TEACHERS' STRATEGIES TO COMBAT DISRUPTION IN CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

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APPROVAL PAGE

This research has been examined and is approved as meeting the required standards for partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Education.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how teachers conceptualize disruptive behaviour and to explore the strategies they use in combating class disruption at senior primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region. A qualitative case study design was used to investigate this phenomenon in the two best-performing schools and two under-performing schools in the Otjozondjupa region. The target population for this study consisted of senior primary school teachers (Grades 4 to Grade7) from selected schools in the Otjozondjupa region. Purposive sampling was used to select the top two performing schools and two under-performing schools as per their respective performances in the National Standardized Tests (MoEAC, 2015). Criterion sampling strategies were used to select the sample of thirteen (13) teachers from the four schools. Semi-structured interviews and observation were used as data collection instruments.

The results of the study confirmed growing awareness among primary school teachers of classroom disruption and the effectiveness of classroom management strategies that factor in environmental, structural, and background variables. The study revealed that verbal and nonverbal actions can constitute perceived disruptive behaviour. The study also established that perceived causes of classroom disruption significantly influenced by social and psychological factors. Parental involvement and keeping learners engaged also emerged as strategies teachers most prominently employ in managing classroom disruption. The study concludes that teachers who could leverage teaching experience, understood the importance of social factors, and took a proactive approach in addressing classroom disruption were more successful than those who were passive, inexperienced or did not understand how learning and behaviour are socially influenced. The study recommends broadening the understanding of inclusive education approaches and cultures for addressing classroom behaviour in the Namibian school system.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, colleagues and friends for their kind support and encouragement. When I was under pressure, they generously provided words of encouragement and wisdom.

DECLARATIONS

I, Nelago Ndeuthigilwa Kamenye, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof, has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

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Nelago N Kamenye **Date**

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List of abbreviation/Acronyms

EFA- Education for all

IE – Inclusive Education

UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

MoEAC- Ministry of Education

ESPIE- Edu-Sector Policy on Inclusive Education

NSATs- National standardized achievement test

MoEAC- Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the Study

Since 2012, Namibia has implemented Universal Primary Education. Basic school-related fees are fully subsidized by the State, so that parents do not have to pay. Consequently, about 90% of children have access to primary education nationally, according to the Demographic and Health Survey (2013) and United Nations International Children's Educational Fund (2018).

Education in Namibia has the overarching goal of being as inclusive as possible, inclusive education being based on the principle that local schools should provide for *all* children, regardless of any disability or other social, emotional, cultural or linguistic difference (MoEAC, 2013). As Alquraini & Gut (2012) put it: "Inclusive education is the system of delivering education to all learners regardless of their identity or differences in socio-economic background, race, (dis)ability, gender, religion and ethnicity; it ensures that learners are enabled to receive high-quality instruction, interventions, and support so that they can achieve success in the core curriculum." The principle of inclusion affirms that everyone in any community is respected, accommodated and valued.

Additionally, at the Sustainable Development Summit, the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included Goal Target 7.1 (2015), urging nations to build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender-sensitive and to provide a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment for all.

Importantly, Namibia's Sector Policy on inclusive education (MoEAC, 2013) directs schools to be open to all learners. Moreover, the Constitution of Namibia (1990) and UNESCO's Inclusive Education Factsheet (2018) place emphasis on "education for all." But even if everyone has access to school theory, in reality many learners' rights are violated in the classrooms by occurrences of disruption by fellow learners that hinders learning and teaching from taking place (Amutenya, 2016; Zimba, 1996; Upindi, 2012; Shilongo, 2002). At the same time, the Sector Policy (2013) emphasizes the importance of including learners who exhibit disruptive behaviour as part of teachers' responsibility to educate every learner. It is therefore crucial to curb disruptive classroom behaviour and involve all learners in the business of learning so that no learner should feel left out, and in the process groom well-disciplined, inclusive and productive future leaders and citizens in Namibia.

Challenges facing education in Namibia include teacher shortages, overcrowded classrooms, indiscipline, and bullying and classroom disruption, but it is classroom disruption in particular that has become a common topic amongst teachers and seems to be significant enough to push many teachers into leaving the teaching profession (Amutenya, 2016).

The rise of classroom disruption is corroborated by research beyond the Namibian context, indicating that the study of learner behaviour in order to better understand and address classroom disruption is one of the new dominant discourses in schooling (Ball, Braun, & Maguire, 2012).

Namibian teachers perceive learners' disruptive behaviour as one of the most serious threats to their effectiveness; as such behaviour inhibits optimal teaching and learning and

consequently impedes participation and collaboration, key requirements in inclusive classrooms (Zimba, 1996).

The researcher is a teacher in a multi-cultural school in a town in Otjozondjupa region. The community is diverse in terms of class, race, ethnicity, living standards and levels of education. As a result, learners come to classrooms with different backgrounds, sets of experiences, cultural contexts and world-views. In this school, teacher conversations are dominated by the topic of classrooms disruption, with the focus being on learner behaviour rather than teacher behaviour and classroom management.

Various aspects of learners' lives, such as child-headed homes, broken homes, socio-economic status, parental absence, parents' attitudes and expectations, family structure, and home language, all have a significant effect on a child's social and educational development (Ajila & Olutola, 2007). Over years of teaching, the researcher has observed that some learners grow up lacking basic guidance in social behaviour. Some are neglected and do not have a warm and supportive home environment. When such factors are combined with cold and frustrated teachers, the scene is set for disruptive behaviour.

Learners who find themselves in the situations outlined above become attention seekers, looking for a sense of belonging from fellow learners and teachers by acting up and provoking teachers. In the process, they end up disrupting teaching and learning in the classroom. Such disruption prevents learners from receiving quality education and leaves teachers helpless and demoralized.

Troubled by disruptive conduct in their classrooms, teachers sometimes resort to coercive strategies as a short-term solution to classroom management; however several scholars

have established that coercive strategies are associated with an increase in disruptive behaviour, while supportive strategies have an opposite effect and seem to foster adaptive behaviour (Brekelmans, Mainhard & Wub-bels, 2011; Alonso-Tapia, Gómez & Simón, 2013)

1.2 Statement of the problem

The Teacher Code of Conduct (2004, p. 3) requires that teachers, inter alia: a) respect the dignity and constitutional rights of every learner without prejudice, including the right to education, equality of culture, and the right to privacy; b) promote acceptable moral standards and development among learners; c) not, in any form, humiliate or abuse a learner (i.e. physically, emotionally or psychologically) and d) may not administer corporal or any other degrading punishment upon a learner. Many teachers report that they sometimes find themselves violating this Code of Conduct due to feelings of powerlessness, especially when they are "challenged" over and over by learners through disruptive classroom behaviour.

In line with the Education Sector Policy for Inclusive Education (ESPIE), teachers find themselves in a dilemma, not knowing how to deal with learners behaving badly. Keeping them in class jeopardizes teaching and learning, but sending them out encroaches on their right to education. Listening to such conversations among teachers and herself battling with these issues, the researcher was prompted to conduct a study on strategies of combating disruptive behaviour in classrooms in the senior primary phase.

Despite most teachers' applying the strategies stipulated in the ESPIE, many still experience classroom disruption (Shilongo, 2002). Many teachers hold the opinion that the

ESPIE guidelines are not effective because they are biased in favour of learners and leave teachers unsupported and at a disadvantage.

Thus teachers often feel that their hands are tied when it comes to managing disruptive behaviour. While there are alternatives to corporal punishment, some teachers continue to believe that corporal punishment is one of the most effective ways to deal with disruptive behaviour. On the other hand, those who apply alternative strategies report investing a lot of time and energy but achieving low success rates in controlling such behaviour.

Teachers seem to be divided between the use of supportive strategies (proposed by the inclusive education philosophy) and punitive strategies to combat disruptive classroom behaviour. Questions arising from this situation form the basis of the objectives of this research study, which are presented below.

1.3 Research objectives

The general objectives of this research were to investigate how teachers conceptualized disruptive behaviour and to explore the strategies that they used in combating class disruption at senior primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region. The specific objectives are to:

- Explore what teachers perceive as disruptive classroom behaviour.
- Identify perceived causes of disruptive classroom behaviour among learners.
- Explore teachers' perceptions on the best ways of addressing/responding to disruptive behaviour in senior primary classrooms.

- Find out what strategies are used by experienced teachers to address classroom disruption, and whether such strategies support or undermine the inclusive education philosophy.
- Assemble recommendations from teachers on what they would need in order effectively to address disruptive classroom behaviour and support learners better.

1.4 Significance of the Study

School systems that adopt the education-for-all (inclusive education) approach stand to benefit from diversity, which is important for building a more just and democratic society (Acedo, 2008, as quoted in Zaclona & Radovanovic, 2014).

The findings of this study may guide teachers in the use of strategies that are likely to help prevent or reduce the frequency of disruptive behaviour, while assisting them to manage their classrooms in a way that is grounded in the values of inclusive education. This will be achieved in part by identifying the support that they need in order effectively to address such behaviour.

The findings of this study may also assist school principals to arrive at a better understanding of the causes of disruptive behaviour in classrooms, and thus enable them to help teachers employ effective strategies to combat this behaviour within the framework of inclusive education.

The awareness raised by this study might indirectly serve to reduce the occurrence of disruptive behaviour in classrooms in the Otjozondjupa region, as teachers become more conscious of appropriate strategies to use. The knowledge created by this study might be

useful to policy developers, possibly suggesting effective strategies of managing disruptive classroom behaviour that are in line with the principles of inclusive education.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Since one of the research methods was observation, the researcher anticipated a change in learners' and teachers' behaviours when they were being observed. The researcher therefore spent a lot of time in the participants' classrooms before embarking on formal observation as a data collection method. The results acquired from observation may nevertheless only be partially representative of the real, everyday behaviour of participants (both teachers and learners) when they are not aware of being under any observation.

Although the researcher carefully explained the objectives of the study, some potential participants still opted not to take part, perhaps perceiving the research process as a case of their being assessed and evaluated. The reluctance of some potential participants to take part robbed the study of potentially rich information that could have been beneficial for decision making about this issue at the national level.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

This study was limited to teachers serving on the disciplinary committees of two top-performing schools and two low-performing primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region. Other schools and teachers might well employ better strategies, but they were not part of the sample due to the sampling strategy used. Similarly, the choice of the Otjozondjupa region was based on convenience and ease of access for the researcher to information and research sites. This does not mean that other regions could not have offered richer insights into the research problem.

1.7 Definition of terms

For the purposes of this study, key terms are defined as follows:

Disruptive behaviour – According to Driscol, McCown, and Roop (1996) disruptive behaviour in the classroom can be defined as any action by a learner that disrupts learning and teaching in the classroom. In this study the term refers to undesirable behaviour on the part of a learner, verbal or nonverbal, which disrupts the process of learning and teaching. Disruptive behaviour can also be characterized as any behaviour that hampers the ability of teachers to teach or learners to learn. A disruptive learner manages to grab a teacher's attention and prevents the teacher from giving the other learners attention. Thus, it is behaviour that distracts a teacher and the other learners from the teaching-learning process.

Disruptive learner – refers to a learner who is perceived as uncooperative and does things that prevent him- or herself and other learners in class from learning. Hence, a disruptive learner in this study refers to a learner who continuously disrupts the teaching and learning process.

Inclusive Education – is defined as a process of addressing and responding to diversity by increasing the participation of all learners in learning and other activities in the same environment with peers (MoEAC, 2013). In the context of this study, inclusive education is used to refer to the inclusion of learners manifesting disruptive behaviour in the regular classroom.

Inclusion – Zulch-Knouwds (2010, p. 14) defines inclusion as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion." The term is further

understood as a process of taking action in order to address the wide diversity of needs of all learners (Zulch-Knouwds, 2010).

Ainscow and Miles (2008) propose five ways of thinking about inclusion: inclusion concerned with disability and special education needs; inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions; inclusion as a being about all groups vulnerable to exclusion; inclusion as the promotion of a school for all; and inclusion as Education for All. In this study, inclusion will thus be understood as all adaptations made to ensure that learners with behaviour difficulties are included in classroom activities.

Corporal punishment – In one of its guidelines published in *Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework PART B: Practical Guide for Building Safe Schools*, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) defines corporal punishment as punishment using physical force, usually inflicted by a person of authority, with the intention of causing physical pain for disciplinary purposes. In recent years, however, the definition has been broadened to include verbal and/or emotional violence (MoEAC, 2018).

Vulnerable child – A child who needs care and protection (National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children, 2008). In this study the phrase refers to learners who need care and protection, including those from marginalized backgrounds, those heading households and those coming from poverty-stricken backgrounds.

Senior primary phase – This phase refers to Grades 4-7, with learners' ranging in age between nine (9) and thirteen (13) years.

Experienced teachers – Teachers who have been in the teaching profession for more than 5 years.

Low-performing school – A school where recorded pass rates in standardized tests are below 50%.

Average-performing school – A school where recorded pass rates in standardized tests are between 50 and 65%.

High-performing school – A school where the recorded pass rates in standardized tests are above 65%.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented the background of the study, a statement of the problem, the research objectives and significance, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. I have provided definitions of key terms, focusing on their meanings in the specific context of this research. In the next chapter the theoretical framework and literature review are presented and discussed in relation to the research objectives.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter features discussion of Inclusive education and of the theoretical framework of the study, followed by a review of existing literature on teachers' perceptions of disruptive classroom behaviour, the perceived causes disruptive behaviour, and strategies that teachers can use to deal with disruptive classroom behaviour.

2.2 Inclusive education

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), defines Inclusive Education as follows:

> The process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and management strategies, with a common vision aimed at serving all children of an appropriate age range; included in the philosophy is a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children (UNESCO, 2008).

In accordance with inclusive education principles, learners with any difficulty or special needs are to participate in learning in the same classroom situation as those who are not experiencing barriers to learning and development. Inclusive education is thus that aspect of an education system that responds to the diverse needs of all learners in order to remove all barriers to learning. This means accepting each person for what he or she is, despite

people looking different, having different needs and having different ways of living, believing and thinking (Engelbrecht, Hugo, Nel & Swanepoel, 2013; UN Declaration (1948). Consequently, is imperative for schools in Namibia to provide an environment in which all learners, including those prone to causing and engaging in disruptive behaviour, can be accommodated.

Furthermore, it is understood that an inclusive education system creates opportunities for participation and collaboration. According to Winter and O'Raw (2010), the provision of inclusive education requires persistent efforts, attentiveness, and continuous monitoring and evaluating to create a participatory school setting Reiser (2013) similarly characterizes inclusive classrooms as those in which all learners, irrespective of their capacities and challenges, actively participate in activities, in a spirit of collaboration.

Winter and O'Raw (2010) and Reiser (2013) agree on the need for both participation and collaboration, although how to go about this is not always a matter of agreement. Some research has questioned the effectiveness of implementing inclusive educational principles by merely grouping learners with distinct differences together. Madriga et. al (2010) concluded that both learners with challenges and those without experienced barriers to group work, while Kimmel & Volet (2012) reported that bringing people together in cross-cultural groups did not in itself foster tolerance or collaboration.

Many researchers laud inclusive education for its capacity to develop new approaches and resources not necessarily material resources, but resources developed through diversifying teaching and learning and resources resulting from teachers' improved pedagogical skills and broader understanding of diversity (Engelbrecht et al, 2013). The notion of improved

teaching abilities is echoed by Reichow et. al. (2016) who concluded that an inclusive classroom needs to use multisensory communication as well as multiple teaching strategies in order to keep the class engaged.

However, in spite of all the awareness and policy-making regarding inclusive education, in practice there has not been much progress. Johansson (2014) noted that although inclusive education policy has been crafted by many governments, establishing inclusive practices on the ground had proven to be more difficult, a fact echoed by Ferguson (2008), who concluded that the difficult part is the practices of inclusive education rather than the policy making. Consequently, the importance of inclusive education in practice theory as well as in practice has never been greater, in Namibia and elsewhere.

2.3 Theoretical framework

2.3.1 Social Learning Theory

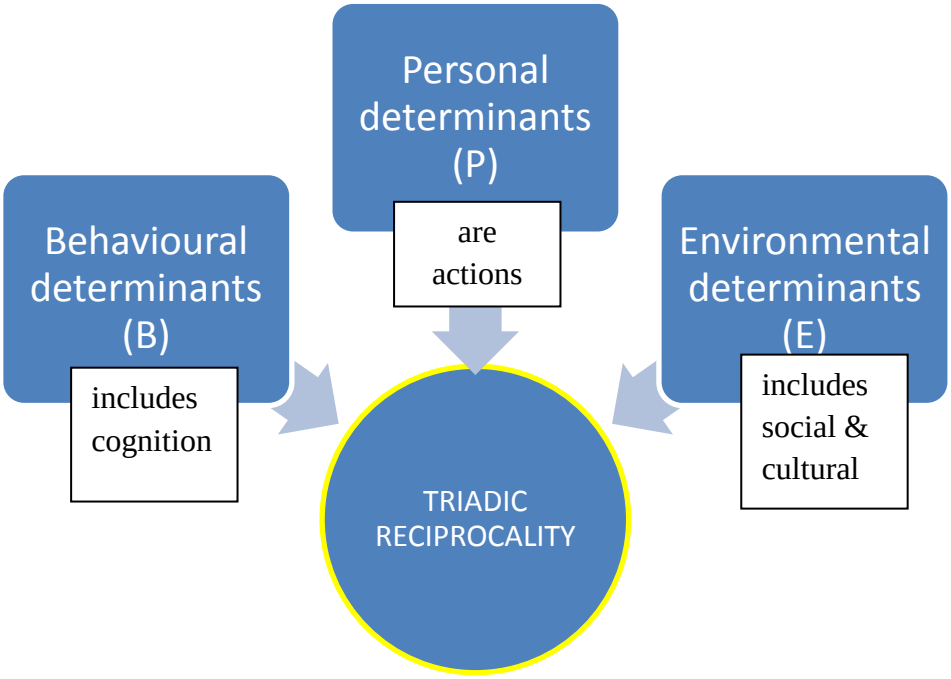
This study is informed by the work of Bandura (1989), the founder of social learning theory. Bandura views human behaviour as a result of reciprocal influences, a situation he called reciprocal determinism (Bryan, 2014). The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in the fact that when teachers are fully aware of and versed in the dynamics of social values, reciprocity, and influence, they can understand the root causes of disruptive classroom behaviour and employ informed and effective strategies to address the challenge that they pose.

Such informed strategies include, among others, encouraging observation and modeling behaviour from fellow learners and other people in the learners' immediate social surroundings. Bandura's social learning theory stresses the importance of observational

learning, imitation, and modeling. Additionally, in the social learning perspective, behaviour is learned, at least in a basic form, before it is performed, and this is usually done in a controlled environment.

Social learning theory posits continuous interaction among behaviour, individual influences including cognition and the environment, in what is referred to as the reciprocal causation model. Bandura does not suggest that the three factors in the triadic model of reciprocity are always equal in importance. The influence of behaviour on a learner or the environment depends on which factor is strongest at any particular moment, even though each pillar remains a critical component of the model, as illustrated in Figure 2.1, below.

Figure 2. 1 Bandura's Triadic Reciprocality



When a teacher applies the Social Learning Theory of Bandura, s/he might present a lesson to the class and have the learners reflect on what the teacher has taught them (the teacher's role represents an environmental influence on cognition). The reflection by learners marks the point at which individual influences become determinants of the learning process and

its outcomes. This also includes instances when learners who do not understand a point ask a clarifying question.

The conduct of the teacher or other learners (good or bad) during the learning process may also affect how other learners learn. In other words, learners may imitate the good or bad behaviour of those around them, determining what and how much they learn. This demonstrates the behavioural pillar of the theory, which posits that people can learn by observing a model.

The researcher has chosen Bandura's social learning theory for this study because both the theory and this study are rooted in human behaviour (disruptive or not) and how it affects learning. Theoretical model's pillar of behavioural determinants offers a source of potential information to support an understanding of why, in line with the research objectives of this study, classroom disruption occurs and its root causes.

2.4 Disruptive classroom behaviour

Disruptive behaviour consists of such actions as disturb teachers and learners during the teaching and learning process (Shilongo, 2002). Mwamwenda (2004) notes that there are various forms of disruptive behaviour that take place in primary school classrooms on a daily basis, and if not addressed properly they can become serious disciplinary problems.

Examples of such behaviour include aggression, physical attacks on teachers and other learners, bullying, making noise, not paying attention, and rudeness. These often have a negative impact on the learning environment. Disruptive learner behaviour interferes with teachers' ability to conduct their classes and prevents optimal teaching and learning

feedback (Kruger, Landsberg & Nel, 2014). Furthermore, disruptive behaviour puts teachers under emotional strains, leaving them with a sense of powerlessness and forcing them to redirect time and energy from teaching activities and to addressing issues of classroom discipline (Shilongo, 2002; Reichow et. al. 2016; Kruger et al, 2014). Disruptive behaviour also disadvantages other learners because it interferes with their right to learn (Lewis, Romi & Joel, 2012).

In a study conducted by Shilongo (2002), teachers in Namibia indicated that the most frequently occurring types of unwanted behaviour in the classrooms were learners talking out of turn, moving around, shouting, not doing homework, using abusive language, banging their heels on the floor, singing, stamping, fighting, teasing, bullying and obstructing other learners from paying attention in class. In other studies, (in Australia) Conway, Johnson, Owens and Sullivan (2014) and (in South Africa) Kruger, Landsberg & Nel (2014) observe that the most prevalent unproductive learner behaviours are talking out of turn, back chatting, avoiding doing schoolwork and disengaging from classroom activities. Disrupting the flow of a lesson and homework not being done also ranked among the most frequently occurring kinds of conduct that teacher found difficult to

The negative effects of classroom disruption are straightforward: disruptive conduct in the classroom makes it difficult or even impossible for the teacher to effectively deliver his or her lesson. In light of the emphasis placed by Bandura (1989) on learning by imitation, disruptive learners can negatively impact the classroom by modeling wrong behaviour for other learners to imitate, further compounding the significant challenge of disruptive classroom conduct.

When disruptive behaviour occurs, teachers are unable to pay the necessary attention to other learners who are deserving of support, as per the requirements of inclusive education. At the same time, learners who engage in disruptive behaviour get no benefit from the learning material, the attention of all the other learners is distracted and the atmosphere in the classroom is tainted (Kruger, Landsberg & Nel, 2014).

The solution would appear to lie in identifying the root causes of such behaviour and crafting the right strategies and mechanisms to address the challenge that it poses.

2.5 Perceived causes of classroom disruption

According to Shilongo (2002), the causes of disruptive behaviour among children in Namibian senior primary school classrooms include a lack of interest in education, imitating other learners because of peer pressure, and hunger, which disturbs concentration.

Other research (Aro, Haihambo, Imasiku, Kariuki & Moewës, 2011; Kruger et al. 2014) identifies the root cause of disruptive behaviour as attention seeking. This is confirmed by the researcher's own experience as a teacher: the most prominent reasons for such are related to the social needs of a child, including attention, belonging, status, as well as support from grown-ups (both parents and teachers).The lack of any of these social needs tends to drive the learner into acting mischievously and/or disruptively.

Bandura's (1989) social learning theory endorses this perception, as it places social-environmental influence among the three most consequential determinants of learning. What is more, the scholarship on inclusive education underlines the need for inclusion regardless of a learner's background or intrinsic characteristics. This implies that

disruption can be caused by learners who feel excluded because of some trait or limitation they possess, or because of the background they come from (Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

In a study of the impact of school breakfast on children's health and learning, Beardslee, Brown, and Prothrow-Stith (2008) found out that children who do not get enough to eat have poorer mental health, exhibit more disruptive behaviour and are more likely to withdraw from classroom activities and learning-related tasks because they are too weak and distracted by their condition to pay full attention.

Ridnouer (2010) maintains that pre-adolescents like to be in authority over their own behaviour and they are likely to misbehave to send whatever message they feel like sending at that moment. For example, learners are prone to blurting out answers without the teacher's permission to speak, calling their classmates or friends loudly in class, asking a lot of probing but irrelevant questions of the teacher when they feel confused or sense they are falling behind.

These are examples, in terms of social learning theory, of how actions (Personal Determinants [P]) can influence learning and educational outcomes for good or bad. In this case, the immature and disruptive behaviour of preadolescents serves to deprive them and other "innocent" learners of knowledge and instruction.

The concept of reciprocity in social learning theory (Bandura, 1989), finds some echo in research that points to teachers as being affected by learner behaviour, and studies indicating that the behaviour of teachers in public places and at school has an impact on learners (Shilongo, 2002). Teachers' conduct toward learners in classrooms can elicit negative responses from learners, which manifest as disruptive classroom behaviour. The way some teachers treat learners, such as shouting at them and even using bad language,

can contribute to learners' behavioural problems. This is why it is important to acknowledge the co-dependence of teachers and learners with regard to school settings conducive to learning.

The World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain, in 1994 pointed out that special needs education incorporates proven methods of teaching from which all children can benefit. The statement issued on that occasion (UNESCO, 1994) proclaimed that:

- Every child (learner) has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting their needs.

The declaration assumes that human differences are normal and that learning must be adapted to the needs of the child, rather than the child being fitted to the process. Teachers should do whatever they can to explore create humane classrooms offering a warm but firm teaching and learning atmosphere (UNESCO, 1994).

Other research has highlighted the importance of inclusion by establishing that learners with special needs who lived in areas distant from special schools or did not have access to special learning support classes repeatedly failed, and in many cases eventually dropped out of the education system completely (Ainscow, 2005; Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001; McKinney & Swartz, 2016).

In Namibia, as much as teachers would like to have an inclusive classroom, with overcrowding (teacher learner ratio 1:43) and no assistant teacher in the classroom to offer learner support, it is difficult or impossible for teachers to respond to the needs of all the learners. As a result, teachers may resort to "one size fits all" strategies of teaching and discipline.

2.6 Strategies used by teachers to deal with classroom disruptions

An inclusive educational strategy implies careful consideration of the unique needs of each learner in order to provide effective educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2008). Most children that present with inappropriate behaviour are not always aware of their actions as they were either born with conditions that predispose them to misbehaviour, or they acquired their behaviour patterns socially (UNESCO, 2008).

Raby (2012) notes that classroom management strategies include authoritarian sanctions of increasing severity in response to repeated rule infringements. Such escalating consequences are often referred to as step systems. Steps typically involve an escalation of punitive responses such as giving a warning/reminder, in-class time-out, and out-of-class time-out, referral to a principal, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension and permanent exclusion from school.

Some of the strategies listed by Raby (2012) would violate the Namibian Education Code of Conduct (1990) that forbids out-of- class or time-out punitive strategies. The Namibian Education Act 16 (2001) states that no child should be sent out of the classroom as this violates the child's right to education. This principle is supported by one of the Namibian Goals for Education for All "Access," which respects the right of all individuals to have

access to quality education (MoEAC, 2003). Teachers typically find themselves in a dilemma over whether to abide by the Act and spend a lot of time trying to maintain order or deviate from the Act and complete the cognitive targets, while perhaps causing emotional harm to learners by leaving them unfulfilled or unable to learn.

Teachers normally end up taking a cautious approach by adhering to official rules and guidelines in order to maintain their professional integrity, safeguard their careers, and protect themselves from potential legal ramifications that may arise from violating the laws and regulations. In many schools, teachers also sign a Corporal Punishment Agreement Form, in which they agree not to use corporal punishment. Consequently, teachers rarely ever use physically punitive or out-of-class measures.

Without the option of using punitive measures, teachers resort to other tactics and strategies, these include isolating problematic learners (i.e. by seating arrangement), strong verbal reprimanding, referral to principals/administration, and sometimes parental involvement (Raby 2012; Sun, 2015) These strategies are not consistently or always effective, but they do result in a reduction in the number of classroom disruptions that teachers have to address.

There are sometimes reports in the media about the use of corporal punishment, e.g. "Parents outraged by teacher's abuse of kids" (*Informanté*, August 14, 2019), where the offending teacher was handed a written warning by the principal after slapping learners in the face; and "Teacher under fire for duct-taping pupil" (*The Namibian*, October 4, 2018), where a teacher duct-taped four pupils she was supervising, and ordered them to lie down

on the floor until their parents came to pick them up. Neither the identity of the teacher, nor the measures taken against him or her were revealed in the newspaper report.

In instances where teachers use out-of-class measures, the school authorities (e.g. principals) usually hand out a verbal warning to the teacher, while in cases where the violations is more severe, the teacher receives a written warning. Given these constraints, alternative and acceptable strategies frequently used include talking to the learners, referrals, and parental involvement. In a study conducted in Hong Kong, Sun (2015) revealed some effective strategies to control learner's disruptive behaviour while nurturing their responsibility for managing their own behaviour and forging good relationships conducive to cultivating their trust and positive behaviour changes.

On a positive note, although some cases of disruptive behaviour will persist, the percentage of learners who respond positively to such measures is greater than the percentage of those who do not. Apart from the possible success of direct, benign engagement, the fact is that at the senior primary phase, parental influence is still a strong factor in the life of most learners, and hence their involvement usually leads to some reform on the part of the offending learners.

Many schools provide learner-support resources such as having a Life Skills teacher on the staff to help learners with counseling as well as emotional and moral support. Teacher-support, meanwhile, is a rare thing and teachers have to rely on their colleagues, principals, or teacher unions for both moral and legal support when dealing with difficult situations.

Kruger, Landsberg and Nel (2014) agree with Shilongo (2002), who recommends the following reinforcements: write learners' names and forward them to the disciplinary

committee; give learners warning letters or verbal warnings and lastly, consider suspension. In the view of the researcher, the above procedures are frequently only partially effective, and are not always treated with respect by learners and/or by their parents.

Conversations with other teachers (both formal and non-formal) resonate with teachers, who believe that the procedures rarely actually change the behaviour of the learners for the better, and often do not have lasting outcomes. Some literature provides support for these teacher sentiments: while learners with behavioural problems are often at risk for disciplinary actions or victimization because of their inept social behaviours (Mishna, 2003), some researchers have noted that quite often school remedial behaviour programmes are not effectual in changing learners' conduct (Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Rose, Monda-Amaya & Espelage, 2010).

Ridnouer (2010) and Sun (2015) advise that, when referring learners manifesting disruptive behaviour to the principal's office, it is important for the teacher to do the following:

- Always keep a copy of every referral or other disruptive behaviour record that you submit and file your copy in a place where you can locate it quickly in case follow-up is necessary.
- It is also wise to document parent phone calls: the dates you called and whether or not you made contact with parents.

In spite of these suggestions and recommendations in the literature, within the Namibian context, most teachers do not see the value in keeping meticulous records (as they find it tedious and ineffective). But many teachers do regularly make contact with parents and

keep them informed on the performance and conduct of their children. Afolabi (2014) found a strong and meaningful relationship between the involvement of parents and the academic performance of their children. Kruger, Landsberg and Nel (2014) and Ridnouer (2010) insist that is crucial to pay home visits to establish a partnership with families, instead of waiting until the learners misbehave.

Ridnouer (2010) notes that in the United States of America it is essential for teachers to share behavioural guidelines and the consequences of infringements. Teachers print and display general lists of classroom rules and the consequences of positive and negative behaviour.

Woolfolk (2014) emphasizes that when classroom rules are understood clearly by all learners it becomes easier to maintain a classroom environment that is respectful and conducive to effective learning.

The researcher sees the value in the effective use of classroom rules by teachers, where rules are clearly displayed to remove any uncertainties among learners. The researcher furthermore believes that school rules make the job of classroom management easier for the teacher because rules are a written record of the expected standards of behaviour, a record to which the teacher can always refer if any instance of disruptive behaviour arises.

The (ESPIE) (Ministry of Education [MoEAC], 2013) encourages teachers to provide boundaries and to be consistent with to easily distracted learners by having appropriate classroom rules in place. Moreover, the rules should be clearly visible to all learners in the classroom, and ought to be referred to every time a child infringes them. This is echoed by Forlin & Chambers (2011), who state that although emphasizing school or classroom rules

correlates with good learner behaviour, these rules needs to be scrutinized in order to align them with the values of inclusive education.

Furthermore, instead of beating or making a child lift-up a chair or stand in a corner for the whole period, the ESPIE encourages teachers to reward good behaviour to combat behavioural problems. It is crucial not to violate the child's dignity or to humiliate a child as this might cause rebellious behaviour.

The Namibian Educational Code of Conduct for Schools (1990) and guidelines for Discipline from Within: Alternatives to Corporal Punishment (1992) forbid all corporal punishment to address classroom disruption. Rather, they encourage strategies and ways of dealing with classroom disruption that are not violent and discriminating. The ESPIE affirms that the development of good inclusive practice involves institutional change. Such change entails that all schools and other educational settings regularly review their policies and practices to ensure that they meet the needs and aspirations of all learners. It also requires analyzing the education system and identifying factors that may inhibit or promote teaching and learning, including caring and supporting. Disruptive classroom behaviour is clearly one factor that impacts teaching and learning and calls for unpacking and a review of practice.

A constructive and inspiring learning environment is one without or with minimum of disruptive behaviour. According to Fullerton & Guardino (2010)), good behaviour management creates an environment that assists learners' learning and influences learners' perception of what their role should be.

In order to enable teachers to manage the classroom in a well-organized manner, teachers should attempt to find out the causes of the disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

Since disruptive behaviour happens as a result of several factors, it is crucial to discover the main factors that responsible for it and then find a strategy to eliminate or at least reduce the behaviour so that learning can occur. For instance, the cumulative cards kept by the life skills teacher may contain crucial information on individual learners. Where these records are not comprehensive, it should be established whether learners have troubled home backgrounds or if there are any other factors that may be contributing to their behavioural problems. The more a teacher knows about individual learners, the better the position s/he is in to deal with their conduct.

Few research studies have been conducted on this issue in the Namibian context and a comprehensive solution to disruptive behaviour is yet to be found. Meanwhile, the status quo in which disruptions abound remains unchanged. Learners are aware of their rights, which they interpret in their own way, and teachers continue to find themselves in the invidious position of seeking an effectual balance between principle and practice.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

According to (Creswell, 2014), research methodology is a plan or structure that researchers use during an investigation in order to facilitate the collection of the most valid and appropriate answers to research questions. This chapter describes the plan the researcher used in pursuit of the main research objectives, which were to investigate how teachers conceptualize disruptive behaviour and to explore the strategies used by teachers in combating class disruption at senior primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region. The chapter covers research design, population, sample and the sampling techniques, research instruments, pilot study, data collecting procedures, data analysis and research ethics.

3.1 Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative research approach and employed a case study design to conduct an in-depth study into how teachers perceive and address disruptive classroom behaviour. The study was confined to selected primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region.

A case study involves the exploration in depth of a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the case comprised four primary schools in the region (coded as Schools A, B, C, and D), and the study interrogated the perspectives of teachers participating in the study on the issues of classroom disruptive behaviour and what strategies they used to address the problem. This information was captured by the researcher through the observation of learning activities and interviews with the study's participating teachers.

3.2 Population

The population for the study consisted of senior primary teachers (Grades 5 to 7) from four schools in Otjozondjupa region. There are three circuits, 41 primary schools and 36 049 learners in Otjozondjupa region (2018). From among these the researcher selected the two best-performing schools and the two lowest -performing schools in the region.

3.3 Sampling technique and sample size

Airasian, Gay and Mills (2009) refer to the sample as "individuals selected from a population for a study. In this study, purposive sampling was used to select the top two performing schools and two lowest-performing schools in Otjozondjupa region as determined by the results of the national standardized tests (MoEAC, 2015). This choice enabled the researcher to observe and experience classroom disruption in a variety of situations, thus broadening the context of the study. The criterion sampling procedure was used to select the participants, who were senior primary school teachers. Criterion sampling involves the researcher setting up a criterion or set of criteria and then identifying cases that meet the criterion (Mertens, 2010).

The criterion sampling strategy was used to select the sample of teachers according to the following criteria: they would be senior (upper) primary teachers from each school with at least 5 years teaching experience, who had served on the disciplinary committee of their schools (these teachers would have experience share regarding learners with disruptive behaviour in their schools). The four primary schools were dubbed School A, School B, School C and School D.

The sample for this study thus consisted of thirteen (13) teachers from four senior primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region (four teachers at School A, three at School B, three at

School C and three at School D). Participants in the study included one (1) principal, three (3) HODs', two (2) life skills teachers and seven (7) ordinary teachers.

3.4 Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used to collect data in this study, namely observation (see Appendix E) and semi-structured interviews (see Appendix F). These instruments are discussed in detail below.

3.4.1 Observation

Observation is a direct method which affords the researcher close contact with the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site or natural environment (Creswell, 2014). The benefit of this lies in the fact that it allows the researcher to observe participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the researcher was a non-participant observer seeking to obtain an outsider's impartial perspective. This method sought to neutralize some of the biases inherent in other methods, as well as to expose the differences between what participants say and what they actually do. The approach requires that the researcher consistently stay outside of the activities that are happening, and also that the researcher informs the participants that they are under observation. The researcher used an observation checklist to collect data as events unfolded, allowing her to observe directly the nature of disruptive classroom behaviour and of the strategies used to encounter it, and consequently assess the effectiveness of the strategies being use.

The researcher observed two 40-minute long lessons for each participating teacher over two days within a week of each other. This amounted to 26 lessons in total for all teachers participating in the study.

The observation checklist consisted of two sections (see Appendix E) Section A focused on perceived disruptive behaviour (verbal and non-verbal), and Section B on in-class strategies teachers used for addressing the disruptive behaviour.

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

An interview is a process of asking questions face-to-face. The questions may be open-ended in nature, especially in a qualitative case study like this. Open-ended questions allow for explanations and expressions of ideas and by so doing create an opportunity for the interviewer and interviewee to converse (Creswell, 2014). The teachers were interviewed in order to obtain their personal views concerning disruptive behaviour in their classrooms. An interview guide consisting of thirteen open-ended questions was used to collect data for the study. The interview guide was divided into four sections based on the objectives of the study. It also included participants' biographical data (see Appendix F). Thirteen interviews in total were conducted by the researcher, and the medium of communication for all interviews was English (without translation). The interviews were conducted at a venue preferred by participant, and most interviews were done in classrooms, offices, or the school library.

Before the observations the participants were somewhat reserved and appeared to be unsure as to what the interview experience would be like. However, as the interviews progressed, most participants became more engaged and lively in their discussions. The researcher also observed that the same interested and relaxed attitude remained as participants stated that they had enjoyed participating in the interviews. Furthermore, a few participants indicated that they would be open to discussing the issues covered by the study should the researcher need any further input from them in the future.

3.5 Pilot study

A pilot study is one of the most effective ways to determine the feasibility of a study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). For the purposes of this research, a pilot study was conducted at one selected regular primary school with a diverse, multi-cultural population in the Otjozondjupa region which had similar basic characteristics to those of the targeted schools in the actual study. The data collected from the pilot study was not used in the main study. The sample of the pilot study consisted of four (4) participants and included a male member of the school management (Head of Department) and three female teachers all part of the Disciplinary Committee (DC) at their school. The pilot study helped the researcher to ensure that the interview guide and the observation checklist were comprehensive and adequate to answer the research objectives.

Before the observation and interviews were carried out during the pilot study, the purpose of the study was explained to all the participants and verbal informed consent was obtained from the potential participants for their participation in the pilot study. Some participants gave the researchers permission to tape record the pilot study interview.

3.5.1 The results of the pilot study

The results of the pilot study revealed that the instruments were reliable and valid.

No changes were made to the observation schedule as a result of the pilot study, because its coverage was found to be appropriate for the study. The majority of interview questions were well understood by the participants, although after the pilot study some questions were revised, and a few discarded. Some follow-up probing questions were added to

enable a clearer understanding of some of the questions. Other questions were divided up to enable them to focus on only one issue at a time.

For example, section A, Question 5 was rephrased and broken down into two sub-questions:

5.1. What qualifications do you have? Please indicate the specific qualification for example, BETD, BED, Advanced Diploma, Master's Degree and/others,

5.2. Please state your specialization and the institute where you obtained your qualification. For example: M.Ed. (Inclusive Education), UNAM.

The key areas of the observation schedule in the pilot study yielded useful results that allowed the researcher to identify both verbal and non-verbal behaviour that disrupts learning in the classroom. The researcher found this outcome satisfactory as the results were in line with the overall research objectives of the study, and there was no need, going into the main study, to make any significant changes to the observation schedule.

In their responses to the research questions posed during the interviews, participants in the pilot study shared fairly similar perspectives on what constitutes disruptive behaviour, generally revolving around actions by learners that create noise, distraction, or disturb the teacher's ability to effectively carry out teaching duties, or hinder other learners from paying full attention in class.

There was more variation with regard to what participants' perceived as the causes of classroom disruptive behaviour, some teachers indicated that personality or other faults of the learner led to classroom disruptive behaviour, while others leaned more towards

attributing this behaviour to social background factors such peer influence or the type of home or cultural upbringing the learners had had.

Another finding was that across the board there was noticeable interest from nearly all participants in the topic itself, in discussing it in-depth and having a dialogue where they and the researcher collectively discussed and tried to identify ways in which teachers might cope with and mitigate disruptive behaviour (such as adhering to class rules, record-keeping, and referrals and counseling). Participants gave the impression that this was not only a problem they dealt with constantly, but also one they approached with much gravity as both teachers and parents or parental figures. The pilot study was instrumental in shaping the final research instruments.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

After having acquired an ethical clearance certificate from the University of Namibia (UNAM) Research and Ethical Committee, obtained permission from the Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture (MoEAC) and the participating schools, the researcher took study leave and made an arrangement to have a relief-teacher in her class for a period of seven weeks. The researcher consequently requested permission to embark on the research from the school principals via telephone. Upon her arrival at the research sites, she introduced herself, and briefed the principal by presenting the permission letter from the MoEAC as well as the ethical clearance certificate and UNAM student card for identification.

The researcher explained the objectives of the study to the principal. The researcher was introduced to the staff and participants at the various schools/research sites. In each case, the researcher was assigned to the Disciplinary Committee (DC) leader or an HOD who

showed her around the school. The researcher explained the objectives of the study to the participants. Consent forms were issued to the teachers that requested them to indicate in writing on the forms whether or not they wished to participate in the study and or be tape recorded. Out of 16 targeted participants, only 13 agreed to take part in the research.

The researcher decided to conduct the observation first, followed by the interviews. This would enable her to see the extent to which the findings from the interviews correlated and agreed with those from the observation.

3.6.1 Observation

After meeting with each teacher individually, the researcher followed the timetables given to her by the participants. A seat was usually allocated to her at the back of the class, although in some cases she used the teacher's table. The researcher stayed in the class for a couple of periods before the actual observation to put the teacher at ease. The researcher was introduced to the class as a teacher and UNAM student doing her teaching practice while in some classes there was no introduction at all.

The researcher observed all 13 senior primary teachers in the sample over two days, spending a week at each school, and a month in total for all four schools. The researcher observed the teachers in their classes before meeting them later for interviews. No photos were taken.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interview

An interview appointment was made with participants and interviews were carried out during or after school in an appropriate quiet environment, and during the observed teachers' free time to avoid disruption of school activities. Some of the interviews had to

be shifted to after school as some teachers had a lot of work to do. An office or classroom was made available by the participants.

The researcher once again explained the objectives of the study, and encouraged participants to ask for clarity on any questions that they did not understand. She assured them that they were free to withdraw at any time. Most of the interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, while some were shorter or longer than expected as some participants had a lot to say. After the interviews the researcher went back to the research sites and thanked each participant with a USB holder for giving up their time for participating in the study.

When using these data collection tools the researcher had to be patient as participants needed to become comfortable with the researcher by spending more time engaging in conversation. With permission from the participants, the information was digitally recorded and later transcribed. The researcher thanked the participant and the principal upon leaving the research site.

3.7 Data analysis

According to Delport, De Vos, Fouche, and Strydom (2011, p.335), data analysis is a method of categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing data to attain answers to specific research questions.

The researchers used thematic analysis as a qualitative analytic method to ‘identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) within the data obtained from the observation schedules and interviews. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail.

First, the researcher organized the data from the observation. She then proceeded with the interview by taking the following steps:

Step 1

The interviews were transcribed in their entirety, coded and typed.

Step 2

The second step, involved synthesis, evaluation and integration of the data. The researcher synthesized data into tables and merged summaries in order of importance.

Step 3

The data was organized into themes and categories from which the meaning of the participants' views regarding disruptive classroom behaviour were determined.

3.8 Research Ethics

According to Neuman (2011, p. 116), "ethical issues are the concerns, dilemmas and conflicts that arise over the proper way to conduct research. Ethics define what is or is not legitimate to do, or what moral procedures are involved." Taking cognizance of this indispensable requirement, this study adhered to the prescribed ethical principles of the ethical committee. This entailed obtaining permission from and access to schools and acceptance by the relevant education authorities, participants' informed consent, and committing to privacy, confidentiality and freedom from dishonesty or disloyalty (Neuman, 2011).

The researcher obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the Centre for Research and Publications committee at University of Namibia (Appendix A). The researcher was also

granted permission by the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (Appendix B), Otjozondjupa Regional Education Directorate, as well as by the participating schools. The researcher grouped the participants at their respective schools, and explained to them the purpose and procedures of the study as well as how their contributions would be used. All the participants were assured that the information collected would be used for research purposes only and treated with strict confidentiality.

Before the interviews were conducted and as indicated above, the researcher obtained informed consent by administering consent forms to be signed (see Appendix D). According to Sture (2010), informed consent is the process in which a participant consents to participate in a research project after being informed of its procedures and benefits.

The participants had the right to withdraw from the study if they felt threatened in any way or deemed it necessary for whatever reason. Individualized codes instead of names were used both in the observation and interviews so that no names were attached to responses. This ensured strict adherence to all the standard ethical guidelines standards regarding honesty and the trustworthiness of the data collected (Sture, 2010). To guard the confidentiality of the data, recorded and typed information was electronically stored and protected by a password known only to the researcher.

3.9 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology adopted for this study including the research design, population, sampling technique and sample size, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis procedures and ethical issues. The following chapter will present the results of the study, discussing and interpreting the data according to the research objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The objectives of this research were to explore how teachers conceptualize disruptive behaviour and the strategies they use in combating class disruption at the senior primary school level in the Otjozondjupa region. To achieve the aims of the study, four objectives were formulated, namely to:

- Identify what teachers perceive as disruptive classroom behaviour
- Identify perceived causes of classroom disruption by learners
- Explore teachers' perceptions of good practices in dealing with disruptive classroom behaviour
- Find out what strategies are used by experienced teachers to address disruptive behaviour

To address the above objectives, the present study adopted a qualitative research design. A total of 13 teacher participants from four primary schools were selected through the criterion sampling technique. Observation and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for each research objective. Through a process of comparing and categorizing, the data was broken down into themes corresponding to the research objectives.

In this chapter the findings of the study are presented, structured according to the study's four research objectives. The next section presents a description of the research sites and the participants' biographical data.

4.2 Research sites

Table 4.1 Key Description of Research sites

Name of school	Location & Demographics	Year Established	Total Enrolment	Staff	Number of classes and Average Class Size	School Infrastructure/ Facilities
School A	well-established, urban, multiracial primary school	1953	971 learners	31 teachers six institutional workers Two administrative workers	27 classes Average class size of 42 learners	○ Library ○ Computer room ○ Science Laboratory ○ School Hostel ○ Netball Court ○ Intercommunication facility ○ Electricity ○ Flushing toilets ○ Well-maintained infrastructure
School B	Peri-urban location learners hail from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds	1973	1251 learners	40 teachers 4 institutional workers 2 administrative workers	33 classes Average class size of 38 learners One Special Class	○ Library ○ School Hall ○ No Hostel ○ Evident vandalism
School C	Well-established primary school peri-urban location (Grootfontein) Learners hail from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds	1925	857 learners	26 teachers 6 institutional workers 2 administrative workers	25 classes Average class size of 40 learners One special class	○ Library ○ Computer room ○ Science laboratory ○ School hall ○ Netball court ○ Rugby field ○ School hostel ○ Flushing toilets, electricity, clean running water
School D	Rural marginalized school Located 7km north-east of Otjiwarongo	2003	64 learners	6 teachers 1 institutional worker 1 administrative worker	5 classes Multi-grade teaching Average class size 18	○ No stand-alone administration block ○ Library serves as an administration block ○ Electricity ○ Borehole water ○ Pit latrines (no flushing toilets)

The Table above breaks down the information on the research sites featured in this study (Schools A, B, C, and D) and shows each school's profile in terms of its location,

demographics of the student body, enrolment, number of classes and average class size. It also reflects the extent of infrastructural development at each school in terms of the facilities available such as classrooms, libraries, etc.

School A is a well-established urban primary school with learners from different racial and cultural backgrounds and an enrolment of 971 learners (2018). School B, situated about 100km East of Otjiwarongo, is a peri-urban, primary school with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds, with an enrolment of 1251 (2018). School C is situated in the central town of Grootfontein, in the Grootfontein circuit. It is a well-established peri-urban primary school with learners from different racial and cultural backgrounds, and with an enrolment of 857 learners. School D is situated about 7km north-east of Grootfontein, also in the Grootfontein circuit. The school has an enrolment of 64 learners (2018). It is categorized as a rural marginalized primary school since it caters for the children of farm workers who lead a nomadic lifestyle (their parents can be fired by the farm owners at any time and will be evicted from the farm).

Unlike the other three schools, teachers at School D practice multi-grade teaching due to low enrolment at the school. There are six teachers at the school, teaching multi-grade classes from Grade 1 to Grade 7. There are two teachers at junior phase (one teacher for both Grade 1 and 2, and another teacher for Grade 3) and four teachers (including the principal) rotate at the senior phase (Grades 4-7; Grade 4 in one class, Grade 5 and 6 in another, and Grade 7 in a third class).

4.3 Participants' biographical data

4.3.1 Biographical data of participants.

This section presents the biographical data (gender, teaching experience, years on the disciplinary committee, qualifications and specializations and institute obtained) of the participants who took part in the present study. The biographical data is recorded in the table below.

Table 4.2 Codes assigned to participants and schools

Description	Participants	Teachers Observation
School A	A1, A2, A3, A4	ATO1, ATO2, ATO3, ATO4
School B	B5, B6,B7	BTO5, BTO6, BTO7
School C	C8, C9, C10	CTO8, CTO9, CTO10
School D	D11, D12, D13	DTO11, DTO12, DTO13

Table 4.2 presents the codes assigned per participant in this study. The participating schools were identified by letters (School A, School B, School C and School D), while codes such from A1 (School A Teacher 1) to D13 (School D Teacher 13) were used to identify individual teachers. The codes for the teachers' observation schedule followed a similar pattern (e.g. ATO1 for School A Teacher Observation 1). This encoding replaced the participants' real names and ensured adherence to good ethical practices.

4.3.2 Gender

Table 4.3 Gender of participating teachers

Description Gender:	School A	School B	School C	School D	Total: (%)
Female	A1, A2, A3, A4		C8, C10	D11	7 (53.8%)
Male		B5, B6, B7	C9	D12, D13	6 (46.2%)

As shown in Table 4.3, of the 13 participants, seven (53.8%) were females while six (46.2%) of the participants were males. At School A (A1 to A4), all four participants were female teachers; School B (B5 to B7) had three male participants; School C participants (C8 to C10) comprised two females and one male teacher. Lastly, one female and two males took part in this study at School D (D11 to D13).

4.3.3 Teaching experience

As shown in the following table, the participants' teaching experience was on average 14 years in the education sector, with six years being the minimum and 30 years the maximum. This data is illustrated in Table 4.4, below.

Table 4.4 Biographical data of participants' teaching experience

Schools	Participants	Teaching experience	Years on the disciplinary committee
School A			
	A1	15 years	1 year
	A2	11 years	5 years
	A3	10 years	3years
	A4	15+ years	8 years
School B			
	B5	11 years	6 years
	B6	16 years	8years
	B7	25 years	10 years
School C			
	C8	16 years	6 years
	C9	7 years	5 years
	C10	7 years	6years
School D			
	D11	30 years	4years
	D12	6 years	1year
	D13	10 years	1 year

4.3.4 Teaching experience and years served on the disciplinary committee at school

As shown in Table 4.4 above, the participants' stints on the disciplinary committees (DC) ranged from one to eight years at School A (A1 to A4). The range in School B (B5 to B7) was from six to ten years. At School C (C8 to C10) participants' years on the DC ranged between five and six years; and at School D (D11 to D13) experience on the disciplinary committee ranged between one and four years.

4.3.5 Years of teaching experience

As shown in Table 4.4, above, the average teaching experience, in years, of the teachers from Schools A, B, C, and D, respectively, is 13, 17, 10, and 15. This demonstrates the extensive teaching experience possessed by this study's sample group of participants.

4.3.6 Teacher qualifications and specializations

Table 4.5 Teacher qualifications and specializations, and Institute obtained: School A

Schools	Participants	Qualifications	Specializations	Institute obtained
School A				
	A1	1) National Diploma in Agriculture. 2) Bachelor of Education	1) Livestock and extension 2) Geography and English	1) Neudam Agricultural College 2) University of Namibia
	A2	1) BETD 2) Advanced Certificate in Education	1) Mathematics and Science 2) Learner support	1) Windhoek College of Education 2) North-West University
	A3	Bachelor of Education	Science	University of Namibia
	A4	1) Bachelor of Education 2) Bachelor of Ministry; 3) Master of Theology; 4) Dip. Sport Management	Education	1) Team Impact University 2) International and Sport Man @ Boston City Campus

All four participants had a teaching qualification, with each participant holding a Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) from the Windhoek College of Education (currently known as the Khomasdal Campus under the University of Namibia) as their first/primary qualification. Additionally, A1 holds a National Diploma in Agriculture specializing in livestock extension and geography, while A2 specialized in Mathematics and Science. The

specializations for A3 and A4 were science and education, respectively. Thus, each of the participants holds a Bachelor of Education degree as their first or second qualification, coupled with additional qualifications where they attained specialization in specific fields. Among the first three participants (A1, A2, and A3), these specializations were in languages, geography and sport respectively, while A4, with a Masters of Theology (MTheol.) degree, holds the highest further qualification. None of the participants had a specialization in Inclusive Education.

These participants had furthered their studies at various institutions, including the University of Namibia, North-West University, Team Impact University, and Boston City Campus.

Table 4. 6 Teacher qualifications and specializations, and Institute obtained: School B

Schools	Participants	Qualifications	Specializations	Institute obtained
School B				
	B5	1) BETD 2) Advanced Certificate in Education	- Maths & Science - Learner support;	-Windhoek College of Education -North-west University
	B6	1) BETD 2) Advanced certificate in Education	-Learning problems and learning difficulties	- Windhoek College of Education - North-West University
	B7	1) BETD 2) Advanced Certificate in Education	-Maths and Science -Learner support	-Windhoek College of Education - North-West University

All three participants were qualified for teaching, holding a BETD as their first qualification obtained from the Windhoek College of Education (Khomasdal Campus,

University of Namibia). They had furthered their studies at the same institution, the North-West University, earning the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) with a specialization in Learner Support. School B thus presents a measure of uniformity in not only the levels of teaching qualifications attained by the three participants, but also the institutions at which they studied.

Table 4.7 Teacher qualifications and specializations: School C

Schools	Participants	Qualifications	Specializations	Institute obtained
School C				
	C8	1) BETD 2) Advanced Certificate in Education	English	Windhoek College of Education North-West University
	C9	1) BETD 2) Advanced Certificate in Education	-Mathematics and Science -Learner support	Windhoek College of Education North-West university
	C10	1) BETD 2) Advance Certificate in Education	- Languages	-Windhoek college of Education -North-west University

The uniform trend in levels of qualification shown in school B continues with School C (C8 to C10). All three teachers had BETD as their first teaching qualifications, obtained from the Windhoek College of Education. They specialized in English, Mathematics, Science and Languages. All furthered their studies at North-West University earning the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Learner Support.

Table 4. 8 Teacher qualifications and specializations, and Institute obtained: School D

Schools	Participants	Qualifications	Specializations	Institute obtained
School D				
	D11	1) Bachelors of Technology		-University of Pretoria
	D12	1) BETD 2) Advanced certificate in Education	1) Mathematics 2) Mathematics & English	-Caprivi College of Education -Open Learning
	D13	1) BETD	-Social sciences	-Caprivi College of Education

Participants' qualifications were varied and included two BETD diplomas, specializing in Mathematics and Social Sciences, from Caprivi College of Education, now known as the University of Namibia -Katima Mulilo Campus. One participant furthered his studies in English at the Institute of Open Learning (Advanced Certification in Education), while the other holds a Bachelor of Technology degree from the University of Pretoria as her tertiary qualification.

The above sections provided information on the school sites and the demographics of the participants. The next section provides results from the observation schedule, followed by findings from the interviews.

4.4 Results from the observation schedule

4.4.1 Perceived disruptive behaviour and strategies used to counter it

This section presents themes identified in the data from the observations and semi-structured interviews. The data is summarized in Table 4.8, and followed by discussion.

The table lists disruptive behaviour observed at the four schools, and matches it with strategies the teachers under observation used in response to each specified disruptive form of behaviour. The researcher arrived at these themes using information from simple statistical frequency, where the most cited themes (both perceived disruptive behaviour and strategies) became the basis of the tallying recorded in the table below.

Table 4.9 Themes and Categories from the Observation Schedule

Perceived disruptive behaviour	Participants	Strategies teachers use
Verbal disruptive behaviour		
Shouting out answers	**CTO10; CTO9**	Teacher told learners to wait for their turn; Teacher firmly asked learners to stop shouting.
Whispering	**CTO10; CTO9; ATO4**	Teachers "shooed" the learner; Teacher clapped hands loudly to quiet the learners; Teacher told learners to stop whispering.
Making noise (during or at lesson change)	**DTO12; DTO13; CTO9; CTO8; BTO6; ATO3; ATO2; ATO1**	Teacher firmly told learners to stop talking; Teacher reprimanded learners and redirected their attention to learning tasks; Teacher told learners that if they continued making noise, they would be detained during break time; Teacher changed classroom seating arrangement; Teacher told learners to stand for a while; Teacher told learners to lift up chairs; Teacher separated disruptive learners; Teacher raised voice and told learners to be quiet.
Learners talking out of turn	**BTO7; BTO5**	Teacher hit on the chalkboard and made loud banging sound to quiet the learners; Teachers used a firm voice and told learners to keep quiet; Teacher ignored learners until they kept quiet; Teacher asked learners to raise their hands in order to speak.
Teasing other learners	**DTO12; DTO11**	Teacher warned offenders to stop teasing other learners as it was against the school rules; Teacher reminded learners about school rules.

Talking out of turn	**DTO13; DTO11;TO10; BTO6; ATO2; ATO4; ATO3**	Teachers told learners to raise their hands to give an answer; Teacher told learners to wait for their turn.
Interrupting teacher or back chatting.	**CTO8; ATO2**	Teacher tolerated learners' opinions but emphasized boundaries; Teacher told learners to keep quiet; Teacher told learners to wait to be given a chance.
Non-verbal disruptive behaviour		
Doing other work (unauthorized).	**DTO12; DTO11; CTO10; BTO5; ATO3**	Teacher instructed learners to close other books and put them away and re-directed learners' attention to the learning activities.
Tapping a pen/ ruler/ banging heels on the floor/table	**DTO12; ATO3; ATO1**	Teacher confiscated objects; Teacher made eye contact and gestured disapprovingly.
Walking around in class while expected to be seated.	**DTO12; DTO11; CTO9;BTO5 ; ATO3;ATO2 ; ATO1**	Teacher instructed learner to return to seat; Teacher referred learners to the class rules.
Inattentiveness	**DTO12; DTO13; BTO6**	Teacher told learners to stand up for a while; Teacher called out the learner by their name and posed a question to the learner.
Aggression towards other learners	**DTO11; CTO8; BTO7**	Teacher instructed learner to stand in the "quiet corner" at the back of the classroom; Teacher instructed learners to stop acting aggressively and teacher took down names of offending learners; Teacher made strong eye contact and asked learners to stop being aggressive.
Late coming	**ATO1**	Teacher kept the learner outside for a short while, and later reminded learner to be punctual next time.
Poking or distracting other	**DTO12;**	Teacher reprimanded learner; Teacher made strong eye

learners	**CTO10; BTO6**	contact, and moved closer to the learners; Teacher made disapproving gestures.
Obstructing other learners from paying attention in class; also, having "mini-meetings"	**BTO7; BTO5; ATO2**	Teacher told learners to pay attention and stop distracting others; Teacher told learners to "zip it" and be part of class discussion: Teacher told learners to leave others alone and to pay attention.
Vandalizing furniture by inscribing graffiti	**DTO12**	Teacher instructed learners to clean off their graffiti.
Chewing	**CTO8**	Teacher told learner to spit and trash what they were chewing.
Homework not done	**CTO8**	
Leaning on and riding classroom chairs; also fidgeting in the chair	**DTO11; BTO6; ATO4; ATO3**	Teacher instructed learners to sit properly (upright); Teacher instructed learners to sit still.
Hiding behind books (covering faces)	**DTO11**	Teacher told learners to remove cover and pay attention.
Playing in class; also, playing with objects/toys in class	**DTO11; BTO6**	Teacher stared at learner and used disapproving gestures and body language; Teacher told learners to put away objects/toys and pay attention.
Throwing objects and missiles in class	**DTO11**	Teacher reprimanded learners and confiscated their objects.
Eating (or drinking) in class	**DTO11; ATO2**	Teacher instructed learner to put away food and to stop chewing; Teacher took away the drink bottle from the learner.

4.4.2 Other general observations by the researcher

During the process of carrying out the observations, the researcher made some general field notes aside from on the main observation schedule. These observations related to how the participants managed their classroom and handled instances of disruption. Some of these observations are listed below, and include the codes of the participant teachers in whose classrooms the observations were made:

Classroom rules

- Classrooms rules are displayed on the wall and are visible to all learners ((**CTO10); CTO9; CTO8; ATO4; ATO3; ATO2; ATO1)**
- Teacher reminds learners about school rules before they enter the classroom **(AT04)**
- No classroom rules displayed **(DT013)**

Learners-learner and Teacher-learner interaction

- Learners applaud classmates for giving correct answers, and sometimes laugh at classmates for giving wrong answers **(DTO12)**
- Teacher praises learners for trying and asks other learners to answer the question **(DTO12)**

Time management

- Teacher finished lesson too early and left the class; learners left alone and started making noise **(DTO11)**
- Teacher seemed irritated by frequent interruption by school's intercom facility, apparently because of the resultant waste of class time **(AT04)**

General classroom management and teaching style

- Class was divided into two groups, with boys and girls sitting apart from each other **(BT08)**
- Teacher established routine where learners raised their hands for attention when they needed anything.
- Teacher walked around while teaching; (**BTO7; BTO5; ATO1)**
- Teacher carries a black piece of hose and points it at disruptive learners **(BTO7, DTO11)**

The Observation component of the research process provided the study with rich information about the practical experience of classroom disruption and how teachers handle it. The researcher's observations revealed that the number of causes of classroom disruption is high, and that the teacher participants were fairly proactive and hands-on, ready with a response to nearly every occurrence of disruptive classroom behaviour (verbal or non-verbal). As revealed in Table 4.9, the tallying of the observation findings showed that teacher participants, even from different schools, had a lot in common as they used the same strategies in response to a given type of disruption (e.g. strong body language on the part the teacher, and reference to class rules were common across the pool of participants).

4.5 Data from the interviews

Teachers were interviewed in order to obtain their personal views. The questions were based on the study's research objectives. Unlike observation which is one-sided and confined to the researcher's interpretation of events, the interview gives a voice to the participant to express their opinions and explain their position.

Data is reported logically in subsections that each cover as aspect of the study's objectives: perceived disruptive classroom behaviour, perceived causes of classroom disruption, teachers' perceptions on good practices for dealing with disruptive behaviour in senior primary classrooms and strategies used by experienced teachers to address classroom disruption.

4.5.1 Perceived disruptive classroom behaviour

This section explores what teachers perceive as disruptive classroom behaviour. They also were expected to provide details of the numerous disruptions they faced in the process of conducting their teaching duties.

Question 1:

What do you perceive as disruptive classroom behaviour?

Each of the participants identified several situations each regarded as being disruptive to learning in the classroom, as recorded in Table 4.10, below. The table anticipates the teachers' answers to the question about strategies used for dealing with disruptive behaviour set out in Section 4.7, below, but it was thought that the reader would appreciate the juxtaposition of the two at this stage.

Table 4.10 Summary of responses regarding perceived disruptive behaviour and strategies used by the teacher

Participant	Disruptive behaviour	Strategies the teacher used or recommended
SCHOOL A		
A1	Learners making noise in class; playing during focused academic sessions.	Teacher reprimanded learners, teacher called out individual offenders.
A2	Learners speaking when they are not spoken to; or failing to focus on the task at hand and instead do other activities in the classroom.	Teacher told learners to raise their hands for teacher's permission to speak; Teacher gave distracted learners responsibility in group-work.
A3	Example coming to class late, talking without permission, having "mini meetings" while the teacher is teaching.	Teacher reminded learners of the school rules; Teacher asked learners to stand at the back of the classroom.
A4	Anything that violates school rules,	Teacher reprimanded noise-makers and

	such as noise-making, loitering, and coming late to class.	reminded learners of the school rules.
SCHOOL B		
B5	Attention-seeking, fighting in class, and shouting out answers without teacher's permission.	Teacher called out individual learners; Teacher told learners to stop fighting and referred them to principal's office.
B6	Giving answers randomly, standing during teaching, following outside noise while in class	Teacher asked learner to raise hands and wait for their turn to speak; teacher made sounds that drew the attention of learners.
B7	Not paying attention to class activities; making unnecessary and distracting noises (e.g. loud coughing)	Teacher reprimanded learners; teacher spoke one-on-one with learners after school.
SCHOOL C		
C8	Learners playing in class while not concentrating; attention-seeking; learners taking other learners' property.	Teacher makes use of school rules; Teacher referred learners to administration / the principal.
C9	Learners give an answer to a question without being given permission; learners pick on other learners during teaching time.	Teacher asked learners to wait for their turn; Teacher verbally reprimanded offending learner; Teacher asked learner to hold up a chair or stand at the back of the classroom.
C10	Learners perform actions that attract the attention of others who are supposed to be concentrating on school	Teacher called out offending learners and reprimanded them; teacher separated learners from their friends

	tasks.	(seating arrangement).
SCHOOL D		
D11	Learners coming late to class; learners teasing others, culminating in fights; disobedience; throwing paper missiles and other objects in class.	Teacher reminds late-comers about school rules; Teacher asked learners to trash their objects or confiscated them.
D12	Learners turning to make noise or discuss, or standing up unnecessarily while the teacher is teaching.	Teacher separated disruptive learners from their friends; teacher called out loitering learners and ordered them to take their place in class.
D13	Learners discussing issues that are not related to teaching and learning; Learners standing up trying to move around the class while other learners are engaged with learning tasks.	Teacher made offending learners stand at the back of the classroom; teacher instructed loitering learners to return to seat.

4.6 Perceived causes of classroom disruptions

This section captures the views of teachers' perceptions of the causes of classroom disruptions and what can be done to eliminate the causes of the disruptive behaviour identified. This section is presented according to the themes from the research objectives.

Table 4.11 Perceived causes of disruptive behaviour

Causes of Disruptive behaviour	Participants
Frustration caused by learning difficulties and language barrier	A2, B4, C9
Overcrowding	A1, A3, A3, B5, B6, D12
High teacher-learner ratio	A2, C6, D11, D13
Boredom	A2, A3, B6, C9, D12
Desire for Attention	A3, C6, D11, D13
Difficult home background	A2, C6, D11, D13
Puberty-related behaviour	A2, B7, C8, D12, D13
Long walking distance to school	D11
Lack of role models	B5, C9
Corrupting influence of TV, entertainment and pop culture	A1, D12

Table 4.12 Classification of perceived causes of disruptive behaviour

CLASSIFICATION OF PERCIEVED CAUSES		
Home factors	**School factors**	**Social factors**
Corrupting influence of TV and other media Bad role models (parents, family members) Poverty Broken homes Upbringing Absentee parents	Overcrowding Language barriers Learning disability High teacher-learner ratio Long distance to school Boredom	Desire for attention Peer Pressure Absence of role models

4.6.1 Specific causes of disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

In this section the responses of the participants are reported in more detail

Question 1:

What do you think are the specific causes of disruptive behaviour in your classroom?

School A

Language barrier

According to A1 and A2, one of the specific causes of disruptive behaviour in their classes is that some learners are frustrated by the language barrier. They feel they can't understand what the teachers are saying because the medium of instruction, which is often English, is different from their vernacular or home language. A2 remarked:

The approach maybe is different or they get easily frustrated because they don't understand the language of instruction. Because we have two streams Afrikaans and English as a medium of instruction from junior phase and I have realized one specific class that did Afrikaans all the way through the subject and now are being taught in English, they are really struggling with the transition.

Learning difficulties and illiteracy

A1 noted that there were some learners who cannot really write properly, while some learners cannot read fluently. These learning difficulties frustrate the learners a great deal and as a result they keep misbehaving. A1 stressed that: "Many a time the kids that I have observed have reading and, writing challenges and they are always failing tests and

assignments; these learners become frustrated and subsequently they frequently disrupt the classes."

A2 and A3 also said that when learners don't understand the content of the subject, they start to disrupt the class:

> *Somehow it can also be boredom for those who catch something faster and now they have to sit there and the others are a bit slower and slow ones they don't also understand the work or they are not up to the standard where the others are. So they also turn to disrupt the lesson, because it is meaningless to them.*

Overcrowding and teacher-learner ratio

A2 was also of the opinion that there were too many learners for one teacher to manage and give individual attention.

> *Also I have observed that the learners are too many in a class and while you are dealing with a certain group the others get out of hand and you are just one person. So, yes, the number of learners in the classroom plays a role because when they are many against one person, there are bound to be distractions.*

This finding brings into focus the shortcomings associated with high teacher-learner ratios, and connects with the literature concluding that overcrowding makes learner-centered pedagogy, a requirement of inclusive education, impossible (UNESCO, 1994: Bui et. al., 2010; Alquraini & Gut, 2012).

Home environment

A3 said,

> *The children are not doing homework, sometimes the problems don't really lie with the child it depends now on the background the influence, the situation at home. Maybe the child doesn't get time and attention from guardians, those are some of the reasons that I got. They go home and they have to do the homework but on this side there are household chores that they have to do. Maybe the child is living alone with a granny so there are those situations that we find in schools. Also, sometimes learners experience problems at home, for instance some kids they don't have enough to eat, maybe the parents are not there, and all these things are sometimes stressing the kids.*

A4 added that some learners seek attention from the teacher or fellow learners or want to be accepted by their peers because of a lack of attention at home:

> *Sometimes they don't even understand themselves why they are doing what they are doing. Mostly it is that and they want to be accepted by the peers so they have to do things that they think will make others want them or to give them attention.*

<u>School B</u>

Boredom

B5 said that generally when learners were not occupied with work they sought attention.

Hyper-active learners

B6 said that most common issue was hyper-activity. “They are always restless, bags of energy and trying to show off to their peers. ”B7 observed that: “it is more about bullying; teasing others and those are things that I have observed.”

School C

Absent parents and boredom

C8 and C9 both stated that disruption is also caused by learners who come from backgrounds where there are a lot of social and economic problems, where the learners who are not looked after properly and consequently act out disruptively in class.

C8 further said:

> *Learners who don’t have parents around, parents who are, say, working for the military, and usually they are not around, posted at Osona military base or somewhere in the North or wherever, and the kids are left either to be alone. Sisters or nanny, or whoever becomes the guardian, tends to struggle to stamp authority and instill good behaviour in these kinds of learners.*

C9 added “at times it comes from home. There is nothing you can do even if there is a system in place at school, you will still find learners who are ill-disciplined, who are constantly on the wrong side of the rules because of where they are coming from.”

The findings from C8 and C9 connect to literature which posits that parents’ attitudes and expectations, family structure, and home language have a significant effect on the child’s social and educational development (Ajila & Olutola, 2007).

Attention seeking

C9 agreed with the previously recorded sentiments of other participants that the desire for attention often fuels disruptive conduct: "perhaps the learners are seeking attention; some of them feel left out so for them to be recognized they pick on the others because they feel important when they are naughty and consequently become the centre of attention."

Parents or rules/ laws put in place

C10 said that some learners disrupt others just because they lack a good, basic up-bringing at home and as a result have no respect for rules.

> *The way we raise kids as parents, we do not tell or talk to the child at home what is expected of him at school. Alike, if the learners are spoiled and rule their parents at home, they also want to be on top of the teachers and dominate them. So meaning it is the way we raise the kids that is sometimes the problem.*

C10 added:

The issue of how to discipline learners in schools is important. I am not saying corporal punishment was not supposed to be taken away completely. But you will find that when a learner knows that if I do this I will be punished, then they will not disrupt classes because they know the consequences. So it's parenting and on the other hand rules or laws that we have put in place that might be a cause of disruptive classroom behaviour.

School D

Home environment

D11 and D12 said problems can be caused by the situation in which the learner has grown up, the home environment. D13 noted that while some learners are just naughty and naturally mischievous, others are just too exhausted to focus on learning: they become irritable and engage in disruptive behaviour.

Distance to and from school

D13 explained that hunger and the long distance from home to school are detrimental factors because by the time learners arrive at school they are hungry, tired, and easily lose concentration. The result is that they get involved in disruptive behaviour. Elaborating further on the loss of focus that follows, D13 added:

> *Yes they don't concentrate. When I am teaching I always open the door and if they see any movement outside they try to concentrate outside. And if they see a visitor or a car outside they look there. The private road is near the classroom so any car that pass they have to respond and see it. They know cars but they just want to know who that one is and they will also try to give each other information as to who it is, you know.*

D13 also had occasion to say:

> *We say charity begins at home. However, some of the backgrounds of our learners where they are coming from their parents don't really know the importance of education they just send them to school. Maybe they don't know, sometimes you can tell them your children are doing this and this, or this is not good at school.*

The parents will attack saying "you are just against my daughter or son," that kind of thing.

Lack of respect

According to D13, some parents discuss teachers at home in the presence of the learners.

When learners come in the classroom, they don't respect you. Because they know they had mini meetings where parents discuss about the teachers in negative tones while learners are there. So when they come from home they don't give you much respect.

4.6.2 To eliminate the causes of disruptive classroom behaviour

Question 2:

What can be done to eliminate the causes of disruptive classroom behaviour?

School A

Support classes and referral

A1 said that was crucial for the teacher to know and understand their learners' backgrounds. This helps the teacher to match learner needs with available resources and support. For instance, learners who struggle with learning, writing and reading problems can be referred to a learners' support class where the teacher can help the individual learner for a period of time.

Having a support class at our school is really helpful. Learners with learning difficulties are referred to this class for a period of time. But if there is no

improvement then we need to call in the parents and discuss this problem with them perhaps some parents can take their children to specialist to test and or assist the learner. In the support or special class learners are few and the teacher, who is an expert, can give them more/individual attention. This is much unlike the overcrowded mainstream, where one teacher sits with 45 learners in a class and it is sometimes a bit impossible to help these specific learners (A1).

Planning

A2 said the solution has a lot to do with planning, so that the teacher can keep the learners busy at all times; it is consequently crucial to plan activities well for all the types of learners in the classroom, in terms of their ability, backgrounds, and disciplinary profiles. A teacher who plans her/his lessons well experiences fewer disruptions in his/her classroom than the poor planner or the non-planner.

Talking to learners on a regular basis

A3 noted that, while the involvement of parents is frequently helpful and positive, before doing so, it is important to talk to the individual learner first, motivating them to act upon their disruptive behaviour and following up every time.

One must understand the learners as normal human beings; they are maturing through puberty, entering their teenage years. Thus, if you talk to them and consistently motivate them to act upon their disruptive behaviour, they are going to respond positively because they are being guided by someone who understands (A3).

Meanwhile A4 said that her classes are generally quiet,

Because I have them quiet down on the stoep (pavement) before entering or leaving class; they move in or out row by row in an orderly manner. I am on my stoep to receive them and on the stoep when they leave the class.

School B

Planning

B5 advised that teachers must "plan and be prepared for the lesson:

Just through planning if one is prepared even if anything comes up learners will be kept busy. Like in my case having to be called up to the office, I am often prepared and I can give work to the learners before I go out. I know that will eliminate disruptive behaviour and I will not see anybody outside.

Boredom

B5 and B6 both recommended keeping the hyper-active learners busy, and giving them some challenging work to do.

B6 specifically stressed:

Hyper-active sounds to me like a kid who wants more challenging work so you give this child more than the other, you try to occupy this child more than the others even you are asked to write a sentence or complete a summary a hyper active child will complete that summary in 5 to 7 minutes by the rest of us will take 15 to 20 minutes and after that he will be bored so you must always have something, challenging for him, like an extra book to read or a certain worksheet to complete just to keep that behaviour in check.

B5 added:

> *In most cases when a learner is disruptive that learner is bored, whether he is naturally an attention seeker or not, that learner will come down so one must just keep them occupied and if you have not prepared or given them anything you will struggle that day.*

Parental involvement

B6 advised that parents be called in to get them involved in talking to their kids:

> *Normally what we do is once you call in a parent, all of us it is human nature that learners don't want to disappoint their parents even for a small matter, just for a parent to come to school for a learner it is a big thing.*

Praise good behaviour and change their seating position

B7 advises teachers to encourage and praise learners for the positive things they have done. A teacher can also change the seating to benefit that targeted or bullied learner, but also in a way that eliminates the causes of the disruptive behaviour (e.g. separating two trouble-makers who sit next to each other).

<u>School C</u>

Keep them busy or make them a group leader

Echoing the sentiments of other participants, C8 and C9 both advised eliminating boredom by keeping the learners busy with work throughout the period so that they will not play or

disturb the lesson. In addition, C9 said that the teacher can make these learners feel important nominating them a group leader:

> *Some of the learners they really feel important when you give them more responsibility. Try to identify what is the cause of this disruptive behaviour? Hence, put these attention seekers in a group and then you make that specific learner a group leader then they also feel important.*

Boredom: ice-breaker

C9 also said that it was crucial to energize the learners by using an ice-breaker between activities in the classroom. An ice-breaking activity can be used to cheer, divert and focus learners' attention back on the lesson.

> *My favorite, and it works every time, is where, we go outside hold hands you give them commands: jump in out, turn left, turn right and they are having fun as they are doing it, when they are really cheered up and feel they need to go back to class and then you continue with your lesson if there is time left.*

Parental involvement

C9 recommended creating a close connection with the parents and working hand-in-hand with them to control the learners' behaviour as some learners are afraid of their parents but not their teachers.

> *Let me just apply to my own situation in my class or our school, so far I think the system we have is working for our school, and this mainly been due to the fact that we have a close connection with the parents.*

Referral to the office

C9 nevertheless noted that if the behaviour gets out of hand the teacher must fill in a 'transgressions form' and refer the learner to the principal's office where the teacher, the learner and the principal can sit and iron out the problem. "I think so far it has been working it doesn't reach the level of school board or the disciplinary hearing so this mostly means the system at our school is working."

Corporal punishment

C10 expressed the view that "corporal punishment must be brought back but not in an intensive way, it must be controlled, there must be measures, rather than just completely eliminate it."

Parental guidance and respect

C10 observed that there was a need for parents to change the way they raised their kids, by teaching their kids the importance of education and respecting for elders.

> *Let the children know the reason why they come to school, they say charity begins at home; I train my child to respect elders at home then even at school that child will do the same. So, I train my child not to use abusive language or to interrupt another person when something is happening that child will keep that even when they are at school. Children should be taught the basics on when to do things and how to do things.*

School D

Build a hostel

D11 noted that building a hostel to save learners walking long distances from the plots and curbing hunger will go a long towards addressing issues of discipline in schools. The school could also move away from multi-grade classes:

> *As we are struggling with these kids we need a hostel because when they are staying in the hostels there will not be this long distance walking, there will not be a big problem with hunger because they will be getting 3 meals a day. Even school enrollment will increase and we will not suffer with this multi-grade teaching because more teachers are going to be employed.*

D12 said the school should put up some curtains to cover the windows, to minimize external disturbances. D12 also proposed "put(ting) up measures and consequences for disruptive behaviour in the classroom, for example pasting the rules of the classroom on the wall."

Feeding programme

D13 stated that they have a feeding programme at School D to curb the children's hunger. This programme especially targets learners who walk long distances to and from school.

> *Oh hunger, we have got a school feeding program here and distance I don't know. So at least the kids come hungry to school but after the break they are full. The parents must also be addressed. They must do something to feed their children so they don't come hungry to school.*

4.7 Strategies that experienced teachers use to address disruptive classroom behaviour.

Table 4.13 Strategies to eliminate disruptive behaviour

Strategies to deal with Disruptive behaviour	Participants	Conformity with Inclusive Education Principles
Parental involvement	A1, B4, C9	Positive
Praise good behaviour	A1, A3, A3, B5, A3, B7	Neutral
Good lesson planning	A2, C6, D11, D13	Positive
Referral to the office	A2, A3, B6, C9, D12	
Corporal punishment	A3, C8, D13	Negative
Sex and drug education	A2, A3, C8, D11, D13	Neutral
Peer mentoring, guidance and counselling	A2, B7, C8, D112, D13	Positive
Charitable aid for vulnerable learners(e.g. NGO's)	D11	Positive
School feeding program	D12, D13	Positive
Sending learner out of classroom	A3, B7	Negative

Question 1

How do you respond to disruptive behaviour in the short-term as it occurs right there in the class?

School A

A1and A3 both said they used one-on-one talks with the disruptive learner in-class or after lessons. A1 advised: "Stay calm and point at the disrupting learner and tell him/her to stop

the behaviour, if the learner continues as learners are individuals then talk to the learner individually after class."

> *Sometimes you get angry maybe you scream a bit, sometimes that happens honestly and you tell learner to stop it and immediately if it's like that, you talk to that whoever is doing that time when you talk to the child then they immediately hold back. That is what happens most of the time.*

Keeping records of transgressions

A4 notes that disruptions are essentially time-wasting:

So in most cases I will keep it aside, maybe record it, and deal with it later. Making a note on the class list is also helpful as it will provide me with information or a record I can use later to help the child, or give an assessment to their parents or my superior.

School B

Corporal punishment (whip the learners)

B5 said that he sometimes employed moderate corporal punishment, to discipline or to deter learners from misbehaving.

> *I usually have my whip; I call it "ka Blackie". The name ka Blackie is known to all of them even if it does not land on them so they are afraid of it. So we joke every now and then about him but now that is how I retain my orders with my learners also sometimes.*

Corporal punishment (lift up chairs)

B6 notes that asking a learner to lift a chair above his head causes his muscles to tire; the discomfort ensures that he will not repeat his mistake. B7 noted that there were a variety of ways to threaten punishment, such as telling the learner, "you will be sweeping the class today," or "you will be packing the teacher's table today."

School C

Eye contact and firmness

C8 said "I give them the look. I stare them down." This point was endorsed by C10, who notes that strong eye contact between a learner and a grown up, the teacher, can be a very quick and effective solution that ensures disruptions are eliminated as soon as they appear.

Firmness with learners is also echoed by C9:

> *I am very strict and firm with my tone and that is the way I also talk to the learner and also help to eliminate misbehaviour. Not that one to the learner but most time they will respond, that is how I deal with it.*

School D

D11 advocates reprimanding the child immediately, when the offense they committed is still new and fresh, rather than later when they have forgotten. Agreeing with this strategy, D12 states that when reprimanding, the teacher must speak with a firm voice and leave no doubt to the offending learner and the rest of the class that the misdeed in question will not be tolerated.

D13 meanwhile volunteered that he did not use punitive measures but tells the child to "stop what they are doing and to concentrate" – that is all. D12 and D13 both said they contact parents or pay home visits to brief the parents and discuss their children.

Question 2

How do you respond to disruptive behaviour in the long term? And how effective are the strategies you use?

School A

Record on transgression forms

All four teachers followed the procedures of the school, using record forms to keep track of what is happening on a daily basis. According to A4 "disruptions are essentially time-wasting. In most cases I will keep it aside and maybe record it. Then I will deal with it later."

The routine practice of record-keeping is preliminary but maintains an up-to-date record of classroom behaviour among other things. The strategy is supported by Ridnouer (2010), who recommended that teachers always keep a copy of every referral or other disruptive behaviour report they submit.

Parental involvement

All four teachers at school A said they called in parents for an interview or discussion together with the HOD to resolve problems. According to A2, if the problem is ongoing "we try to find ways to solve this problem in a way that involves (the parents) so that their child can perform."

Referral to the office and Counselling

A1 pointed out that the school has a rule that a disciplinary form is filled in and submitted to the office.

> *The child is also called in and again maybe if it becomes severe then a school board member can be called in and the kid can be sent for counselling to me as the life skills teacher.*

School B

Referral to the office and parental involvement

B5 and B7 both said that if disruptive behaviour persisted in a certain child, parents are called in. B7 noted that:

> *There is a record of how many times have a learner been warned against certain behaviour once it goes to three or four, we usually involve the parent. Then one will not accuse a child for disruptive behaviour but have record to show to the parents, the disciplinary board and the parents they must always have something on paper. But then, once it goes up to parental involvement they usually cooperate.*

Detention

B7 stated that "if there is no change after involving parents, then they have to sit for their detention". Both B5 and B6 also said they used detention, especially in lieu of corporal punishment. They further added that detention is usually reserved for more serious offence rather than minor ones, such as chewing paper in class. These offences may include verbal

abuse of other learners or fighting. B5 conceded, however, that detention was effective "less than half of the times." This view is supported by the literature, which concludes that quite often school remedial behaviour programmes do not work effectively to change behaviour (Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Rose, Monda-Amaya & Espelage, 2010).

School C

Parental involvement

All three teachers noted that if learner's disruptive behaviour continued for a certain period, then the parents are called in to be informed about their child's behaviour and asked to talk to their child. In most cases the learners concerned change their behaviour for some time.

Detention

C10 went on to say that if there was no change after involving the parents then they had to sit for detention or stay later on Friday.

C10 noted that change could not be seen overnight, but over a longer horizon; most of the strategies used have proven to be efficacious.

School D

D11, D12 and D 13 all said they send the offending child to the office and contact the parents.

Home visits

D11 to D13 all said that they contacted the parents or paid home visits to brief the parents and discuss their child. D12 and D13 noted that the penalty for not doing their homework was to have the matter referred to the disciplinary committee, which reports it to top management and parents are called in to the school, "because I have exhausted a few measures that I am entitled to." The importance of parental involvement at School D, in particular resonates with the views of researchers who have posited that it is crucial to pay home visits to establish a partnership with families, instead of waiting until the learners misbehave (Kruger, Landsberg & Nel, 2011).

Question 3

How effective are the strategies teachers use to combat disruptive behaviours?

School A

A1 to A3 all reported that their strategies were effective. A3 clarified that the strategies were most effectual if everybody concerned is doing what they are supposed to do:

> *If the children come in your class you are the only teacher doing that or there are also rules for when they are exchanging classes, you are the only one telling the child walk in the straight line, tuck in your shirt whatsoever. The others don't do that and the children are seeing these things and then they make the whole system to not work.*

A4 meanwhile, reported that the evidence that his methods were highly are very effective is simply that he "hardly ever (has) a lot of nonsense" in his classroom.

School B

Participants B5 to B7 all note that most of the strategies are effective, for example, asking a learner to lift chair above his or her head usually persuades the learner to refrain from the misbehaviour in question. B6 noted,

> *It is effective because we try not to do what is not appropriate by applying corporal punishment; so by asking a learner to lift up a chair above his head we know he will know that the result of disruption will be a physical discomfort.*

School C

Detention

C8 and C9 claimed that their strategies were highly effective. "I think it works for our school. We have sat down trying to find many strategies like detention which at times I think are also a punishment for teachers.

C10 agrees that the school's strategies were mostly effective, because there was always noticeable change in the levels of misbehaviour once a teacher became proactive about implementing the strategies.

School D

In school D, D11 and D12 regarded the strategies as being effective, while D13 said that the strategies were not really or not always effective.

From D12: “The strategies are effective if learners like and respect you, and if you understand the need to keep the learners busy. So I have seen that most of the measures I take are effective.”

However, D13 responded:

> *Not really, only 40%; It depends with the situation and with the situation on the child so telling them to stop doesn’t always work, like our learners here they usually forget and you always have to monitor them; they forget easily and we also have to work with the parents.*

Question 4

Do you have classroom rules in place, and if so, do they act as a strategy to combat disruptive classroom behaviour?

School A

All four teachers, A1 to A4, indicated that they had classroom rules. A1 said written rules make it easier to remind learners when they transgress. A3 and A4 agreed, noting that although making class rules can take time, once made they prove to be very useful in serving as a reminder for learners to stick to good behaviour.

School B

All the three teachers, B5, B6 and B 7said that they had class rules in place. B5 observed: “if we have them then as a room rule, we are good to go,” while B6 said his class only occasionally made full use of the rules.

School C

C8, C9 and C10 all said they support the idea of class rules and often make use of them. C10 that the rules are effective but "not to great extent… (because) one still has to keep reminding them of the rules."

School D

All three teachers (D11, D12 and D13) have classroom rules. Unfortunately, D13 noted, due to vandalism, the rules which used to hang in his classroom are no longer there.

Question 5

How do you ensure that learners presenting with disruptive behaviour are included in your lesson?

School A

A1 said that he did not know how to include them: "We are not allowed to chase learners out of the class, after you talk to them and the misbehaviour continues. Try and involve them in class activities or let them take the lead in something to see if there is any change."

A2 noted that

> *I came up with a strategy of the learners are many in the class, so if one is disrupting and then I know obviously he is not paying attention into the lesson then I will ask him a question based on that lesson and if he cannot answer then*

he has to ask somebody else, point somebody else to answer. This ensures that anyone is expected to be called and to have been listening and to give a response.

A3 added:

Maybe you are having a discussion on something and you see a learner who disrupts the class and the reason is because of poor performance, you give him a chance to also answer that one. If he answers then you encourage him and that also bring them back to the whole system and the school so that they feel that they are also part of the class and they can do something.

According to A, "I ask them questions – have overall communication with all learners. All gets a chance in answering or trying to answer – right or wrong – then I help them do the correct thing."

School B

B5 said,

That is a difficult one. I am not sure how to include them. We don't enforce them in our lesson preparation. However, most of the times when a learner is disruptive that learner is bored whether is naturally attention seeker that learner will come down just keep them occupied if you have not prepared or given them anything you will struggle that day.

B6:

Hyper-active is like a kid who wants more challenging work so you give this child more than the other, must always have something, challenging for him, like an

extra book to read or a certain worksheet to complete just to keep that behaviour in check.

B7:

I don't believe in chasing a learner out. I will put the learner in the front they are my first target when teaching, and then I try to keep them focused. Not chase them out of the class then you still owe then what they need to know.

School C

In School C, C8's take on ejecting learners from class was similar to that of the teachers in School B.

One thing that we are not allowed to do is send a learner out of the class. You may not. I move them to the front they are still part of the class. Even if you make them stand at the back of the class in the corner they are still part of it, but they must face the black board they must still be able to see the teacher and hear what the teacher is saying.

C9 reported that "we do group work if it necessary so they don't feel left out, or give the responsibilities in the group make them group captain and let them try organize the group. Although this approach has its own challenges, it does frequently work." C10's response was similar "if I have learnt that this child is disruptive I will give him more work to do, something prepared on a particular skill that we need to focus on, during that week just to keep him busy."

School D

D11 noted, "I will let him talk or repeat what I was saying, while D12 asserted: "you should involve them. They have to be engaged, questioning and the answering in all the activities; also make sure to involve them in presentations." D13 simply said: "I just tell them to stop what they are doing, and carry on with the lesson. That is how I do it."

Question 6

What are the teachers' (your colleagues') perceptions of good practice when it comes to dealing with disruptive behaviour in senior primary classrooms?

School A

A1: "I have observed here people are just negative really and just blame, blame any disruptive behaviour so that is it, as sometimes as teachers we need to go back and find out, whatever is happening in my class does it maybe not my fault."

A2:

> *I would say the teachers feels its extra work especially with this strategies that we are having at the school, the paper work is too much, the classroom rules it was a bit too much even have them displayed in classes and they felt it just how the children are.. Some feel like they do not really care so we still sit with those who do not send in any transgression and there is no way that there will not be any, even though you try to always deal with the disruptive learners but where you cannot one need to come through.*

A3: "most are positive and don't appreciate disruptive behaviour."

A4:

> *Most of them feel the same as I do. We want discipline so that we can work effectively. Time is running fast. A teacher needs to be consistent everyday – do and say the same thing and implement – all staff the same – then it takes a few weeks and everyone is on the same page. But all must at all times implement the same thing – otherwise you do not win!*

School B

In School B, B5 and B6 have a common of curbing disruptive behaviour in the classroom.

B5 noted that " generally when a learner is disruptive it is known by all the teachers then you cannot punish the learner twice once the learners has been recorded by a certain teacher then it is enough." According to B6,

> *We are all different individuals from different backgrounds so what I see the other person cannot see but we have common goal towards instilling good behaviour and morals in children and the phase we are dealing with is when puberty comes in and we try by all means not to apply extreme penalties or even corporal punishment.*

B7 asserted:

> *There are some who are tolerating it and some who chase disruptive learners out of class, that is why I always say because I am the one dealing with the child behaviour at school I always go to them and ask colleagues, how you feel? I will never advice a teacher to chase learners out of class because you need to simply tell that offending learner to change their manners.*

School C

C8 noted,

> *That is a difficult one; teachers think if they bring a child to you, you should handle the situation immediately myself and the principal I am the only HOD here at this school. We have about 900 learners at our school and I am the only HOD, they didn't give us the green light to appoint another one. So between me and the principal we are handling everything and we are also teaching so now I am in my class and a teacher is there with a learner or two and will expect you to deal with that situation immediately which is impossible. It is a very difficult situation.*

C9 added that most colleagues saw the importance of handling disruptive behaviour. "Most of the teachers will handle it on their own, but sometimes when they come here it is because they get those learners that are really stubborn." C10 stated curtly, "I am not sure about their feelings but surely at any rate they ought to be against disruptive behaviour."

School D

D11 and D12 stated: "we are working together here as a team so the measures that you put in place are by all teachers, we use the same measures. This ensures uniformity and avoids confusion among both teachers and learners.

D13 conceded: "there I don't know. I don't want to lie; I don't know anything."

Question 7

What do you regard as best practices for dealing with disruptive behaviour in an inclusive senior primary classroom?

School A

A1 highlighted the need for fairness:

> *You have to treat all of them equally regardless of their differences, for example some learner may have disabilities or be unique is another way; if you give different treatment to one learner than you give to another, the other one will keep acting wrongly and think that what he is doing is correct. You need to treat learners equally and also reprimand them equally.*

A2 agreed with A1, emphasizing the need to give the equal treatment to the learners:

> *I think the best thing will be if all the learners could be treated the same; if a learner who causes disruption or has difficulties it doesn't mean you have to treat that case differently. This means so that the learner can also feel that even if I have a difficulty or this problem, we are in the same class and rules apply to everyone.*

A3 meanwhile brought up the need to be aware of and adhere to rules and regulations:

> *It's crucial that the learners must understand disciplinary procedures in place and know what is expected from them; they must know and follow and abide by the rules and we must act upon it so that they know it is serious.*

School B

In School B, the first participant reported that he did not have a way to implement his best strategies because of situational constraints:

I am not certain how to deal with all those learners; I really don't know how we should organize the learners because it is very hard since our classrooms are very overcrowded; with overcrowding, there will be a lot of work to be done (e.g. a marking or completing the scheme of work) and one has to work against time. Obviously indiscipline and disruptive behaviour and all that will come into the picture. (B5)

B6 recommended engaging learners and involving them in the classroom management process:

A good practice is just to talk to the offending learners; talk to them and never get tired of talking to them you must always and constantly show them the good way of doing thing and you must constantly remind them of you have done this wrong. You could for example even ask other learners "are you happy with what Person A or Person B did?" A common answer is, "No we are not". Then "what do you think is the right way, what should we have done better?" Then the class can also guide you; so to involve the learners themselves in their own discipline or the way of doing things is often the best strategy, and the teacher should seem like they are forcing.

B7 highlighted the need to have a discussion with the learners:

The most recommendable one I can mention is to discuss the matter with the child. Why is he doing so, what are the reasons -- you need find that out. And at the end, you know where to begin helping that learner.

School C

In School C, C8 brought up the importance of identifying the disruptive learners and working closely with them to manage further disruptive behaviour:

> *From day one, the teacher has to identify the learners that will give him constant problems, and from there it is a matter of dealing with them, and speaking with them; if it doesn't help, call or involve the parents. But there are some learners whom you can't get through to, and even if you call those parents they never turn up. So you do have to deal with those learners each and every day. You have got to keep your eye on then constantly in all the classes.*

C9, meanwhile, mentioned maintaining close bonds with learners:

> *I recommend having that personal relationship with the learners where you make them so comfortable that when they have a problem they can talk to you. School is not prison; they are allowed to talk as long as when you need their attention they respond to you. What is mostly important to me is having that relationship with them. And when you disturb what they do they have to see the seriousness and in my class when I talk to them firmly they know they cannot get away with disruptive behaviour.*

C10 emphasized the importance of managing the classroom in a way that keeps learners involved in classroom activities:

> *An effective strategy is to help them to be involved: that now is an inclusive classroom - you need to involve everyone - that is the only way. Make sure that the learner is present, doing something, participating. Also make sure that learner is*

also doing what the others are doing and do not really focus on one but you focus on the rest of the class because they all have to be included.

School D

D11 agreed with the strategies shared by teachers from other schools, highlighting the importance of involving learners: "Keep the learners busy and ask the disruptive learners to answer questions, explain what I the teacher is saying, and occasionally even to come up to the chalkboard." D12 also *agreed with other teachers who placed emphasis on keeping the classroom engaged:*

Engaging them more in activities and trying to separate learners, separating the disruptive learners even in the context of simultaneous (multi-games) learning, because the learners have a friend in all the classes. The teacher must isolate problem learners who must not sit next to each other; they must try to sort them here and there and monitor them. That way they will not have time, to you know.

Question 8

Which strategies are in place to combat class disruption at your school?

School A

A1:

Currently what is only happening is now as teacher we fill in the disciplinary forms and send them to the office. The office also has their own summary if one name of a learner comes up more than three times for the same offense then the HOD's call in the parents. After that if he still the same then they maybe take it up

with the Director of primary schools you cannot suspend a learner that easily but if it is really that serious then maybe suspension for one week or more.

A2:

it is the classroom rules and then we have the transgression forms, then we have counselling sessions and the school board also is now part of that, if it goes to that extend and for serious cases such as fighting. The transgression form steps: is not only for disruptive behaviour but also for academic issues, for instance, homework not done. So the academic part and the behaviour part are there.

A3 agreed that this is standard disciplinary procedures at school, which they follow for disruption, keeping records of transgression and calling in parents.

A4 elaborated:

Yes, when the parents are called to the office to discuss and they see the documentation that has been submitted, I think they realise that discipline starts at home not at school. At school we are only the extension of the parent's arms. We can maintain discipline at school.

School B

B5 and B7 listed current punitive strategies as cleaning, parental involvement and moderate corporal punishment with a whip. According to B6, "We have classroom rules, a code of conduct for learners and school rules in general. Therefore, each child is aware of the rules."

School C

C8 noted: "We do have our school rules, which is up in all classes all the learners in the beginning of the year get a set of the rules and it is pasted in their homework books for them and their parents to see." In addition, according to C9 "we use the infringement form that is in place because it is a backup also for when one day the parents are called in and the learners is facing disciplinary hearing." C10 also cited the school and classroom rules pasted in the learner's homework book. "It is not a document given by the ministry, so we use those two just to let the parents know that they are involved in the welfare and the education of their children and what happens in school they need to be informed."

School D

According to D11: "Writing papers to let the parents come, making sure to include the learners when the parents are here. The learners come and their parents come and talk while we are there and most of the time it helps." D12 observed "We give the learners rules, classroom and school rules and mainly that is what we are following the school policy in combating disruptive classroom behaviour."

Question 9

Do you think the strategies are working that are in place to combat classroom disruption at your school? Motivate your answer.

School A

A1 stated, "I cannot say for certain, because currently I still see the parents are being called in. Probably this means that the strategies are working but have their own limitations because they are not completely eliminating all cases of misbehaviour."

A2:

They are working, in my opinion. At first we had learners who did not do homework; we also had teachers who did not monitor homework, but now all that has changed. Similarly, as the life skills teacher, I am also responsible for life skills and I supervise monitor that and we are referring cases and kids are getting help. And it is working for this school. There are lots of improvements so far.

School B

B5:

Yes for us they are working, even though you find on parents again you have given punishment to a learner and that learner will go and report to the parent and the parent will come back my child is not supposed to clean the school yard because he is allergic to ABCD and then you are waiting to see this learners developing marks because of working. But nothing and you just say maybe something maybe too much love for the kids I don't know what they want us to do sometimes.

School C

In school C, the teachers' assessment of the effectiveness of their strategies was mostly positive. According to C8, "Most of our parents do respond yes, and so the minute that you tell a learner that I am going to call your parents now you will see a difference immediately. That is an example of some of the strategies we implement that are working." The alleged effectiveness was confirmed by C9, who stated "very well, it has been effective so far, so we haven't any major incidents. So far it is a success for me it is really

working." C10 added, "Yes, they are effective. I have noticed that no child or parents like to be called in at the office."

School D

D11 and D12 agreed that the measures in place were working. D11 added: "yes, parents are showing interest, including members of the community in the vicinity of our school, of all racial groups, who have been making kind contributions of their time and resources." According to D12,

> *We are seeing changes some learners when they are enrolled here you find that they are coming with disruptive behaviours but in the end you see they are falling back in line and you see some, they are good learners completely, we don't have much cases that the learners doesn't change which is a sign that this means that the strategies are working.*

Question 10

In your opinion, do you think the Ministry has done enough in terms of combating disruptive behaviour? What would you like the Ministry of Education to do? Motivate your answer.

School A

A1: "I don't know whether the ministry has done something. They just say corporal punishment is out, but they don't bring in any proper strategies; it's you here at school that must find out those strategies so for me from my side I don't know. From my side I will just say no." A1 added: "I would like the Ministry to conduct more workshop where teachers are involved, perhaps teachers of different schools can come together and bring

different ideas together with each one bringing what they experiencing in the schools; then we can see how to deal with this problem."

A2:

> *Well I really feel the ministry must provide us with teachers who are professionals and who are supposed to know how they must deal with disruptive learners. I also think what government could do is limit the number of learners in a classroom because teacher-learner ratio really plays a big part; you don't reach out to everyone.*

A3:

> *The ministry is always setting rules you know, and people who set up rules is people that are not in classes who don't know the real situation in the class, they just don't know what is happening there. Besides, there are no measures in place to use this are just things that we struggle with. The ministry has not done anything and this are going out of hands as because on the part of the teachers, it is not everybody that has a strong personality to handle some of this disruptive behaviour.*

School B

B5: "The measures from the MOEAC that we should not punish learners corporally are the only responsibilities towards the learners we have. There are not many other measures or guidelines."

B6:"Yes the ministry has made some effort, but the guidelines are not as clear as possible and teachers are applying the guidelines differently."

B7: "Not really, not all of us are at the same level of combating disruptive behaviour problems at school at least the ministry need to give some hints on how to go about these problems."

School C

C8: "Something is missing. They must bring back corporal punishment but they must stipulate that corporal punishment will only be inflicted by the principal and the HOD's."

C9:

> *I don't really know what the policies in place are in when it comes to the ministry. In my opinion I would say they haven't really done enough, what they have done is just to abolish corporal punishment which is one of the reasons our hands are cut. But when it comes to dealing with the whole disruptive behaviour itself, I don't really know any guidelines that are there, unless the ones that we have at the school level.*

C10: "The government must come up with practical alternative to corporal punishment and educate parents on the importance of education."

School D

D11: "Yes, to a certain extent but they need to come up practical alternative to corporal." punishment."

D12:

> *They have tried, the ministry has done their part, but it's only the monitoring process that is still lagging; if the school could not monitor and evaluate the*

policies there would be much effectiveness… I suggest that they do away with multi-grade in schools, because managing two grades simultaneously even if learners are few but are at different levels, are difficult. Otherwise, the ministry is doing fine.

D13: "(the Ministry) needs to do better."

Question 11

If you have any other comments, suggestions or recommendation relating to the three core questions regarding disruptive behaviour, causes and strategies, asked earlier, please feel free to share?

School A

A1: "I recommend teamwork amongst teachers, where we work as a team and listen to each other's; sometimes you want to make a suggestion but other people do not want to listen; that's when we do not get things done, and do not become better."

A2:

I will say that as teachers we are actually parents; if we can try to be parents first, before we are teachers. I think the outcomes of work and our efforts will be much better. A teacher is there to guide and help, motivate, encourage, and all that. I do not really believe learners are fundamentally bad people, but rather that they only need understanding, care, and support. I also suggest knowing one's learner better. That is, get to know the background they come from, the churches they belong to and things like that. Lastly, I think teachers need to make use of the accumulative record cards even when you get them from the previous teacher. Fill in something

and then fill them again, because it will be the first thing in getting to know each other.

A3:

I would like to emphasize what I call the Education Triangle; it involves the teacher, the learners and the parents. If we can work together nicely, and as a teacher you talk to the learners in the right way and you work well together with the parent then you can help this child not to end up in a bad place, for example on the street.

A4: "I have said enough."

School B

B5:

I know of a school in Arandis where they have a teacher who is only known to handle misbehaving learners. He only wears jeans, t-shirts and sneakers; if a learner is seen in the wrong place by this teacher, he knows he should run or else he will be caught and given punishment. I think that we should have such people in our mix just to assist with discipline. I believe a disciplined school performs better.

School C

C8 had the following to say:

My suggestion is that we must bring back corporal punishment. We must have a watching committee in place to protect the principal and the HOD or teacher administering it; if say the government says, corporal punishment can only be

administrated by the principal by the H.O.D. and one or two teachers on the disciplinary committee, and we will need something on paper that will legally protect us.

C9:

My input is that teachers should be open-minded and develop a good relationship with the learners. Because we have a diversity of learners that come from different backgrounds, try to understand what the root problems are. From there, try to see where you can help, or how you can keep the disruptive behaviour at a low level or where it doesn't affect the other learners and consequently teaching and learning will take place.

C10:

I think parents need to be more educated, you find that sometimes most of the learners who disrupt classes are coming from the homes or families where parents have no clue about education. So parents need to be educated and motivated on what they should do to encourage and support their children towards academic success. They need to have a clear understanding of what school is. Thus, parents they need to be given more information on what is happening at schools and how they also can improve. I was raised in an environment where I was told to respect my teachers so even at school there was no time that my parents were called in because of disruptive behaviour in class because from home I was taught what is right and what is wrong.

School D

All the teachers at School - D11, D12 and D13- indicated that they had covered all that needed to be covered in this area. D12 said: "Thank you and I believe that I have said enough about what measures can be put in place to resolve the classroom challenges that we have been discussing."

4.8 Summary

The findings presented in his chapter originated from both the interviews conducted with participant teachers and observation carried out in their classrooms.

The interviews offered a comparatively larger set of findings, in accordance with the objectives of the research. Yet, although not as extensive in scope as the interviews, the observation provided another rich set of information that complemented the interview findings.

The observations were also important because, while in interviews participants can edit their words, moderate themselves, and even reflect; in observation the researcher got on-the-ground access to how teachers actually run their classrooms, and specifically how they manage instances of classroom disruption.

The researcher was particularly impressed not only by the volume of information generated from the participant teachers, but also by the strong and genuine interest in discussing and exploring the subject matter that participants expressed throughout the study.

The key findings of the research are principally that teachers hold diverse perceptions of what constitutes disruptive behaviour in the classroom; and that the causes of disruptive

classroom behaviour are rooted in social factors, although environmental, systematic and personal factors remain significant.

My own experience as a researcher during this study validated some of the previously held notions I had about the subject (and my personal experience as a teacher) - particularly the notion that disruptive behaviour, although not prominent in local discourse on education, is a challenge of significance that deeply affects both Namibian teachers and their learners.

My impression of the participant teachers whose contributions comprise the findings of this study was that they are not only aware of the problem posed by disruptive behaviour in the classroom, but are also eager to discuss the challenge and find and implement solutions. Furthermore, it was my impression as a researcher, based on the sample of teachers who participated in this study, that although many teachers are willing to solve the problem of classroom disruption, they are not yet capacitated and equipped to manage their classrooms inclusively.

The following chapter offers a discussion of the findings presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how teachers conceptualize the problem of disruptive classroom behaviour, and to identify the strategies they use to mitigate and deal with it. The study was confined to the senior primary phase in selected schools in Namibia's centrally-located, multi-cultural Otjozondjupa region.

This chapter offers a thematic discussion of major findings as they relate to the research objectives of this study, namely to:

- Identify what teachers perceive as disruptive classroom behaviour.
- Identify causes of classroom disruption as perceived by senior primary school teacher
- Explore teachers' perceptions of useful ways of dealing with disruptive classroom behaviour at the senior primary school level
- Establish what strategies are being used in practice by experienced teachers to address classroom disruption

The findings are complex and multi-faceted, revolving around several themes yielded by the data under each objective:

1. There is a broad range of disruptive behaviours: Verbal and Non-verbal disruptive behaviour
2. Home and social factors dominate among the causes of disruptive classroom behaviour

3. Current strategies being employed to combat disruptive classroom behaviour are only partly effective
4. Addressing disruptive behaviour is a collective, multi-stakeholder responsibility.

Some of the above themes are connected to the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of the teachers as individuals, some to the broader workplace environment of the school. Some are rooted in human social and psychological realities, while others entail a combination of all of these factors.

These challenges are reflected in the literature considered in this study, which indicates that disruptive behaviour by learners can undermine classroom order and learning, and negatively impact academic achievement (Sun & Shek, 2012).

The following sections discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter in terms of each of the study's research objectives.

5.2 Perceived disruptive classroom behaviour

Perceived disruptive classroom behaviour refers to the actions of learners that teachers consider to be obstructing the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. The study revealed that teachers characterize disruptions variously, but their perceptions revolve around a common understanding that the concept refers to any behaviour on the part of a learner that will interrupt learning. This finding is in agreement with the literature that defines disruptive behaviour as any action that disrupts learning (Driscol, McGowan & Roop, 1996; Shilongo, 2002).

Regarding teacher perceptions of disruptive behaviour, the researcher discovered that teachers attached maximum importance to the classroom as the centre of all learning.

The study revealed that both internal and external distractions were a significant challenge. For example, B6 noted that learners sometimes followed outside noise, for example, from passing cars. The sheer range of perceived distractions (internal and external) puts into perspective the scope and significance of the challenge that teachers face in dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Interestingly, the findings revealed that participant teachers distinguished a set of behaviours they do not classify individually or specifically, but rather generally as "attention-seeking".

Research has demonstrated that individualized attention to learners can result in a drastic reduction in learners' attention-seeking behaviour in the classroom (Patterson, 2009), and this study revealed that teachers tended to characterize attention-seeking behaviour more as a desire for individualized attention than a serious cry for help. The comments by A4 reveal that attention-seeking was more about social acceptance and fitting in rather than serious need:

> *Sometimes they don't even understand themselves why they are doing what they are doing. Mostly it is that and they want to be accepted by the peers so they have to do things that they think will make others want them or to give them attention.*

A4's suggestion ties in with existing theory. Bandura's social learning theory (1989), positing that personal factors have the ability to reciprocally affect a person's immediate *environment* and his or her *behaviour*, would possibly explain how an individual need – the desire for attention – ends up determining the behaviour of learners (attention-seeking actions) that ultimately disrupts classroom learning. The findings agreed with the research

of Driscol, McGowan & Roop (1996), which classified all actions disturbing learning as 'disruptive'.

The findings identified these actions as making unnecessary loud noises in class, e.g. coughing (A2, B7, B8), making funny gestures and body language (C8), inappropriate or ill-timed humor (A3, B5), standing up unnecessarily when the teacher is teaching (A2, A3, B6, C9, D12), bothering/harassing learners sitting around them (C9), and asking unnecessary, irrelevant, or obvious questions (A2).

Perceived disruptive behaviours were divided into verbal and non-verbal behaviours, as outlined below.

5.2.1 Verbal disruptive behaviour

The study participants identified several perceived disruptive behaviours. *Verbal* behaviours are those that involve the use of words and sounds, rather than actions. The findings showed for instance that noise-making (D12; D13; C9; C8; B6; A3; A2; A1) was the most common verbal disruption across all the participating schools, indicating that a major source of the disruptions that Namibian teachers in primary schools have to deal with is noise.

Other verbal disruptive behaviours that were prominently cited include talking out of turn, whispering while teaching is in progress, teasing other learners, interrupting other learners, and speaking when not spoken to. There is a high frequency of learners speaking when they are not allowed or supposed to. This behaviour came in many forms, as learners either talked to fellow learners (teasing, whispering, shouting, making conversation or holding

"mini-meetings"), or to the teacher in the form of answering questions without being given permission to do so ("giving answers randomly," as reported by B6.)

However, some verbal disruptive behaviours were related to non-verbal ones, e.g. when a learner engaged in attention-seeking behaviour (non-verbal) by making deliberate loud coughing sounds in the classroom. Thus, the prominence of these verbal behaviours in the findings confirm previous research in the Namibian context, where teachers indicated that the most frequently occurring types of unwanted disruptive behaviour in classrooms included learners talking out of turn, moving around and shouting (Shilongo, 2002).

5.2.2 Non-verbal disruptive behaviour

The findings also revealed a wide range of non-verbal disruptive behaviours. Loitering about the classroom when expected to be seated was the non-verbal behaviour cited by most participants (D12; D11; C9; B5; A3; A2; A1). This result confirms the findings of Shilongo (2002) that among the most frequent disruptive behaviours is the learners' moving around the classroom ("loitering") when they are expected to be seated.

Other prominently cited behaviours include fidgeting in the chair, aggression towards other learners and fighting among learners, tapping pens and rules or banging heels on the floor, and inattentiveness during learning time.

5.3 Causes of disruptive classroom behaviour: teachers' perceptions

5.3.1 Home factors

True to the thread that ran through the findings of this study (the importance of a stable social background), the study revealed that the absence of strong role models (B5, C9) was

a key perceived cause of disruptive classroom behaviour. In agreement with B5 and C9, several other participants noted that absentee parents who lived far away from their children were a cause of learner disruptive behaviour.

As noted by C8,

> *Learners who don't have parents around, parents who are, say, working for the military, and usually they are not around, posted at Osona military base or somewhere in the North or where-ever, and the kids are left either to be alone. Sisters or nanny (nannie), or whoever becomes the guardian, tends to struggle to stamp authority and instill good behaviour in these kinds of learners.*

Most participants mentioned social deficits at home (absentee parents, no role models, broken families) without necessarily linking these factors to overall academic performance, as occurs in the literature, which indicates a strong correlation between parental involvement and positive educational outcomes for learners (Afolabi, 2014). This implies that teachers tended to place the blame for disruptive classroom behaviour on external factors as opposed to viewing it as part of the school's responsibility to meet the needs of all learners - the very needs which are in many cases the cause of the disruptive behaviour. This tendency by teachers goes against the thrust of Bandura's theory of social learning (1989), which would assign "blame" reciprocally – that is, partly to teachers, partly to learners, and partly to the environment. The theory posits, for example, that a person can influence the environment, and the environment in turn can influence a person – and the same reciprocal relationship exists among each of the elements in the triad of Environment, Behaviour, and Personal Factors.

5.3.2 School factors

Teacher-learner ratio (overcrowding)

Scholarly thinking on classroom size supports the findings of this study, that disruption may arise from overcrowding as a high teacher/learner ratio was one of the perceived causes of disruption most prominently cited by participants. Alderman and Green (2011) found a correlation between high teacher/learner ratios and more competition for textbooks, more incidences of indiscipline or misconduct, and a lower pass rate in standardized tests.

D11, D12, and C7 all stated that the most direct consequence of overcrowding in the classroom was that each learner did not get adequate attention from the teacher; as noted by A2, "I also think what government could do is limit the number of learners in a classroom because teacher-learner ratio really plays a big part; you don't reach out to everyone." Furthermore, A2, D10, and D13 reported their experience of overcrowding in terms of feeling "stretched" or even "overwhelmed." Similarly, in terms of the strain imposed on teachers, this study confirms that overcrowding makes learner-centered education impossible. The failure to achieve learner-centered education means a failure to realize inclusive education, whose central tenets include catering to the learner and his needs regardless of his condition or background (Shirley, 2017; Alquraini & Gut, 2012; UNICEF, 2018).

Language barrier, learning difficulty and disengagement

The study also revealed several other perceived causes of disruption. These include learning difficulties among learners, some of whom certain medical conditions that pre-dispose them to disruption. The study also found that the language barrier (D12, D11) was

a significant perceived cause of disruption, as teachers reported that learners who felt left out because they did not fully understand the medium of instruction ended up disengaging from the lesson and acting disruptively. As A2 stated,

> *The approach maybe is different or they get easily frustrated because they don't understand the language of instruction. Because we have two streams Afrikaans and English as a medium of instructions from junior phase and I have realized one specific class that did Afrikaans all the way through the subject and now are being taught in English, they are really struggling with the transition.*

The study revealed that boredom also resulted in disengagement from learning activities, and ultimately ended up in disruptive actions.

5.3.3 Social factors

Several participants, such as B5 and C9, reported that learners are often disruptive in the classroom for socially-based reasons, such as a desire for attention. This finding is consistent with the view of the existing literature that attention-seeking is a driver of disruptive conduct (Ahonen et al., 2011). Participants such as A1, C7 and C8 identified the importance of both the vertical and the horizontal relationships that learners have inside the classroom (with teachers and fellow learners) as well as outside (with family and community members). This finding connects with several ideas from researchers such as (O'Connor, Dearing and Collins (2011), Conway, 2012) who identified the importance of teacher-learner relationships as determinants in the behavioural trajectories of primary school children. Confirming this, in Australia, Patterson (2009) demonstrated that teacher greeting and personally focused small talk before class resulted in a drastic reduction in learners' attention-seeking in the classroom.

The underlying importance of these social dynamics can be inferred from what was shared repeatedly by many of the participants, such as: (a) the learner is in need of attention from others (A1, C7, C8); or (b) the learner feels left out and excluded from the learning process (A1, C7, C8). This is supported by Alquraini & Gut (2012), who argue that many cases of disruption are caused by learners who feel excluded because of a trait or limitation they possess, or the background they come from.

Furthermore, the results revealed that problematic learners' home background is characterized by neglect, lack of some basic necessities, or difficult relationships (A1, B5, B6, C7, C9, and D12). In such cases and others which are closely related, disruptive behaviour in the classroom seemed to originate from learners' lack of fundamental social supports such as friends or parental attention and care. This means that besides meeting the academic needs of learners, teachers should also to pay attention to their social needs. This is supported by Afolabi (2014), O'Connor, Dearing and Collins (2011) and Patterson (2009).

5.4 Strategies used to combat classroom disruption behaviours

5.4.1 Strategies currently employed to combat disruptive classroom behaviour

5.4.1.1 One-on-one teacher/learner sessions

This was a common theme among the teachers interviewed and observed (Schools A, B, C, and D), who all valued the practice of individually speaking to and counselling a disruptive learner. Most teachers reported that it was highly effective, as class disruption is in many instances only *situational*, occurring in that specific moment, rather than deeply rooted in social or psychological factors. Along with taking down names and recording incidents of

disruption, one-on-one sessions were cited by nearly all the participants interviewed in this study.

Researchers Engelbrecht and Swanepoel (2013) noted that teachers tended to refer learners for professional support because they believe they were not trained to deal with intrinsic behavioural problems. In line with this, teachers in this study who did not succeed in resolving classroom disruption issues using the strategy of one-on-one consultations reported that the next step they most frequently took was that of referring learners to learner-support resources, such as the Life Skills teacher on the staff, school counsellors or social workers. This implies that the capacitation and readiness effectively to implement inclusive education among teachers remains low.

It is the opinion of the researcher that the ineffectuality of learner support in this instance is likely due, as the study has found, to the fact that the causes of disruption are mostly social, while learner support is mostly geared towards meeting the academic needs of learners. In contrast, other findings of this study have established the effectiveness of involving learners in classroom activities. It appears that taking the inclusive approach by involving disruptive learners in class activities is a better strategy than referring them to learner support services.

5.4.1.2 Inclusion in class activities

The study has revealed that inclusion in classroom learning activities is one of the most effective solutions to disruptiveness. This finding gets support from Reiser (2013), who concludes that active learner participation in activities and in the spirit of collaboration is a requisite of the inclusive classroom. According to both A1 and C9, the reason for involving learners more in class activities is that if a learner does not feel that he or she is fully a part

of a lesson, s/he is likely to end up behaving disruptively. Conversely, the benefits of involving learners connects with the research reporting that where there is provision of inclusive education, learners with limitations or disabilities tend to perform better, while there are also benefits for learners without challenges (Barclay, Dupuis, Holmes, Sherwin, Platt, Shaha & Lewis, 2006; Alquraini & Gut, 2012). This implies that the benefits of inclusive educational practices are not limited to a single group or type of learner in terms of their ability, condition, or other status. Participants reported that learners felt "left out" of the learning process because a) they found the subject material difficult (A1, B6, C9); (b) they were behind in their studies (A2, B6, B7, C8); (c) they were highly capable learners who found the material boring or too easy; d) they had learning difficulties (B5); or (e) they did not speak or fully understand the language used as the medium of instruction.

Consequently, teachers strategized to include learners in learning activities in order to keep them occupied at all times and prevent them from falling into acting disruptively. These strategies included: (a) giving learners more work to keep them mostly busy (A1, A2, B6, B7, C8, D11); (b) giving learners more responsibility (C8, D12); (c) giving learners more challenging tasks; and (d) giving learners with learning difficulties more time and support.

According to C10," An effective strategy is to help them to be involved: that now is an inclusive classroom – you need to involve everyone – that is the only way. Make sure that the learner is present, doing something, participating." S/he was supported by D12: "You should involve the disruptive learners. They have to be engaged, questioning and the answering in all the activities; also make sure to involve them in presentation."

A2, B6, B7, C8 further agreed that this strategy was mostly effective and resulted, according to B7, in positive changes that were *noticeable*. The researcher believes that given the number of participants who relied on this strategy, it is one of the most effective and easy-to-implement strategies. Its further importance lies in the fact that it directly connects with the principles of inclusive education in Namibia, including delivering education to all learners without regard for differences among them (MoEAC, 2013). It is also in line with literature that posited a correlation between inclusive educational practices and greater academic success (Alquraini & Gut, 2012). This means that the task of sensitizing the educational sector in Namibia to the importance of inclusive education should be easier in respect of those to whom academic success is appealing, e. g. parents.

5.4.1.3 School and class rules

Most participants regarded school rules as an important strategy they used to manage the classroom. A1, A2, A3, A4, C8 and C9 all visibly displayed school rules in their classrooms. The results revealed that schools implemented the strategy differently, from traditional methods such as displaying the rules inside the classroom, to more innovative ones such as sticking a copy of the rules in the schoolbooks of every learner at the start of each school term or year. However, several teachers (A2, A3, and C8) reported that the rules did not eliminate disruptions, and were not even among the most effective ways to manage classroom disruption.

Most teachers noted that rules were important in setting the parameters and boundaries of good behaviour, and also as a reminder to learners when they caused disruptions. This finding corroborates that of Woolfolk (2014), who emphasizes that when classroom rules are understood clearly by all learners it becomes easier to maintain a classroom

environment that is respectful and conducive to effective learning. Although emphasizing school or classroom rules correlates with good learner behaviour, Forlin & Chambers (2011) insist that the content of rules needs to be studied in order to orient and align them with the values of inclusive education.

5.4.1.4 Changing seating arrangement

Several participants in this study (A1, A4, B6, and D12) reported that they occasionally relied on changing the seating arrangement in their classrooms – a strategy that was observed in action by the researcher. This strategy was most prominent among more experienced teachers, seemingly indicating the value that these seasoned teachers have found in regularly changing where learners sit in class, and who sits around them.

According to D13, the reasoning behind this strategy lies in the fact that disruptive behaviour "can be reduced when learners are separated from those they engage in disruptive behaviour with or the objects they use in making disruptive actions in the classroom". This strategy was also reported to be mostly effective by teachers who used it, although some participants (C8) noted that the strategy needed to be employed consistently and regularly enough so that learners did not get a chance to grow sufficiently comfortable in any arrangement to continue being the source of classroom disruption.

5.4.1.5 Corporal punishment

Despite the near-absence of corporal punishment within the Namibian educational system, the findings from this study showed that teachers sometimes used certain forms of corporal punishment; for instance, several participants asked learners causing disruption to hold up

a chair in the air until they felt their arm muscles aching; others kept small whips or *sjamboks.* According to B5,

> *I usually have my whip; I call it "ka Blackie". The name ka Blackie is known to all of them even if it does not land on them so they are afraid of it. So we joke every now and then about him but now that is how I retain my orders with my learners also sometimes.*

B5 continued;

> *I know of a school in Arandis where they have a teacher who is only known to handle misbehaving learners. He only wears jeans, t-shirts and sneakers; if a learner is seen in the wrong place by this teacher, he knows he should run or else he will be caught and given punishment. I think that we should have such people in our mix just to assist with discipline. I believe a disciplined school performs better.*

It is probable that the punishment this teacher uses involves a form of corporal punishment or other form of punitive conduct that falls outside of the legally permissible measures for addressing learner misbehaviour. The guidelines for *Discipline from within: alternatives to corporal punishment* (1992) forbid corporal or any violent punishment.

Overall, teachers were tentatively supportive of regulations on the use of corporal punishment, though some teachers still occasionally and openly used it as well as reported that it was an effective strategy.

However, unlike participants who called for the return of corporal punishment, or admitted that they occasionally used it, C10 stated: "The government must come up with a practical alternative to corporal punishment and educate parents on the importance of education."

This recommendation connects with literature positing that initiatives to enhance inclusive education in practice must include professional development programmes for teachers (Hockins et al., 2012). This implies that Namibia's quest to introduce a comprehensive system of inclusive education will possibly be characterized in its initial stages by a capacity building foundational phase before full implementation.

5.4.1.6 Praising good behaviour

Participant teachers in this study recognized the need to use social and behavioural strategies in their efforts to combat disruptive behaviour. One such strategy used by both experienced and relatively inexperienced participants was rewarding good behaviour with praise and credit. This could involve, for example, a teacher asking the class to applaud a learner who gives a correct answer or makes a positive contribution in the classroom. It can also occur during the learning process itself, when the teacher makes comments and remarks that are positive and encouraging to learners demonstrating effort, thus giving them credit for effort and participation, regardless of whether their answers are correct or not.

This imparts a sense of belonging and being welcomed and encouraged among learners of all backgrounds and abilities. As the literature maintains, such a humanistic approach to pre-adolescent education ensures the development of children's autonomy and ability to make decisions within the limits of their capabilities and competencies (Ridnouer, 2010; Struzik, 2014). This means that understanding of the benefits of inclusive education must be broadened beyond the merely academic to include the personal, social and developmental benefits that accrue to learners.

This finding accords with the literature and the behavioural theory informing this research, which highlights the importance of reciprocation and social learning (Bandura, 1989). Furthermore, the vast majority of teachers noted that this strategy was effective because it was fundamentally inclusive, giving learners a sense of belonging within the classroom and rewarding actions oriented towards learning, rather than opposed to it.

5.4.1.7 Record-keeping

This was one of the steps used at both the preliminary and intermediate stages of the disruption management process. For the participants in this study, it involved initially taking names and recording incidents of disruption, usually for the purposes of a follow-up one-on-one session between the teacher and the learner.

If the problem persisted the teacher usually filled in paperwork such as at transgression form, which could be used to take recurrent cases to the administrative level (principals and disciplinary committees), as well as provide a record in case there were further steps that involved the learner's parents or guardians.

5.4.1.8 Home visits and parental involvement

When problems of disruption persisted and teachers took them further to the school administration, participants in this study reported that frequently the involvement of a parent or parental figure became necessary. This was followed by either a home visit to the learner's house (infrequent) or by an invitation to parents to visit the school and sit down with teachers to resolve the problem. Kruger, Landsberg and Nel (2011) concur with Ridnouer (2010) that it is crucial for teachers to pay home visits to establish a partnership with families, rather than wait until learners misbehave. This implies that implementing

inclusive education in Namibia may involve changing old-fashioned approaches when it comes to the important aspect of involving parents in the education of their children.

The importance of this strategy, although confined to more difficult cases such as violence or fighting amongst learners, is underlined by the fact that participants highlighted social and cultural/background factors as among the major causes of classroom disruption (B5, C9).

Furthermore, in comparison to other strategies teachers used, parental involvement had a relatively high success rate (A2, A3, B5, B7, 9, D11). Teachers (B5, D11) attributed this to the respect that learners have for their parents, or the fear of the consequences that could possibly follow both at home (punishment, reprimanding) and at school (suspension, expulsion).

The effectiveness also lay in both the *fear of parental involvement*, and parents' *actual involvement*, because while many parents did not bother to show up and get involved (D11, D13), those who did get involved saw their involvement resulting in the resolution of the cases concerned (A2, A3, B5, C9, D11).

When a learner exhibits disruptive behaviour, teachers tend to locate responsibility for the misbehaviour with the learner rather than consider other factors that might contribute to the behaviour (Ball, Braun & Maguire, 2010). Some teachers indeed recognized that often the root cause of disruptive classroom behaviour was not the learner's own fault entirely, and to a very significant extent lay in the factors of home background and social upbringing.

5.4.2 Best practices for combating classroom disruption

Teachers interviewed in this study all grappled with the challenge of classroom disruption. While they shared many similarities in their academic backgrounds, the institutions they worked in, as well as their perceptions and experiences of dealing with classroom disruption, the strategies they used were varied: some were traditional and common, while others were more innovative, as teachers worked within local and external constraints.

This section discusses the responses teachers gave when the researcher asked them to share the strategy they found to be most effective and recommendable.

Several teachers cited the need to *keep learners busy and engaged in learning activities* as their number one strategy. The reasoning behind the strategy was that a significant amount of disruptive behaviours in the classroom originated from idleness, boredom, and a lack of connection during learning. Teachers frequently found that when learners were kept interested and given more work, more responsibility, and more challenging tasks in general, they did not have time to get caught up in disruptive classroom actions.

This view, which places some responsibility on the teacher to keep learners engaged and connected, aligns with literature suggesting that factors which contribute to disruptive behaviour include inconsistent, inappropriate teaching styles, such as using the same teaching style every day (Chin, 2010). This highlights the need to include developing teaching skills during capacity building and professional development, referenced prominently in this study as part of the process of implementing inclusive education.

Several more participants underlined *fairness*, and the need to *treat all learners equally*. They noted that teachers might treat identical cases of misbehaviour with different degrees of severity in terms of the punishment meted out, as a result of favouritism, gender bias, or

a general state of things where a teacher is ill-disposed towards certain learners compared to others.

According to several teachers who recommended equal treatment, unfairness in the handling of classroom disruption often generated more problems with behaviour, as learners assumed that certain forms of behaviour were acceptable because of occasions when the teacher dealt lightly with or tolerated misbehaviour.

Another strategy that was commonly cited as most recommendable was *talking with the learners*. Teachers participating in this study placed considerable value on one-on-one communication with disruptive learners, both in the classroom and after school, with an emphasis on building rapport with learners to encourage them to feel more comfortable with teachers and able to share underlying problems with them. Teachers also said that this strategy helped them better to understand the root causes of disruptive behaviour, which in turn helped them to address the problem (e.g. by calling parents or contacting other outside help.)

While the above were widely cited, other best strategies emerged from the teachers' responses. According to Ball, Braun & Maguire (2010), there is need to move the focus from controlling, disciplinary policies to ways of engaging learners. Many teachers emphasized the *need to involve learners in classroom activities* so that they did not feel left out of the learning process. Such inclusive-minded strategy involved in some cases the modeling and imitation of behaviour, where the teacher involved other learners in resolving the disruptive behaviour of their classmate(s).

5.4.3 Teacher perspectives on inclusive education: recommended, strategies to fight classroom disruption

In most of the schools included in this study, participant teachers demonstrated a consistent willingness to spend time addressing disruptive conduct in their learners, and only resorted to other strategies after their initial efforts did not yield positive change.

Specifically, teachers tended to have a set of preliminary measures that they employed in the hope of resolving classroom disruption at the outset; these included verbally warning a learner in class or writing down incidents of misconduct.

However, as outlined in the background to this study, disruptive learner behaviour is a deep-seated and significant challenge in the school system in Namibia, and consequently for most teachers handling the problem involves resorting to further steps that require the involvement of other stakeholders such as school principals and parents/guardians.

While some incidents of disruptive conduct were reportedly addressed by first steps, according to the teachers interviewed in this study, in many of the situations the indiscipline persisted in spite of verbal cautions and other strategies initially employed. Several teachers described their initial steps in terms such as “moderate” and “preliminary”, and demonstrated an understanding that in many cases classroom disruption is the result of issues that cannot be resolved easily by individual teachers.

This tie in with the previous finding that shortcomings still exist in the strategies teachers currently use to fight classroom disruption, especially in the context that comprises the scope of this study. The existence of failings within the educational system logically implies the need for solutions where a) the crafting and b) the implementation of such solutions is not the responsibility of individual teachers only.

Throughout this teachers not only reported feeling restricted by regulations that kept their 'hands tied', but crucially, they recommended bottom-up solutions that build up from the lowest level to the highest, incorporating input, decision-making and action, and including teachers, principals, and officials within the ranks of the educational system and the government. In short, the implication was that addressing classroom disruption is a multi-step, multi-stakeholder responsibility

5.4.4 Shortcomings

Although teachers were currently using the above strategies to some effect, they described encountering certain persistent obstacles and recurrent difficulties.

5.4.4.1 Structural (systemic) shortcomings

The participants reported achieving at least some success in several of the strategies they employed, even when the teacher was relatively inexperienced or did not hold a senior rank at the school. Still, an important finding across all the interviews with teachers was that the sum of their efforts to combat disruptive classroom behaviour had been inadequate and that their efforts had been plagued by factors relating to the following:

a) Teachers as individuals

b) The specific workplace environment in which they worked, and

c) The structural and bureaucratic system in which they were employed.

Essentially, this study found that all the teachers interviewed identified shortcomings and inadequacies at the personal, school, regional and national levels of dealing with the problem of disruptive learner conduct.

The most constricting structural shortcomings stemmed from the higher levels of the educational system, the government, the Ministry of Education (MoE), and the national Constitution. Not surprisingly, one of the most common issues of contention was the policy that outlaws corporal punishment in Namibian schools. While most teachers did not have a problem with the current legal regulations (A1, A3, B5, C7, C8, C9, D11), the remainder of the participants indicated that moderate corporal punishment had a place in the set of strategies that teachers could employ in combating disruption.

Many times in their interviews, participants reflected on the feeling that they had been rendered "powerless" and placed in a dilemma of sorts (A1, C6, C7): for example, C7 remarked that "we often feel that our hands are tied and that we are in a position of frustration because we are powerless." The social learning theory of Bandura (1989) discusses the importance of behaviour, individual characteristics, and the environment. Through one of its three pillars (Environmental Factors), the theory can account for how external factors (in this case government laws), by imposing restrictions on certain punitive strategies, leads to frustration among teachers and detracts from the quality and effectiveness of learning. This applies not only to corporal punishment, but also to other general rules such as the regulation in the Education Act 16 (2001) that makes sending a learner out of the classroom a violation of the learner's right to education.

A2, C5 and C8 described a dilemma in which, according to C8,

> *The teacher must balance the need to stop disruptions to learning from occurring in the classroom, on one hand, and on the other hand the legal obligation to protect the right to education of learners in an inclusive educational environment.*

The feeling reported by teachers of having had their hands tied makes a further connection with Bandura's social learning theory, in that the principle of reciprocal determinism states that influence is a 'two-way street' in which the teacher and the learner alike are affected, because people learn from each other via observation, imitation, and modelling (Bandura, 1989).

5.4.4.2 Institutional shortcomings

Factors specific to each individual school setting were also important in limiting the effectiveness of the strategies that teachers use. For instance, both B5 and C8 pointed to the lack of consistency and uniformity among teachers in implementing disciplinary strategies. Some teachers implemented one strategy, while other teachers either failed to implement it or even contradicted it. This resulted in an end situation in which classroom disruption remained unresolved or even got worse. This disconnect among teachers can be described in terms of both Bandura's social learning theory and academic thought on institutional dynamics.

According to theoretical models of systems and systematic thinking, an employee is only a part of a community called the system, a cohesive aggregation of interrelated and interdependent components (Basile, 2017). This implies that teachers can only be effective when they work in a collective and coordinated fashion, analogous to that of the components of an engine or a machine. Bandura's theory builds upon this point to emphasize that the environment in which an individual functions influences them and impacts on their effectiveness.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed the findings of this qualitative research study. It has described the emergent themes, summarized the important findings and categorized them under each of the study's research objectives, while connecting the findings to existing literature and the study's theoretical framework.

The chapter established that the perceptions of teachers regarding what constitutes disruptive behaviours are not identical but similar, characterizing classroom disruption as anything verbal or non-verbal that gets in the way of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Teachers interviewed and observed in this study also gave holistic accounts of disruptive behaviour as including behaviour that is not easily visible or obvious, and this connected to the thinking in the literature reviewed that posited that learning is reciprocal, and that teachers, too, and their ability to do their job effectively, can be affected by how learners behave.

Furthermore, teachers participating in this study identified many examples of what they perceived to be the causes of classroom disruption. Critically, these causes were prominently rooted in the needs of learners for care, support, and attention, and related to their cultural and home backgrounds.

This chapter also established that teachers take a proactive, long-term approach to resolving classroom disruption, employing strategies that are both short-term and longer-term. These strategies have been in part successful, with participants reporting a lower incidence of classroom disruption following their efforts. However, teachers noted that inadequacies and limitations still exist at the school level (factors pertaining to the

workplace environment) and vertically down through the educational system (laws, policies, and regulations).

Participants in the study recommended a systematic approach to resolving the challenge of classroom disruption, in terms of which the responsibility for resolving this issue rests upon the teacher as an individual, but also critically involves the principal, parents, and authorities responsible for the regional and national educational system.

Through observation, this study established the most commonly occurring examples of classroom disruption, as well as the strategies that the teachers under observation used to manage and resolve these instances. A key realization was that teachers' strategies may frequently be *verbal* (e.g. talking or shouting to a learner while reprimanding them), but can also rely heavily on *non-verbal* strategies, where body language and gestures proved to be very useful and were widely used (A3, B6, B7, C9, D12).

The following section will offer a conclusion to the study, followed by a summary of its limitations and recommendations arising from it.

5.6 Conclusion

This study's main objectives oriented it to the task of identifying what teachers perceive to be disruptive classroom conduct, what causes disruptive behaviour, and what strategies teachers use and recommend in managing the problem.

The study confirmed that there is no specific definition of what constitutes disruptive behaviour, and that such behaviour falls under the broad umbrella of any action that will hinder the learning and teaching process.

This study also concluded that the causes of classroom disruption are plentiful, and both simple and complex. These causes revolve most prominently around social factors such as home background, and the learners' need for attention and belonging. Cultural and environmental factors also proved important in causing disruptive behaviours, a finding corroborated by existing literature and theory concerning the important influence of the environment on learning.

These perceived causes constitute the "background" and "risk" factors (Marais & Meier, 2010) that are necessary for a teacher to understand in order to manage classroom disruption. The study confirmed that some schools have better strategies in place than others. These include documentation (such as Transgression Forms to keep track of learner behaviour), a strong communication system with parents, more teacher attention, more social interaction with grown-ups, and more parental involvement.

The study established that the most effective strategies to fight classroom disruption importantly entailed the committed involvement of the teacher, but, crucially, also the involvement of other stakeholders such as school principals and parents.

The participants in this study taught at different primary schools and, importantly, differed in terms of levels of teaching experience (defined in this study as the number of years spent teaching professionally).

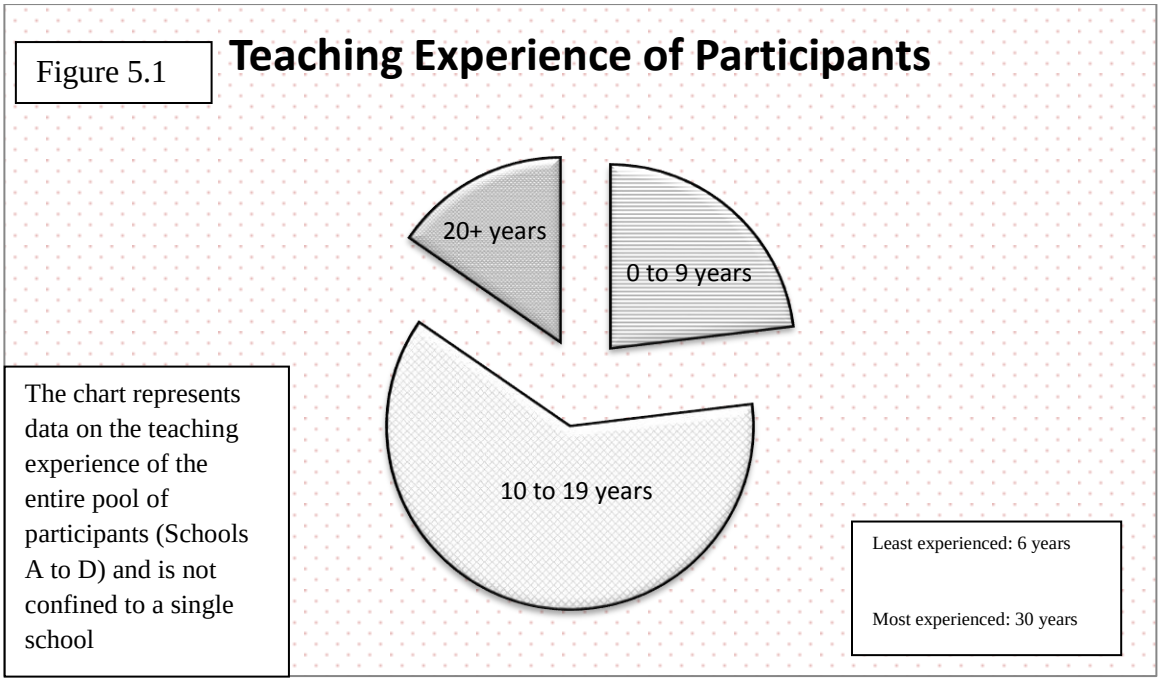


Figure 5.1: Teaching Experience of Participants

As shown in Figure 5.1, above, some participants had less than eight years' experience in teaching (C9, C10), while others had decades' worth of teaching experience (B7, D11). This represented a significant standard deviation for teaching experience (from 6 years up to 30 years).

In terms of this spectrum of experience, more experienced teachers such as A4, B7, and D11 seemed to be better equipped and prepared to handle and resolve disruption issues, and also seemed to report more success in their efforts than their less experienced counterparts (e.g. C9, C10, and D12). This suggests that the more experienced a teacher is, the better they are able to address classroom disruption.

Two likely explanations for this finding are that more experienced teachers have had more time to try out various strategies and have discovered the more effective ones along the way, and that seniority in the teaching profession and in a school set-up (e.g. an HOD.

position) elicits more respect from learners, which serves as a deterrent to disruptive behaviour. This finding echoes that of scholars such as Rybska and Klapa (2014), who conclude that teacher experience was a necessary condition for the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom.

Conversely, poor classroom management – with which inexperienced teachers are associated – is an important factor associated with disruptive behaviour. A study by Johansen, Little & Akin-Little (2011) found that 88 percent of a sample of 42 New Zealand teachers rated classroom mismanagement as 'sometimes' or 'very often' a cause of problematic classroom behaviour. During observations and interviews, the researcher noted that novice teachers used strategies that further agitated learners instead of calming them by affirming them, listening to them or coming to their level.

Overall, through its findings the study met its objectives, as participants provided rich information illuminating how they perceived and managed classroom disruption. The analysis and discussion further confirmed the connection between the findings and the study's research objectives, as well as with existing literature and social theoretical models.

The importance of this research study lies in part in that although many studies have been conducted on this topic, few studies have focused on the Namibian context. This study has helped assess and interrogate the experiences and challenges of inclusive education in Namibia. It has also served to illuminate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the Namibian education system in understanding and addressing the challenge of disruptive classroom behaviour.

The study has made a significant contribution to understanding the causes of disruptive classroom behaviour, and to identifying the most effective strategies to meet the challenge

it poses. Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that the current strategies being employed conform to the principles of inclusive education, though much remains to be done at all levels of the education sector to scale up and fully implement inclusive education in Namibia.

This study's findings are in accord with the theoretical perspective of reciprocal determinism as formulated in Bandura's social learning theory (1989), which emphasizes the impact of reciprocation and environmental influence on learning. The views of the teachers interviewed in this study identify and attach significance to social relationships and home background factors such as culture and family life.

5.7 Recommendations

This research has catalogued the perceptions, experiences, and strategies used by teachers dealing with disruptive behaviour in the senior primary phase. Using interviews and observation of participants, the study successfully gathered a rich set of data detailing how teachers perceive and deal with classroom disruption. On the basis of this data and subsequent findings, certain recommendations are made.

Recommendations specific to the objectives of the study

Perceived disruptive classroom behaviour

This study recommends legislation or by-laws that protect school environments from distraction and disturbance. This may include noise pollution from shopping centres, bars, workshops, or roads. Such regulations may prohibit the construction or operation of certain facilities or businesses in close proximity to schools or during school hours.

Perceived causes of disruptive behaviour

In response to the challenge of overcrowding, this study recommends the building of more facilities at schools in order to better accommodate learners. At the administrative level of the Ministry of Education, this problem could be resolved in two ways:

a) setting limits or quotas on the number of learners that can be enrolled at any public school, as well as setting guidelines limiting the number of learners who may be in a single class in order to control the teacher-learner ratio.
b) a capacity and infrastructure-building programme that funds the construction of additional classroom blocks. It is further recommended that such a programme pay equal attention to remote, peri-urban and rural-based schools, and seeks assistance from private sectors such as non-governmental organizations to build additional class blocks.

Regarding difficult home circumstances experienced by many learners, this study recommends both institution-specific interventions as well systemic ones.

Regarding systematic policy-making in education, A3 noted:

> *The ministry is always setting rules you know, and people who set up rules is people that are not in classes who don't know the real situation in the class, they just don't know what is happening there.*

Institutional interventions include home visits to parents as opposed to merely parental visits to school. This study recommends that teachers move away from the old notion of inviting parents to school, and instead pay more home visits because home visits may anticipate and forestall a problem before it even arises. Systemic interventions meanwhile

may involve maintaining and strengthening feeding programs funded by the ministry, as well interventions by charitable organizations to provide transportation, guidance and counselling, or feeding programmes to meet the ministry half-way.

There is need to sensitize educators to the inclusive education policy as some teachers in Namibia still exclude learners from class when they are not sure how to handle them. This study thus recommends capacity building and training for teachers to enable them to respond to a variety of disruptive behaviours.

Such training must be grounded in a framework of *inclusive education* and provide teachers with skills in handling one-on-one relationships/interactions with learners; implementing alternatives to corporal punishment in managing disruptive behaviour; using aids and techniques that improve their teaching and make it more engaging to learners; properly integrating disruptive learners with non-disruptive ones in order to include the former in the educational process.

Finally, this study recommends making the inclusive education paradigm integral to all teacher-training programmes in Namibia. As one of the findings of this study is that teachers are not capacitated and sensitized to inclusive education, it is the opinion of the researcher that reforming the teacher-training curriculum to include it will be an effective solution. As highlighted by A2 in the findings, "I really feel the ministry must provide us with teachers who are professionals and who are supposed to know how they must deal with disruptive learners."

Strategies teachers use to combat disruptive behaviour

In line with the finding that corporal punishment remains a difficult issue, and that its proscription sometimes leaves teachers feeling incapacitated, this study recommends educating teachers on alternative methods that can be used to maintain order in the classroom. Such education may take the form of workshops, literature, and training courses. The study recommends more options for teachers in terms of the punitive measures they can take to address classroom disruption.

As already mentioned under the causes of disruptive behaviour, the study recommends home visits by teachers in order to speak with parents. This type of intervention may be organized by individual teachers themselves or by administrators so that routine home visits become part of the official schedule or calendar.

As an inclusive educational principle, this study recommends reforming the lesson programme in schools to include short breaks outside of break time or lunch break.

Recommendations for further research

In light of the research instruments used in this study, the researcher recommends the addition of a quantitative component to the study (for example, statistical data analysis and computational data analysis, including visual representation) in order to improve the accuracy of the results.

This study was confined to primary teachers who serve on disciplinary committees but also work in the classroom, rather than in administrative or office roles. Future studies could consider the inclusion of participants in administrative roles, as long as they have teaching experience and/or sit on disciplinary committees in their schools. School principals and

their deputies, for example, would be good additions to the sample of participants because they are usually promoted into senior positions from the ranks of teachers after they acquire enough experience, and therefore typically possess experience of dealing with classroom disruption.

Similarly, the researcher recommends that learners who manifested disruptive classroom behaviour and have been successfully reformed be included in the study to hear their views on classroom disruption and possible practical strategies to combat disruptive classroom behaviours.

Furthermore, future studies could be aimed at broadening the scope of the study beyond the senior primary phase, to include junior or secondary school phases, where disruption problems are also a significant challenge for teachers.

Geographically, this research study was confined to the Otjozondjupa region. Given the fact that the ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic distribution of the population is geographically oriented in Namibia, broadening the geographic scope of this study could serve to yield findings and consequently recommendations that are applicable to the whole of the Namibian educational system in the senior primary phase of schooling.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNAM
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: FOE/145/2016 **Date: 5 December, 2016**

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Research Ethics Committee (UREC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee sitting with the Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Title of Project: Teachers' Strategies to Combat Disruption in Classrooms: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Otjozondjupa Region

Nature/Level of Project: Masters

Researcher: N. N. Kamenye

Student Number: 200012681

Faculty: Faculty of Education

Supervisor: Dr. C. Haihambo

Take note of the following:

(a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the UREC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
(b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the UREC.
(c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the UREC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus Research & Publications Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by UREC.
(d) The UREC retains the right to:
(i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
(ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

UREC wishes you the best in your research.

Prof. P. Odonkor: UREC Chairperson

Ms. P. Claassen: UREC Secretary

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 - 2933206
Fax: +264 61 - 2933922
Enquiries: C. Muchila
Email: Ceron.Muchila@moe.gov.na

Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

Ms Nelago N. Kamenye
P O Box 26187
Windhoek
Cell: +264812745631
Email: nkamenye30@gmail.com

Dear Ms Kamenye

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct research for your Master's Degree in Otjozondjupa region is herewith granted. You are further requested to present the letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the ministry. You may contact Mr C. Muchila at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for provision of summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours

Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
Office of the Permanent Secretary
2017 -01- 31
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek Namibia

SANETTE STEENKAMP
PERMANENT SECRETARY

30.1.17
Date

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS & CULTURE

Cell: 0812745631

Email: nkamenye30@gmail.com

P.O. Box 26187

Windhoek

Namibia

18 January 2017

To: The Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Education, Arts & Culture

Private Bag 43186

Windhoek

Dear Madam

Re: **Request for permission to conduct an Educational Research in the Otjozondjupa Region on the topic: "Teachers' strategies to combat disruption in classrooms: a case study of primary schools in Otjozondjupa Region".**

I am a registered student at the University of Namibia pursuing a Master's degree in Inclusive Education. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the completion of this degree, I am required to conduct a research project on the topic stated above during the month of February to April 2017.

Teachers in Namibia face inappropriate learner behaviours in inclusive classrooms. In a large number of schools in Namibia, disruptive behaviour inhibits optimal teaching and learning. Learners who are disruptive in classrooms make it difficult or sometimes impossible for the teacher to effectively deliver their lessons. It is obvious that learners who are disruptive interrupt the learning and teaching process. In the light of education being a right to all and the delivery of quality education being mandatory, it becomes crucial that disruptive behaviour and the ways in which it is addressed in primary school classrooms be studied and understood deeper, beyond the commonly accepted medical model (deficit model that puts the blame on the child). Therefore, the aim of my research is to investigate how teachers conceptualize disruptive behaviour and to explore the strategies used by experienced teachers in combating class disruption in inclusive classrooms in selected senior primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region.

I kindly request your good office to allow me to use the primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region as my research site for the research project. If granted permission,

firstly, the researcher will observe all the 16 senior primary school teachers in the sample (4 per school) over two days, at least less than 1 weeks per school; two months in total. Teachers will be observed first in their classes and then later be interviewed.

The teachers will receive full information about the purpose and objectives of the study. Furthermore, I would like to clarify that this study is purely for academic purposes, it has no intention of causing harm to participants. Their information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and anonymity. The teachers' names will not appear on the observation sheet or in the final thesis report. This study will not in any way harm the participants either physically or psychologically.

The findings of this study may provide the Ministry of Education, teachers and policy developers with effective strategies that are in line with the principles of inclusive education that can be used to combat classroom disruption and to develop guidelines to bring about the needed change. Furthermore, the study results could unveil the needed support at participating schools in addressing class disruptive behaviours with diverse learners. Likewise, contribute to on-going discourses on classroom behaviours among primary schools in Otjozondjupa region and the country as a whole.

Attached to this letter is a copy of the ethical clearance certificate from the University of Namibia.

I look forward to a favourable response from your good office.

Yours Sincerely,

Nkamenye

Nelago N Kamenye

(Masters Student, University of Namibia)

APPENDIX D: CONSENT LETTER

Research Participants' Consent Form for teachers

Date: ……

Dear Participants

You are kindly requested to participate in this research project aimed at investigating ***how teachers conceptualize disruptive behaviour and to explore the strategies used by teachers in combating class disruption at senior primary schools in the Otjozondjupa region.***

Any information obtained about you during this study will be treated strictly confidential, and be assured that your name will not appear anywhere on the thesis report. A code number will be assigned to you instead of your name. Your participation may entail observation and audio-taped interview.

Please sign this letter as a declaration of your consent that you are willing to participate in this study willingly. Information to be obtained from the observation and interview will be sorely used for the purpose of this research.

Yours sincerely

……..

Nelago Kamenye

CONSENT

Please circle the appropriate choice beside each statement:

1. I agree to participate in the study as described above.

YES / NO

2. I agree to have the interview tape recorded.

YES / NO

Taking part in this study is voluntary where one is at liberty to withdraw at any point in time. I thank you very much for your time.

Participant's: …… ……..… ……..

Name Signature Date

APPENDIX E: OBSERVATION

TEACHERS' STRATEGIES TO COMBAT DISRUPTION IN CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OTJOZONDJUPA REGION

Introduction

Observation will focus on learner's behaviour and also strategies that teachers use to address classroom disruptive behaviour.

Teacher observed (code): T… Day: 1/2

School code: A /B /C/ D Subject:……. No. of learners:…..

Section A: Perceived disruptive behaviour

Perceived disruptive behaviour *Any actions the teacher perceive as disruptive *Any spoken or unspoked conduct that the teacher perceive as disruptive		**In-class strategies teacher use**
	Verbal disruptive behaviour	
	Teasing other leaners	
	Moving around the class	
	Noise(during lesson change)	
	Learners talking out of turn	
	Verbal abuse to peers	
	Hyperactive	
	Late coming	
	Fighting	
	Non-verbal disruptive behaviour	
	Busy with other work	
	Banging heels on the floor	
	Walking around in class	
	Obstructing other learners from paying attention in class	
	Not doing homework	
	Others…	

Observers comments (observation): ……
……
……

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide for teachers

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this research. The main objectives of this research are to investigate ***how teachers conceptualize disruptive behaviour and to explore the strategies used by teachers in combating class disruption at senior primary school in the Otjozondjupa region.*** I wish to assure you that all your responses will be used for the purpose of this research only and you will remain completely anonymous in the research process and its documentation.

Instructions

- There are no right or wrong answers to questions contained in this interview.
- Please feel free to respond to interview questions.
- Please answer all the questions to the best of your ability, and do not discuss the content of this interview with your colleagues.
- Personal opinion is highly valued in this interview.

Section A: Biographical information

In this section I would like to know about you. In the following questions please indicate the appropriate answer as required.

1. Code: ……
2. Gender: Male/Female
3. Number of years in the teaching profession.

4. Number of years as a member of the Disciplinary Committee at this school

5.1. What qualifications do you have? Please indicate the specific qualification for example, BETD, BED, Advanced Diploma, Master's Degree and/ others

5.2. Please state your specialization and institute where you obtained qualification. For example:. MED (Inclusive Education), UNAM

Section B: Perceived disruptive classroom disruptions

1. What do you perceive as disruptive classroom behaviour?
2. How do you deal with such behaviour?

Section C: Perceived causes of classroom disruptions.

1. What do you think are the specific causes of disruptive behaviour in your classroom?
2. What can be done to eliminate the causes of classroom disruptive behaviour?

Section D: Strategies used by experienced teachers to address classroom disruptive behaviour.

1. How do you respond to disruptive behaviour in the short-term as it occurs right there in the class?
2. How do you respond to disruptive behaviour in the long-term? and How effective are the strategies you use?
3. How effective are the strategies teacher use to combat disruptive behaviours?
4. Do you have classroom rules in place and if so, do they act as a strategy to combat Classroom disruptive behaviour?
5. How do you ensure that learners presenting with disruptive behaviours are included in your lesson?
6. What are the teachers' (your colleagues') perceptions of good practices when it comes to dealing with disruptive behaviours in senior primary classrooms?
7. What do you regard as best practices for dealing with disruptive behaviours in an inclusive senior primary classroom?
8. Which strategies are in place to combat class disruption at your school?
9. Do you think the strategies are working that are in place to combat classroom disruption at your school? Motivate your answer.
10. In your opinion, do you think the Ministry has done enough in terms of combating disruptive behaviour? What would you like the Ministry of Education to do? Motivate your answer.

Section D: General comments

11. If you have any other comments, suggestions or recommendation relating to the three core questions regarding- disruptive behaviour, causes and strategies, asked earlier, please feel free to share?

The End

I thank you very much for your time and contribution