel of a whole school disciplinary management system which is learner-oriented. The principal should make the learners feel his/her "human side of learner discipline management" approaches to maintain effective learner discipline in the modern state secondary school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE EDUCATIONAL ZONE 2

This 16 February 2015

Mr BELLE Louis Jinot (Educator on Leave without Pay)

5, Tagore Avenue

Morcellement Roy

Bel Air R/Seche

Mob 5712 4044

The Director

Zone 2

Ministry of Education, Human Resource, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

Sir Herchenroder Street

Beau Bassin

Fax Number 467-3509

Thru

The Rector

Bel Air SSS

Dear Sir,

I, Mr BELLE Louis Jinot, am doing research on learner discipline with Prof EJ van Niekerk, in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management, towards a Doctor in Education (subject Education Management) at the University of South Africa.

The title of the research is THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AMONG LEARNERS IN SELECTED MAURITIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT MODEL.

The aim of the study is to investigate into the various causes of a lack of discipline in state secondary schools and to develop guidelines that will help state secondary school principals maintain and restore discipline among learners in their schools through their leadership

The study will entail conducting non-participant observation in two schools and interviews with the supervisors of two schools. It will also include individual interviews with the school principal, and a focus group interview with six selected teachers, six learners of the Student Council and six parents from the PTA of each of the four selected schools in the Zone 2.

The purpose of this study is not generalisation but it may assist principals of other state secondary schools to find the transferability of the findings and conclusions to their school which may have similar characteristics, and improve their principalship in the context of learner discipline.

The researcher ensures the Directorate that the research in general and the research methods used in particular will in no way cause harm to the participants.

Feedback procedure will entail debriefing of the research findings and sharing the researcher's interpretation with the various participants to avoid researcher bias and ensure the soundness of the research.

I would be very grateful to you, Sir, if you may please grant me the permission to conduct this research and to involve principals, teachers, learners, and parents of the state schools in Zone 2. I would like to ensure you that in no circumstances will my study encroach onto the normal duty of the participants involved.

Yours sincerely

………………………….

BELLE L J (Postgraduate research student)

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW (Educator/Principal/Parent/superintendent)

Dear Mr/Mrs………………

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Mr BELLE Louis Jinot, am conducting as part of my research as a Doctoral student entitled THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AMONG LEARNERS IN SELECTED MAURITIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT MODEL at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Prof EJ van Niekerk. Permission for the study has been given by The Department of Educational Leadership and Management and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant for interviewing because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of learner discipline in schools is substantial and well documented. Learners in state secondary schools are reputed for a lack of school discipline, and therefore the researcher finds it a pertinent phenomenon to shed light upon so that principals may adopt research-based discipline interventions and strategies to restore discipline. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. Parents, teachers, learners and the principals of six schools will be participants in the research.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately 60 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 5 years in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 5712 4044 or by e-mail at carino2211@yahoo.com.

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows.

Yours sincerely

………………………

****

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study on learner discipline in state secondary schools. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may

withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Participant's Name (Please print):

Participant Signature:

Researcher Name: (Please print)

Researcher Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING PARENTAL CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION OF MINORS IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Parent

Your ward is invited to participate in a study entitled THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AMOMG LEARNERS IN SELECTED MAURITIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT MODEL. I am undertaking this study as part of my Doctoral research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to investigate into the causes of a lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools and develop guidelines for principals to maintain and restore discipline through their leadership and the possible benefits of the study are the improvement of school discipline among learners in the state secondary schools. I am asking permission to include your ward in this study because he is the most concerned about the research problem and he is a key informant about the possible causes of a lack of discipline among learners. I expect to have five other children from this school participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to take part in a group interview consisting of six learners only. The interview will last for about one hour and it will be audio-taped.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His or her responses will not be linked to his or her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are a safer and more conducive learning environment for him/her. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not adversely affect him/her in any way. Similarly you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during normal school activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Prof EJ van Niekerk, Department of Educational Leadership and Management, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 5712 4044 and my e-mail is carino2211@yahoo.com. The e-mail of my supervisor is vniekej@unisa.ac.za. Permission for the study has already been given by the Directorate of the Educational Zone 2, Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study. You may keep a copy of this letter.

Name of child:
Sincerely

_____ _____ _____

Parent/guardian's name (print)   Parent/guardian's signature: Date:

_____ _____ _____

Researcher's name (print)   Researcher's signature   Date:

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE OF A LETTER REQUESTING ASSENT FROM LEARNERS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Title of study: THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE AMONG LEARNERS IN SELECTED MAURITIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT MODEL

Dear …………………………………………………………..

I am doing a study on learner discipline as part of my studies at the University of South Africa under the supervision of Prof EJ van Niekerk. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your principal and teachers can use to improve your teaching and learning situation as well as to create a safe and secured school environment. This will help you and many other learners of your age in different state schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

For this research on learner discipline, I will do a focus group interview with you and five other learners in the Student Council. We will talk about the phenomenon as I will like to have your views, feelings, perceptions and thoughts about learner discipline in state secondary schools. The interview will last about one hour. The information you share in the interview will be used by the researcher to come up with his findings, conclusions and recommendations about the phenomenon. All the information collected from you will be used exclusively for this study only.

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. You do not have to be part of this study if

you don't want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form below. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me on 5712 4044. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: ……………. Phone number: ....

Do not sign written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.

****

WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about the study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be in the study.

Learner's name (print)   Learner's signature   Date:

Witness's name (print)   Witness's   signature
Date:

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed.)

Parent/guardian's name (print)   Parent/guardian's signature: Date:

Researcher's name (print)   Researcher's signature: Date:

APPENDIX E: FOCUS GROUP/INTERVIEW ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I_____ grant consent/assent that the information I share during the group discussions (focus group interviews) may be used by the researcher, Mr Belle Louis Jinot, for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and grant consent/assent for these recordings, provided that my privacy will be protected. I undertake not to divulge any information that is shared in the group discussions to any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

Participant's Name (Please print):

Participant Signature:

Researcher's Name: (Please print):

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX F: LETTER OF CLEARANCE FROM THE UNISA ETHICS COMMITTEE

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

15 April 2015

Ref#:**2015/04/15/6471390/16/MC**
Student #:Mr JL Belle
Student number#:31106676

Dear Mr Belle,

Decision: Approved

Researcher
Mr JL Belle
5 Avenue Morcellenent Roy-Bel-Air
R/Seche
Mauritius
+2304197130/+22307124044
Carino221@yahoo.com

Supervisor
Prof EJ van Niekerk
Department of Educational Management and Leadership
College of Education
+2712 429 6992
vniekej@unisa.ac.za

Proposal: The role of Principals in maintaining effective discipline in selected Mauritian secondary schools: An Education Management Model

Qualification: D Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for 2 years.

For full approval: The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the CEDU ERC on 15 April 2015.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:
1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is

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relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

3) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.
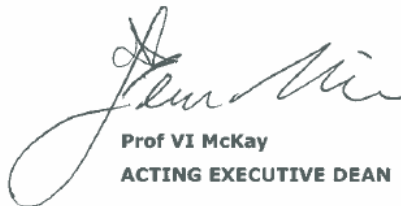
Note:

The reference number [top right corner of this communiqué] should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,

Dr M Claassens
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU ERC

Prof VI McKay
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN

mcdtc@netactive.co.za

APPENDIX G: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FOR INFORMATION GATHERING

REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES, TERTIARY EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Our Ref: ME/0/305/3 T4 (2)   Date: 14 April 2015

Mr Louis Jinot Balle
5, Tagore Avenue
Morcellement Roy
Bel Air Rivière Sèche

Dear Sir,

Subject: Permission to Conduct Research in State Secondary Schools

Please refer to your letter dated 16 February 2015 in connection with the above subject.

2.   I am pleased to inform you that approval has been granted for you to conduct your survey in State Secondary Schools in Zone 2 as mentioned in the letter under reference.

3.   The above is subject to the following:
   - No classes will be disrupted while the survey is being carried out
   - Participation will be at the discretion of the students and parental consent should be obtained
   - A report of your findings to be submitted to this Ministry at a later stage

4.   You are kindly requested to liaise with the Rectors of the chosen schools prior to conducting your survey.

Yours faithfully,

E. Pillay (Mrs.)
for Supervising Officer

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APPENDIX H: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST FOR TWO STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Areas of interest for observation:

- The manifestations of a lack of learner discipline
- The possible causes of a lack of discipline among learners (especially school-related causes)
- The behaviour interventions and strategies that the principal and teachers may take when there is the manifestation of a lack of discipline
- Possible barriers to the successful implementation of effective discipline by the principal

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH EACH STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Major questions to the principal:

1. What are the causes of a lack of discipline among learners of your school?

THEMES:

- Internal causes

- External causes:

  - The family (breakdown of family structure; parents' inadequate childrearing practices, dysfunctional lifestyle; lack of parental supervision, involvement and encouragement in the learner's academic endeavour; ineffective parental discipline; parental use of physical punishment; parental rejection)
  - The school (the educator; character education; school connectedness; school climate; academic competence; lack of extracurricular activities; the school characteristics)
  - The culture (enculturation and acculturation; minority groups; educators' expectations of learners of the minority cultures)
  - The community (the social disorganisation of the learner's community; a lack of neighbourhood support; a lack of social competence)
  - The media
  - Peer pressure and peer rejection
  - Attention-seeking; power and superiority seeking; revenge seeking and social withdrawal
  - Self-discipline, problem solving skills, interpersonal, intrapersonal and prosocial skills
  - Curriculum and methods of evaluation of learners
  - Behaviour/teaching style of educators
  - Threatened personal dignity

- Rules
- The perception of personal and/or academic capacity
- Lack of the sense of belongingness
- Member of a deviant group
- Low self-esteem
- Academic failure
- Social disadvantage

2. What strategies may you take to maintain and restore effective discipline among the learners of your school? What are the barriers to maintaining discipline in schools?

- Professional teacher growth and development in respect of positive discipline
- Management by wandering around
- The principal as an instructional leader
- Teachers support and empowerment in terms of collaboration, delegation, SMT
- Distributed leadership
- The principal as a visionary leader in creating a safe and secure learning environment in the school
- Monitoring closely the administration of behaviour contract, daily progress report, check-in/ check-out, and the token economy
- The promotion of learner leadership and pupil voice and choice
- The promotion of team building and collaborative leadership to ensure the implementation of the behaviour intervention strategies at the class level as well as the school level
- The principal as the moral and inspirational leader
- Relationship-driven principalship
- Creating of an invitational teaching and learning environment in the school
- Centralisation
- Competition classroom versus competitive classroom
- Automatic promotion

3. What would you propose as disciplinary strategies that should be taken to maintain effective discipline?

APPENDIX J: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH EACH STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

Major questions to the school superintendent:

1. What are the causes of a lack of discipline among learners of the school?

THEMES:

- Internal causes

- External causes:

  - The family (breakdown of family structure; parents' inadequate childrearing practices, dysfunctional lifestyle; lack of parental supervision, involvement and encouragement in the learner's academic endeavour; ineffective parental discipline; parental use of physical punishment; parental rejection)

  - The school (the educator; character education; school connectedness; school climate; academic competence; lack of extracurricular activities; the school characteristics)

  - The culture (enculturation and acculturation; minority groups; educators' expectations of learners of the minority cultures)

  - The community (the social disorganisation of the learner's community; a lack of neighbourhood support; a lack of social competence)

  - The media

  - Peer pressure and peer rejection

  - Attention-seeking; power and superiority seeking; revenge seeking and social withdrawal

  - Self-discipline, problem solving skills, interpersonal, intrapersonal and prosocial skills

  - Curriculum and methods of evaluation of learners

  - Behaviour/teaching style of educators

  - Threatened personal dignity

- Rules

- The perception of personal and/or academic capacity

- Lack of the sense of belongingness

- Member of a deviant group

- Low self-esteem

- Academic failure

- Social disadvantage

2. What strategies may you take to maintain and restore effective discipline among the learners of the school? What are the barriers to maintaining discipline in schools?

- Professional teacher growth and development in respect of positive discipline

- Management by wandering around

- The principal as an instructional leader

- Teachers support and empowerment in terms of collaboration, delegation, SMT

- Distributed leadership

- The principal as a visionary leader in creating a safe and secure learning environment in the school

- Monitoring closely the administration of behaviour contract, daily progress report, check-in/ check-out, and the token economy

- The promotion of learner leadership and pupil voice and choice

- The promotion of team building and collaborative leadership to ensure the implementation of the behaviour intervention strategies at the class level as well as the school level

- The principal as the moral and inspirational leader

- Relationship-driven principalship

- Creating of an invitational teaching and learning environment in the school

- Centralisation

- Competition classroom versus competitive classroom

Automatic promotion

3. What would you propose as disciplinary strategies that the principal may take to maintain effective discipline among learners?

APPENDIX K: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH STATE SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS

Major questions to state secondary school educator:

1. What are the main causes of a lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools?

Themes:

- Internal causes

- External causes:

  - The family (breakdown of family structure; parents' inadequate childrearing practices, dysfunctional lifestyle; lack of parental supervision, involvement and encouragement in the learner's academic endeavour; ineffective parental discipline; parental use of physical punishment; parental rejection)
  - The school (the educator; character education; school connectedness; school climate; academic competence; lack of extracurricular activities; the school characteristics)
  - The culture (enculturation and acculturation; minority groups; educators' expectations of learners of the minority cultures)
  - The community (the social disorganisation of the learner's community; a lack of neighbourhood support ; a lack of social competence)
  - The media
  - Peer pressure and peer rejection
  - Attention-seeking; power and superiority seeking; revenge seeking and social withdrawal
  - Self-discipline, problem solving skills, interpersonal, intrapersonal and prosocial skills
  - Curriculum and methods of evaluation of learners
  - Behaviour/teaching style of educators

- Threatened personal dignity
- Rules
- The perception of personal and/or academic capacity
- Lack of the sense of belongingness
- Member of a deviant group
- Low self-esteem
- Academic failure
- Social disadvantage

2. What, according to you, are the behavioural interventions and strategies that the principal of your school may take to maintain and restore effective discipline among the learners? What are the barriers that may prevent the principal from doing his role of maintaining discipline in the school?

- Professional teacher growth and development in respect of positive discipline
- Management by wandering around
- The principal as an instructional leader
- Teachers support and empowerment in terms of collaboration, delegation, SMT
- Distributed leadership
- The principal as a visionary leader in creating a safe and secure learning environment in the school
- Monitoring closely the administration of behaviour contract, daily progress report, check-in/ check-out, and the token economy
- The promotion of learner leadership and pupil voice and choice
- The promotion of team building and collaborative leadership to ensure the implementation of the behaviour intervention strategies at the class level as well as the school level
- The principal as the moral and inspirational leader
- Relationship-driven principalship
- Creating of an invitational teaching and learning environment in the school
- Centralisation

- Competition classroom versus competitive classroom

- Automatic promotion

APPENDIX L: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH STATE SECONDARY LEARNERS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL

Major question to the secondary school learners:

What are the causes of a lack of discipline among learners in state secondary schools?
- Internal causes

- External causes:

- The family (breakdown of family structure; parents' inadequate childrearing practices, dysfunctional lifestyle; lack of parental supervision, involvement and encouragement in the learner's academic endeavour; ineffective parental discipline; parental use of physical punishment; parental rejection)
- The school (the educator; character education; school connectedness; school climate; academic competence; lack of extracurricular activities; the school characteristics)
- The culture (enculturation and acculturation; minority groups; educators' expectations of learners of the minority cultures)
- The community (the social disorganisation of the learner's community; a lack of neighbourhood support; a lack of social competence)
- The media
- Peer pressure and peer rejection
- Attention-seeking; power and superiority seeking; revenge seeking and social withdrawal
- Self-discipline, problem solving skills, interpersonal, intrapersonal and prosocial skills
- Curriculum and methods of evaluation of learners
- Behaviour/teaching style of educators
- Threatened personal dignity
- Rules
- The perception of personal and/or academic capacity

- Lack of the sense of belongingness

- Member of a deviant group

- Low self-esteem

- Academic failure

- Social disadvantage

APPENDIX M: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH PARENTS OF THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Main question to parents:

What are the main causes of a lack of discipline among learners in this state secondary school, in particular?

Themes:

- Internal causes

- External causes:

  - The family (breakdown of family structure; parents' inadequate childrearing practices, dysfunctional lifestyle; lack of parental supervision, involvement and encouragement in the learner's academic endeavour; ineffective parental discipline; parental use of physical punishment; parental rejection)
  - The school (the educator; character education; school connectedness; school climate; academic competence; lack of extracurricular activities; the school characteristics)
  - The culture (enculturation and acculturation; minority groups; educators' expectations of learners of the minority cultures)
  - The community (the social disorganisation of the learner's community; a lack of neighbourhood support; a lack of social competence)
  - The media
  - Peer pressure and peer rejection
  - Attention-seeking; power and superiority seeking; revenge seeking and social withdrawal
  - Self-discipline, problem solving skills, interpersonal, intrapersonal and prosocial skills
  - Curriculum and methods of evaluation of learners
  - Behaviour/teaching style of educators

- Threatened personal dignity

- Rules

- The perception of personal and/or academic capacity

- Lack of the sense of belongingness

- Member of a deviant group

- Low self-esteem

- Academic failure

- Social disadvantage

2. What are the strategies that the school may take to restore or maintain learner discipline in this school?