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**Learners' Problem Behaviour in the Classroom: Teachers'
Explanations and Interventions in Selected Primary Schools in
Midrand, South Africa.**

A dissertation submitted to the Wits School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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EDUC8003A: MEd Dissertation

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2022

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The increase of problem behaviours experienced in South African schools have become an immense concern for teachers. Effective and appropriate strategies need to be implemented to address the concerns of South African teachers to manage the problem behaviours they experience in the classroom. This study sought to address the following research questions: (a) How do teachers define problematic behaviours of learners in the classroom? (b) What, according to the teachers, are the causes of these problematic behaviours of learners? (c) What, in the opinion of the teachers are the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment? and (d) Which strategies do teachers use to manage the problem behaviours of learners in inclusive classrooms?

The study adopted a qualitative approach. A multiple case study of three private primary schools in Midrand, Gauteng, South Africa were conducted. Data were collected from fifteen participants through semi-structured interviews. Trustworthiness of qualitative data was ensured by the four criteria; credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. Data was analysed by using the thematic framework.

The study found that teachers are able to identify learners who display problematic behaviours. They implemented various strategies to manage problem behaviours, however, these strategies were only temporary. Teachers revealed that in addition to the increase of problem behaviours experienced in the classroom, they are aware that many strategies used do not work and problem behaviour is seen as time consuming, ineffective and greatly affects the teaching and learning process.

The study concludes that problem behaviour experienced in the classroom remains a major concern for many South African teachers. Although there are various strategies implemented by teachers to help manage the problem behaviour experienced, these strategies only temporarily manage problem behaviour. A long-term solution needs to be enforced to adequately manage problem behaviours in schools.

Key words: *Problem behaviour; classroom; teachers' explanations; interventions; discipline, primary schools, Inclusive education, Inclusive classroom, Management strategies, disruptive behaviour*

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Figure 3: Strategies used to manage problem behaviour.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ACE:	Adverse Childhood Events
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
SA:	South Africa
SACE:	South African Council of Educators
OBE:	Outcomes-Based Education

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the Study

The key to an individual's future is education. In terms of the individual's self-growth and development, education plays a vital role and those who assist with this function are the teachers who ensure that this need is fulfilled. As part of the ongoing teaching/learning process, teachers are motivated to impart knowledge and skills to learners using a variety of teaching methods, well-established practices, and strategies, which are intended to enhance the development of the individual learner's knowledge. In this process, there is hope that learners will not only acquire new knowledge but also, develop more generally, reach their full potential.

In this teaching/learning process learners' behavioural conduct in the classroom play a significant role in achieving the overall aims of education and, depending on the nature of this behaviour, may thwart these aims. To this end, Tiwari and Panwar (2014) identify various problematic behaviours experienced in the classroom such as stealing, bullying, teasing, fighting, truancy, lying, disobedience, cheating, inappropriate language, lateness, rudeness and disruptiveness. All of these problematic behaviours can affect the teaching/learning process and should therefore be addressed for effective learning to take place in the classroom. Parsonson (2012, p. 16) contends that, "[b]ehaviour problems in a classroom increase the stress levels for both the teacher and pupils, disrupt the flow of lessons and conflict with both learning objectives and the process of learning". This observation highlights the fact that problem behaviours displayed by learners are an immense challenge for teachers.

In the local context Nunan (2018, p. s1) states that "challenging behaviour in South African primary schools are an ongoing problem that is cause for concern". Nunan (2018) further postulates that there are very little teachers can do to address the problem behaviours displayed in the classroom and that teachers' "helplessness has further intensified the problem in primary schools" (p. s1). In another South African study, Rossouw (2003, p. 413), shows that "a lack of learner discipline may seriously hamper the teaching and learning process, and, if disruptive behaviour prevails, education cannot be successful". Rossouw (2003, p. 416) argues further

that the prevalence of these problem behaviours in school is a “universal concern” and strategies need to be developed and implemented to help deal with the problem behaviours.

In support of Rossouw’s contention Rubbi-Nunan and Ntombela (2019, p. 1), further show that learners’ problem behaviour has become a serious problem in South Africa. The research by the latter writers focused on three primary schools in South Africa in which they attempted to find the causes of the problem behaviours. The study concluded “that primary school teachers need to understand the causative factors of challenging behaviours and consider changing school cultures as a possible solution to improve school efforts” (Rubbi Nunan & Ntombela, 2019, p. 1).

Marais and Meier (2010) add to the foregoing assertion by showing that learners’ “challenging”¹ behaviour remains the most talked about problem in South African schools. In addition, Mncube and Harber (2013) reported that in South African schools, safety has become a concern as learners bring weapons and other unorthodox objects to school. In agreement with these observations the South African Council of Educators (SACE, 2011) reiterate that South African primary schools are experiencing serious forms of school-based violence by learners. In a more recent study in South Africa, Rubbi-Nunan, and Ntombela, (2019) agree that primary schools in South Africa experience serious forms of “challenging” behaviour by learners. Similarly, Jacobsz (2015, p. 1) addressed the concerns of problem behaviour in Botswana. Jacobsz (2015, p. 1) shows that even in that country “[d]isruptive behaviour in schools has been a source of concern for school systems for many years”. The author further asserts that problem behaviour is a “major obstacle” which teachers must confront on a day-to-day basis. None of these studies attempt to explain the causative factors which may be responsible for the problem behaviours and whether, the nature and type of problem behaviours currently displayed by pupils have changed significantly. Therefore, it is important to note that in order to address the concern of problem behaviours, teachers need to understand the factors that responsible for the behaviours displayed.

According to Dalton, Mckenzie, and Kahonde (2012, p. 1), “South Africa has adopted an inclusive education policy in order to address barriers to learning in the education system”. The framework of the education system in South Africa provides “services to all South Africans on

¹ It should be noted that the word “challenging” is often used in the South African context for politically expedient reasons to “soften” the true meaning of a phenomenon. As such, the term “challenging” is often used instead of, for example, “problematic” or “problem” to reduce the true import of the phenomenon concerned. However, throughout this dissertation this usage will be avoided consciously unless it is found in cited texts and quotations.

an equitable basis” (Dalton, Mckenzie, & Kahonde, 2012, p. 1). According to this policy it is important for teachers to understand the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom. However, the demands of an inclusive classroom may also be a contributing factor in producing problem behaviours in a classroom.

Richter, Griesel and Barbarin (2000) conducted a study in Soweto, Johannesburg, in which they aimed to analyse the growth and well-being of children who grow up in South Africa’s largest urban area. They conducted this study in the view of social and economic conditions of the families, stress and social support systems. Richter, Griesel and Barbarin (2000, p. 160) asserted that there were various occurrences of problem behaviours experienced and there “have been no prior studies of the prevalence of pre-adolescent children's behaviour problems in South Africa”. They further postulated that there is a large persistence of problem behaviours in South Africa which is an immense concern due to poverty, crime, violence, family instability and the degradation of their environmental/ social surroundings. These factors greatly influence the behaviour of a child from a very young age. Some of the problem behaviours displayed by learners are temper tantrums, day dreaming, irritable moods, passivity, aggression, bullying and poor social skills (Richter, Griesel & Barbarin, 2000). Due to the difficulties experienced in the children’s’ socio-cultural environment, their behaviour is strongly influenced.

According to Dhlamini (2014) who conducted a study in Heidelberg, the province of Gauteng, learner behaviour has become a challenge over the years in South Africa. Dhlamini (2014, p. 839) asserted that “The abolition of corporal punishment in 1996 necessitated a shift towards alternative discipline methods”. Through much research, Dhlamini (2014, p. 839) suggested that there is a difference in behaviour among the children of today and those children of many years ago and the “reason might be the development and transformation in the political system of the country”. In addition, social factors and the environment in which a child is surrounded by plays an important part in the influences of the behavioural patterns of learners. The behaviour can be affected by the socioeconomic status, poverty and family structure (Dhlamini, 2014). According to Dhlamini (2014), the school is responsible for controlling the behaviour of learners to ensure that effective and teaching occurs in the classroom. However, teachers had great difficulties in implementing effective strategies to help manage the problem behaviour. The “[n]on-implementation of the school code of conduct in some schools was a problem” and teachers lacked “alternative measures regarding corporal punishment which teachers could use as a source of discipline for learners when need arises” (Dhlamini, 2014, p.

843). If a school is unable to address the discipline issues, this will result in ineffective teaching and learning. Dhlamini (2014, p. 840) asserted that “Poor academic performance in these secondary schools reflects a lack of discipline”. Thus, negatively affecting the child’s learning experience in schools.

There have been reports of problem behaviours among learners in schools in Gauteng province. For example, De Beer (2012) study of more than 1000 grade 10 learners’ schools in Johannesburg indicated that learners engaged in violence, robbery and mugging among others. Another research by Myburgh, Poggenpoel and Nhlapo, (2015), among learners in Gauteng indicated that there are aggressive tendencies in the patterns of anger, bullying, challenges to moral values and fighting. Despite the numerous problem behaviours among learners in South African schools, very little published literature is available which may explain the causes of these behaviours and the management and success of intervention measures adopted by teachers which address these problems in schools. Therefore, the present study explored teachers’ explanations and interventions to address problem behaviours in the classrooms in selected private primary schools in Midrand in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

1.2 Problem Statement

Previous studies have indicated that there are numerous problem behaviours among learners experienced in South African schools. The problem behaviour greatly affects effective teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom, thus becoming a concern for teachers. Very limited research is available on the type of problem behaviours displayed in the classroom, the causes of these problem behaviours, and what strategies are used to manage these behaviours in the South African school context. Teachers who experience difficulties with problem behaviours tend to adopt rule-of-thumb and ad hoc strategies to deal with such problems. There are many cases of problem behaviours such as inappropriate classroom talks, inappropriate banter, disruptive, aggressive and inattention being displayed by learners in South Africa. However, teachers’ inadequacy to identify or manage these problem behaviours among learners negatively affects the teaching and learning situation in the classroom. According to Marzano et al (2003, p. 1), “[e]ffective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom”. They further asserted that “[i]f students are disorderly and disrespectful, and no apparent rules and procedures guide behaviour, chaos becomes the norm” (Marzano, et al., 2003, p. 1). However, as a result of teachers maintaining a well-managed classroom and

creating a safe classroom environment, “teaching and learning can flourish” (Marzano, et al., 2003, p. 1).

Some teachers may confuse problematic behaviour in a classroom as just a disturbance of a naughty child, although the behaviour may have more complex causes. The issue of problem behaviour can also label a naughty child as a child having challenging behaviours. Teachers need to identify the causes of these behaviours, but they also need appropriate strategies to engage learners who display such problem behaviours to ensure that an orderly and safe learning environment is created for everyone. This study focused on teachers concern of problem behaviours experienced in the classroom. Over the years teachers have experienced many challenges regarding teaching and learning due to the problem behaviours displayed in the classroom. According to Hester, et al (2004, p. 6), “[t]he solution to reducing children's behaviour problems is neither simple nor easy; however, there are a number of steps that teachers can take to address children's behaviour before problems become well established and more resistant to treatment”. Teachers implement various strategies to help manage problem behaviour, however, these strategies are only temporary. Hester, et al (2004) further asserted that “[t]he implementation of an intervention plan poses challenges to those working in classrooms”. In addition, on account of the complexity of implementing various interventions to help manage problem behaviour, teachers find it difficult to identify “the most salient features of a particular intervention and formulate both an effective and efficient strategy accordingly” (Hester et al, 2006, p. 7). Due to the increase of problem behaviours over the years, teachers need to find more effective and more lasting strategies to manage problem behaviour. Finding a solution to problem behaviours is an ongoing process and “[e]ffective early interventions need to take into account child characteristics, family norms and expectations of the settings in which the child and the family live, and the nature of interactions between the child and those with whom the child interacts” (Hester et al, 2006, p. 7). The adoption of such strategies will provide the teacher with better control of the classroom environment so that effective teaching and learning can occur without any disruptions.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The study of learners’ problematic behaviour in classrooms is important because it may give teachers an insight into the nature and causes of such behaviour, the impact on learners’ academic performance due to the problem behaviours, and strategies that have been suggested to deal with such behaviours. The study is of particular interest because it is a major concern

for me as an educator. As an educator, it is important to ensure that all learners are catered for, and that effective teaching and learning takes place. Teachers need to consider the social, emotional and behavioural aspects of the children to create a safe learning environment for their learners. According to Marzano et al (2003, p.1), “[i]f the teacher is ineffective, students under that teacher’s tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically”. It becomes difficult to reach this objective when learners misbehave and disrupt lessons. Furthermore, teachers rarely understand why some children misbehave or display problematic behaviour while other children are able to conform to the rules of the classroom by displaying appropriate behavioural characteristics. This study investigates teachers’ perspectives of why some children display various problematic behavioural characteristics and what can be done in the classroom to manage children who display such problem behaviours.

1.4 Aims of the Study

The study intended to identify the problematic behaviours of learners that teachers experience in the classroom, the explanations that they provide to account for these behaviours, and to identify and analyse the strategies used by these teachers to manage such behaviours in inclusive classrooms in three private primary schools in Midrand, South Africa. In specific terms, the aims were to:

- Explore how teachers define problematic behaviours of learners in the classroom.
- Examine from the teacher’s perspective, the causes of the problematic behaviours of learners.
- Establish the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment and,
- Find out the strategies that teachers use to manage the problem behaviours of learners in inclusive classrooms.

1.5 Research Questions

To address the stated aims of the study the following research questions were addressed:

The main research question is; What is problem behaviour and how can teachers manage the problem behaviours experiences to create an effective teaching and learning environment?

The following sub questions were addressed in the study:

- How do teachers define problematic behaviours of learners in the classroom?
- What, according to the teachers, are the causes of these problematic behaviours of learners?
- What, in the opinion of the teachers are the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment? And,
- Which strategies do teachers use to manage the problem behaviours of learners in inclusive classrooms?

1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research the following operational definition of terms were adopted:

Problem Behaviour: In this study the term was used to describe a consistent pattern of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviour in the classroom.

Discipline: In this study, the term discipline refers to the practice of conditioning learners to obey rules and follow instructions, using some form of punishment or negative reinforcement to correct disobedience/ problematic behaviour in the classroom.

Disruptive behaviour: In this study, the term is used to refer to children who display inappropriate behaviour, who are uncooperative, and have difficulty controlling their actions which consequently disrupt learning in a classroom.

Management strategies: This term was used to refer to techniques implemented by teachers for controlling and managing classroom activities to achieve a set of predetermined goals.

Classroom management: This refers to diverse techniques and skills that teachers use to keep learners organised, focused, attentive and productive creating an orderly environment in the classroom increasing meaning learning.

Inclusive Education: This refers to the diversity in education which provides equal learning opportunities for all individuals, regardless of differences. All individuals are welcomed, supported to learn, contribute and participate. In this study, the term inclusive education is ensuring access to quality education for all individuals by effectively meeting their diverse needs and removing barriers that may lead to individuals feeling or being excluded.

Inclusive Classroom: In this study, the term refers to a general education classroom in which learners with and without learning differences are given equal opportunities in learning together. Inclusive classrooms welcome and support the diverse social, academic, and emotional needs of all learners.

Teachers' explanations: In this study refers to teachers' perspective and narrative based on their teaching experience.

1.7 Structure of the dissertation

To address the aim and the related research questions identified above this dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter One

Chapter one presents the background to the study which includes an introduction to the study; a statement of the problem from which this study evolved; the aims of the study as well as the research questions posed; a justification for the study; operational definition of the key terms used in the study and finally, the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two

Chapter two consists of reviewed literature which gives a brief overview on identifying problem behaviours in the classroom; the causes of problem behaviours in the classroom, managing problem behaviours in the classroom and lastly, the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/ learning environment.

Chapter Three

Chapter three consist of an exposition of the theoretical framework which will serve as the explanatory framework for the research findings reported later in the dissertation. The study focused on two theories, that is, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

Chapter Four

Chapter four discusses the research design and research methodology adopted in this study. The aspects presented in this chapter include the research paradigm, research design, research

methodology, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, trustworthiness of qualitative data, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Chapter Five

Chapter five is devoted to a presentation and analysis of the findings of the research conducted. The findings are presented consonant with the research questions of the study.

Chapter Six

Chapter six is the conclusion which summarises the most important findings of this dissertation and presents recommendation for practice, limitations of the study and finally, the suggestions for future research in this area of research.

1.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter summarized the key aspects of Chapter 1 which included the background of the study, the problem statement, the rational of the study, the aims of the study, the research questions, the operational definition of terms used in the study, and the structure of the dissertation. Chapter 2 will present a literature review related to learners' problem behaviour in the classroom: teachers' explanations and interventions. Chapter 2 will discuss literature that has been conducted that focuses on identifying problem behaviours, the causes of problem behaviour in the classroom, the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching and learning environment and managing problem behaviour in the classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review looks at the extant literature in the domain of problem behaviours and their effects on schooling. The review begins by providing a brief overview of some of the problematic behaviours that teachers experience in the classroom. Following this, the research will look at explanations of the causes of such behaviour and its impact on learners' academic performance. Finally, it also looks at (a) strategies proposed in the literature to deal with such behaviours, and (b) the efficacy of these strategies.

2.2 Identifying problem behaviours

Having to deal with learners who display problem behaviour in the classroom is an immense difficulty that nearly every teacher encounters nearly every day. Taylor (2021, p. 9), contends that "behaviour is a function of the state of the system and its environment", therefore emphasizing the way in which an individual behaves is in response to a particular situation or stimulus whether internal or external, and is based on 'purpose'.

However, according to Maze (2019, p. 20), Taylor's concept of behaviour is inadequate,

because of his desire to show that teleological behaviour was predictable and its conditions observable, thus disposing of the two most frequent objections, that it is unpredictable and only capable of pseudo-explanation.

Maze further postulates that

Woodfield's general criticism of this definition is that if S's having a goal G at a particular time is supposed to explain why S behaves 'appropriately' at that time, then his having the goal cannot consist in that appropriate or convergent behaviour, because the explanans must be distinct from the explanandum (Woodfield 1976, p. 157).

Behaviour is a complex of changes in the individual and changes in the environment; and these two systems will be in constant interaction (Maze, 2019, p. 42). Therefore, “[b]ehaviour is ‘any change of an entity with respect to its surroundings’ and individuals derive their own behaviour, changes itself, emphasizing that behaviour is goal-directed” (Maze, 2019, p. 47).

Problem behaviours in schools are common throughout the world. However, they take on a very particular dimension in the South African context given general historical changes in the country. Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2012, p. 1211) assert that “[t]he period 1994-20211 introduced a new historical era for school education in South Africa” and the reason for implementing Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) “was to move away from the apartheid curriculum and to address skills, knowledge and values”, and to focus on a more teacher-centred philosophy. However, there were many shortcomings with this policy, and consequently the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) was introduced in 2012. This means that Education policy was revisited time and again. According Adu and Ngibe (2014, p. 987), curriculum change “affects the lives, relationships and working patterns of teachers and the educational experience of learners” and “knowledge and skills for learners are goods which need to be serviced by teachers, and learners has to produce what they have learnt and acquired from school to the outside world”. Therefore, the continuous change in the curriculum may affect the teaching and learning due to the ‘abilities and aptitudes’ of the learners and the competence to use their skills in the outside world which impacts the conditions available in society (Adu & Ngibe, 2014, p. 987). Teachers are trained to educate children, however, the change in curriculum alters their approach to teaching as they need to change their role to accommodate all learners in their classroom and to reach the desired goals and focus on the learner-centred approach of teaching. The continuous changes in the school curriculum and the form of education since 1994 has led to uncertainties in the educational domain from both a teaching and learning perspective.

Behavioural problems have an immense impact in the teaching and learning process. “The prevalence of problem behaviour among students is an indicator of schools that fail, and is correlated with truancy, bullying, reduced learning engagement, and low achievement” (Sørli and Ogden (2015, p. 202). According to Merrett and Wheldall (1984) the concept of ‘disruptive classroom behaviour’ is seen as the activity that interferes significantly with a student’s own learning, interferes with another student’s learning or responses, “interferes with the teacher’s ability to operate effectively”, or any combination of these (page. 88). According to these researchers, teachers identified the following as major categories of disruptive behaviour:

maintaining order and control in the classroom; learners talking out of turn; or being aggressive, disturbing others and disobedience. Similarly, Beaman, Wheldall, and Kemp (2007) found that “talking out of turn is the most troublesome, and the most frequent” behaviour issue that occurs in the classroom” (p. 53). They further show that idleness, hindering others, disobedience, interrupting, “inappropriate classroom talks and aggression inattention; lack of motivation; out of seat; inappropriate banter; non-verbal noise; asking to leave the classroom; and bullying” are examples of other behavioural problems experienced in the classroom (2007, p. 53 & 54).

According to Merrett and Wheldall (1984), “[t]alking..., was the most chronic form of inappropriate behaviour” (p. 121). When learners talk continuously or talk out of turn it disrupts the lesson. They also assert that “[a] behaviour which we have identified from other contexts as being of concern to teachers is that of children needlessly wandering about the classroom”. This results in the teacher having to stop the lesson to reprimand them which takes up teaching time. Similarly, Smaragda (2013), asserts that multiple factors contribute to the learners’ behaviour and can greatly influence the individual who is “provoking and rebellious towards authority at a young age can, in their adolescence, become those teenagers who show troublesome inclinations and knock off school willingly” (p. 3). These behaviours also lead to stealing, lying, aggression and bullying.

An international study conducted by Cavanagh and Huston (2006) focused on family instability and children’s early problem behaviour. They asserted that there is a strong relationship between family instability and a child’s behaviour. According to Cavanagh and Huston (2006, p. 551) “[c]hildren who experienced instability had higher teacher and observer reports of problem behaviours than those from stable family structures”. Family instability such as changes in marriage, divorce, remarriage, etc greatly impact the behaviour of children. The “the family structure statuses from which and into which children are transitioning may have different implications for children’s behaviour” (Cavanagh & Huston, 2006, p. 553). The stress of the family structure change can unknowingly affect the behaviour of the child. When experiencing a loss of a loved one, having to relocate which means adapting to a new environment, or having a parent remarry, can all impact the child. When a child first enters school, they enter a new learning environment, their behaviour is a result of what they have learnt from home, should they be disruptive, as a result, the behaviour displayed will be a product of the family instability. According to Cavanagh and Huston (2006, p. 554), the link “between family structure histories and children’s problem behaviour during the transition to elementary school cannot be understood independently of the other circumstances that define

the families undergoing these changes”. It is important to be aware of the family dynamics so that child behaviour can be easily understood. The study concluded that children who have a single parent and cohabiting families display more disruptive and negative behaviours with their classmates and teachers in comparison to complete homes of married couples.

Akpan, Ojinnaka and Ekanem (2010), conducted a study in Nigeria to determine the prevalence and pattern of behavioural problems among children. They identified various problem behaviours, and that problem behaviours were displayed more in the government schools in comparison to the private schools. They further asserted that problem behaviours were commonly displayed by males and “[a]ntisocial features were found to be more common in males, while neurotic problems were more common in females” (Akpan, Ojinnaka & Ekanem, 2010, p. 54). The socio-economic status greatly impacted the prevalence of problem behaviours. Children from a lower socio-economic background has a higher prevalence of problem behaviour in comparison of those children from a higher socio-economic background. Akpan, Ojinnaka and Ekanem (2010) concluded that there are many children who display problem behaviours, and the government needs to provide appropriate programmes to help address this concern.

A study conducted in South Africa by Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012) focused on emotional and behavioural barriers to learning and development in the inclusive education classrooms in SA. They asserted that many teachers “in main stream education lack training to deal with learners experiencing emotional and behavioural barriers, resistance towards inclusive education becomes evident” (Potgieter-Groot, Visser & Lubbe-de Beer, 2012, p. 1). According to Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012), emotional and behavioural barriers of learners in South African schools are an immense concern that required immediate attention because these behavioural barriers negatively impact the teaching and learning processes in the classroom. They further asserted that emotional and behavioural barriers include schizophrenia, selective mutism, aggression, disregarding the rights of others, destructive, dishonest and depression (Potgieter-Groot, Visser & Lubbe-de Beer, 2012, p. 4). Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012) postulated that these emotional and behavioural barriers are increasing and negatively affects many children in South African schools. In addition, they stated that “teachers are often not trained or equipped to deal with the variety of barriers to learning that learners may experience in an inclusive classroom environment” ((Potgieter-Groot, Visser & Lubbe-de Beer, 2012, p. 4). As such, teachers are required to spend time managing learners’ problem behaviours, which subsequently takes away

from teaching time and teachers become frustrated and stressed. As suggested by Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012, p. 5), “teachers are not equipped to use strategies that could support and accommodate learners with emotional and behavioural barriers”. Teachers therefore need to be empowered by adequate training to accommodate the problem behaviours which they experience in their classroom. Teacher training is essential to support the problem behaviour learners and to facilitate the barriers to learning by creating a safe learning environment.

Reyneke (2015) postulated that problematic behaviours are commonly experienced and as a consequence, childrens’ academic results are affected. According to Reyneke (2015, p. 58), “[d]isciplinary problems could be experienced because many children have the perception that education is useless; they do not perform at school and experience exam failure”. Many children lack hope due to their social factors such as a lack of a support system at home, and not getting attention from their family members. Reyneke (2015, p.58) asserted that there are various problem behaviours experienced which include school-based violence, bullying, verbal aggression, class disruption, teasing other learners, rudeness, lack of commitment to schoolwork, and arriving late at school. These forms of indiscipline do not create a safe learning environment for learners and for effective teaching and learning to occur.

In another study conducted in South Africa, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 2) showed that problem behaviours are displayed in various ways which include: not attending lessons, frequently leaving the class to use the toilet, rudeness, unwarranted talking while the teacher is teaching, bullying, being abusive, and stealing. They contend that many learners do not abide by the school code of conduct and this becomes a major problem for teachers. In addition, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 2) argued that some problem behaviours are much more serious where learners are in possession of weapons, steal, gamble, destroy school property, and even engage in verbal and sexual assaults. The severity of these behaviours needs to be addressed to maintain order and discipline in schools.

According to Nazareth, Kvalsvig, Mellins, Desmond, Kauchali and Davidson (2021), adverse childhood experiences is associated with child behaviour. They asserted that the adverse childhood events

...included experiences of physical, sexual and emotional abuse prior to age 18 years, domestic violence, parental substance abuse, mental illness and crime/imprisonment of household members, more recent studies of ACEs have

included factors such as child neglect (physical and emotional), parental separation/divorce or death, exposure to violence outside the home, bullying, living in unsafe neighbourhoods, homelessness, racial/ethnic discrimination and income insecurity...

which later effected the behaviour of the child (Nazareth, Kvalsvig, Mellins, Desmond, Kauchali & Davidson, 2021, p. 495).

In addition, Nazareth, Kvalsvig, Mellins, Desmond, Kauchali and Davidson (2021, p. 495), postulated that children experiencing behaviour difficulties affected not only the well-being of the child but also the child's academic performance in school. Nazareth, Kvalsvig, Mellins, Desmond, Kauchali and Davidson (2021) conducted a study in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. They concluded that there was sufficient evidence from the data collected to suggest that there is a relationship between adverse childhood experiences and the subsequent behaviour problems the child displays. In addition, they also identified that a disorganised household, a child with deceased parents, and food insecurity also contributed to the problem behaviour of the child ((Nazareth, Kvalsvig, Mellins, Desmond, Kauchali & Davidson, 2021).

In a South African study, Marais and Meier (2010) contends that disruptive behaviour should be considered as behaviour that interferes with the teaching and learning act (a learner who distracts other learners during lesson presentation, who refuses to follow directions, or displays aggressive behaviour) [and] behaviour that interferes with the rights of other learners to learn (a learner who continually calls out while the teacher is explaining content) (p. 43-44). They further show that “disrespect (verbal aggression, teasing, punching, neglecting academic work, and refusing to follow directions)” (p. 44), are also problems and difficulties that are often faced in the classroom.

The foregoing discussion makes it clear that teachers need to be able to identify the nature of problem behaviours in the classroom.

2.3 Causes of Problem Behaviour in the Classroom

There can be various contributing factors which may influence learners' behaviour. According to Giallo and Little (2003), “behaviour is thought to be influenced not only by the belief that a particular action will lead to desirable outcomes” (p. 22). Learner conduct and behaviour are

strongly affected by societal norms and these include family and social networks. Smaragda (2013, p. 3), postulates that “many different origins of children’s’ challenging behaviour can exist: biological, psychological and social”. In keeping with these findings, the present study will elaborate on the some of the causes of problem behaviour.

According to Mestry and Khumalo (2021, p. 106), the lack of parent support affects the problem behaviour displayed by the child, “active partnership between parents and schools has great benefits and parents can have a powerful effect on children’s behaviour”. They also add that the family background plays an important role as the participants of their study suggest that “learners with discipline problems come from a family background where there is physical abuse, conflict and domestic violence and [b]oth, the lack of parental support and learners’ family backgrounds highlight factors that may impede the enforcement of the code of conduct. However, in both these cases, it becomes essential to deal with ill-disciplined learners in more holistic ways” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 107).

Cortina, Fazel, Hlungwani, Tollman, Cortina-Borja and Stein’s (2013) study shows that there are many children who have been “exposed to multiple adversities in low and middle-income countries placing them at potential risk of psychological problems” (p. 1). They further assert that socio-economic disadvantages greatly affect the child’s performance in South African schools and teachers identified high levels of behavioural and emotional problems (Cortina, Fazel, Hlungwani, Tollman, Cortina-Borja & Stein, 2013, p. 1).

In agreement with the previous study, Barbarin and Richter’s (2001) study proposes that economic status, community danger and psychological problems greatly affect children in South Africa. They assert that various risk factors in the environment influenced children’s behaviour. In addition, problematic behaviour and emotional trauma often occurred more frequently among poor households rather than non-poor households and these conditions affected the children’s overall well-being (Barbarin & Richter, 2001, p. 1-5). Community danger can also influence the child’s development, as they learn from the society around them such as, gangs, robberies, and street violence. Ultimately, the way in which a child behaves is affected by the environment in which they grow up.

Problem Behaviour Theory illustrates that there are factors, both internal and external that influences the ‘problem behaviour’ within a child. Jessor (2016, p. 4) contends that “the theory provides the underlying influences which determine the social behaviour that an individual demonstrates”.

According to Lopes and Oliveira (2017), “[e]cological models usually emphasizes situation-specific factors that contribute to occurrences in the classroom, including classroom indiscipline” (p.235). Lopes and Oliveira (2017) further postulate that culture plays a role in the discipline found in a learner. They assert that “societal values such as individualism, community and collectivism significantly influence social relationships and, consequently, the interpersonal relations in schools” which underlines the cause of the learners’ disruptive behaviour in the classroom (Lopes & Oliveira, 2017, p. 235).

Extending the idea of social influences Unity, Osagiobare, and Edith (2013) contend that “[o]nce students are in school, the dual factors of socialization and social status contribute significantly to behaviour” and poverty plays a role in the emotional trauma experienced that influences the behaviour of the child as well (p. 151). This can lead to feelings of alienation, inadequacy, depression and anxiety in which “aggressive or impulsive behaviour... can affect their behaviour and academic achievement” (Unity, Osagiobare, & Edith, 2013, p. 152). Children who grow up in an enriched environment may have strong and secure relationships that will help “stabilize children’s behaviour and provide the core guidance needed to build lifelong social skills” and these children will adopt healthy and appropriate behavioural responses to situations, whereas children who have been exposed to a poverty stricken environment may “often fail to learn these responses” and therefore inherit certain behaviours that can be expressed inappropriately (Unity, Osagiobare, & Edith, 2013, p. 155). Consequently, an individual who has grown up in a poverty-stricken environment may possibly exemplify problem behaviour in the classroom because they are unable to establish healthy relationships and have difficulty in following instructions, which greatly affects the individual’s conduct in school.

According to a South African study, Mafumbate and Mkhatjwa (2020) focused on the causes of problem behaviour at a primary school level. Their study revealed that due to a lack of parenting skills, family dysfunctionality, family socioeconomic status and peer influence, children’s behaviour was greatly impacted. Mafumbate and Mkhatjwa (2020, p. 4) asserted that home environment factors are the “main source of influencing maladaptive behaviour amongst learners”. Parents/ family are people who the child is in contact with first and interacts with and are important people who the child imitates. The study showed that a child who comes from a healthy home environment in which the parents show much love, affection, care, support, guidance and peace influences the behaviour of a child in a positive manner. Whereas, an unhealthy home environment in which the child is ignored, hated, violence, and hostility is

present, this influences the child's behaviour in a negative manner (Mafumbate & Mkhathjwa, 2020, p. 4). In addition, Mafumbate and Mkhathjwa (2020, p. 5) postulated that school also plays an important role in influencing the behaviour of a child, in which peer influence and a lack of school discipline can affect the manner in which a child behaves. If a child is surrounded by friends who misbehave or display problematic behaviour, the child will be influenced to behave in the same way. According to Mafumbate and Mkhathjwa (2020, p. 6), problem behaviour among children is a major problem that is triggered by various factors such as the child's home environment, inadequate parenting, home dysfunctionality and family socio-economic status and the study findings "revealed that there are currently no intervention strategies in schools for learners to better manage their behaviours".

By contrast, Nunan and Ntombela (2018, p. 3) contends that "students' desperation for attention and acceptance can cause them to adopt and act out in disruptive ways". Nunan and Ntombela (2018, p. 3) further assert that learners tend to misbehave as a result of not being able to control their anger, therefore, they act out by "regularly striking others; throwing, breaking, and destroying things around them; or even resort to stealing (Marais & Meier, 2010)". Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010) further argue that "feeling scholastically inadequate can also cause anxiety and stress. These feelings can cause children to panic and use defences as ways of protecting themselves" (Nunan & Ntombela, 2018, p. 3).

Behaviour and social development are shaped by one's upbringing and subsequent life experiences. Burgess (2012, p. 48) believes that "[p]arents play the crucial role of children's first and most important teachers through modelling and reinforcing desired behaviours in the home (Louv 2009). Parents, like teachers search to support and generalise their child's learning into all areas of their life". Iwaniec (2006) adds that emotional abuse and neglect can be directly linked to problematic behaviour:

There is also growing recognition that emotional abuse happens not only within the walls of the family home. Some children who are looked after, either by foster-parents or who reside in children's homes, are also sometimes emotionally abused and neglected. Equally, young people in secure units or other penal systems are terrorised, degraded, humiliated, and threatened by staff and by older inmates (p.4).

Such conditions can result in both emotional vulnerability and insecurities. These negative effects may manifest themselves in disruptive behaviour including, chatting, truanting, lying

and bullying. Furthermore, such insecurities may have an impact on children's ability to accurately assess instructions and execute them accordingly. Consequently, children who are subjected to these conditions will tend to perform poorly at school.

Children growing up in a home where there is disorder, tend to believe this behaviour is the norm and it is acceptable to continue with this type of behaviour within the learning environment as well. According to Coldwell, Pike & Dunn (2006), 'household chaos' can also affect children's behaviour (Coldwell, Pike & Dunn, 2006, p.1120). In other words, such a chaotic environment is not conducive for the future, as these children will tend to mimic this behaviour and would assume it is acceptable to be treated in this manner even though it is socially unacceptable. These children may instigate conflict and may not behave in a correct manner by being rebellious and these would have a direct impact on their social interactions and how they go about their daily activities. Early childhood experiences have cultivated this behaviour to be as a norm in their lives as they as children are none the wiser due to circumstances of their upbringing within their immediate family environment. Such behaviour is carried over into the school environment and becomes problematic for teachers dealing with these children.

In addition, Jupp and Purcell (1992, p. 17) contend that the "consequence of divorce on children" have been shown to be a demonstrable cause of children's problematic behaviour and "depression, anxiety, anger, phobias, guilt and decreased self-esteem have been noted both in the short and long terms". These feelings influence the child's behaviour significantly within the classroom. "There appear to be six kinds of problematic beliefs commonly held by young children faced with a divorce. These are thoughts of being abandoned; being to blame; expectations of peer ridicule and rejection; fantasies about parental reunification and parental blame". All of these have an on the individual's learning experience at school, as well as the encounters between their teacher and their classmates (Jupp & Purcell, 1992, p. 18).

Lopes and Oliveira (2017) postulate that "culture plays a relevant role on the greater or lesser degree of average discipline found in schools and classrooms". This can greatly influence the child's approach in how they interact with their teachers and their classmates, as well as how they behave in the classroom situation more generally. According to Lopes and Oliveria (2017), children's characteristics are influenced by their diverse cultures. These authors believe problem behaviour occur primarily when those of diverse backgrounds are put together in a classroom and the children have difficulty in conducting themselves appropriately when

interacting and communicating with other learners in the class. Due to the cultural environment in which they grew up most learners often act out and do not know how to conform to the norms of appropriate behaviour in the classroom. In a classroom setting, learners may unknowingly interrupt or disturb the lesson with no ill intentions because they are unaware of acceptable behaviour due to their cultural experiences. In some instances, they may consider it acceptable to blurt out or interrupt while someone is speaking because it is socially accepted within their home environment.

Tommerdahl and Semingson (2013 p.218) believe that children “with behavioral problems often have underlying language difficulties” or “language impairments” which have a negative impact on their academic performance in the classroom. They elaborate that the “weakness in language comprehension ability is particularly damaging to a child’s social relationships, and their ability to understand instructions and perform academically”, consequently causing frustration in the learners themselves, thus resulting in the learner acting out or disrupting the class (Tommerdahl and Semingson, 2013, p.218). Tommerdahl and Semingson (2013, p. 219) feel that a “child’s language problems are most likely to be recognized by parents... Parents have the advantage of having information” regarding their child’s language impairments as opposed to the knowledge of the child’s teacher. As an example, teachers may assume that a learners’ lack of participation and disruptive behaviour in the classroom may be due to lack of interest, however, this may not be the case. Due to their language impairment, such children may not understand clearly the instructions given by the teacher and consequently fail to follow the established ‘rules’ in comparison with learners who have no language impairments.

According to Marais and Meier (2010, p. 45), there are general causes of problematic behaviour. They propose nine contributing factors to problematic behaviours. For Marais and Meier (2010) the first fact is “developmental stage”, emphasizing that as a child develops, they learn and adopt certain behaviours along the way. As the children grow, they adapt to the behaviours of other individuals with whom they associate. The second contributing factor is “inexperience or ignorance” in which learners “make mistakes and misbehave simply because they do not understand the “rules” of the classroom or even the dominant culture in the school” (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 45). The diversity in the classroom also explains the behaviour of a child, seeing that the children are influenced by the environment in which they are brought up. Consequently, these learners will behave in a certain way based on the social environment/ background from which they come. The third contributing factor is “curiosity”, “normal curiosity may lead to misbehaviour” (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 46). The fourth contributing

factor is the “need for belonging”, which highlights that children seek the approval of others and display inappropriate behaviour in order to fit in or to stand out as a result of “society’s invalidation” (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 46). The fifth contributing factor is the “need for recognition”, “[m]any learners misbehave because they are starved for attention” (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 46). The sixth contributing factor is the “need for power, control and anger release”

. . . some learners misbehave as a means of issuing a deliberate challenge to the teacher’s authority [and] some learners create disciplinary problems by indulging in violent behaviour because they are angry and resentful and are not mentally and emotionally equipped to handle their strong feelings or express their anger constructively. They lash out blindly without thinking (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 46).

The seventh contributing factor entails “factors related to the family”. In this regard “the family is the most immediate and perhaps the most influential system affecting the individual. Lack of parental guidance and dysfunctional families are continually emphasized as risk factors” which greatly impacts a child’s behaviour (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 47). The eighth contributing factor is “school-related factors” which can “heighten learners’ propensity to engage in disruptive behaviour such as: a negative school climate, inadequacy of teachers as role models; teachers’ professional incompetence (lack of educational/didactic expertise), overcrowded schools, deficient organisational structure of the school, etc” (Marais & Meier, 2010, p. 48). The last contributing factor mentioned by Marais & Meier (2010, p. 48) is “factors emanating from society”, “moral degeneration of communities, racial conflict, poor housing and medical services, the availability and poor control of firearms, poor law enforcement and unemployment” are some of the contributing factors for problematic behaviour.

Rappaport & Minahan (2020, p. 1) believe that “[m]isbehaviour is a symptom”. According to them, “[a] student would behave if he or she could. If the student is displaying problematic, maladaptive behaviour, it is a symptom of an underdeveloped skill. When students blow up or act out, it is a sign that they are stuck and can’t cope with the situation” (Rappaport & Minahan, 2020, p. 1). The way in which learners conducts themselves is purposeful to them and therefore acceptable in solving a problem. “Individuals would not repeat a behaviour unless they were getting something out of it. Usually, it is a response from other people that fuels inappropriate

behaviour” (Rappaport & Minahan, 2020, p. 2). Learners may display problem behaviour to seek attention or for self-satisfaction.

Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014, p. 293) study in Kenya postulate that “peer pressure among learners is a strong factor in the disruptive behaviour of learners”. Learners succumb to peer pressure and as a result feel the need to be part of a social group of their peers, irrespective of their morals being compromised so that they do not stand out within their group of classmates. They feel that they have been accepted and have a sense of belonging within their group of peers, therefore they conform to the influences of peer pressure. Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014, p. 293) further state that “[p]eer pressure, drugs, breakdown of family and social values and hopelessness contribute greatly to indiscipline in schools”. A learners’ behaviour is immensely impacted by these negative influences of acting out, being disrespectful, lying, and being generally disruptive in the classroom.

Research obtained in credible scholarly works, suggests that problematic behaviour is prevalent in learning environments. By having identified the root causes of problem behaviour and understanding the influences from the societal environment, we gain knowledge of the impact this has on children’s behaviour. The influences from the individual’s social environment is responsible for problem behaviours which negatively impacts teaching and learning within the classroom. Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014, p. 290) believe that “[d]iscipline at school plays a vital role in the achievement of expectations and goals”. It can be concluded that learners’ problematic behaviour is “overdetermined” and there are many contributing aspects that affect their learning, as well as the teachers teaching within the classroom.

Marais and Meier’s (2010) study suggests that various factors “can be inherent in the individual (internal system), but also in the broader social context or external systems in which the individual operates” (p. 45) and the existence of these factors is associated with disruptive behaviour. According to Marais and Meier (2010), “when learners come from disadvantaged environments such as living in squatter camps, on the streets or in abusive family scenarios, where language is coarse and loud and where stealing is a way of surviving, they need to be taught what is expected of them in the classroom” (p. 46). These learners tend to misbehave as a result of seeking for a need for belonging, a need for recognition, and a need for power and control (Marais & Meier, 2010).

In another study conducted by Mafumbate and Mkhathjwa, (2020) in Swaziland, it is reported that home factors contributing to children's maladaptive behaviour include inadequate

parenting styles, home dysfunctionality and family socio-economic status. It was also concluded that school factors that are contributing to children's maladaptive behaviour included peer influence and a lack of discipline. Moreover, Huston, Mcloyd and Coll (2008) established that children in economically deprived families, are likely to be at a higher risk of depression, low self-confidence, peer conflict and conduct disorders. In their study, they also noted that, these children live with parents who are always moving from one place to another, resulting in their children shifting schools and neighbourhoods. Amato and Cheadle (2008) who conducted a study in Pennsylvania on parental divorce, marital conflict and children's behavioural problems and found that a standard family environment model assumes that marital conflicts and divorce increase the risk of children's behavioural problems. Kwaja and Mormah (2011), study among learners in Nigerian secondary schools found that adolescents sometimes follow the dictates of their peers. In Botswana, a study by Matsoga (2003), reported that the embracing and acceptance of western behaviours and norms within a very traditional culture could be a contributing factor towards poor classroom behaviour.

From the foregoing review, it is evident that teachers need a detailed knowledge and understanding of learners who display problem behaviour. The literature above briefly explains the causes of problem behaviour through the perspective of societal influences. Historical changes in the South African educational domain and the political system with its attendant rights were not taken into consideration as further explanatory causes of problem behaviours in the studies reviewed. Although this study does not address these issues, it is nonetheless important to recognise that changing social conditions may also influence children's behaviour. This recognition is crucial since it enables teachers to gain a greater understanding of the problem behaviours that they face and may provide them with more effective and appropriate techniques and practices that will address the problem behaviours learner's currently display.

2.4 Consequences of Problem Behaviours on the teaching/learning environment

When focusing on problematic behaviour and the impact on teaching and learning, we should also take into consideration the effect problem behaviour has on the individuals themselves, as well as the impact on other learners and the way teaching is being conducted in terms of the content delivered.

The content planned for a specific scheduled time would not be delivered timeously should there be a disruptive learner in the classroom. This, in turn, creates an adverse effect to the entire year's curriculum that should be taught for the lessons planned in the schooling calendar for the year. Problematic behaviour, overall, can be a great disruption when children need to do group activity-based exercises. These activities require the learner's undivided attention as well as hundred percent engagement within the group and everyone's participation is essential. Following a disruptive learner within the group leads to only a few learners contributing to the activity whilst other learners may be influenced by the disruptive behaviour and contribute nothing at all to the group activity. This then also does not provide the teacher with constructive feedback due to a lack of participation from the entire group.

In addition, O'Brennan, Bradshaw, and Furlong (2014, p. 2) asserted that the 'social climate' of the classroom, as well as the manner in which teachers interact with other students, can affect the learners' behaviour. They further argue that learners' "academic focus can be stifled if placed in classrooms composed primarily of" learners who display problem behaviour such as "high levels of aggression and low academic proficiency" (O'Brennan, Bradshaw, and Furlong, 2014, p.2). This statement suggests that the academic performance of the learner who displays problem behaviour is not the only one affected – the classmates are equally affected. According to O'Brennan, Bradshaw, and Furlong (2014, p. 3), there is a link between academic achievement and performance, and learner misconduct and problem behaviour. As a consequence of problem behaviours experienced in the classroom, teachers experience various difficulties in completing the curriculum and tend to lose a lot of teaching time which can greatly impact the teaching and learning process.

McIntosh, Brigid Flannery, Sugai, Braun, and Cochrane (2008, p. 2) asserted that "[s]tudies have noted poor academic performance and problem behaviour in particular" affect the level of drop out learners in schools. In agreement to O'Brennan, Bradshaw, and Furlong (2014), McIntosh, Brigid Flannery, Sugai, Braun, and Cochrane (2008, p. 2) add that problem behaviour presents barriers to learning as learners may be suspended or expelled due to their bad behaviour and thus having learners miss out on a lot of teaching. They further asserted that learners "with emotional and/or behavioural disorders have been found to be twice as likely to drop out of school than students without such eligibility. When compared with children from other high-incidence disability groups, children with emotional and/or behavioural disorders have lower graduation rates, higher rates of course failure and grade retention, and are less likely to attend secondary school at all" (McIntosh, Brigid Flannery, Sugai, Braun, and

Cochrane, 2008, p. 2). This emphasizes that problems in academic performance and behaviour not necessarily exists in isolation, there are various factors that are combined which impact the teaching and learning environment of the learner. Therefore, teachers need to consider the fact that the relationship academic performance and problem behaviour is a cause of concern because if the interaction. Learners “with early difficulties in behaviour are at greater risk for developing academic problems” (McIntosh, Brigid Flannery, Sugai, Braun, and Cochrane, 2008, p. 3).

Teachers find that learners inattentiveness can also affect the teaching and learning process. Enthusiastic learners and learners with potential do not enjoy disruptions when working on activities in the classroom. This is due to their attentiveness levels being lowered and they are not engaged at a level they would love to, had there been no disruptions. This, for the avid learner breaks their concentration and minimizes their participation. This would lead to the teacher not achieving the desired outcome they had initially planned for.

Tiwari & Panwar (2014, p. 517) opine that “[c]lassroom behaviour problems affect the teaching and learning process as it influences teachers’ ability and competence in handling the classroom environment”. Henricsson & Rydell (2006, p. 348) asserts that problematic behaviours are “behaviours that are harmful to others or disruptive, such as impulsivity, hostile defiance, destructive behaviour, temper tantrums, and over-activity” which can be linked with poor academic performances in school. “Once a child has entered the school system, to succeed academically is of paramount importance for long-term development. Children with behaviour problems are often low achievers” (Henricsson & Rydell, 2006, p. 348).

According to Sun and Shek (2012), non-attentiveness, is a serious behavioural problem that can affect the child’s learning process. “Daydreaming during the lesson will affect learning. If they are not attentive to the teacher, they have already missed out on some new information/knowledge” (Sun & Shek, 2012, p. 4). They further believe that unnecessary talking in class was the most disruptive activity in the teaching and learning process. “Chatting during lesson affects teaching and learning most... Chatting will alter the whole classroom atmosphere as well as class progress” (Sun & Shek, 2012, p. 5). The unwarranted chatting of learners during a lesson influences their ability to pay attention to what is being taught, resulting in the learners missing out on important information/content and this ultimately affects their academic performance. Playfulness during a lesson and demonstrating problem behaviours such as “non-

attentiveness, out of seat, habitual failure in submitting assignments, and clowning” affects “the students learning and classroom atmosphere” (Sun & Shek, 2012, p. 5).

Problem behaviours experienced in the classroom conflicts with teaching. Lopes & Oliveira (2017, p. 39) contend that “[c]lassroom management becomes the gatekeeper to student learning by either supporting a consistent and predictable classroom or allowing a disruptive, chaotic, and random learning environment to occur” (p.79). This statement by Freiberg, Huzinec and Templeton (2009) clearly summarizes the relationship between classroom management, problematic classroom behaviours and learners’ academic achievement. The behaviour demonstrated by learners, plays a pivotal role in preventing or improving their academic achievement, thus motivating the learner to excel and want to be and do better striving towards their learning experiences within the classroom.

According to Lopes & Oliveira (2017, p. 40), there is a relation between the problem behaviours within the classroom and a learner’s academic performance. They further propose that “[h]igh-achieving students only occasionally misbehave; unlike low achievers” who tend to misbehave in lessons (Lopes & Oliveira, 2017, p. 40). The displeasure of learners who perform poorly in their academics, can contribute to the likelihood of causing a learner to misbehave. This dissatisfaction causes learners to have no intention to reach their full potential. This diminishes the learners’ “opportunity to learn and again increases the likelihood of classroom misbehaviour, disciplinary referrals, grade retention, learned helplessness, etc., in a seemingly endless cycle”, and ample time is being spent on rectifying the problem behaviours rather than teaching (Lopes & Oliveira, 2017, p. 40).

According to Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014, p. 289), “[d]isipline is a vital ingredient for the success of students’ academic performance”. In maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment, learners gain confidence, they are motivated and inspired to work hard, as they are encouraged to perform to the best of their ability to reach their full potential. Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014, p. 289) opine that “[t]he environment should not be intimidating and threatening to the learner”. Expanding on this idea, Mothata and Squelch (1997) postulate that “...if discipline is not taken into consideration, the school environment will be dangerous and the educational process may be disrupted. This may also affect the educational performance of the learners and the overall educational attainment” (Njoroge & Nyabuto, 2014, p. 289). The learners who display problem behaviour in class tend to disturb the learners who behave appropriately, subsequently, these learners can miss out on important content being taught

during the lesson as they were distracted/disrupted and this can have an effect on their academic performance. The display of problem behaviour in one learner does not only affect their classmates but also themselves, which causes disruption to the entire class. Some learners seek attention by acting out. As mentioned previously, Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014, p. 293) emphasized that problem behaviour is influenced through peer pressure, in seeing that all children tend to learn things from each other, the behaviour is eventually imitated and displayed by all the learners in the class. Having one disruptive learner in a class can result in having all learners imitate the bad behaviour thus having a rowdy class and subsequently an unproductive lesson.

Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014) contend that

ill-discipline can destroy the possibility of a safe and orderly environment and thereby hamper the core purpose of the school. It is therefore necessary that discipline is maintained in a school for the welfare and safety of learners and educators and for the success of the educational process (p. 289).

Problematic behaviour often interrupts the teaching and learning process in the classroom. This consuming a lot of time in the classroom, thus having teachers spending less time teaching and more time is given to the problematic learners. Learners' involvement in the lesson is reduced significantly. According to Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway (2014, p. 45), "fixing behaviour will fix learning", emphasizing that if teachers take control of the learner's behaviour, learning can take place without any difficulties.

The occurrence of problematic behaviours in the classroom negatively affect the teaching and learning processes. Njoroge and Nyabuto (2014, p. 306) postulate, "[i]t can also be concluded that indiscipline in schools negatively affects learning, leads to time wastage for both the undisciplined and disciplined students, affects the teacher-student relationship, and disrupts learning environment and the overall effectiveness of the school and the education system. Indiscipline was also found to lead to poor academic results in schools, to the students causing it and the resultant ripple effect affects the innocent students learning and the overall academic performance". It is crucial to administer necessary strategies to manage the problem behaviours demonstrated by learners to ensure that effecting teaching and learning can occur within the classroom.

For effective teaching and learning to occur in the classroom, proper classroom management strategies need to be implemented (Tiwari & Panwar, 2014). Lopes and Oliveira (2017),

postulate that it is important to prepare well for the lessons (by following strict planning) and have full control of the classroom, have classroom rules, and not to allow time for learners to misbehave. If learners are given the opportunity to misbehave in class, they will, therefore, they should be occupied throughout the lesson. It does not help to ignore the behavioural problems that occur in the classroom. It does not benefit the teacher or the learner. The teacher becomes frustrated and loses the essence of a productive classroom and the learner loses interest in their academics (Smaragda, 2013). Many individuals are influenced by various social factors that they are embedded in, and it is the teachers who have to help these learners to now allow their behaviour to impact/influence their academic performance. Learners can perform poorly due to their inappropriate behaviour in the classroom, and it is up to the teacher to help them reach their full potential (Smaragda, 2013).

According to Parsonson (2012, p. 17), “disruptive behaviour requires planning and consistency”. In order for productive teaching and learning to occur, Parsonson (2012), proposes various strategies that may engage problematic behaviour in the classroom. He postulates that having seating arrangements will help lower the level of disruptive behaviour, “effective instructions and commands need to be proceeded”, reduction of noise, and class-wide incentives because “disruption can be endemic and stress-inducing well as a potential launching pad for more problematic behaviours, interventions focusing on the whole class can be more effective than targeting individuals” (Parsonson, 2012, p. 17).

According to Lopes and Oliveira (2017), “[t]aking into account that classroom management...and classroom discipline are inextricably linked, teachers must develop an accurate sense of what is best for the class in every moment” (p. 239). The effectiveness of the various strategies to address the behavioural issues in the classroom depends on how the teacher deals with the situations that occur in the class. Similarly, Nene (2013, p. 7), believe that teachers should “orientate learners about the code of conduct and school rules” and the consequences of breaking the rules should clearly be explained to the learners. Nene (2013, p. 7) further argues that teachers should “acquaint themselves and learn to know learner home backgrounds in order to understand learners they are dealing with”, thus helping them obtain effective management strategies.

In a study conducted in Nigeria, Abdulmalik, Ani, Ajuwon and Omigbodun (2016) asserted that aggressive behaviour among children is a major concern as it negatively impacts the children's school performance. The child tends to have difficulties with their academic performance

resulting in underachievement and disciplinary problems due to the aggressive behaviours. According to Abdulmalik, Ani, Ajuwon and Omigbodun (2016, p. 2), “children with high aggressive behaviours were 2.4 times more likely to exhibit disruptive behaviours; 3.3 times more likely to be male; and 2.9 times more likely to have substance abuse/dependence problems in adulthood”. In addition, they asserted that a high level of aggression is also predictive for future criminality, and poor social functioning. In schools, aggressive learners are very likely to be disruptive and excluded from schools, thus causing them to perform poorly as they miss out on the teaching and learning processes. “A meta-analysis of school-based interventions for aggressive and disruptive behaviours found that the most successful improvements occurred when the intervention was focused on students with the highest risk of aggressive behaviours” (Abdulmalik, Ani, Ajuwon & Omigbodun, 2016, p. 2). Implementing strategies that focus on social and emotional learning proved to be effective in reducing aggressive behaviours.

In a South African study, Giarelli, Clarke, Catching and Ratcliffe (2009) the concern of problem behaviours was located in low- income countries, among children in the rural areas, and underdeveloped regions in South Africa. According to Giarelli, Clarke, Catching and Ratcliffe (2009, p. 1303), a large number is children who enter school in Grade R, demonstrate disruptive behaviours in addition to having difficulties in communicating and other difficulties. These difficulties are not dealt with at an early age and therefore, children become frustrated as they are expected to adapt to the structure of a school setting and is expected to perform towards a set academic standard. When the child is unable to meet the standard, frustration arises thus resulting in behavioural problems. These problem behaviours then impact the academic performance of the child. It is of great importance to respond to the existing problems/ difficulties of a child at a young age that affects their daily life. Giarelli, Clarke, Catching and Ratcliffe (2009, p. 1304) asserted that teachers observe and report various problem behaviours that learners display in the classroom and there is a need to “support a call to expand remedial educational and behavioural services in this region and others with similar situational factors; and to better prepare teachers to manage behavioural problems in the classroom and individualize instruction”.

The failure to respond effectively to addressing problem behaviour is an immense concern. Therefore, this study recommends interventions to offer a more constructive solution to this problem of problem behaviour which offer relief to all teachers and effective change in the classrooms. From the reviewed literature, it is clear that learners who display problem

behaviour have difficulty in schools. Their academic performance is demonstrably affected due to their problem behaviour. It is crucial for teachers to help bridge this gap by implementing appropriate interventions so that learners with problem behaviour are not disadvantaged academically. Quite importantly, some of the reviewed studies were purely quantitative in nature and they lacked participants' feelings that can only be obtained from qualitative research. Therefore, the present study fills in this gap by adopting a qualitative approach.

2.5 Managing Problem Behaviour in the Classroom

In a study conducted in South Africa, Rubbi Nunan and Ntombela (2019, p. 13), showed that

... if teachers know and understand what the source of the problem is, they can develop the necessary skills and take proactive measures to address and prevent unwanted behaviour. It is the behaviour that is challenging, not the children. As such, since challenging behaviour is learnt, teachers can, through fostering welcoming classrooms and school cultures, promote the development of acceptable behaviour and also support their students to unlearn that which is regarded as unacceptable or challenging (p. 13).

According to Lopes and Oliveira (2017), classroom discipline helps to manage the problem behaviour learners demonstrate in the classroom. They believe that “[c]lassroom order, unlike what one might think, is only indirectly linked to, and is conceptually independent of classroom disruption. The ultimate goal is to enable instruction” (p. 233). Teachers who are effective in their teaching methods, adopt appropriate classroom management techniques, and do not allow time for anything outside the learning of curriculum content are more likely not to experience problem behaviour in the classroom. “These teachers tend, for instance, to keep up the lesson pace and to use the curriculum effectively to establish order and to maximize students’ on-task behaviour” (Lopes & Oliveira, 2017, p.233). However, the difficulty for many teachers are learners who simply refuse to participate in class.

The great number of problem behaviours such as “talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interfering with teaching activities, harassing classmates, verbal insults, rudeness to teacher, defiance, and hostility” needs to be managed adequately. According to Sun and Shek (2012, p. 1), “teachers usually reported that these disturbing behaviours in the classroom are intolerable and stress- provoking, and they had to spend a great deal of time and energy to

manage the classroom”. To help manage problem behaviour experienced in the classroom, appropriate strategies need to be implemented.

According to Parsonson (2012), the problems and difficulties faced by learners in their personal life greatly affects their behaviour. Parsonson (2012) concentrate on behaviour management strategies, and together with Payne, Mancil, and Landers, (2005), adopt an Applied Behaviour Analysis, which involves “the application of the principles of operant conditioning (Skinner, 1953) to socially relevant human behaviours” (p.16). To manage problem behaviour in the classroom, the use of positive reinforcement can help decrease the unwarranted problem behaviour. Having rules, establishing classroom routines, frequent use of praise, and seating arrangements, are some of the strategies that can be used (Parsonson, 2012).

Parsonson (2012) also feels that feedback can be an effective way to address problematic behaviour. This study indicated that a learner who constantly disrupts the class, misbehaves and does not get his work done is given a daily report. This makes the learner assess himself and monitor his own behaviour, and in some way, this helps him to change his behaviour so that he does not receive the daily report any longer. Other learners are also aware of this and monitor their behaviour so that they are not put into the same situation. According to Smaragda (2013), the “Cognitive Behavioural approach helps children to modify their behaviour by teaching them to energetically play a part in understanding and changing their own beliefs and behaviours, using a collection of therapeutic methods and strategies” (p.7).

In some instances, punishment such as the use of a merit and demerit system, detention, and removing the learners from class or sending them to the office is not always an effective way of dealing with problem behaviour. The “use of positive reinforcement is essential to encourage and maintain appropriate behaviour and academic learning” (Parsonson, 2012, p. 21). Punishment is another strategy used to attempt to discourage bad behaviour in the classroom. Though such 'punishment' is much less effective than reward in shaping how learners behave, some children will find the disapproval involved in punishing enough to deter further disruption in the classroom. According to Lopes and Oliveira (2017), it is the teacher's own actions that inadvertently maintain a pattern of bad behaviour in the classroom. The various forms of punishment include, removing the badly-behaved learner from the classroom and this results in the learner missing out on the work that is being done in class, issuing demerits, detention, removal of privileges, break detentions, giving them physical labour, and being excluded from

fun activities at school. One of the main goals of punishment is to invoke the distress of disobedience in the learner so that the bad behaviour does not occur again.

According to Smaragda (2013, p. 7), “ children have to feel good about themselves and others; they need the abilities to mix; they need the skill to deal with problematic conditions in an adequate, non-challenging way”, and Long (2003) proposes a “model for developing self-esteem that focuses on three features: Competency (aiding children to identify their current abilities), value (spending time to let the child recognize that he/she is appreciated for just being himself), and control (giving option and control to an age-suitable level to facilitate self-esteem) (Smaragda, 2013, p. 7). Children will understand that for every action there is a consequence. For good behaviour, they will be rewarded and for bad behaviour, they will be punished.

Cameron (1998) proposes a “management model” which he believes will help learners who display problem behaviours. According to Cameron (1998, p. 36)

[t]he behavioural model has demonstrated that it is possible both to understand and change inappropriate and disruptive behaviour. The traditional framework has been to focus on the antecedents of the behaviour, the behaviour itself, and the consequences which follow the behaviour.

Another model, the Linear ABC model of Behaviour, is also proposed as a means to identify and manage the numerous problematic behaviours (Cameron, 1998). This model suggests that if teachers were to recognize problematic behaviour and the reasons for the behaviour, it would assist the teacher in finding ways to work with this while ensuring that the environment is conducive for teaching. It has been shown that the environment plays a major role that affects children’s behaviour. Cameron (1998) contends that the environment does affect behaviour in children and proposed another model called the “Antecedents-Background-Consequences model of behaviour”. This model focuses on reinforcement of positive behaviour to reduce disturbances in the classroom. This model highlights, firstly the Antecedents (the problematic behaviour), secondly the Background (the context) and lastly the Consequences (outcomes of the problematic behaviour). This typically promotes positive behaviour and aids in the management of children with problems. The key focus of both these models is to “emphasize that effective learning takes place in natural contexts” (Cameron, 1998, p. 37).

Cameron (1998, p. 41) further believes that to manage problematic behaviour in the classroom, “mentoring can be viewed as a means of enhancing the transition from adolescence to

adulthood through the provision of support and challenge”. To create a strong foundation for learners to depend on, teachers need to support and guide their learners. By having teachers monitor and implement positivity in the classroom, a safe learning environment is created for learners to be able to obtain the fruitful objectives of the lesson being taught. According to Cameron (1998, p. 41), by motivating the learners and providing a meaningful rationale, helps to “facilitate the internalization of the value of activities and the integration of the processes leading to their successful completion”. Cameron (1998) also argues for peer relationships within the classroom. Encouraging peer learning by having learners assist each other can be a beneficial strategy to help reduce the outcome of problem behaviour, it will allow for learners to work together to reach the same end goal. This will enhance the support, motivation and guidance amongst the learners. This strategy can reduce the disruptiveness and stress in the classroom learning environment and can also reduce the pressure from learners thus creating a positive and safe learning environment.

According to Sorcinelli (1994), to help manage the problem behaviours experienced, it is important to create a constructive classroom environment. Sorcinelli (1994, p. 2) proposes that it is important to define expectations for learners’ behaviour in the beginning, to decrease “anonymity by forming personal relationships” with the learners, to seek critical feedback from learners, and to encourage “active learning” within the classroom. Sorcinelli (1994, p. 2) proposes that it is essential to “make good use of the first class” by implementing ground rules such as no unnecessary talking while busy with work in class, no disruptions whilst the teacher is teaching, etc. Teachers’ ought to “use the course syllabus to reinforce expectations” by accentuating appropriate behaviour during lessons, and “let students participate in setting classroom rules”. To sum up, it is important to invest in the wellbeing of the learners by communicating to them about their academic performance to ensure that they progress. Creating a safe learning environment which allows learners to communicate freely helps them deal with difficulties.

Sorcinelli (1994) further emphasizes that by encouraging active learning, it can reduce the problem behaviours experienced in the classroom. Teachers’ preparedness for lessons, having discussions which allows learners to participate and share their thoughts and ideas, can also give learners a sense of confidence and will allow for active learning to take place (Sorcinelli, 1994, p. 4). Sorcinelli (1994, p. 4) recognizes five aspects which can help manage the problem behaviours that occur in the classroom. First, if learners are talking unnecessarily, try to get their attention by making eye contact with the learner to make them aware that you are aware

of their unwarranted talking. By stopping the lesson and looking directly at the learner who is disruptive, and thereafter continuing with the lesson when the learner stops talking is sufficient to address the disruption. Secondly, it would also help to address a question to a learner who is next to or around the disruptive learner. This draws attention to that area but avoids confrontations. Thirdly, having the teacher physically move towards the learner who is disruptive and make eye contact with the learner. Fourthly, teachers can propose that learners participate in mini group discussions and have each learner present their findings so that they are forced to pay attention and participate, leaving no room for being disruptive. Lastly, communicating to the learner privately, by talking to them privately, teachers are able to identify what the problem is and this offers the learner the opportunity to express how they feel (Sorcinelli, 1994, p. 4).

Payne, Mancil & Landers (2005, p. 13) contend that when problem behaviours demonstrated by learners occur, “effective consequence-based interventions are necessary to decrease the chance of that same inappropriate behaviour occurring again (Skinner, 1953)”. They propose three consequence-based strategies for learners who display problematic behaviour. The first strategy is “Time-Out” (Payne, Mancil & Landers, 2005, p. 13). Teachers establish several consequences for the problem behaviours experienced in their classroom. An example of issuing learners with a first warning, then a second warning, and finally resorting to a ‘time-out’, are forms of punishment teachers use to reduce the problem/disruptive behaviours that learners display. The punishment ought to allow learners to reflect on their inappropriate behaviour. The second strategy is “Planned Ignoring” (Payne, Mancil & Landers, 2005, p. 15), which emphasizes ignoring the problem behaviour and is based on the belief that if it is ignored the behaviour will not be reinforced. Some learners tend to act out in class to be noticed because they seek attention, if the inappropriate behaviour is ignored, the learner will stop being troublesome as they are not being noticed. This emphasizes’ the concept of “removing the attention away from the student who is engaged in the inappropriate behaviour” (Payne, Mancil & Landers, 2005, p. 15). The third strategy is “Tangible and Activity Reinforcement”. “[T]angible reinforcement is simply defined as the presentation of a tangible item after a behaviour occurs, resulting in an increase in the behaviour” and “activity reinforcement is simply defined as the presentation of an activity after a behaviour occurs, resulting in an increase in the behaviour” (Payne, Mancil & Landers, 2005, p. 16). Teachers ultimately decide on the type of reinforcements to be used for different children, as this would be dependent knowing each individuals’ needs. Ultimately, based on the learners’ pattern of behaviour

exhibited, teachers will successfully implement the necessary steps in dealing with a particular individual. This way, the successful outcomes will be measured through time of response, consistency of application and the level of implementation. By correcting the behaviour at the very instance, it is displayed is appropriate rather than correcting it later. When it comes to consistency learners displaying the same behaviour would need to be rated in the same fair manner in order to ensure transparency and a standard process being applied. On the implementation level, teachers need to ensure that this is aligned to the behaviour that was exhibited (Payne, Mancil & Landers, 2005, p. 19).

According to Miller (2020, p. 1), “[t]he goal is to pay more attention to the behaviour you want to see and less to the behaviour that’s getting in the way of teaching. As a result, over time you’ll get more of the former and less of the latter”. Miller (2020) further proposes productive strategies to bring about order within the problematic behaviour within the classroom. Miller (2020, p. 2) believes that it is important to “redirect children positively, rather than calling out the child for the behaviour you are trying to discourage”. Praise and recognition should be given to those displaying appropriate behaviour in the classroom and by using the reverse psychological approach this will assist with the learners that misbehave to follow the habits of the learners that behave well. Miller (2020) emphasizes that it is of utmost importance to give attention to positive behaviours and target the behaviours teachers would like to promote and acquire. In so doing this creates an atmosphere for positive growth and would boost the learner’s morale on an individual basis, thereby creating an environment which motivates learners to perform well academically and to gain greater self-confidence within the classroom environment.

For Sullivan, Johnson, Owens and Conway (2014, p. 45), “[r]ewards are used to promote compliant behaviour and sanctions are used to deter students from disrupting orderly learning”. The strategies proposed by Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway (2014, p. 52), includes discussing the issues/ problems with the entire class, reasoning with a learner, deliberately ignoring minor disruptions, issuing a strong verbal reprimand, asking learners to withdraw from the class, removing privileges, detention, requiring learners to do extra work, school suspension, sending learners to another teacher or a higher authority, seeking parental involvement, or having a meeting with the learner, their parents and the principal. These strategies are implemented to reduce the problematic behaviours and increase productive behaviour within the classroom. Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway (2014, p. 53) contend further that it is important to consistently keep learners engaged in the classroom,

[b]y focusing on engaging students, there is a need to unsettle notions of what constitutes unproductive behaviour. This requires educators to rethink what is normal or acceptable classroom behaviour by considering what behaviours support engagement in learning and schooling more generally (p.53).

To avoid the disruption of the lesson, teachers ought to keep learners occupied and engaged in the lesson at all times by getting them to engage in work, which thus leaves no time for learners to misbehave as they are given tasks to complete.

Awang, Ahmad, Wahab and Mamat (2013, p. 35) propose strategies to ‘promote learning behaviour’. They accentuate the use of positive reinforcements to evoke effective learning and to disregard the troublesome behaviour. Teachers are required to provide learners with support and guidance through their academic journey. By creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom, learners become self-motivated and encouraged to display good behaviour and to perform to the best of their ability striving to reach their full potential. According to Awang, Ahmad, Wahab and Mamat (2013, p. 39), “teachers need to realise that their actions influence the behaviour of pupils in the classroom; hence teachers must be aware of their actions and strategies in managing” the learners. They contend that “the use of praise should be a core element in teaching activities as it encourages and reinforces positive learning climate” (Awang, Ahmad, Wahab & Mamat, 2013, p. 39). With this said, teachers need to be aware of the characteristic of their learners in order to manage their behaviour.

Giallo & Little (2003, p. 22) draws attention to the preparedness and self-efficacy of the teacher and the learner as an important strategy to overcome problematic behaviour.

Confidence, or self-efficacy is conceptualised as an individual’s judgement of his/her ability to execute successfully a behaviour required to produce certain outcomes. Such beliefs are thought to be an important moderator between an individual’s knowledge and skills, and his/her behaviours (Giallo & Little, 2003, p. 22).

They highlight that those learners unable to complete a task that has been given to them, “. . . will not initiate or engage in the relevant behaviours” resulting in difficult behaviours (Giallo & Little, 2003, p. 22). Teachers’ decision making and taking control is most important in managing the problem behaviour. It is essential for teachers to implement “effort and persistence”, “effective classroom organisation, planning and practices” to ensure positive behaviour (Giallo & Little, 2003, p. 22). The confidence in teachers and what they do is

necessary as they are role models for the learners. “[L]ess confident teachers appear more vulnerable to stressful classrooms, employing fewer effective strategies to deal with stress compared with confident teachers” (Giallo & Little, 2003, p. 22). Therefore, teachers’ response to situations where they have to deal with learners’ behaviour, largely depends on their own ability to cope with the circumstances dependent on the influences of their own beliefs. Teachers maintaining high self-confidence tend to cope better with the learners and do not feel intimidated by the problem behaviours that learners display. According to Giallo & Little (2003, p. 23), “[t]eachers high in self-efficiency are more likely to use positive teaching strategies, such as praise, modifying teaching approaches, and encouragement for effort”, again emphasizing that the way teachers conduct their classroom activities has a direct bearing on the learners’ behaviours in the classroom environment.

In addition to self-efficacy, teachers’ unpreparedness compromises the learning environment; hence, teachers have to be well equipped and organised prior to entering a classroom. They must strive towards keeping learners engaged and interested in the activities within the classroom environment in order to have little room for learners to misbehave or create any disruptions (Giallo & Little, 2003, p. 23).

Marais and Meier (2010, p. 53) emphasise “parental involvement” as an important strategy for managing learners’ problem behaviours. According to Marais & Meier (2010, p. 53), “lack of parental care, lack of parental involvement, and lack of role models [are] a significant cause of disruptive behaviour”. It is vital for parents to play a pivotal role in their child’s education and be able to monitor as well as observe their child’s behaviour during their schooling career. Learners lacking parental support and guidance, tend to have a “don’t care” attitude towards their education and their behaviour. The needs of learners should be taken into consideration by both teachers and parents to enhance a positive outcome in the learners’ results and behaviour. Marais and Meier (2010, p. 54), further suggest that “[h]aving classroom rules enables learners to understand what kind of behaviour is expected from them”. Considering Marais and Meyer (2010) and other authors suggestions, clear basic practices need to be in place that inform learners of behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not.

According to Rappaport and Minahan (2020, p. 3), there are five strategies that can be implemented to manage learners who display problem behaviour. The first approach is to “manage antecedents”, which involves “minimizing or accommodating things in the environment that tend to set off an incident of inappropriate behaviour” (Rappaport & Minahan,

2020, p. 3). The second approach is to “reinforce desired behaviour” by reinforcing desired behaviour, learners are more likely to display appropriate behaviour. The third approach is to “teach a replacement behaviour” - “the student needs to be taught a replacement behaviour- an appropriate behaviour that serves the same function as the inappropriate behaviour- to be used while he [or she] is building the skills needed to behave appropriately without accommodations” (Rappaport & Minahan, 2020, p. 3). The fourth approach is to “address underdeveloped skills that are at the root of a child’s inability to behave appropriately”, which “eliminates the need for the replacement behaviour” (Rappaport & Minahan, 2020, p. 4). The importance of dealing with the root cause of problem behaviour helps teachers understand why the learner displays such behaviour. Knowing the cause provides a better insight as to why the learner is displaying such behaviour, and subsequently, teachers will then be able to effectively manage such problem behaviour. The last approach, according to Rappaport & Minahan (2020, p. 4), involves teachers having to “respond to a student’s inappropriate behaviour in a way that deters it”, “when prevention does away and incidents do occur, the teachers’ response needs to reinforce the students’ desired behaviour, and avoid accidentally reinforcing the undesired behaviour”.

In accordance with the above-mentioned strategies, Tiwari and Panwar (2014, p. 518) suggest that there are four strategies that can be used to manage problematic behaviour. This includes; the authoritative style which “is characterized by behavioural principles, high expectations of appropriate behaviour” from learners (there is clarity about which behaviours are acceptable or not and there is a good learner-teacher relationship), the authoritarian style which is “characterized by numerous behavioural relations” (there are many forceful restrictions imposed on learners, the teacher is strict and punishes learners who break the rules), the permissive style which “is characterized by a lack of involvement and the environment is non-punitive” (learners are given freedom), and the indulgent style “presents an environment where there are no demands on the students...[t]hey are actively supported in their efforts to seek their own ends using any reasonable means” (Tiwari & Panwar, 2014, p. 518).

In addition, Tiwari and Panwar (2014, p. 518) highlight three classroom management strategies to manage problem behaviours in the classroom. They believe that the “self-discipline approach is built on the premise that students can be trusted to evaluate and change their actions so that their behaviours are beneficial and appropriate to everyone” (Tiwari & Panwar, 2014, p. 519). The second approach is the “instructional approach” in which the “premise that forms the basis for instructional approach is well-planned and well-implemented instruction” and this will

prevent problem behaviour from occurring within the classroom (Tiwari & Panwar, 2014, p. 519). The third approach is the “desist approach to the classroom management gives the teacher full responsibility for regulating the classroom” (Tiwari & Panwar, 2014, p. 519). Teachers must enforce their power of authority to manage, “forcefully and quickly” the learners who display problem behaviour (Tiwari & Panwar, 2014, p. 519).

Tiwari and Panwar (2014, p. 526) further highlight other strategies to manage problem behaviour such as, “staring at children when not listening” to redirect the child’s attention and focus on the lesson being taught; “asking questions to inattentive students” so that they are forced to be attentive and will be able absorb new information and not be distracted; “providing positive reinforcement to students for following class rules” by commending or praising them; “mobility of teacher in the classroom” which allows teachers to monitor the learners, enforcing them to be more alert; “shouting”, “seating arrangements”, appointing monitors” to take control of any disruptions that may occur; “reminding students about the class rules”, “giving clear instructions”; and “threatening students with the name of principal or parents” to prevent learners from displaying problematic behaviour in the classroom.

According to Hecker, Hermenau, Isele and Elbert (2014), corporal punishment still remains a common practice in schools located in low- income countries as a strategy to manage discipline and improving behavioural problems. A study conducted by Hecker, Hermenau, Isele and Elbert (2014), assessed the occurrence of corporal punishment in Tanzanian primary schools, which involved 409 children. These children experienced corporal punishment at home and at school as a consequence of displaying problem behaviours. “In Tanzania corporal punishment is still lawful not only at home but also at school. Although the law prohibits torture or other cruel or inhuman punishment, it allows corporal punishment as a means for justifiable correction. While only headteachers used to be allowed to punish corporally in Tanzanian schools, corporal punishment has just recently been reintroduced as a corrective measure usable by all teachers” (Hecker, Hermenau, Isele & Elbert, 2014, p. 885). Therefore, it was a method enforced by teachers to help manage problem behaviours in the classroom. This was seen as an effective method to prevent problem behaviours in schools.

Gagnon, Sylvester and Marsh (2021) conducted a study in South African primary schools, from kindergarten to Grade 7 in an urban disadvantaged community. The study focused on positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS) as a framework to manage problem behaviours that aligns with the South African Department of Education’s Alternatives to Corporal

Punishment. According to Gagnon, Sylvester and Marsh (2021, p. 2), although corporal punishment is banned, “many teachers lack classroom management skills and continue to believe in and rely on corporal punishment” and there are only a “few published empirical studies focusing on behavioural interventions in SA schools and teachers assert that they have no practical and effective alternatives to [corporal punishment]”. Therefore, it was within the South African Department of Education to implement the positive behavioural interventions and support and a way forward to manage problem behaviours. The positive behavioural interventions and support approach provides a safe and supportive environment and is being using in many schools in 22 countries to promote appropriate learner behaviours. From the study conducted by Gagnon, Sylvester and Marsh (2021, p. 4), teachers identified intervention strategies to manage problem behaviours, such as; punishments/sanctions, removing learners from the class, rewards , set rules and make learners aware of the consequences, keep learners engaged, use praise, use negative consequences, reprimand, time-out, separation from peers, inform the principal and parents, keep the learner in during the break or after school and contact other professionals. Teachers responded that they rarely followed the policy. The most common approaches to manage problem behaviour were the implementation of negative consequences rather than positive behavioural interventions and support, only a few teachers implemented positive reinforcements.

In addition, Mahlangu, Chirwa, Machisa, Sikweyiya, Shai and Jewkes (2021) conducted a study in public schools in Tshwane, South Africa. They found that “[c]orporal punishment is still a common practice in schools globally. Although illegal, studies in South Africa report its continued use, but only a few have explored factors associated with school [corporal punishment]” (Mahlangu, Chirwa, Machisa, Sikweyiya, Shai & Jewkes, 2021, p. 1). According to Mahlangu, Chirwa, Machisa, Sikweyiya, Shai and Jewkes (2021, p. 3), while the use of corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa,

...there has been limited concerted effort to enforce the law, ensuring that those who continue to use [corporal punishment] are convicted of an offense; and training of teachers on alternative methods of classroom management and discipline has been inadequate

They further asserted that 52% of the learners had experienced corporal punishment at school in the last 6 months. Due to the concern of problem behaviours experienced in the classroom, corporal punishment was implemented to maintain discipline and to enable academic success.

A study in Zambia by Mtonga (2016) reported that the step taken to abolish corporal punishment in all schools created serious disciplinary issues in Zambian schools. The study further revealed that after corporal punishment was abolished in Zambian schools, teachers were expected to use alternative modes which are non-physical to instil positive behaviour despite the government not providing workshops for teachers to be equipped with guidance and counselling skills as an alternative. Egbochukwu (2012) study in Nigeria suggested behaviour therapy for learners with behaviour problems which include: systematic desensitization, modeling, homework, activity scheduling and role playing (for example prefectship), some of which have been scientifically proven to be effective in treating behaviours requiring modification. Egbochukwu also suggested cognitive behaviour therapy, which is insight-focused and entails recognizing and changing negative and maladaptive patterns of thought in clients' minds.

A study carried out in South Africa by Schmid (2007) concludes that the need for statutory intervention can be avoided if prevention and early intervention is the focus because it is this which is 'required to strengthen families, enhance their coping skills and promote self-reliance'. Another study by Lunga, Koen and Mthiyane, (2021) reported that disruptive learner behaviour in rural schools could potentially be managed through parental involvement, the use of problem-solving approaches, learner participation in all school programmes and the antecedent-behaviour-consequence approach.

According to Section 10 of the South African Schools Act, no person may administer corporal punishment at a school against any learner. The removal of corporal punishment and teachers' concomitant inability to maintain classroom conditions and maintain discipline could also be responsible for encouraging problem behaviours in then the classroom. Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p. 97) contend that the South African Schools Act of 1996 "provides that all school governing bodies should adopt and assist in the enforcement of a learner code of conduct to maintain discipline effectively". They further show that disruptive behaviour in South African schools has been reported widely "and is said to include learners with dangerous weapons, learner on learner violence, learner on educator violence, vandalism, theft, and learners in possession with prohibited substances such as drugs and alcohol" (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 98). As a result, the school governing bodies adopted a code of conduct for learners as a way of "establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to improving the quality of the learning process" (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 97). The code of conduct implements rules which learners must follow, however, "learner discipline as one of the major

concerns expressed by all stakeholders in the education process in South Africa [and] a study conducted by Rossouw (2003) revealed that there has been a decline in the level of discipline in schools in recent years and this has seriously hampered the teaching and learning process” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 98). According to Mestry and Khumalo’s (2012, p. 105) study, the misconduct of learners is an issue of serious concern and the participants of their study “mentioned that learners do not show respect for those in authority such as teachers. As a result, it becomes difficult to discipline such learners who seem to rebel against authority”. They further show that a participant who “is a Departmental Head also asserted that a lack of respect for teachers is a serious problem which disturbs an environment of mutual trust which must exist between a teacher and a learner” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 105). The lack of respect for law and regulations in SA in general is sometimes not taken seriously and this has led to a kind of "don't care" attitude on the part of teachers and learners in the domain of education.

According to Mtsweni (2008, p. 25), section 8 of the South African Schools Act, states that “discipline must be maintained in the school and classroom situations so that the education of learners’ flourish, without disruptive behaviour and offences”. Teachers are to ensure that effective teaching and learning occurs in the classroom, however, teachers find it difficult to do so when learners display problem behaviour. Therefore, it is the role of the teacher to implement effective strategies to manage the learners who display problem behaviour.

Maphosa and Shumba (2010) focus on educators’ disciplinary capabilities after the banning of corporal punishment in South African schools. They assert that in the “escalation of learner indiscipline cases in schools suggests failure by teachers to institute adequate alternative disciplinary measures after corporal punishment was outlawed in South African schools” (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p. 1). According to Maphosa and Shumba (2010), the democratization of the South African schooling systems and the change in the constitution in 1994 focused on children’s rights and the protection of the child, thus resulting in “disciplinary measures like corporal punishment were abolished” (p. 1). In addition, they asserted that according to Section 12 of the South African Constitution Act 108 of 1996 stated that “everyone has the right not to be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” (p. 1). South African schools had to then seek alternative strategies to manage problem behaviours displayed by learners. Many South African schools today face numerous challenges to come up with effective, adequate and appropriate strategies to manage problematic learners in a classroom without overstepping on their rights (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010, p. 1).

In another study, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 1) asserted that the “lack of discipline among learners in schools has been one of the foremost problems facing schools over the years”. Learner discipline greatly impacts the teaching and learning process. In addition, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 1) asserted that “that the problem of learner discipline is on the increase – both nationally and internationally”. The increase of problem behaviours experiences is of immense concern and the lack of disciplinary measures cannot be achieved in schools. “Education legislation, school principals and educators face extreme challenges in the management of learner discipline without affecting the learners’ rights” (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021, p. 1). The South African legislation clearly prohibits the implementation of corporal punishment in schools, and since then many schools experience difficulty in maintaining learner discipline. The study conducted by Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) focuses on how learner discipline is managed post-corporal punishment era. According to Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), to establish effective discipline, teachers need to have a good relationship with their learners so that they can communicate and understand the cause of the problem behaviours. In addition, teachers also need to involve parents so that the parents can also monitor the child’s behaviour at home and the advice of school counsellor can allow be beneficial to help manage the problem behaviours experienced. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p.3) also asserted that in order to promote discipline, “schools should involve learners in the drafting of the school rules, such as the school’s code of conduct. This would make them see the rules as being fair and easy to obey; effective rules should motivate learners to comply with the school policies”. Teachers find it challenging to use the strategies to maintain order and discipline in their classrooms. “Despite having the guidelines on how to maintain discipline, many schools still practice corporal punishment” (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021, p.3).

Mestry and Khumalo’s (2012) study focused on Governing bodies and learner discipline: Managing rural schools in South Africa through a code of conduct. Their study asserted that school governing bodies should “adopt and assist in the enforcement of a learner code of conduct to maintain discipline effectively” (p. 97). Their study focused on the perceptions and experiences of the school governing bodies in the manner in which they addressed and managed discipline in rural schools using the learners code of conduct. Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p. 97) asserted that “[o]ne of the major findings of the study revealed that many rural school governors still lack the relevant knowledge and skills to design and enforce a learner code of conduct effectively” thus having problem behaviour still being an immense concern for teachers. According to Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p. 97), a safe and effective learning

environment refers to an environment that is free from any disruptive behaviour that can negatively impact the learners' education or interfere with their learning environment. The code of conduct sets out rules and consequences regarding learners' behaviours and also describes the disciplinary processes that should be implemented when learners too not conform to the code of conduct. There is a lack of discipline in South African schools and as a result of problem behaviours, the teaching and learning environment is affected. In addition, Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p. 102) asserted that school governing bodies "are not given adequate training to enable them to perform their duties effectively". Many strategies were used to manage problem behaviours; however, many strategies were ineffective. From the study conducted by Mestry and Khumalo (2012, p. 104), teachers were aware that corporal punishment was banned but they had still used it. They postulated that "in some instances, principals argued that the only way to get the discipline right was by using the stick". "The fact that the use of the outlawed corporal punishment still exists, indicates the difficulties regarding enforcing the use of alternative resolution strategies which should be contained in the learner codes of conduct" (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p.104). This suggests that the school governing bodies face great difficulties to enforce the code of conduct and schools did also not make use of the code of conduct, thus still being a great concern in schools.

South African schools need to find effective strategies to manage problem behaviours experienced in the classroom. Many strategies implemented by teachers are only temporarily and are not long-term solutions. Finding appropriate strategies to manage problem behaviour in the classroom needs to be more permanent so that effective teaching and learning can occur. It is important for teachers to have knowledge and understand the problem behaviours, as well as how to manage these behaviours in their classroom. If teachers are unaware of their learners' strengths, weakness and needs they will be unable to help their learners. Teachers need to accommodate learners by implementing appropriate and effective strategies.

It is important to note that the studies reviewed above were quantitative in nature and they lacked detailed findings which could have been possible within a qualitative research paradigm. Moreover, there appears to be contradicting results in the reviewed studies, and the present study validated the findings by focusing on the south African context. This shortcoming was addressed in the present study.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed various literature in the domain of problem behaviours and provided an overview of some of the problem behaviours that teachers were faced with in the classroom, teachers' explanations of the causes of problem behaviours, the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching and learning environment and lastly, strategies that teachers used to manage problem behaviours in the classroom. The next chapter focuses on the theoretical framework which serves as the explanatory framework for the research findings that are later reported.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework which will serve as the explanatory framework for the research findings. The study was informed by two theories, that is Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory.

3.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory has been chosen to inform this study. Bronfenbrenner saw the process of human development as being shaped by the interaction between the individual and their environment. He proposed 'social systems' which illustrated the interactions within each system as well as the individual (Hertler, Figueredo, Peñaherrera-Aguirre, & Fernandes, 2018, p.325). The emphasis in the theory is on the large number of environmental and societal influences on child development. The child first interacts with their parents, their external family members, friends, and then society at large. Bronfenbrenner proposed five levels of social systems (Hertler, Figueredo, Peñaherrera-Aguirre, & Fernandes, 2018, p.325). The systems in this theory are discussed as follows:

Microsystem

The first system is the microsystem which includes social structures in which the child interacts such as family. According to Härkönen (2001, p. 7) the microsystem is "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features, and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and systems of belief". At this proximal ecological level direct interaction is taking place.

Mesosystem

The second system is the mesosystem which includes the interaction between two or more microsystems. For example, the interaction between the parents and teachers. According to Härkönen (2001, p. 10), the mesosystem “comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person”. The mesosystem refers to a system of microsystems that are interconnected.

Exosystem

The third system is the exosystem which includes the external environment which indirectly affect development, for example the workplace of the parents. According to Härkönen (2001, p.11), the exosystem “encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings”. At this proximal ecological level, the individual has no direct influence, but by which is nevertheless influenced.

Macrosystem

The fourth system is the macrosystem which includes the cultures in which individuals live which shape human development. According to Härkönen (2001, p.12), the macrosystem “consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally-institutive belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems”. At this ecological level, culture, values, beliefs and norms influence the development of the individual, including the microsystems and mesosystems that are embedded in those cultural influences.

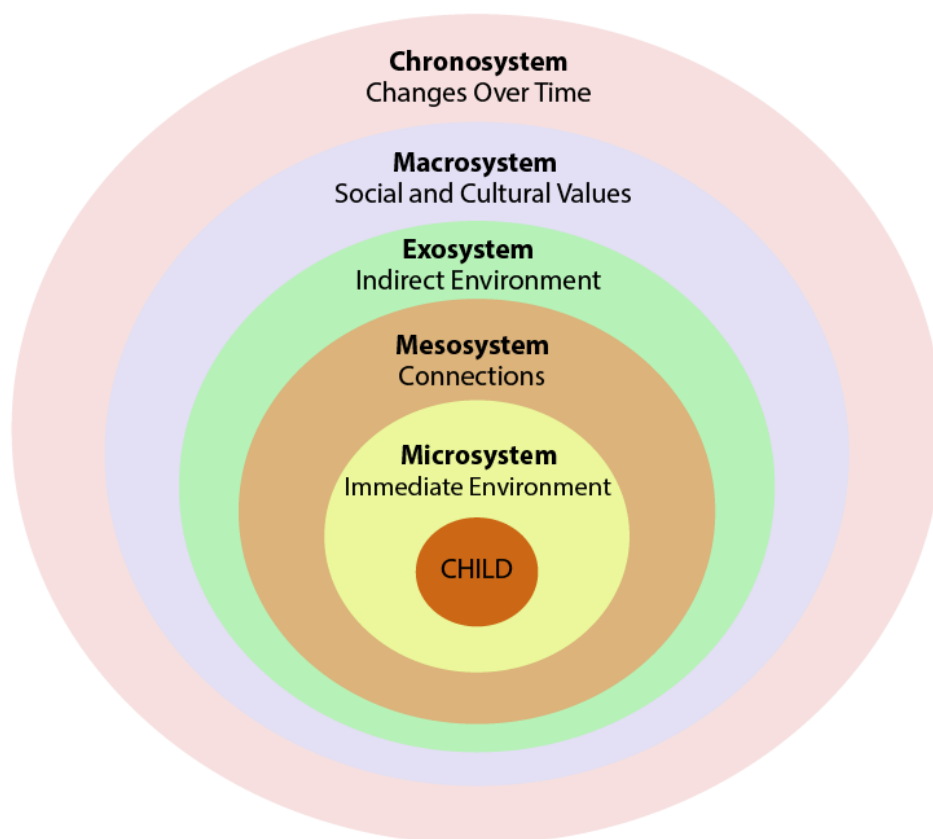
Chronosystem

The fifth system is the chronosystem which is the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course (Hertler, Figueredo, Peñaherrera-Aguirre, & Fernandes, 2018, p.326). According to Härkönen (2001, p.13), the chronosystem is a description of the evolution, development or stream of development of the external systems in time”. At this ecological

level, the pattern of environmental events and the changing socio-historical circumstances influence the development of the individual.

Figure 1 illustrates Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory which organises the contexts of development into five ecological levels of external influences that affect the process of development of an individual.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory



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Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

In addition, Ettekal, and Mahoney (2017, p. 5) postulate that Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory proposed a process of human development. The process of development included four factors, namely, the person, the process, context and time (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 5). The person involves the child's biological characteristics. The process involves the interactions between the child and their environment. The context involves Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems. The interaction between the person and context factors are immensely important in

seeing that “[d]evelopment is largely induced by proximal processes that occur on a regular basis over extended periods of time” (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 5). Therefore, to understand the dynamic nature of development, “[p]roximal processes occur in a specific time and place and within a specific historical context. Time is construed at various levels of the ecological system” (Ettetal & Mahoney, 2017, p. 5).

Bronfenbrenner’s theory identifies various factors in the environment and how each factor influences a child’s development. The ecological model is important in understanding a systems approach of human and social development. This theory informs the present study because teachers need to focus on the child’s environmental structures to be able to understand more about the child’s characteristics and needs. It is important to understand the ecological systems as it also informs my study in helping teachers understand, identify and manage learners who display problem behaviour. Teachers can help by understanding learner’s learning environments and to establish a more safe and effective learning space for learners to be able to feel comfortable. Understanding this theoretical framework allows for an understanding of the development of a child and how various factors impact the individual.

Amod, Vorster, and Lazarus (2013) argue that the environment we are surrounded by impacts our development. These researchers adopt an extension of Bronfenbrenner’s thinking called “[t]he eco-systemic theory, which forms part of the broader social ecological model to understanding learning barriers” (Amod, Vorster, & Lazarus, 2013, p. 216). This theory proposes that we need a holistic approach to the understanding of children’s growth needs as they are not only impacted by their immediate familial environment but also their surrounding environment.

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system theory emphasizes the concept of ecology entailing the relationships between the individuals and their environments. It further examines the influence of the environment in the social, physiological and emotional wellbeing of the child. The various factors included in the ecological system therefore influences the child’s development. According to Bronfenbrenner, children find themselves in various ecosystems which the child inevitably interacts with and which influences all aspects of the child’s life. The way in which the ecosystems interact with the child affects the child’s overall development. Bronfenbrenner proposed that how a child reacts to people in their microsystem will affect how the child will treat people. The child’s family, peers, school, community and culture can greatly affect the child’s behavioural outcome.

In addition to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory, Cooper and Upton's (1991) article on 'an ecosystemic approach to problem behaviour in schools' emphasizes a management, developmental and reflexive function which have important implications in schools to control and change behaviour (p. 23). According to Cooper and Upton (1991, p. 23), the ecosystemic approach is "based on the idea that human interactional structures, such as families, schools and other organisations, are self-regulating systems, which function in a way which is analogous to the natural ecosystem". Human interactional structures including educational facilities and families are self-regulating. This ecosystemic approach is comparable to that of certain characteristics displayed in the natural ecosystem which are subject to continual change resulting from the survival needs of the total system. The ecological systems, as mentioned previously, are in continual interaction with each other, thus influencing the individual within their environment. If there is a change in any part of the ecosystem, this will result in the change of the whole ecosystem (Cooper & Upton, 1991, p. 23).

Cooper and Upton (1991) indicate that ecosystemic techniques were used to manage behaviour problems experienced by teachers and other school staff. They further focus on key concepts which are fundamental to the ecosystemic approach (Cooper & Upton, 1991, p. 23). First, they contend, problem behaviour is not developed within the individual displaying problem behaviour, but rather they adopt this behaviour from interactions between other individuals. Every individual is different and will therefore react differently to situations based on their perception. Secondly, the relationship factors in the correspondence of behaviours are recursive, and not lineal. Thirdly, any change in one part of a system will change the entire ecosystem and resonate through related systems, emphasizing that a problem of classroom misbehaviour can be solved by the teacher in the classroom ecosystem, whilst a problem that cannot be managed by a teacher will involve intervention with the parents in the family ecosystem. Lastly, intervention strategies to address problem behaviour needs to encompass all systems' full participation, seeing that acceptance by all individuals is crucial in order to be able to reach a resolution, there is no room for neutral responses. According to Cooper and Upton (1991, p. 23), the lack of parental supervision, ineffectual teachers, teachers' lack of formal power, an imbalance between rewards and punishment, are all seen as contributory causes for 'bad' behaviour in schools. These underlying recommendations will help reduce the problem behaviour experienced in the classroom. Meaningful and feasible changes results in successful solutions in sustaining various situations.

In addition, Cooper and Upton (1990, p. 301) asserted that the ecosystemic approach offers “new ways of conceptualising behaviour problems in schools, which are based on the view that human behaviour is developed and maintained through interactional processes”. Secondly, it offers teachers various interventions for managing problem behaviour, and lastly, it offers practicality in the overall effectiveness of schools. According to Cooper and Upton (1990, p. 302), teachers do not need the expertise of a trained family therapist, but rather teachers need to use the systemic intervention strategies when they interact with their learners and parents.

According to Hess and Schultz (2008, p. 65), the application of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model demanded an exploration of the societal factors which explained human behaviour and experience, as well as “focusing on the macrosystems, social structures that maintain inequality by treating individuals differently in accord with the economic, political and social needs of the dominant society are revealed”. This statement emphasizes that in order to understand behaviours of an individual, the historical factors need to be considered in the explanations.

In an ecological system, the interconnectedness within individuals and their systemic factors shapes the development of their experiences (Hess & Schultz, 2008, p. 79). In understanding behaviours of an individual, we need to take into account the effect of sociocultural factors, the four systems, cultural norms that surrounds the experience, and the social and economic policies and laws that influences aspects of the individual. The explanations of these conditions will help understand the causes of the behaviours experienced. As time goes by, in our ever-changing world, the world becomes more complex and the development of an individual is connected to the way in which the world evolves. Therefore, it is important to practice Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model to embrace this convolution in seeing that the ecological model does indeed consider the historical dimension into account and corporates the factor of historical aspects to provide an explanation for the problem behaviours teachers experience in the classroom today.

3.3 Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura’s Social Cognitive theory adopts an agentic perspective on change, adaptation, and self-development (Bandura, 2005, p. 9). This theory identifies the influence of the individual’s experiences, the actions of those around the individual, and the environmental factors which affect the individuals’ behaviours. The Social Cognitive theory identifies three factors that

influence the behaviours of an individual. The first factor being the environment of the individual, the second factor being the experiences of the individual or personal characteristics and the third being behavioural factors. According to Bandura (2005, p. 10) the manner in which individuals' function is deeply rooted in social systems. "Therefore, personal agency operates within a broad network of sociostructural influences" (Bandura, 2005, p. 10). These sociostructural influences is an important aspect as it allows individuals to create social systems to organise, guide, and regulate their daily activities which provides personal development.

According to Bandura's (1989) article on Human agency in social cognitive theory, highlights the mechanisms of human agency through the manner in which changes within an individual are recognised. The human agency functions in three different ways known as the autonomous agency, mechanical agency and emergent interactive agency (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Although human beings are independent agents and is control of their own actions, various aspects of the environmental factors "invoke the view of autonomous agency in arguments designed to repudiate any role of self-influence in casual processes" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Secondly, external influences operate using the mechanical agency which "external influences operate mechanistically on action, but it does not itself have any motivative, self-reflective, self-reactive, creative, or self-directive properties" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Lastly, the emergent agency places focus on the individual to make contributions to their own actions and motivations "within a system of triadic reciprocal causation" (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). These three agencies help understand the influences of actions and desired outcomes of individuals. Individuals may obtain self-regulation but this in no way detracts the influences of the nature of their environment and their situations which make them who they become.

Rumjaun and Narod (2020, p. 85) contends that interactions between people play a vital role in the daily lives of social beings. Bandura's social learning theory postulates that "people learn from each other through observation and modelling. His theory is often referred to as a junction or bridge between cognitive and behaviorist theories" (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020, p. 86). According to Bandura's theory, learning occurs through a social behavioural approach in which people learning from others by "observing and modelling their behaviour" (Rumjaun & Narod, 2020, p. 86), and also focuses on the cognitive process to explain how learning occurs. In addition, Rumjaun and Narod (2020, p. 86) assert that Bandura proposed that learning through observation is through direct imitation, "people learn by observing others' behaviour, but their cognitive processes or internal mental states will determine whether they will "imitate" the behaviour or not". By analysing the manner in which individuals function cognitively on their

social experiences, the influences of their environment are evident on their behaviour and development.

In addition, Bandura (2012, p. 55) postulated that some individuals learn from direct experiences of rewards and punishments from their actions through social modelling and some individuals learn from others' experiences. The function of modelling influences personal and social change. Through observation individuals acquire "emotional proclivities toward people, places, and things through modelled emotional experiences", they also learn what to fear and dislike from their experiences, and finally, "[t]he behaviour of others also serve as social prompts that activate, channel, and support modelled styles of behaviour" (Bandura, 2012, p. 55). According to Bandura (2012, p. 57), human behaviour and motivation is also affected by the outcomes individuals expect their desired actions to produce. These include material aspects that affect behaviour and social approval and disapproval which influence individuals to "adopt personal standards and regulate their behaviour by their self- evaluative reactions". Human beings do certain things or behave in a certain manner to achieve self- satisfaction.

Bandura's (2006) agentic theory emphasizes human development, adaptation, and change. Human beings contribute to their life circumstances and the social cognitive theory "rejects a duality between human agency and social structure" (Bandura, 2006, p. 164). Individuals create social systems which influence the individual's lives in various aspects. According to Bandura (2006), individuals are contributors to their life circumstances. Bandura (2006) focus on four core properties of human agency. The first property is 'intentionality', which refers to the intended planned actions that is taken deliberately by an individual to achieve a desired future outcome. The second property is 'forethought', which involves the process of applying thought to an action, setting goals and the ability to anticipate a desired outcome to guide and motivate the efforts of the individual. The third property is 'self-reactiveness', which refers to individuals being self-regulators. Individuals must display the ability to "construct appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution" (Bandura, 2006, p. 165). The fourth property is 'self-reflectiveness', which involves self-examining and evaluating. Individuals obtain metacognitive capacity to reflect effectively. Human functioning involves a "reciprocal interplay of intrapersonal, behavioural and environmental determinants" (Bandura, 2006, p. 165). Therefore, the social systems are the main factor that develops an individual and helps to organise, guide and regulate the affairs of human beings.

In addition, Bandura (2006, p. 170), argued that personal efficacy is important because the “belief in one’s efficacy is a key personal resource in personal development and change” because it “operates through its impact on cognitive, motivational, affective decisional process”. The beliefs can affect the individuals’ goals and can affect the individual’s outcome expectations.

Individuals who possess low belief efficacy tend to give up quickly and face many difficulties, whereas individuals who possess high belief efficacy, are able to face any difficulties and remain motivated. According to Bandura (2006, p. 171), “[a] factor that influences choice behaviour can profoundly affect the courses lives take. This is because the social influences operating in the selected environments continue to promote certain competencies, values and lifestyles”. The efficacy of belief can greatly influence the quality of the individuals’ life. Bandura (2006, p. 172) further adds that “we are currently witnessing extensive “genetization” of human behaviour”. Human beings have created societies of many diverse natures and culture plays an important role in the development of an individual. “People have changed little genetically over the past millennium, but over the recent decades they have changed markedly in their beliefs, more, social and occupational roles, cohabiting arrangements, family practices, and styles of behaviour in diverse spheres of life” (Bandura, 2006, 173). Individuals have changed due to the “rapid cultural and technological evolution” (Bandura, 2006, 173).

Schunk and Usher (2012) also focus on Bandura’s social cognitive theory which is a theory of psychological functioning that highlights learning from the social environment. “Social cognitive theory emphasizes the idea that much human learning and behaviour occur in social environments. By interacting with others, people learn knowledge, skills, strategies, beliefs, rules, and attitudes” (Schunk & Usher, 2012, p. 13). Through the observations and interconnectedness between the individual and the environment, the individual tends to learn about behaviour.

In addition to the above, Schunk and Usher (2012, p. 14) illustrated that the social cognitive theory emphasizes that behaviour is established with a framework of ‘triadic reciprocity’ which involves reciprocal interactions between three factors of influences being the personal, behavioural and social/ environmental factors. Social cognitive theory reflects the view of individual ‘agency’ regarding the manner in which individuals are proactively engaged in their development. Individuals have a great sense of control in guiding their thoughts, feelings and

actions which affects the manner in which they behave, however, in the reciprocal aspect, individuals are influenced by the environment in which they live in.

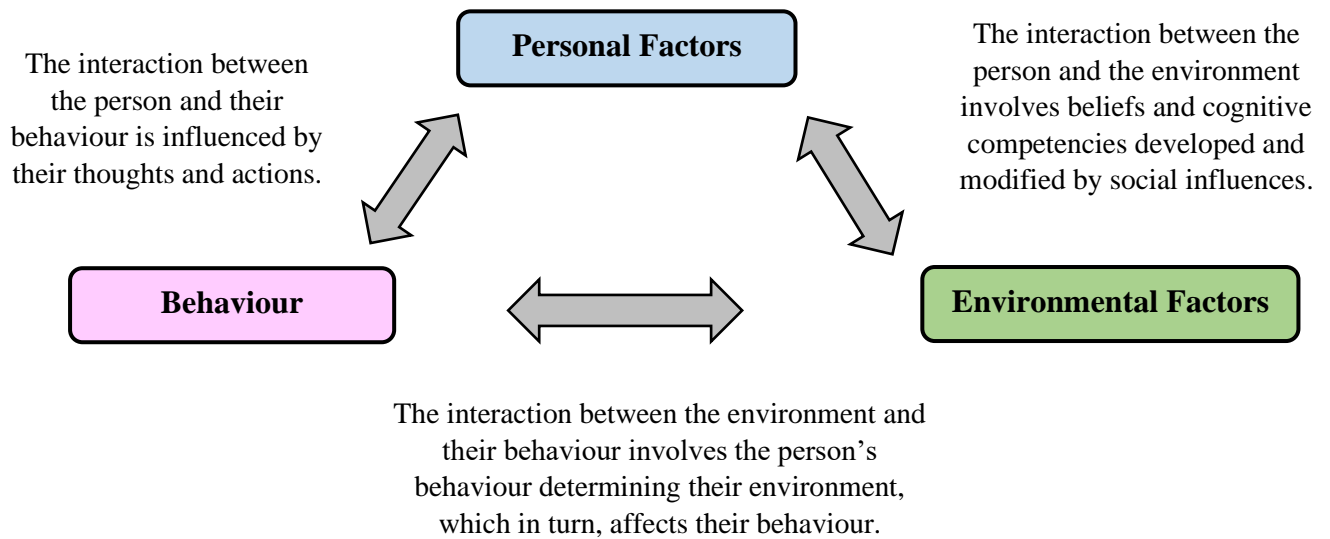


Figure 2: Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

(<https://foryou1181.blogspot.com/2021/04/social-cognitive-theory-bandura-theory.html>)

According to Grusec (1994), Social Learning Theory was an attempt to understand the explanation of human behaviour. Bandura maintained that “cognition involves knowledge and the skills for acting on that knowledge” (Grusec, 1994, p. 783). Being attentive is an important skill for children to identify their environment and obtain the ability to make connections between information about their actions and outcomes. Children experience attention difficulties when they are young. This improves as time goes by and children are able to reason and make decisions governing their behaviour. According to Bandura, the acquisition of behaviour is through observational learning (Grusec, 1994, p. 784). The concept of self-efficacy is used to understand the explanation of “how children’s changing self-concepts can affect their social and cognitive behaviour” (Grusec, 1994, p. 784). Behaviour can be acquired from direct experience or from observing the behaviour of others (Bandura & Walters, 1977, p.145).

The social cognitive theory uses environmental factors, socialization, and modelling to explain behaviour. In addition to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory, Bandura’s theory also helps to explain the nature of behaviour. Both theories explain how the interconnectedness of the individual and the environment is important in understanding behaviour. However, history

also plays an immense role in understanding behaviour. As time goes by, many changes are taking place in our everyday lives; there are changes in our society, and our culture, etc. Although as human beings we are able to make our own choices and are able to think rationally, we are still greatly influenced by our surroundings, the people we associate with and the environment in which we live.

3.4 Justification of the Theoretical Framework to the study

This study was informed by a “combination” of the theories discussed above. The ecological systems theory is relevant to this study because it explains how social environments affect children’s development through the five ecological levels. Bronfenbrenner’s theory further articulates the process of human socialization which is key in understanding the behaviour of the individual due to the various external influences. The ecological theory identifies important factors which can be used in the classroom. Children can learn and develop through their person-to-person interactions with their teachers and their classmates, as well as the influences of their personal characteristics. Once children are able to understand their learning environment, they will be able to establish a safe quality learning environment. Teachers need to be aware of how influential they are on their learners’ lives. On the other hand, social cognitive theory is relevant to this study because it explains how behaviour is imitated by others, especially children. The importance of Bandura’s theory is that it reveals new methods of teaching and imitating appropriate behaviour. Through the means of social learning theory, teachers can increase engagement in the class, learners can develop self-organising skills and collaboration in class can be encouraged for effective teaching and learning to occur, and also to reduce problem behaviours. Teachers can use Bandura’s theory to encourage and teach desirable behaviours in the classroom. It is important to acknowledge that social learning theory can be used to show the various ways that an individual can learn. Children can make choices on self-reflection, however, the environment in which the children find themselves will influence the way they behave and learn. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to create a safe learning environment for children.

Thus by “combining” Ecological theory with Social cognitive theory we have a greater explanatory framework to engage with, and explain, problem behaviours in the classroom.

3.5 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter focused on two theories, viz., Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which both help in understanding the development and behaviours of an individual. In the next chapter the research design and research methodology adopted in this study will be discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the theoretical framework adopted by this study. This chapter presents an overview of the research design and research methodology adopted in this study. An overview of the research paradigm, research design, research methodology, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, trustworthiness of qualitative data, data analysis and ethical considerations are presented.

4.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical view in which people share their perspective or interpretation of researched data (Kuhn, 1962). This study was located within the interpretative research paradigm. “Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located, assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 8). Therefore, the interpretivist paradigm attempts to understand the world through social constructions. This paradigm was relevant for the present study because it helped me to understand the teachers and their interpretations of the world around them, to identify problem behaviour, the causes of problem behaviour and to investigate teachers’ explanations of these phenomena.

4.3 Research Design

The design chosen for this study was a multiple case study. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015, p. 3), in a “multiple case study a number of cases are studied to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition”. Lincoln and Guba (1981) asserted that case studies are an appropriate way of evaluating data, and they further believe that a “case study is best because it provides thick description, is grounded, is holistic and lifelike, simplifies data to be considered by the reader, illuminates meanings, and can communicate tacit knowledge”

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 49). By conducting a multiple case study design, this study involved collecting and analysing data from several cases, in this case, three schools in Midrand, Gauteng Province in South Africa. This study focused on identifying problem behaviours in classrooms and appropriate strategies used to manage problem behaviour.

4.4 Research Methodology

This study was guided by a qualitative research methodology. The “[q]ualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 5). According to Pathak, Jena and Kalra (2013, p. 1), “qualitative research is now recognized for its ability to add a new dimension to interventional studies that cannot be obtained through measurement of variables alone”. The qualitative methodology adopted was relevant for this study because obtained the in-depth experiences of teachers with learners who display problem behaviours and had allowed for flexibility throughout the research when answering the research questions and helped the researcher to analyse the data more intensively.

4.5 Research Site

This study was conducted at three private primary schools located in Midrand, the Gauteng province of South Africa. The schools were co-head schools and consisted of diverse backgrounds. The schools chosen were very resourceful and did not lack any teaching materials. The socio-economic of the area is of an average/ wealthy living. The area chosen was suitable for my study as these schools established many learners who displayed problem behaviours. All three private schools consist of diverse teachers regarding ethnicity and age group. The ages of the teachers range from individuals straight out of university until retirement age. Private school A has one principal, two HOD’s (one HOD for junior primary and one HOD for senior primary), there are 7 faculty heads for various subjects being English, Afrikaans, IsiZulu, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, Technology and Creative Art. There are a total of 20 teachers and 3 assistants. There are 388 learners (Grade R to 7). In private school B, there is one principal, the management team includes the head of sports and two HOD’s (one HOD for junior primary and one HOD for senior primary), there are three

Foundation Phase Grade heads and there are 5 faculty heads for English, Afrikaans, isiZulu, Mathematics, and Science. There are a total of 33 teachers and 10 assistants. The total number of learners are 517 (Grade R to 7). Private school C has 1 principal and 2 HOD's (Foundation and Senior Primary). There are 25 teachers and 397 learners (Grade R to 7).

4.6 Research Sampling and Sample Size

This study focused on three private primary schools in Midrand, South Africa. This study focused on fifteen teachers (15) who teach grade four in the three schools in Midrand. Thus, each school has 5 teachers who teach grade 4 learners. Grade 4 learners were adequate for this study as they have just entered the senior primary phase and they have to adapt to a lot of changes. This age group demonstrate more problem behaviours as they have just moved out of the junior primary phase. The participants in my study are teachers with relevant teacher training and teaching experience. These teachers were interviewed to obtain the necessary data required for this study. This study employed the census sampling technique to obtain the 15 teachers who teach grade 4 learners. The participants comprised 15 teachers who teach grade 4 learners. Five teachers from each of the schools had been interviewed. These teachers consisted of both male and female ranging from teachers to HOD's. This sample size of 15 teachers was appropriate for my study as recommended by Mason (2010, p.1), which report that in qualitative studies smaller sample sizes are employed because “qualitative research is very labour intensive, analysing a large sample can be time consuming and often simply impractical” (p.1). Mason, (2010) further recommends that for qualitative studies, a sample size of 10-50 participants would enhance saturation of interview data. Moreover, Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) recommend that for qualitative studies, 15 participants were the smallest acceptable sample size that would lead to data saturation.

4.7 Data Collection Methods

This study employed semi-structured interviews for data collection (refer to Appendix D). In such interviews all of the questions are more flexibly worded or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions. Specific information was required from all the participants, in which case there is a more structured section to the interview, but the largest part of the

interview was guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, and neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions was determined ahead of time. The format allowed the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the participant, and to new ideas on the topic (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 90). The interview between the interviewer and the participants allowed for a comprehensive discussion of the topic at hand. According to Louise Barriball and While (1994, p. 330), “in this type of interview, validity and reliability depend, not upon the repeated use of the same words in each question, but upon conveying equivalence of meaning (Denzin, 1989). It is this equivalence of meaning which helps to standardize the semi-structured interview and facilitate comparability”. The interviews were conducted virtually using online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom as a covid-19 precaution measure. Each of the interview with participants lasted approximately between 45 minutes to one hour. The interviews were audio recorded, which was done using the online platforms, with permission from the participants, and these interviews was then transcribed and analysed. Due to the Covid pandemic, data was also collected using email and telephonic communication, in addition to virtual meetings. The interviews were then transcribed in readiness for data analysis.

4.8 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness of qualitative data through research done earnestly is important in ensuring the validity and reliability of the research findings for future readers and researchers. The concept of trustworthiness employs the criteria of credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability which help identify how a trustworthy thematic analysis is conducted (Nowell, Norris, White& Moules, 2017, p. 3). The four aspects of trustworthiness in this research are discussed below:

4.8.1 Credibility

The credibility of a study refers to the truth and reality of the research findings ensuring that the participants’ perspective is accurately interpreted and represented by the researcher. In order to increase trustworthiness and to ensure credibility, the study adopted member checking which allows the participant to verify the accuracy and resonance of the data and peer debriefing, allowing a qualified peer researcher to review and assess transcripts (Nowell,

Norris, White& Moules, 2017, p. 3). This study will establish credibility in six stages as described by Richie and Lewis (2013);

- **Stage 1:** Arrival and introductions – It is important to establish an ethical relationship in the introduction process by creating a comforting atmosphere.
- **Stage 2:** Introducing the research – The research topic is introduced clearly and considerations including ethics, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality, is reaffirmed.
- **Stage 3:** Starting the interview – Demographical information and further background information from the participants will be obtained, and the interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed in detail.
- **Stage 4:** Interview process – The research will aim to probe and direct the conversation to obtain adequate data to answer the research questions.
- **Stage 5:** Closing the interview – The participants will be allowed to express any unmentioned or incomplete points.
- **Stage 6:** Post interview – Appreciation and thanks will be showed to the participant. Confidentiality and anonymity will be reaffirmed.

4.8.2 Dependability

The dependability of the study refers to the consistency of the research findings by tracing the study's process. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe that to demonstrate dependability, the process of the study should be audited, which provides future readers and researchers with raw data and transcripts of the research findings “creating a clear audit trail” (Nowell, Norris, White& Moules, 2017, p. 3). The dependability of this study demonstrates the consistency and reliability of the research findings and the degree to which the research procedures are documented, which allows an external person to follow, audit and critique the research process. The data collected from this research are kept throughout the study.

4.8.3 Confirmability

The confirmability of the study focuses on the researchers' establishment of description on conclusions and interpretations of the research findings, emphasizing the understanding of “how and why decisions were made” (Nowell, Norris, White& Moules, 2017, p. 3). The data collected from this study fully reveals participants perspectives highlighting objectivity. The researcher ensured confirmability of data by ensuring that the procedures are documented for

checking and rechecking the data throughout the study to which others can confirm or corroborate the results.

4.8.4 Transferability

The transferability of the study refers to the “generalizability of inquiry” (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017, p. 3). To assist with transferability in the study, an in-depth descriptive detail of data received will be provided for each situation the mainstream schools. The results obtained of a qualitative nature from this study can be transferred to other contexts as it provides detailed description of results that can be generalized. The data collected thoroughly describes the research context so that the behaviours and experiences become meaningful to an outsider. Transparent reporting of the data collected will achieve transferability so that outsiders can evaluate whether the findings are applicable to other contexts (Kyngäs, Mikkonen & Kääriäinen (2019).

4.9 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was adopted to analyse the qualitative data. Coding procedures were tailored to the specific analytical approach. The qualitative study provided codes and themes formed from the relative data collected. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) “[t]hematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p. 3352). The objective of a thematic analysis is to ensure that the data obtained addressed the aim of the study. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules, 2017) outline the six phases of thematic analysis. The first step was to familiarize oneself with the interview data obtained and keep a record of all raw data collected. The second step is to generate initial codes from the qualitative data by using audit trails and peer debriefing. The third step was to search for themes, it is important to make sense of theme connections. In the fourth step the themes are reviewed. The fifth step involved defining and naming themes and finally, in the sixth step the report is produced which employs member checking and peer debriefing in the final write-up (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017, p. 4).

4.10 Ethical Considerations

According to Pietilä, Nurmi, Halkoaho, and Kyngäs (2020, p. 49), ethics “is an integral part of research that extends throughout the entire research process: from the selection of a research topic, to data collection and analysis, and, finally, the dissemination of study results”. Ethical considerations are of most importance as it promotes the aims of the research such as the truth in knowledge and to prevent any errors or falsification. Ethical consideration is a set of principles that guide this research design and practices. These principals include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality.

4..10.1 Permission Obtained from Relevant Authorities

All ethical protocols were taken into consideration during this study. Ethical clearance was first applied for from the University of Witwatersrand Ethics Research Committee. Secondly, permission to conduct the research in schools was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education, after which the researcher sought permission from principals to visit the selected private schools. The participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study, and they were provided with the proof of registration of the researcher and the ethical clearance document. Due to the constraints that the current pandemic places on face-to-face research interviews, the interviews were done using online platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

4.10.2 Informed Consent

To ensure voluntary participation, the participants were provided with consent forms, which they had to sign to have the interviews recorded. Informed consent is permission granted by the participants with full knowledge of information about what it means for them to participate in the study and they voluntarily give their consent before participating in the study, highlighting that the data will be used for research purposes only. According to Kadam (2017, p. 108) an “informed consent process can be termed as complete, valid, and meaningful if all four criteria of information disclosure, competence, comprehension, and voluntariness are effectively satisfied”.

4.10.3 Anonymity

To ensure anonymity of teachers, their names were not mentioned in the description of the research. According to Whelan (2007, p. 2) anonymity can be “conceptualized as “the degree to which the identity of a message source is unknown and unspecified; thus, the less knowledge one has about the source and the harder it is to specify who the source is among possible options, the more anonymity exists” (Scott, 2005, p. 243)”. All data collected from the participants will be kept anonymous as their identities will not be revealed.

4.10.4 Confidentiality

Confidentiality “means that information about individuals is protected from inadvertent disclosure to others by physical means, such as a locked cabinet, legal means, such as signed confidentiality statements, or methodological means, such as the use of coded files” (Whelan, 2007, p.3). To ensure confidentiality, the participants and schools are not identified by name and the researcher will secure the management of data access ensuring that the access is only authorized and granted to those in the process of this research avoiding the exposure of data findings. Moreover, the data will be stored in a computer whose password will be kept by researcher and the data will be destroyed after 5 years from the last date of data collection.

4.11 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter focused on the research paradigm, research design, research methodology, research site, research sampling, data collection methods, trustworthiness of qualitative data, data analysis and ethical considerations of this study. The beliefs about the ontology and epistemology will be discussed in the following chapters. The next chapter will discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I explained the research design and methodology and supported my choice of qualitative data collection and data analysis techniques. This presents the research findings based on the data collected in my multiple case study. The study aimed to explore the teachers understanding, their explanations and interventions of problem behaviour. The chapter begins by a presentation of the demographic information of the research participants, then this followed by a presentation of results on the bases of the research objectives of the study.

5.2 Demographic information of participants

The study participants comprised of 15 teachers who teach grade 4 learners from three selected private primary schools in Midrand, in the Gauteng province of South Africa, thus, five teachers in each school. The teachers selected for this study were both male and female and ranged in age from 27 to 58. The demographic information of participants of the research are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: *Demographic Information of teachers*

Participant	Gender	Race	Age (years)	Years of experience (years)
1	Male	Black	43	17
2	Female	Black	46	18
3	Female	Coloured	49	20
4	Male	White	36	13
5	Male	Black	56	29
6	Female	Black	30	3
7	Male	White	28	5
8	Female	White	28	2
9	Female	White	27	1

10	Female	Indian	32	6
11	Female	Indian	45	+ - 20
12	Female	Indian	51	28
13	Female	Black	31	8
14	Female	White	46	26
15	Female	White	58	36

The information on demographic profiles of participants in Table 1 indicate that, in terms of the ages of teachers, the youngest one was 27 years old while the oldest teacher was 58 years old. Regarding years of teaching experience, the information indicates that, there were few teachers with minimal years of teaching experiences while there was a teacher who had 36 years of teaching experience. In terms of gender distribution, there were 4 male teachers while the females were 11. Quite importantly, while race and gender are indicated in the table above, this study did not consider the specific influence that the race and gender of the teachers in the sample would have on learners' behaviour.

5.3 Findings of the Study

5.3.1 Findings on how teachers identify problematic behaviours of learners in the classroom

The study explored how teachers identify problematic behaviours of learners in the classroom. From the thematic analysis of interview data, the themes which emerged related to teachers' identification of problem behaviours included observing learners in and out of class, observing disruptive behaviours, observing uncooperative learners, observing disobedience behaviours, and assessing learning difficulties. The themes are discussed below.

Theme 1: *Observing learners in and out of class*

Teachers identify the problem behaviour in various ways. One of the ways include observation in and outside of class which is conduct during lessons (teaching time) and behaviour during break and while rotating between classes. Participants stated:

“By observing teachers are able to identify if there is something that distracts the learner, by observing social factors (talking during lesson time, bullying, social economic problems at home etc.), and the lack of discipline and motivation in which the learner will, for instance, not have any personal academic goals and he/she will then not see the value of putting forth their best effort in their work” (Participant 4).

“Observing their interactions with teachers and peers is important. I have noticed that some learners ‘feed’ off each other. If the friends are not here, naughty ones, then the other learners are quiet. As soon as the disruptive friends are back, the other learners also become disruptive. If other teachers also complain about the same learner when it comes to being respectful or obedient you can tell who has terrible behaviour and who doesn’t. Having to ask multiple times to quiet down or do a task” (Participant 8).

“By observing the learners in class, you notice that different learners portray different characteristics and show their frustration on struggles in different ways. With some learners the teacher will be able to tell by their facial expressions that they are frustrated or struggling. Some learners will start to distract themselves from the task at hand and fidget, play with their stationery or try to get the attention of other learners” (Participant 9).

“It is important to learn what is ‘normal’ behaviour for each child, that way it will be easier to recognise when any child is behaving abnormally. Observation is very important because most communication is non-verbal; we don’t only listen with our ears but really with our eyes as well. Listening to how a child speaks of home and themselves can also help identify the roots to certain behaviours” (Participant 6).

“It is important that every person, who is involved in the learner’s education, liaise with one another and try to solve any problematic behaviours. If these problems cannot be solved, the help of other educational professionals should be arranged, for example; psychologists or occupational therapists” (Participant 4).

It is essential to record observations to keep track of certain behaviours that may cause a barrier in a learner's education. By observing, teachers are able to indicate problem behaviours, for example, does the specific learner always want to be the centre of attention by not giving other learners the opportunity to talk, ignoring others ideas, abusing others verbally, etc. Subsequently, teachers will also observe when learners are withdrawn, not connecting with their peers, not engaging in academic activities and display a low/ lack of confidence.

Theme 2: *Observing Disruptive behaviours*

Being disruptive is causing unwarranted trouble which results in preventing something from continuing as usual. According to the participants, changing the atmosphere of the classroom and disrupting the lesson was an immense problem faced. The participants reported that by observing disruptive behaviours among learners, they were able to identify learners with behaviour problems. According to excerpts from the interview transcripts the teachers stated the following:

“Problem behaviour is continuous rather than occasional. It is consistent disregard/disrespect of the teacher, disregarding others, snide comments or learners having their own conversations instead of paying attention to the lesson and not submitting work on time” (Participant 3).

“Problem behaviour is any type of behaviour that takes from your lesson/teaching time, anything inappropriate behaviour that disrupts the lesson time” (Participant 4).

“Problem behaviour is any sort of behaviour that disrupts learning, such as being late, disregarding deadlines, side conversations happening when teaching is taking place, are some examples” (Participant 6).

“Problem behaviour is disruptive behaviour, such as learners being too loud/noisy during lessons, blurting out answers when having class discussions without raising their hands and waiting for a turn” (Participant 8).

“Problematic behaviour in the classroom can be any behaviour from learners, interrupting a lesson or distracting other learners. Whether it be

intentional or not. This can include restlessness, causing fidgeting which distracts others, constant talking or making noise which interrupts the teacher or distracts the rest of the learners or even consistently leaving books or stationery at home, which interrupts learning” (Participant 9).

“Observing learners’ behaviour and discovering that a few learners exhibit problem behaviour that is not normal such as them being disruptive” (Participant 10).

“Problem behaviour is learners who displays behaviour that disrupt the lesson and those who are not willing to/ open to conforming to the rules of the classroom. In addition, learners who always want to do their own things other than their work is considered as demonstrating problem behaviour” (Participant 12).

From these responses the following theme/s related to disruption in the classroom can be discerned. First, problematic learners and disciplinary issues are part of all teachers’ experience of teaching. Secondly, the participants identified disruptive behaviour as a significant problem in the classroom. Thirdly, the participants saw the problem behaviour as continuous, and the repetition of disruptive behaviour disrupted learning and had an impact on teaching time, distracted classmates, and affected the learners’ academic performance.

Theme 3: *Observing Uncooperative learners*

Being uncooperative highlights the lack of effort to engage in any form of activity and the unwillingness to complete work or follow instructions. Most teacher participants reported that learner’s unwillingness and inability to work was one of the ways to identify with problem behaviours. Here are a some of the participants’ responses in this regard:

“Problem behaviour would be when the learner does not cooperate in terms of the lesson content as well as not abiding by the classroom rules. If the tasks are not completed timelessly, not delivering their targets of the lesson, this could also be disruptive” (Participant 1).

“Problem behaviour is not a problem child; it is something that is a problem within the child which causes the child to behave in an unpleasant way” (Participant 5).

“Having to repeat instructions multiple times takes up a lot of teaching time because a problematic learner does not want to cooperate” (Participant 8).

“Problem behaviour is when learners distract other learners and the teacher in class and ignore the classroom rules, as well as the instructions from the teacher” (Participant 13).

From the interview results, the participants established that problem behaviour was understood as a learner being uncooperative, a learner who disregards instructions given by the teacher, and displays no interest in completing work, which results in an ineffective learning environment. Classmates of the problematic learner tend to get distracted and thus impacting their learning experience as well. When learners become uncooperative and unruly, they lose focus on school and become the learner who continuously disrupts the class which can affect their academics, and teachers suggested that this leads to problem behaviour.

Theme 4: Observing disobedient behaviours

Disobedience defines the failure or the unwillingness to obey rules or the person of authority. Participants found that the refusal to comply to classroom rules and instructions was a form of problem behaviour. The participants indicated learners with problem behaviours were identified by observing their disobedience behaviours. The lack of obedience from learners were a concern for teachers as their power of authority was overlooked by learners who displayed problem behaviour. Below are excerpts from the transcribed interviews:

“Problem behaviour is when the learner does not want to listen to the teacher and back chat, incomplete work after several warning and when learners disrespect and disregard the teacher” (Participant 2).

“Problem behaviour is when a learner does not conduct themselves in a proper manner of a classroom environment and thus disrupting education for themselves or any other learner is problematic” (Participant 7).

“Displaying defiance towards authority and having to focus on an individual rather than the whole class” (Participant 8).

From the interview results, the participants asserted that learners who display problem behaviour would have no respect for authority and did not respect the role of the teacher. The refusal to listen to the teachers and follow instructions were a great concern for teachers. The problem behaviour of disobedience caused class disruption which not only affected the learning impact of the problematic learner but for their classmates as well. Teachers would tend to spend a lot of focus on the problem behaviour of the learner which disadvantages the other classmates as they weren't given enough attention to focus on the teaching and learning process.

Theme 5: Assessing learning difficulties

Learning difficulties entail the various challenges in acquiring knowledge and skills to the standard level expected of those of the same age, especially because of mental disability or cognitive disorder. Most participants reported that a child with learning difficulties may be described as having specific problems processing certain forms of information. Teachers identified learners with learning difficulties in terms of having little or no speech, find it difficult to learn new skills, need daily one on one support with activities, and have difficulties with social skills. Participants responded as follows:

“When you get to know the learners, you get to know how they behave and as a teacher you will have an understanding of their characteristics/ behavioural patterns. Problem behaviour is when they start behaving out of character/ differently as to how they would behave on a normal day. You tend to pick up that something is wrong and this could result to learning disabilities in certain aspects. This may be visible in various subjects. For example, a learner may be good at Maths and also perform poorly in English being they have a learning barrier” (Participant 11).

“Problem behaviour in the classroom would range from academic issues to social behaviour. In addition, problem behaviour could include learning barriers, physical restrictions or being disruptive, anti-social, withdrawn, or physically inappropriate” (Participant 14).

“Problem behaviour is when behaviour is hindering a learner to effectively learn and make progress in a specific grade, for example, be it ADHD, disciplinary problems, or any other syndrome or problem that was not adequately addressed in the formative years of the individual” (Participant 15).

The Participants postulated that there are many types of learning disabilities that can impact the process in which a child learns, such as dyslexia, attention deficit- hyperactivity disorder, dyscalculia, and many more. A child can have one or a combination, which plays an immense role in the learning difficulties that they experience. This results in learners having difficulty in processing certain forms of information and subsequently, learners tend to become frustrated and lash out or display problem behaviours because they feel overwhelmed. Participants suggested that the problem behaviour illustrated the emotions they felt because they had difficulty in engaging with the learning materials.

5.3.2 Findings on the causes of these problematic behaviours of learners

The study also explored how teachers explained the causes of learners’ problem behaviours. The findings obtained from the data included the following themes: difficult circumstances at home, learning difficulties, medical/ psychological conditions, seeking attention, peer pressure, trauma (emotional), and academic insecurities. These are all discussed in detail below.

Theme 1: *Difficult Circumstances at home*

The circumstances individuals face at home influence their development. Circumstances at home refers to the condition that a learner is connected within their home environment that affects the individual. Majority of the participants found that the learners’ circumstances at home influenced the way in which they behaved. From the excerpt interview transcripts, the Participants said:

“The cause of problem behaviour is when there are changes that learners undergo within themselves or home environment.” (Participant 1).

“You find that the child does not get attention from home and they spend most of their time alone, resulting in having them seeking attention at school

by being disruptive. In addition, that divorce or losing one parent can also be a cause, as children do not know how to handle the pain they experience and therefore act out/ react at school” (Participant 2).

“The lack of parental guidance, interaction and support causes learners to seek attention and manifest problematic behaviour to get attention from the adult in the classroom” (Participant 3).

“Sometimes the learners’ only friends are those in school, and when they go home, they are the only child at home, has no one else to play with. When he is in class he has his friends, and interacts with them and start to chat to them as getting into the class may be a great excitement for this child, and we see it as a problem but they see it as socialisation” (Participant 5).

“Problem behaviours can stem from circumstances at home that are unstable” (Participant 8).

“The cause of problem behaviour comes from the learners’ situation at home, or at school with mainly the adults in their lives. No child is inherently problematic, and comes to school and decides that they are going to be a problem, it could be the result of experiences and situations they have in their lives” (Participant 12).

“The causes of problem behaviour stems from the different home backgrounds and challenges they face daily” (Participant 13).

According to the participants, the root cause of problem behaviour was the learner’s situation at home. They postulated that problem behaviour can be caused by the social circle of the child, the lack of parental guidance, and challenges they face in their daily lives. The assertion made, emphasizes that a learner is influenced by the company in which they surround themselves with and this greatly impacts their behaviour. The participants postulated that all learners are different. Each individual comes from a different background/ environment and will therefore have diverse characteristics. The diversity of the learner makes them who they are. As previously mentioned by Bronfenbrenner, a large number of environmental and societal influences affect the development of the child, which explains the way in which a child will

react in certain situations. From the data collected, it is evident that the teachers are aware of this and are able to identify the various problem behaviours that learners display.

Theme 2: Learning difficulties

As mentioned previously, learning difficulties in receiving new information and learning new skills at the standard level in comparison to their age group is the consequence of mental disabilities or cognitive disorders. Participants found that one of the root causes of problem behaviour was learning difficulties. Here are excerpts from the transcribed interviews:

“The lack of diverse teaching methods, lack of learning support, with no learning differentiation or accommodation of different learning styles can lead to frustration or boredom and cause problem behaviour” (Participant 3).

“In most cases that I have worked with, learners who display problematic behaviour is learners that are put in mainstream teaching that does not belong in mainstream teachings, they need to be put in an LSEN (remedial) school environment where they can accomplish something. That is the problem with inclusive teaching, at the end of the day the teacher puts the pressure of assessment on a child that can't be assessed, or they expect a child to do work from 8:00 to 14:00 that she/he can't do, expecting that child not to act out or be naughty in class. This is an unrealistic way of thinking and approaching a learner with strong barriers” (Participant 7).

“Learning challenges can be a root cause of problem behaviour. Learners become frustrated because of their learning difficulties and tend to act out in class to disrupt the lesson” (Participant 8).

Due to the various learning difficulties that learners entail, participants mentioned that learners can become anxious, stressed, angry and develop a low self-esteem or lack of self-confidence which can also be a cause for the disruptive behaviour they demonstrate. The lack of teaching methods offered by the teachers can also affect the learner's behaviour. When learners feel insecure, frustrated because they do not feel good enough or they find it more difficult to learn or understand the content being taught or the ability to complete asks compared to their classmates, they tend to act out in class and display problem behaviours.

Theme 3: Medical/ psychological conditions

The medical and psychological conditions is a broad term used to describe disorders, mental illnesses, and a dysfunction in psychological, biological developmental processes. The derangement and morbidity of an individual, consequential in abnormal thoughts, feeling and behaviours. Teachers were informed by the parents/ guardians of learners who are faced with medical and psychological issues. Participants indicated that many learners' behaviours are affected by medical/ psychological conditions. Here are some of the comments they made:

“It could be some conditions within the learner themselves, for example; medical conditions. There are medical conditions that we are not aware of, it could also be that the learner does not have the confidence to do the work. For example, in math, you can see some fear in the learner about certain things, and when that happens the learner wants to get the attention of others distracted because he cannot put his own focus into the problem.” (Participant 5).

“Learning difficulties impact the teaching and learning process. Medical and psychological conditions such as ADHD and dyslexia for example, can contribute to the behaviours which learners display” (Participant 8).

“In my experience, the causes of this behaviour usually come from two places: from home, or from some underlying medical or psychological condition. An unfortunate number of learners have uncaring home environments. This can lead children to seek attention from other places, unfortunately sometimes using disruptive techniques or seeking negative attention. There are also several medical or psychological conditions, that, if not handled properly, can cause disruptive or problematic behaviour in the classroom. These learners cannot always control their behaviour or how they react to certain things. This is not their fault, but can be very distracting to other learners in the classroom. It can also cause learners to struggle with focusing their attention in class, which drastically interrupts their own and others' learning” (Participant 9).

“Health issues/disorders can also be a contributing factor to the causes of problem behaviour” (Participant 13).

“Problem behaviour depends on the behaviour a range of reasons such as a chemical/ physiological conditions – bipolar/ autism spectrum, ADD/ADHD, and poor diet” (Participant 14).

A vast range of medical/ psychological conditions impact the learners’ learning abilities as well as behaviour. Learners display impulsive, reactive, defiant and oppositional behaviour. Due to their medical/ psychological conditions, learners can also become easily annoyed or nervous, often appear angry, puts the blame on other learners, refusing to follow the rules, arguing and throwing temper tantrums, having difficulty in handling frustration and many more. Participants found that these medical or psychological issues were contributing factors to learners misbehaving.

Theme 4: Seeking attention

Seeking attention emphasizes the attempt to attract attention from other people by displaying bold and excessive behaviour which subsequently takes away the attention from others. Participants discovered that due learners’ personal experiences, they tend to seek attention for various reasons, such as to feel as if they belong, to be a part of something, to be noticed, to feel accepted and fulfilled. Seeking attention caused problem behaviour in the classroom, such as learners acting out, and this was problematic for teachers. The participants stated the following:

“In some instances, you find that the child does not get attention from home and spends most of their time alone, thus when they come to school, they tend to be chatty all the time with their friends” (Participant 2).

“Learners might seek attention and manifest problematic behaviour to get attention of the adult in the classroom” (Participant 3).

“Lack of attention at home can impact the learner’s behaviour. Learners seek attention at school, resulting in them misbehaving in class in order to get attention from their classmates or teachers” (Participant 8).

“Looking for attention because they may not be getting enough attention at home or enough of it from their parents” (Participant 10).

As a result of seeking attention, learners displayed problem behaviour such as repressing their needs and wants, being aggressive, shouting, acts of manipulation and displaying a dramatic personality. This can greatly effect/ have an influence on a child and the manner in which they behave. Participants established that the lack of attention given to a learner at home caused the learner to seek for attention at school, from both their peers and their teachers. As a result of seeking attention, they would act out in class so that the focus would be on them.

Theme 5: Peer pressure

Peer pressure is the influence from individuals of ones' peer group. Many learners feel that they need to do the same things as other people in a social group of the same age group in order to be liked, respected or to feel accepted. Participants found that learners felt pressure to behave in a certain way because of their peers and this impacted the learners negatively. The peer pressure learners experienced were because they felt that displaying bad behaviour made them 'cool' as they stood out and always got attention for behaving badly and disrupting the class. Participant 3 reported:

“Belonging to or fitting into a group means that learners must be bold when dared to do wrong things to gain friendship with their peers. With the lack or no parental support/ guidance, they can easily be influenced by their peers” (Participant 3).

Children can be influenced by their peers to become proactive in lessons, become more assertive, participate in new activities and get themselves involved in school, however, children can also be influenced negatively by their peers. Negative peer pressure can direct learners to bad life choices/ decision makings. Participants found that learners can be easily influenced by their peers which greatly impacts their behaviour. In order to fit in, learners will behave in a certain manner to seek approval of their friends or fit into a social group. As a result, if learners were in a social circle of individuals who only display problem behaviours, they too will be influenced to behave in that manner.

Theme 6: Emotional Trauma

Trauma is an emotional response to a tragic event that had occurred. Traumatic reactions can be an ongoing issue in which learners feel emotionally upset, depressed, feel anxious, have difficulty with self-regulation and relating with others. This causes behavioural changes within an individual and it may make learners indulge in behaviour problems. Participants were informed by learners' parents/ guardians of the traumatic experienced faced which helped teachers get a better understanding of the learner. Participants suggested that from their experience, many learners have gone through traumatic experiences which is consequential in the manner in which they behave. Participants stated:

“There are many causes for these problem behaviours, the learner could be going through emotional trauma, which distracts them as they spend time lost in thought instead of focusing on their work. There can be social anxiety, the child may have been bullied and this distracts them in class as they may fear to participate in lessons. When you are emotional, you don't focus as well as you normally would” (Participant 3).

“Emotions play an important role, a lot of also relates to the family structures in our country. Children who live with their mum or dad only, with their grandparent/s, or their siblings, or their aunt or uncles, and this greatly impacts their emotional issues which are brought into the classroom” (Participant 5).

“There may be a lot reasons for problem behaviour. The root cause as to what may have changed in the learners' life to cause behavioural issues, and further suggested that trauma and sadness can be masked by anger and aggression” (Participant 6).

“Emotional trauma or emotional problems that are coming from home and bringing it into the classroom, due to financial troubles, parent issues, death of a parent or close relative can be the cause of learners problem behaviour” (Participant 10).

“Problem behaviour depends on the behaviour based on the learners' personal experiences such as underlying abuse, and emotional trauma” (Participant 14).

From the results, it can be concluded that learners who have been through traumatic experiences carry within them traumatic stress symptoms that impact their behaviour in which they have difficulty regulating their behaviours and emotions in various situations. Participants established that due to the trauma experiences faced by learners, they tend to become fearful, difficult to console, display impulsive behaviour and become reluctant to engage openly and transparently to avoid being vulnerable and safe guard their emotions. As a result, learners thus display problem behaviours such as restlessness, impulsive, low frustration, avoidant, inattention, dissociation, aggressive behaviour and poor social relations which is seen as a symptom of traumatic experiences.

Theme 7: Academic insecurities

Being insecure is the lack of confidence, uncertain and anxious about oneself. Academic insecurities emphasize learners lack of confidence in their learning abilities and strategies to learn new information. the Participants discovered that learners expressed feelings of lack of confidence and not being sure of their own abilities and academic judgements. Here are some of the teachers' comments from the transcribed interviews:

“Inadequate implementation of school discipline systems can also relate to the problem behaviour displayed by learners, for instance, “having a merit and demerit system in place but with no consequences” (Participant 3).

“Academic insecurities can also be masked as class disruption and avoiding doing class work and being the class clown” (Participant 6).

“Due to academic insecurities, low self-esteem can result as the cause of problem behaviour. Learners are not confident and this impacts their learning abilities and as a result they tend to act out in class” (Participant 14).

“There can be many different causes which can already start with birth. It could have been a difficult birth, the baby was born with a genetic condition, a hereditary condition or a birth defect, etc. Many parents do not have the means or knowledge on how to stimulate the child from an infant to toddler and later to become a successful learner. There are a lot of skills that needs

to be stimulated and developed in a young child in order to learn in an effective manner” (Participant 15).

To conclude, all participants were aware that there can be various causes behind problem behaviour. Academic insecurities greatly influenced the behaviour of a learner. When a learner tends to excessively focus on their supposed faults such as dismissing accomplishments, self-doubt, problems with self-esteem, and self-effacing to a fault, this affects not only their behaviour but also their academic performance. Insecurities usually stems experiences gained from ones’ social environment, as traumatic, unpredictable or upsetting circumstances in daily life can cause anxiety and insecurity. Seeing that learners are faced with many different conditions on a daily basis, and the social and environmental factors greatly impact the way in which they behave, according to the Participants, the most dominant theme was the difficult circumstances at home which caused academic insecurities in children. All themes mentioned above is a psychological explanation of problem behaviours and do not address the sociological and historical aspects which may be seen as a contributing factor to understanding the causes of problem behaviour.

5.3.3 Findings on the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment

The study also explored the view of teachers on the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment. The findings from qualitative data were analysed thematically and the themes reported include disruption of lessons, reduced attention span, inadequacy of school discipline, lack of time and inadequate curriculum delivery. The themes are discussed below.

Theme 1: *Disruption of lessons*

The definition of disruption in a classroom emphasizes the disturbance or problems which interrupt the learning environment. Participants found that it was difficult to conduct a lesson when the disruption of problem behaviours impacted the teaching and learning process. As indicated by the participants:

“The disruptive behaviour sets a chain of events and is time consuming to get everyone quiet and focused again.” (Participant 4).

“Problem behaviour disrupts the lesson and all learners become distracted and have trouble focusing. I find it difficult to give the other learners the attention they deserve when I am constantly dealing with the problematic learners who disrupt the lesson” (Participant 7).

“The disruption caused by problem behaviour is a concern. When learners blurt out the answers, this results in me having to interrupt the lesson flow to deal with the situation. Once the once the concentration of the rest of the class is interrupted, it is often difficult to get their attention back to the topic being discussed or taught” (Participant 8).

“The disruption caused can be problematic as I find it difficult to sometimes calm learners who are being impulsive and motivate them to keep working hard. It can also be difficult to get the rest of the class under control when a learner disrupts the lesson and the other learners want to chime in” (Participant 9).

“I find it difficult when I am continuously being interrupted during the lesson by various problem behaviours” (Participant 10).

“Problem behaviour impacts on the overall atmosphere and pace as well as on the other learners in the class that are ready to learn, the disruption caused prevents these learners from learning” (Participant 15).

Problem behaviour experienced in the classroom results in the whole class being disruptive, thus negatively impacting the teaching and learning process. The difficulty faced in the classroom is the effect the problem behaviour has on the rest of the learners in the classroom; how other learners react to the disruptive behaviour, as it could be a distraction for other learners and that could become very problematic.

Theme 2: Reduced attention span

Defining attention span refers to the length of time for which learners are able to conceive information and concentrate by participating or completing a specific task in the classroom. Learners' ability to quickly lose focus and get distracted was a concern for teachers. Learners

who displayed problem behaviour has difficulty in remaining focused and interested with the activities in class. Participants responded to this issue as follows:

“One of the difficulties experienced is the attention span of learners. Their attention lapses, and you lose the child for a few minutes and then you have to redirect their attention. The subject being mathematics, the concepts are very important as they build on one and other. Therefore, if a child misses concept A, for them to grasp concept B will be a challenge. So in a math lesson you will need children to grasp concept A and move with them to concept B then to concept C, but on the day you introduce concept A, if the child misbehaves causing disruption, that means that the rest of the class will not be able to grasp concept A, and this becomes a problem in moving to concept B. and some of the diagnoses may not be noticeable until to get to concept C and then you realise that there is a problem and then you have to go back to concept A, where the real problem lies. It takes time to diagnose the problem” (Participant 5).

“When the learning atmosphere is disrupted, learners lose focus. These learners need incredible undivided attention and time from the teachers to ensure that the learners’ attention is only on the task at hand” (Participant 15).

The attention span of learners is of great difficulty. Learners miss out on vital information when they lose focus in class. Regarding the impact of the problem behaviour, teachers need to prepare their lesson so that they can accommodate for the laps. Having to help learners catch up on important work that they had missed is very time consuming. If teachers adequately plan for time being lost, they will be able to cover the content and no learner will be disadvantaged.

Theme 3: Inadequacy of school discipline

Discipline involves inculcating acceptable behaviours and unlearning unacceptable problem behaviours. Teachers established that the quality of discipline was inadequate. The lack of structured consequences of managing problem behaviour was a concern for teachers. Here is a sample of their responses:

“Besides getting through the content, the difficulty is having to discipline the learners, there are disciplinary measures in place, however, learners know that there is no serious consequence to their bad behaviour which does not help manage their problem behaviour. No consequences of their unacceptable behaviour, so they continue to misbehave” (Participant 1).

“As a school, we need to be more consistent in our approach of dealing with discipline and the forms of punishment. We need to stick together as a team and work together is achieving discipline. If one teacher allows a learner to get away with the problem behaviour, the learner does not take the school rules seriously” (Participant 4).

“For some learners who cannot be controlled and the methods used to manage problem behaviour seem to be ineffective. For these problem learners, the consequences do not work” (Participant 10).

“When a learner has become completely disobedient, the school discipline system does not seem to work for that learner” (Participant 11).

“When learners are aware that there is no consistent or any form of punishment as a result of their bad behaviour, no school discipline system would work” (Participant 12).

The aim of effective discipline is to promote acceptable and appropriate behaviour. Participants suggested that the inadequacy of school discipline system was a great difficulty experienced as there were no real consequences for learners who misbehaved. As a result of the lack of school disciplinary measures, learners' behaviours could not be controlled. More effective disciplinary measures need to be put in place in order to manage the problem behaviours of learners.

Theme 4: Lack of time

Insufficient time was a major concern for most teachers as they faced time constraints in having to complete the syllabus and having to deal with problematic learners in the classroom. Participants found that due to the problem behaviours that were displayed by learners, a lot of their lesson time were spent on addressing the problem behaviour, rather than teaching. Below are some of the participants' responses:

“One of the major difficulties experienced is that a lot of teaching time is lost. When a learner misbehaves, it disrupts the lesson thus taking away lesson time” (Participant 2).

“A lot of time is lost in the classroom due to problem behaviour and a lot of time and energy is spent on discipline issues rather than teaching which becomes rather tiring and demotivating” (Participant 3).

“It takes a lot of lesson time to deal with the problem behaviour displayed by the learners and it is difficult to finish everything you intended to teach/cover in that lesson. The disruptive behaviour sets a chain of events and is time consuming to get everyone quiet and focused again. We are very time constrained with the time allocation for a lesson” (Participant 4).

“Managing time is difficult. It is very difficult to complete a lesson when you are trying to attend to the behaviour without disadvantaging everyone” (Participant 6).

“Time becomes an issue. As a teacher you want to help the kids, you want to know what is bugging them and you want to be able to assist them so that they can focus on the lesson, pay attention and also to not lose them. It takes a day to lose them and to try to get them back on track because you are already moving forward the next day that you are either building from on the previous day or an entirely new topic. Subsequently, once you lose them it’s like you’re losing a bit of the foundation you are trying to build on” (Participant 11).

“A great deal of quality teaching time is lost because of all the attention these learners who are problematic need, which impacts negatively on other learners, which is not fair to everyone” (Participant 15).

As a result of the time constraints that teachers dealt with, time is a huge factor as it is difficult to get the disruptive learner aside while being in the middle of a lesson and try to figure out what is going on with them and speak to them privately, to sort out the issue at hand, because not all issues can be sorted out immediately. Teachers can speak to the learner and reassure them, but only the learner would know the magnitude of the problem that they are dealing with better than a teacher would know. That is an immense issue because as a result, teachers cannot

get back the time that was lost. Teachers can sit with them one on one after school if time is available as some students leave directly after school, try and get some time during the break to help assist them.

Theme 5: *Inadequate Curriculum delivery*

Curriculum delivery involves the application of implementing a particular curriculum framework in a certain period of time which is a guide for teachers as to what is essential for teaching and learning so that the learner practices and achieves various applied learning skills as well as acquiring new information. Teachers established that problem behaviour greatly affected the process of delivering the curriculum adequately. Participants stated:

“Due to a lot of time being wasted as a result of problem behaviour in the classroom, curriculum delivery becomes an issue. Presenting a well-prepared lesson in half the amount of time would be done because a lot of time was spent on disciplining learners and therefore not being able to complete the syllabus or cover certain topics adequately” (Participant 3).

“It is very difficult to get through the curriculum, to finish everything you had planned for the lesson because you will spend time correcting the problem behaviour rather than teaching” (Participant 4).

“Due to the problematic behaviours experienced in the classroom, curriculum delivery also becomes an issue that teachers face, as a lot of time is spent dealing with problem behaviours rather than teaching effectively” (Participant 10).

“Taking into consideration the occurrence of problem behaviour in the class, it becomes difficult to deliver the prescribed curriculum and ensuring that all learners are catered for” (Participant 13).

“It is difficult to cover content that requires structure and a set task. It is easier to manage problem behaviour when you are able to distract them with movement, music, or a topic that will draw their focus and interest, however, not all content in the curriculum can be made fun and interesting” (Participant 14).

It takes a lot of lesson time to deal with the problem behaviour displayed by learners and it is difficult to finish everything that you need to teach/ cover or plan for the lesson. The disruptive behaviour sets a chain of events and is time consuming to get everyone quiet and focused again. Teachers are very time constrained with the time allocated for a lesson to complete the curriculum. When teachers are continuously being interrupted during the lesson due to the problem behaviours displayed by a learner, it is very difficult having to get through the content that needs to be taught in an allocated period of time. Subsequently, it is also difficult to deliver the lesson and ensuring that all the learners are catered for when a learner disrupts the lesson by displaying problem behaviour.

As mentioned above, all themes are intricately linked. When the lesson is disrupted, teachers lose out on teaching time and therefore have difficulty completing the curriculum. Thus, the Participants emphasized that problem behaviour greatly impacts the teaching and learning process. The most dominant theme was disruption. According to the Participants, the disruption caused by problem behaviour was an immense concern for teachers as it affected all learners in the classroom.

5.3.4 Findings on strategies that teachers use to manage the problem behaviour in the inclusive classrooms

The study finally examined the strategies that teachers use to manage the problem behaviours of learners in inclusive classrooms. From the qualitative data analysed thematically, the themes reported include classroom rules, positive reinforcements strategies, negative reinforcements strategies, change of learning environment, and clear communication as indicated below:



Figure 3: Strategies used to manage problem behaviour

Theme 1: *Classroom rules*

Classroom rules are important in creating an organised learning environment. Classroom rules are a set of rules that the class is entitled to follow to create order within the learning environment. These rules are designed as a guide to assist teachers to manage the behaviour of learners and ensure a positive and healthy learning environment for all learners making them feel comfortable and safe. Participants discovered that setting classroom rules can help manage learners with problem behaviours. Here are some of their comments:

“It is important to set classroom rules from the beginning of the year so that they are aware of the consequences. Teachers must also be consistent with their discipline approach” (Participant 2).

“If a learner is given work to do and disrupts the class because of failing to follow instructions, they are sent to a colleague’s class and will surprisingly behave and get their work done. To address the learner and call them outside and talk to them and show them how what he or she is doing impacts the others. Direct intervention immediately helps” (Participant 5).

“Accountability is key. It is important to set the rules of engagement with the students before a lesson, so they know and agree to the consequences before they start- give them ownership in their contract of engagement” (Participant 14).

“Classroom rules are often broken and if and when the child is identified with the problematic behaviour, immediate action needs to be taken by the teacher which mostly involves the school team of that department” (Participant 15).

At the very start, it is important to outline consequences of unacceptable problem behaviour, and to agree with them and not oppose them. In addition, it is important to have learners know what would happen if they cross the line and display problem behaviours. Making learners aware of the consequences of problem behaviour may help manage the indiscipline in the classrooms.

Theme 2: Positive reinforcements strategies

It is important to strengthen and support the strategies to manage problem behaviour. Positive reinforcements are the process of adding a desirable stimulus to promote good behaviour. When learners display good behaviour, they are rewarded in a positive manner. Participants established those positive reinforcements helped manage learners who display problem behaviour. Below are some of their comments in this regard:

“Having motivational talks and providing the learners with a chance to change their behaviour on their own can help. Learners must be given an opportunity to change as it is part of the process when dealing with problem behaviours and learners must be informed about the consequences of negative and positive behaviour which will guide their choice” (Participant 3).

“I apply the Gotcha reward System which focuses on positive reinforcement rather than negative consequences, however, this system does not work with all learners” (Participant 8).

“To maintain a positive atmosphere, I try not to lash out at the learners and not to be too strict. This does not often solve the problem and causes the behaviour to become worse” (Participant 9).

“We apply the ‘Gotcha System’ which is similar to the merit and demerit system. The ‘Gotcha system’ focuses on positive reinforcements rather than negative consequences. This system allows learners to monitor their own behaviour, if the learners do well in academics or display appropriate classroom behaviour such as helping each other, being generous, kind, perform well in sports, etc, they receive ‘Gotcha points’, and these points are taken away if they show signs of problem behaviour or not doing the right thing. However, for these problem learners, the ‘Gotcha System’ does not work” (Participant 10).

“I do not believe in negatively reinforcing. Some learners want to be heard and they are not shy about making it known, they do not care if it is said in front of the whole class. As a teacher, I often give them the chance to say certain things to a point where it becomes confrontational in which they

mention names of other kids, I stop and address the issue. Another strategy is Yoga breathing, which is done in the mornings to get it all out to start the day on a fresh note, breath out any negative energy that they had brought into school this morning, whether it was a bad song on a radio that you did not like, or maybe you heard a conversation that happened over the radio that made you feel sad, or you watched a movie the night before that horrified you or traumatized you or an argument with their sibling, or your parents were fighting, if you have issues with your friends, or nervous about anything, etc. This does not work for all kids who are going through more than we know” (Participant 11).

“Always keep the learner who is problematic occupied and busy with work to do, give them responsibilities/ duties in class which does not give them a chance to misbehave” (Participant 13).

“Give struggling learners responsibilities where they are in control of managing the positive atmosphere in the class- this redirects their behaviour from the negative towards something that validates their positive participation” (Participant 14).

The use of positive reinforcements fosters to increase acceptable behaviour. Positive reinforcement develops a child’s character by improving their self-esteem and making them feel loved and cared for. This is beneficial as it helps the children to learn behaviours necessary to be successful academically and socially. Participants had different methods of managing problem behaviour. While some teachers used positive reinforcements, other teachers would use negative reinforcements. Subsequently, teachers will use methods that work for them and the learner. Positive reinforcements may not necessarily work for every problematic learner; thus, teachers will then implement negative reinforcements.

Theme 3: *Negative reinforcement strategies*

Negative reinforcement is a method used to correct problem behaviour and help teach specific acceptable behaviours. Negative reinforcement is when an undesirable stimulus is removed to impact behaviour. Teachers suggested that when learners display problem behaviour, they

should receive punishment in terms of; taking away privileges, being grounded, losing reward token, losing access to a toy, etc. Some of the responses included:

“Learners have a homework diary, at the back of the diary teachers will use a red pen and makes a tick, which will be monitored by their parents, and if a teacher makes three red ticks, as a result the learner may get break detention or a punishment at home from their parents. If all teachers are persistent and consistent with discipline, we will not have any issues of problem behaviour, there are instances where a class is very well behaved with one teacher but with a different teacher they misbehave as it may be harder for that teacher to work with the learners. Being consistent may help” (Participant 4).

“Learners who are problematic during the lesson will be kept in during the break to complete the work they have missed due to their behaviour during the lesson” (Participant 7).

“Try and ignore the unwanted problem behaviour, and see if that works, and thereafter offer the counselling and assistance afterwards. Sometimes it’s the child seeking attention so by ignoring it you will not rob other learners of their constructive learning time, and the disruptive learner will be dealt with afterwards. Use of merit and demerit system which results in detention, doesn’t really work” (Participant 12).

From the results obtained, teachers found that removing a problematic learner from a lesson will allow for learning to take place and as a result other learners were not disadvantaged and remained focus during the lesson. Negative reinforcement tends to strengthen certain behaviours by removing an aversive outcome. If a problematic learner is continuously sent out of the classroom, eventually they will feel as if they are missing out and will want to be present in the classroom, and as a result, the learner will stop displaying problem behaviours to avoid being removed from the class.

Theme 4: Change of learning environment

Learning environment illustrates the conditions in which teaching and learning takes place. It is the educational setting that teachers can change to alter the learning environment to cater for the needs of all learners. Participants recognized that changing the learning environment can help manage problem behaviours. Here is how they responded:

“Modifying the curriculum can prevent problem behaviour, as it is important to choose essential content to accommodate different pace of the diverse learners. Changing the learning environment can also be beneficial, for example, taking the learners outside to read in groups, choose independent learners to be reading monitors and they will manage their groups, while the teacher focuses on the learners that need teacher’s attention” (Participant 3).

“Since learners do not listen, assuming the content being taught is not stimulating, try and make the lessons more interesting for them” (Participant 4).

“A strategy that can be used is to identify if they are the only child at home, and his peer is his only friend and is really valuable to him, so it helps to seat them together so that they can support each other, help each other to focus and keep each other on track. Having paired them together causes them to motivate each other. This works for some and not everyone. For those who it doesn’t work, are seated at the front close to the teacher so that the teacher can closely monitor that learner and always looking into their book to see what they are doing” (Participant 5).

“I would try and simplify the work for the learners or let them come to me alone in break or after school to catch up on the work they had missed when they had disrupted the lesson” (Participant 7).

“I always try positivity in these situations. If a child is misbehaving during the lesson, while walking around the class, I will make it a point to walk to that learner unknowingly and express positivity, for example saying “wow, I love the way you laid out your work”, or “ that diagram looks lovely” , even though I know that the work of the learner is not to the standard that

is expected, giving the learner encouragement and positive comments will help him regain his focus and want to do better because someone believes in them and therefore they need to work harder. I tend to focus my attention on them quite often in class because I want to real them in every 2 minutes whenever I lose them, it's almost like forcing them to pay attention. I have a habit of moving around my class in a very un-bias way to ensure that everyone has a turn to voice their thoughts, asks questions and gets attention so that no one feels left out. But on a particular day is a learner is zoning out more frequently than other learners, my focus will then be on that specific learner and continuously monitor him and check up on him. Focus on him, and real him in, and ask him a question. I do not make it obvious; it is subtle” (Participant 11).

“Fun- ensure the process is learner driven and has enquiry, experimental, experiential elements- when learners are actively involved in their own learning, they have less time to express negative behaviours. You create flexible lessons with multiple check points, learning strategies and opportunities for lateral extension; this gives you flexibility to redirect a learners’ behaviour and attention along the way” (Participant 14).

There are diverse learners in the classrooms. If the problem demonstrated in class is serious, the lesson will be stopped, and the teacher will address the issue. By changing the learning environment, teachers are able to assess what strategies work and what do not work. The change allows for various benefits that can help learners gain the ability to increase their willingness to learn, provides more opportunities for learners that will match their needs and also create an interesting learning environment, encouraging higher levels of performance, so that learners are not bored with the content and become distant in class.

Theme 5: Clear communication

The exchange of information is crucial in ensuring that the expression of emotions, thoughts and ideas are known. Good communication skills improve the relationships between the teacher, learner and parent. Communication is vital because when effective communication takes place, a sense of accomplishment is established in understanding each other, leaving no room to assumptions and misunderstandings. Participants found that it is important to maintain

continuous communication with the learner, colleagues, and parents to help manage learners who display problem behaviour. The participants stated:

“It is important to communicate with learners one on one, not to discipline them in front of others. Teachers can take the learner aside, reprimand the learner alone, try to talk to them and find out why the child is misbehaving” (Participant 1).

“Teachers must accept the learners and learn to understand them. It is good to always have open communication with the learners in order to find out what the problem is and by showing that you are concerned you are showing learners that you are there for them so that they can be comfortable to communicate” (Participant 2).

“To reprimand the learner is helpful, depending on the situation, if it is serious, the lesson will be stopped, and the issue will be addressed” (Participant 4).

“It helps to have a private conversation with the learner to understand what the problem is in order to help the learner. When you deal with the learner privately you have their full attention, and you can offer them support and help them” (Participant 5).

“Conversation is all it takes, addressing the potential emotional distress goes a long way. When a learner displays problem behaviour, it is important to talk to the learner to find out the cause and if the concern is serious, it will be taken up with the phase head and involve parents, and if necessary, suggest an assessment by an educational psychologist” (Participant 6).

“A teacher should not lash out at a learner in front of the class, the teacher should talk to the learner privately about what happened in the class to try and get them to understand what they did was wrong. Thereafter to let the parents know about the difficulties faced by the teacher with the learner for support from home” (Participant 7).

“I explain to learners that what they are doing is disrupting or distracting the rest of the learners, and that it is not fair towards their classmates. I try to find out why they are acting out by talking to them and resolve the

problem based on the cause. I speak to the child to establish where they might be coming from, to hear their point of view. It is important to also inform parents of the behaviour, as in some cases the child does not display the same behaviour at home and the parents are not aware of the problem” (Participant 9).

“Not all learners that teachers communicate with would be honest and explain exactly what they are going through, therefore, teachers need to let learners know that they care about the learners and that they want to help, as well as create a safe learning environment for them. Teachers are encouraged to build a relationship with their learners so that the learners are comfortable to talk to their teachers. In addition, teachers sometimes need to be in the minds of the learners, as in moments when the learners are trying to say something, they sometimes have difficulty expressing it and teachers need to try to get it out of them” (Participant 11).

“In a classroom situation the teacher has to just try and manage it and outside the teaching hours you try to address the problem and have a discussion with the child and reprimand the bad behaviour. It will be best to take them aside or keep them behind to address the issue and offer a solution” (Participant 12).

“It starts with understanding the kind of learners and the reason for their behaviour. I believe you cannot make assumptions. Consulting the parents, checking the history of the learner” (Participant 13).

“It is important to build a healthy relationship with the learners; investing real, conscious time in learners, when they feel genuinely seen, understood, supported and loved they want to reciprocate and be part of the group” (Participant 14).

Communication is essential in building a relationship with the learners. Clear communication with learners and parents can help avoid misunderstandings and it is sometimes best to focus on what the learner is going through. There are diverse learners in the classrooms, and it is vital to communicate with them to find out what the problem is, by showing that you are concerned and spending time to talk to them, they would feel cared for and may open up to you. Addressing the learner about their behaviour and explaining to them how it affects/ impacts the

other learners in the class can also help learners self-assess and change their behaviour. If the problem behaviour is repetitive behaviour, then it is something more that needs to be dealt with, therefore having to contact the parent to inform them about their child's behaviour so that they can also assist. If parents are aware of the problem, we can work together towards a solution. Teachers are also encouraged to consult their colleagues to discuss best discipline practices and the last resort is to involve the Phase Head or the Head Master.

In conclusion, there are many strategies that can be used to help manage problem behaviour, however, many participants suggest that talking to the learner will help manage the problem behaviour experienced. As a result of talking to them, you find out what is really going on in the learners' life and you gain clear understanding of the causes of the problem behaviour. Learners will tend to open up to teachers which will help teachers implement the appropriate strategies to manage the problem behaviour. From the data collected, the dominant theme being communication helped manage problem behaviour.

Theme 6: *Guidance and counselling*

Guidance and counselling are the process of assisting learners to help them discover and develop their educational, vocational and psychological potentials to achieve an ideal level of personal contentment and social usefulness. Participants stated that guidance counsellors are immensely important. For example, participant 11 stated:

“Guidance counsellors do not teach other subjects as their main focus is to help these learners who display problem behaviour. If any issue has been experienced, the learner was sent to the guidance counsellor at any part of the day. This was very beneficial as it did not take away from any teaching time and other learners were not at a disadvantage as the lesson was not interrupted for a long period of time. Not all schools have guidance counsellors available and this should be brought back because as much as schools are focusing on academics, we need to realize the children we are working with in current times, do come from backgrounds/ environments that has some issues that affect them and will affect their learning as well.”
(Participant 11).

Participants established that not all problematic learners can be helped by a professional teacher. Sometimes when the problem is bigger than just counselling and offering solutions, the learners need professional help. Therefore, the teacher would first try to handle the situation, then the teacher would need to consider does the learner need to see a psychologist, or a psychiatrist, etc., and when it reaches that point, the extra intervention is needed other than what the teachers, principal or parents can offer. The benefit of guidance and counselling helps learners develop skills that will assist them as they learn. Through guidance activities and counselling, learners are assisted in applying effective skills to behave in an appropriate manner and will be able to set goals and learn effectively.

5.4 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter focused on the findings of the study. From the data collected, findings on how teachers identify problem behaviours of learners, the causes of problem behaviours, the consequences of problem behaviours on teaching/ learning environment and the strategies that teachers used to manage the problem behaviours in the classroom were discussed. The next chapter will elaborate on the discussion, conclusion and recommendations for this study.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This research study intended to better understand how teachers identified problem behaviour in a classroom, how they explained the causes of these behaviours, the strategies that teachers implemented to address problem behaviour which learners displayed and the effectiveness of these strategies in three primary schools in Midrand, the province of Gauteng, South Africa.

In Chapter one I provided a brief overview of the study by providing background information on problem behaviour. In addition, the problem statement, the rationale and aim of the study, the research questions and the clarification of the defining terms were presented.

The review of the literature was presented in Chapter two and focused on: the domains of problem behaviours, an overview of some of the problem behaviours that teachers faced in the classroom, teachers' explanations of the causes of such problem behaviours, the strategies teachers implemented to address the problem behaviours and the efficacy of the strategies.

The theoretical perspectives of behaviour and the theoretical explanations of the causes of behaviour was discussed in Chapter three. This included a discussion of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory (and the ecosystemic model) as well as Bandura's Social Learning Theory.

In Chapter four, the research design and methodology of the study was discussed. The methodological approaches overviewed the research paradigms, the research design, a qualitative research methodology, and the research sampling which involved interviewing 15 teachers who teach grade 4 learners. In addition to the data collecting methods, the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, data analysis, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study was discussed.

Chapter five presented the findings of the study based on the qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with the fifteen participants. Data collected from the interviewed were categorised into various themes to address the research questions of the study.

In this final chapter (Chapter six), the research findings as well as strengths and weaknesses of the current study, suggested areas for further study and recommendations, are discussed.

6.2 Summary of Results

6.2.1 Identifying Problem Behaviours in the Classroom

The study examined how teachers identify problem behaviour within their classroom. The findings indicated that teachers identify problem behaviours of learners in the following ways: observing learners in and out of class, observing disruptive behaviours, observing uncooperative learners, observing disobedience behaviours, and assessing learning difficulties. The findings suggested that teachers are able to identify problem behaviours, however, not all teachers had the theoretical knowledge to engage with ‘problem behaviour’. Teachers need to acquire a theoretical framework to be able to understand what constitutes problem behaviour. Also, the problem behaviour in the classroom cannot be seen as isolated from the broader societal context within the school environment and even beyond, as there are many contributing factors which lead to problem behaviour in the classroom.

6.2.2 Causes of Problem Behaviour among learners

The study examined the causes of problem behaviour in the classroom among learners. The findings indicated that the causes of problem behaviour in the classroom among learners include difficult circumstances at home, learning difficulties, medical/ psychological conditions, seeking attention, peer pressure, trauma (emotional), and academic insecurities. The findings suggest that teachers are aware of the causes of problem behaviour, however, appropriate intervention strategies need to be implemented in schools so that teachers are able to identify the causes of the problem behaviour. Meetings with parents or guardians should be encouraged so that parents can discuss the learners’ family background and behaviour at home. Teachers need to also ensure that they get to know their learners so that they create a professional and ethical relationship which will allow the learners to be honest with the teacher and is able to communicate effectively to find out what the problem/s might be and to work towards a solution.

6.2.3 Consequences of Problem Behaviours on the Teaching/Learning Environment

The study also explored the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment. The findings indicated that the consequences of problem behaviours on the teaching/learning environment include disruption of lessons, reduced attention span, inadequacy of school discipline, lack of time and inadequate curriculum delivery. The findings suggested that due to problem behaviour, many teachers experienced various difficulties. Teachers found that it was difficult to conduct a lesson when the disruption of problem behaviour occurred and this has an immense impact on the teaching and learning process. Learners who displayed problem behaviour has difficulty in remaining focused and interested in the activities in class, therefore, teachers are encouraged to prepare their lesson so that they can accommodate for the lapses. Having to help learners catch up on important work that they had missed is very time consuming. If teachers adequately plan for time being invariably lost, they will be able to cover the content and no learner will be disadvantaged, because when learners miss out on vital information, they tend to lose focus in class. Lastly, insufficient time was a major concern for most teachers as they faced time constraints in having to complete the syllabus, and at the same time, having to deal with problematic learners in the classroom. Due to the problem behaviours that were displayed by learners, a lot of the lesson time is spent on addressing the problem behaviour, rather than teaching. As a result of the time constraints that teachers dealt with, time is a major factor as it is difficult to get the disruptive learner aside while being in the middle of a lesson and try to figure out what is going on with them and speak to them privately, to sort out the issue at hand, because not all issues can be sorted out immediately. Teachers can speak to the learner and reassure them, but only the learner would know the magnitude of their problem/s. This is a big issue because as a result, teachers cannot get back the time that was lost. Teachers can sit with such learners one-on-one after school if time is available or try to use some time during a break to help assist them

6.2.4 Strategies Teachers use to Manage the Problem Behaviours of Learners in Inclusive Classrooms

The study finally examined the strategies that teachers use to manage the problem behaviours of learners in inclusive classrooms. The findings indicated that strategies that teachers use to manage the problem behaviours of learners in inclusive classrooms include classroom rules,

positive reinforcement strategies, negative reinforcement strategies, change of learning environment, and clear communication. If teaching is disrupted due to problem learners, teaching and learning cannot occur, thus disadvantaging learners who want to learn. Therefore, the appropriate strategies need to be implemented to manage problem behaviours experienced in the classroom for effective teaching and learning to take place. According to the findings, some strategies may not work for learners who are going through more than teachers know, as there is always more than meets the eye. Some strategies are effective, and some strategies do not work. In addition, the findings suggested that the manner in which the strategies are implemented by the teacher is important. If learners are aware of the consequences at the beginning, they will respect and follow the classroom rules. The findings further suggested that strategies may not work if teachers are not consistent with the implementation process, learners will not take the process seriously. While immediate strategies are being employed in the classroom, these are short-term solutions. In addition to managing problem behaviour in the classroom, the problem behaviour also needs to be managed outside the classroom.

6.3 Discussion of Findings

6.3.1 Identifying Problem Behaviours in the Classroom

The study intended to explore how teachers identify problem behaviours in the classroom. The findings indicated that there were various ways in which teachers identified problem behaviours. From the literature reviewed in the study, problem behaviours in schools are common throughout the world. In agreement with Merrett and Wheldall (1984), the concept of ‘disruptive classroom behaviour’ is recognised as an interference with a child’s own learning as well as other classmates’ learning. They further identified various problem behaviours such as disruptive behaviour, talking out of turn, aggressiveness, and disobedience. Similarly, in agreement, Beaman, Wheldall, and Kemp (2007) also identified idleness, hindering others, interrupting, inappropriate classroom talks, out of seat and bullying also forms of problem behaviours.

In addition, researchers also asserted that problem behaviour has an immense impact in teaching and learning process. In agreement with a South African study by Marais and Meier (2010), problem behaviour should be considered as any disruptive behaviour that interferes with the teaching and learning process. Due to many teachers’ experiences of being in a

classroom with diverse learners, they have encountered various problem behaviours. As previously mentioned, teachers' understanding of problem behaviour is any inappropriate behaviour that causes disruptions in the classroom.

The findings tend to agree with the South African study by Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012), which showed that behavioural barriers are an immense concern which requires immediate attention seeing that it greatly impacts the teaching and learning processes in schools. Learners display aggression, disregards the rights of other learners, destructive, dishonest and displays depression (Potgieter-Groot, Visser & Lubbe-de Beer, 2012, p. 4). These problem behaviours do not allow for effective teaching and learning to occur in an inclusive classroom. The findings also agree with Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012) who showed that teachers are not trained and are not equipped to manage these behavioural barriers effectively. Although teachers implement various strategies, these strategies are only temporary and do not deal with managing problem behaviours long term. Therefore, as mentioned by Potgieter-Groot, Visser and Lubbe-de Beer (2012), teachers need to be empowered by receiving adequate training to accommodate the problem behaviours that are experienced in the classrooms.

In another South African study, Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 2) asserted that problem behaviours are displayed in various ways which include not attending lessons, rudeness, unwarranted talking while the teacher is teaching, bullying, being abusive, and stealing. They further postulated that these learners who display problematic behaviours do not conform to the school code of conduct which makes it extremely difficult for teachers to manage such behaviour.

From the qualitative data collected, teachers identified a multitude of problem behaviours which consisted of three themes. The first theme was 'disruptive'. Learners displayed problem behaviours which included, unwarranted noise, anger, disruptiveness, being out of their seat (unnecessary movement), side conversations, talking out of turn, blurting out answers and impulsive behaviour. The second theme was that learners were 'uncooperative'. Learners displayed problem behaviours such as inattentiveness, incompleteness of work, being disorganised, (does not have the necessary resources needed for the lesson), defiance, inability to listen, refusing to follow instructions, lack of work ethic, and disrespect. The third theme was 'disobedience'. Learners who were problematic displayed lack of social skills, what is and is not appropriate conversational language, impulse control, , frustration, low self-esteem,

trying to be the centre of attention, lack of focus, inappropriate content in conversation, notable difficulties to maintain socially acceptable etiquette - outbursts, non-participation, interfering in the space of others, failure to manage their own space, personal presentation, , lack of manners, and not respecting others property.

Problem behaviours have greatly increased over the years. The findings strongly suggested that the first problem is a child who keeps moving around and cannot sit in one place, the second one is a child who cannot listen, and the third one is a child who cannot keep quiet and continuously communicates during the lesson or whenever he feels the need to talk to his friends, he will communicate with them causing a disruption in the lesson. The fourth problem is children who are not willing to do the work and not complete tasks that are given and the necessity to monitor the child closely so that they complete their work.

The findings also suggested that learners who use the bathroom as an escape is considered a problem as they miss out on important content. In addition, the findings established that learners may not be emotionally ready for formal schooling and this results in the display of infantile behaviour, and in addition, many age-cohort appropriate skills appear to be absent in the children concerned. Learners may also have conditions such as ADHD, autism, physical conditions such as bad eyesight, poor muscle tone, problematic concentration and listening skills, as well as disciplinary problems, and auditory problems.

In agreement with the reviewed literature, the most common behaviours according to the teachers are unwarranted noise, inattentiveness, defiance, disruptive, disobedience, disrespect, do not listen, impulsive behaviour, lack of work ethic, lack of focus, lack of time management and lack of manners. These problem behaviours are of most concern for teachers and are often responsible for the many difficulties that teachers face in the classroom and which make teaching and learning ineffective.

6.3.2 Causes of Problem Behaviour in the Classroom

The study provided an overview of the various causes of problem behaviour. The findings explore the various explanations from teachers of possible causes of problem behaviours. From the literature reviewed in the study, there can be various contributing factors which may influence learners' behaviour. Bronfenbrenner identified the many environmental and societal factors in the different ecosystems which influence the development of the child and which

may have an impact on the behaviour and characteristics of the child. The way the ecosystems interact with the child influences all aspects of the child's life, including behaviour. In addition, Bandura's social learning theory is also used to give an account for the explanation of behaviour. Bandura's theory describes the influences of an individual's experiences which considers the manner in which the environment and cognitive factors are interconnected which results in the influence of the individual's learning and behaviour. According to Bandura's theory, behaviour is learned through observation, imitation and modelling. Smaragda (2013), similarly asserted that multiple factors contribute to the learners' behaviour and can greatly influence the individual. Smaragda (2013) further added that the root causes of problem behaviour can exist biologically, psychologically, and socially.

The findings in this study agree with Mestry and Khumalo (2021) who suggested that the lack of parental support affects the problem behaviour displayed by the child. In addition, they asserted that family background plays an important role because "learners with discipline problems come from a family background where there is physical abuse, conflict and domestic violence and [b]oth, the lack of parental support" (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 107). In agreement, Cortina, Fazel, Hlungwani, Tollman, Cortina-Borja and Stein's (2013) research also demonstrated that socio-economic disadvantages greatly affect the child's performance in South African schools and teachers identified high levels of behavioural and emotional problems.

Similarly, Unity, Osagiobare, and Edith (2013) contend that social status contribute to the manner in which a child behaves and that poverty plays a role in the emotional trauma experienced and that both influence the behaviour of the child (p. 151). These can eventually lead to feelings of alienation, inadequacy, depression and anxiety which greatly influences the behaviour of the child. Nunan and Ntombela (2018) also suggested that learner's desperation for attention and acceptance can cause them to display disruptive behaviour. They further asserted that learners tend to misbehave as a result of not being able to control their anger, therefore, they act out in various ways. Lastly, the findings also agree with Barbarin and Richter (2001), whose study proposes that economic status, community danger and psychological problems greatly affect children in South Africa. They asserted that children's behaviour was greatly affected by various risk factors in their environment. In addition, problematic behaviour and emotional trauma often occurred more frequently among poor households rather than non-poor households and these factors can be a threat to a child's well-being.

In a South African study, Mafumbate and Mkhatjwa (2020) postulated that due to the lack of parenting skills, family dysfunctionality, family socioeconomic status and peer influence, the behaviour of the child is greatly impacted. The study showed that the manner in which children behave is influenced by their home environment. According to Mafumbate and Mkhatjwa (2020), if a child is brought up in a healthy environment, they will be positively influenced and display appropriate behaviour. Whereas, if a child is raised in an unhealthy environment, they will be negatively influenced and display inappropriate behaviour.

In addition, according to Coldwell, Pike and Dunn (2006), children who grow up in household chaos can be negatively influenced. When a home is dysfunctional or has disorder, children tend to believe that the behaviour is normal and is acceptable. Children then learn to imitate this bad behaviour unknowingly. Such behaviour is displayed in schools and thus becoming problematic for the teachers.

The qualitative data collected indicated that while teachers many not have the theoretical background knowledge of the causes of problem behaviour, through practical experiences they are able to identify general causes of problem behaviour. Teachers suggested that some of the causes of problem behaviour included academic insecurities, peer pressure, seeking attention, emotional trauma, medical/ psychological conditions, learning difficulties and circumstances at home. Although teachers can identify the possible causes of problem behaviour through a psychological explanation, they are unable to accurately recognise the root causes of such problem behaviour through historical dimensions. Teachers need to form sustainable and ethical relationships with the learner as well as their parents/ guardians in order to understand each learner and identify abnormal behavioural patterns. It is important for teachers to acquire an adequate knowledge of the historic background of each learner to ensure that they can adequately manage the problem behaviours of learners in the classroom.

6.3.3 Consequences of Problem Behaviours on the Teaching/Learning Environment

The study reviewed various problem behaviour and the impact on teaching and learning. The findings explore the consequences of problem behaviours on the Teaching and Learning environment. From the reviewed literature, there are various difficulties that teachers experienced due to problem behaviour experienced in the classroom. Finding in this agree with O'Brennan, Bradshaw, and Furlong (2014) who asserted that problem behaviour greatly affects

the classroom atmosphere, the academic performance of the problematic learner as well as the classmates of the learner. In agreement, McIntosh, Brigid Flannery, Sugai, Braun, and Cochrane (2008) postulated that the relationship between problem behaviour and academic performance is indeed linked and learners with various difficulties in displaying problem behaviour have a high risk of developing problem behaviour (p.3).

In addition, teachers implemented various strategies to manage the problem behaviours. There are strategies that are extremely beneficial and strategies that simply do not work. Sun and Shek (2012) asserted that disruptive behaviour affects the learning atmosphere. In agreement with Mothata and Squelch (1997), many strategies used to manage problem behaviour does not necessarily help and this can disrupt the teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom. The findings also agree with Tiwari & Panwar (2014) who asserted that in order for effective teaching and learning to occur in the classroom, proper classroom management strategies need to be implemented to help overcome the problem behaviours experienced. Finally, Lopes and Oliveira (2017) asserted that the effectiveness of the various strategies to address the behavioural issues in the classroom depends on how the teacher deals with the situations that occur in the class.

In a study conducted in Nigeria, Abdulmalik, Ani, Ajuwon and Omigbodun (2016) postulated that aggressive behaviour displayed by learners is an immense concern as it negatively impacts the learners academic school performance. When a child displays problem behaviours, these problem behaviours affect the child and s/he will tend to have various difficulties with their school performance. Due to the disruptive behaviour, they are unable to pay attention, focus, complete tasks, are easily distracted, and they are excluded from the class. Therefore, these children tend to miss out on important teaching content and are unable to perform well in school.

Giarelli, Clarke, Catching and Ratcliffe (2009) conducted a study in South Africa which emphasized the concern of problem behaviours in low-income countries. They asserted that many children display problem behaviours due to the home environment and these behaviours are not dealt with at an early age. As a consequence, children find it difficult to adapt to a school setting and to conform to the rules of the school, thus becoming frustrated which cause the arise in problem behaviours. They tend to lash out in the classroom and become disruptive, which impacts what they learn in the class.

From the qualitative data collected, the teachers in this study agree with the findings in suggesting that problem behaviour immensely impacts the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Teachers found that due to problem behaviour displayed by learners, it was difficult to conduct a lesson when the disruption of problem behaviours impacted the teaching and learning process. Teachers found that learners' ability to quickly lose focus and get distracted easily also interfered with the teaching and learning process. Teachers also established that the quality of discipline was inadequate. In addition, teachers found that due to the problematic behaviours that were displayed by learners, a lot of their lesson time were spent on addressing the problem behaviour, rather than teaching. Lastly, teachers established that problem behaviour greatly affected the process of delivering the curriculum adequately which greatly affected the learners' academic performance.

6.3.4 Managing Problem Behaviour in the Classroom

The study also examined the strategies that teachers use in the classroom to help manage problem behaviours. The findings identified numerous strategies implemented by teachers to manage problem behaviour in the classroom. From the reviewed literature, problem behaviour is an immense concern for teachers, therefore, there are strategies that need to be considered to manage problem behaviour. Various strategies were mentioned to help teachers manage problem behaviour. According to a study conducted in South Africa by Rubbi Nunan and Ntombela (2019), if teachers can understand and identify the problem, they are better able to develop the appropriate skills needed to manage the problem behaviour. While the findings of the present study concur with Rubbi, Nunan and Ntombela, it must be noted that the measures that teachers implement are generally only of a temporary nature which shows an agreement to the findings.

Lopes and Oliveira (2017) asserted that classroom discipline helps to manage problem behaviour. Parsonson (2012), together with Payne, Mancil, and Landers (2005), also suggested that positive reinforcement and effective feedback can be beneficial to manage problem behaviour. However, while the findings in this study agree with the foregoing practices, it is important to recognise that these are only temporary methods to manage problem behaviour. In addition, punishment such as the use of a merit and demerit system, detention and removing learners from the classroom were also strategies adopted by the teachers but the findings suggested that these were not always effective. The findings of this study agree with Sorcinelli

(1994) in suggesting that by encouraging active learning, teachers can reduce the problem behaviours experienced in the classroom. Sullivan, Johnson, Owens & Conway (2014) also suggested that using rewards would help manage problem behaviour. However, once again this did not work for all learners. The findings also agreed with Marais and Meier (2010) who argued that parental involvement was an important strategy in managing learners with problem behaviours. To help manage problem behaviour experienced in the classroom, appropriate strategies need to be implemented. In this regard I agree with Mothata and Squelch (1997) who contends that many strategies used to manage problem behaviour do not necessarily help to deal with such behaviours. The findings also agree with Tiwari & Panwar (2014) who asserted that in order for effective teaching and learning to occur in the classroom, proper classroom management strategies need to be implemented to help overcome the problem behaviours experienced.

However, the findings also agree with Obadire and Sinthumule (2021, p. 1) who asserted that the “lack of discipline among learners in schools has been one of the foremost problems facing schools over the years”. They asserted that although there are many strategies implemented by teachers to help manage problem behaviour, however, the lack of school discipline makes it difficult to deal with the problem behaviours. According to Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), since the prohibition of the implementation of corporal punishment in schools, many schools experience great difficulty in maintaining learner discipline since then.

In agreement, Mestry and Khumalo (2012) postulated that the lack of discipline in South African schools’ results in the display of problem behaviours which greatly affects the teaching and learning environment. They further asserted that school governing bodies “are not given adequate training to enable them to perform their duties effectively” (Mestry & Khumalo, 2012, p. 102). Numerous strategies and interventions were implemented to manage problem behaviour; however, these strategies were ineffective. The study suggested that although teachers were aware that corporal punishment is banned, they still practiced it in schools to help maintain learner discipline.

From the qualitative data collected, the teachers in this study identified various strategies that they implement to manage problem behaviour, however, not all the strategies were effective. Teachers used positive and negative reinforcement, changed the learning environment, modified the curriculum, communicated with the learner and their parent/ guardian, enforced the merit and demerit system, consulted colleagues, recommended counselling, isolated the

learner, made them aware of the consequences of their behaviour, and set classroom rules. Some problem behaviours experienced cannot be controlled by the teacher, thus requiring extra interventions. Although there are many strategies recommended to manage problem behaviour, they are unclear in their application. The generalised approach of the solutions recommended by teachers do not effectively facilitate in a sustainable way of dealing with problematic behaviour, but rather temporarily aids the management of such behaviour.

6.4 Conclusion

In the research findings presented, the understanding of problem behaviour, the causes of problem behaviour, and the strategies implemented to manage problem behaviour were discussed. To understand problem behaviours the focus was on teachers' interpretations and discovery of new ways to deal with the problem behaviours. The study showed that problem behaviour remains a constant concern for teacher because of its effects on the teaching and learning within the classroom. For effective teaching and learning to occur, teachers need to manage the problem behaviour in their classrooms. Teachers were able to identify problem behaviours, they were also aware of some of the causes of problem behaviour. They implemented various strategies to manage the problem behaviour. However, sometimes it is easy for teachers to misdiagnose problem behaviour. Learners' behaviour should therefore always be assessed within the context in which it occurred. Teachers need to consider if the problem behaviour is continuous or a one-off occurrence. There is a great need for teachers to find a solution to problem behaviour.

Too much time is spent on managing problem behaviour, therefore, teachers need to be educated on problem behaviour, the causes of problem behaviour, and what strategies can be implemented to manage the problem behaviours. By educating teachers, they will be able to implement more effective strategic interventions not only to manage problem behaviour but also to avoid problem behaviour in the classroom as well as reduce the impact that problem behaviours have on teachers.

Very importantly, the problem behaviour cannot be understood in isolation, there are various external factors that need to be considered to explain the problem behaviour in the classroom. The strategies employed by teachers to address problem behaviour are often influenced by generalised societal norms of what should be done in schools. However, the strategies

implemented in the classroom are mostly temporary solutions to manage problem behaviour. To address the concerns teachers have regarding problem behaviour, long term solutions are required. Problem behaviour is continuous, it not only manifests within the classroom but also in societal contexts more generally. Problem behaviour cannot be addressed by teachers alone, collaboration with parents/ guardians are required to assist to deal adequately with the problem behaviour. All facets of the learners' lives need to be considered and dealt with. Discipline needs to be consistent; teachers and parents/ guardians need to work together to manage problem behaviour.

To conclude, this study provided an overview of problem behaviour in the classroom and teachers' explanations and interventions in three selected schools in Midrand in the Gauteng province of South Africa. This study should be seen as providing pointers to future research on the issue of problem behaviour in the classroom. While the present research identifies the socio-economic and other social issues which may contribute to children's behaviour, it may be necessary to engage in a psychological investigation which attempts to delve more deeply into the psychological constitution of those who engage in such problem behaviour. Such an investigation may shine more light on the deeper psychological causes of such behaviour and also provide teachers with greater insight into the causes of these behaviours and how to deal with them in the long term.

When trying to understand problem behaviour, we always tend to focus on a psychological explanation. The concept of problem behaviour and the causes need to be given an explanation which takes into consideration the changes that have occurred over the years in the manner in which the educational system and social environment were created and enforced by the apartheid regime, in comparison to today. Strict rules and consequences were implemented in the past to help manage problem behaviour which were effective. Today, teachers are faced with various problems in the classroom due to the problem behaviours they experience. Teachers give a psychological explanation for problem behaviours. The older teachers see the change and increase of problem behaviours over the years of their teaching experience. The strategies used to manage these problem behaviours are not as effective and are only temporary. The historical dimensions of understanding and managing problem behaviours needs to be taken into consideration for effective strategies to work seeing that these changes may have contributed to the nature of the problem behaviours displayed by learners in the classroom today. It is important to keep up with the times of the evolving world we live in so that we can act accordingly and appropriately in managing the problem behaviours experienced.

6.5: Recommendations

While teachers are able to diagnose problem behaviour at a surface level, they appear to be able to manage such behaviour temporarily, they do not have sustainable methods in to address problem behaviour effectively over the longer term. To address these difficulties the following are recommended:

- In addition to the curriculum of Life Orientation, in which learners are taught about life skills, they need to be taught about crucial life events (bullying, rape, death, divorce, illnesses, learning disabilities) and how that affects a child and how s/he would need to deal emotionally with the situation. This is because the study reported that children are not exposed to the reality of certain situations and cannot talk about it freely. The curriculum needs to accommodate for children to be able to talk about various situations. Children need to learn about the importance of school and how it would affect their future. Learners need to be aware of the practical skills that are required in times of crisis, when they are experiencing emotional stress, instead of acting out by displaying problem behaviour.
- School disciplinary system needs to be reviewed. Stricter methods need to be implemented to address problem behaviours because some strategies, such as the merit and demerit system and detention, are not adequate to solve problem behaviour. After several warnings and meetings with parents, disciplinary hearing or suspension, the constitutional imperatives which guarantees education for everyone, must also be taken into consideration. The change in the educational system needs to be considered. It is important for schools to create effective consequences for learners who display problem behaviour to emphasize the severity of the situation. This is because the study reported that the school disciplinary system is inadequate and a change to be considered to help manage the problem behaviours faced.
- Extra interventions must be employed, such as having learners visit a psychologist, educational assessments, parent and learner counselling which can help learners within and also outside of the classroom. This is because the study reported that although teachers try to implement strategies to help manage problem behaviour, learners need

to seek additional support and more professional help to manage the problem behaviours experienced.

- Often parents are not aware of the way in which their child's behaviours in school. Children tend to behave differently at home than at school. Parents can sit in during a lesson to observe their child. Parents can also attend workshops or seek counselling so that they are able better to understand different behaviour problems that children display so they do not misjudge their own child. This is because the study reported that parents are not aware of the problem behaviours their child displays. At home the child behaviours in one manner and at school they behave in a different manner. Parents need to be involved to help their child who displays problem behaviours.
- Performance based school fees can be implemented to help address problem behaviour. Learners who are well behaved will pay the limited amount of school fees, and learners who are consistently problematic pay a higher price. This is because the study reported that there is no help from the school to promote appropriate behaviour. If schools are able to stress the importance of good behaviour and promote benefits, there can be a change and problem behaviour can be reduced.
- Guidance councillors are essential in all schools. It is important for guidance counsellors to be available to help problematic learners to address the issues that they face. This is because the study reported that not all schools have guidance councillors to assist learners with problem behaviour. By having guidance counsellors, the stress of dealing with problematic learners is taken away from the teachers, and teachers can therefore solely focus on teaching.
- Teachers should attend regular workshops/ training sessions. During these lessons teachers can receive theoretical background knowledge on how to manage problem behaviours in the classroom, they can share their experiences and help each other to manage problem behaviours in the classroom as well as providing support to each other. It is essential to involve experts in the field of problem behaviour and classroom management. This is because the study reported that not all teachers have received the

adequate training that is needed to help manage problem behaviours. Teachers need to be well prepared and equipped to help learners who display problem behaviours, and this can be done through workshops and training sessions.

- Teachers need to be well prepared for their lessons and accommodate for the diverse learners they teach. By using clear and simple instructions and changing the atmosphere of their class from time-to-time teachers can prevent disruption in the lessons. This is because the study reported that not all teachers are well prepared and lesson time is lost due to the teacher having to manage the problem behaviour displayed by a learner. When a teacher is well prepared, the learner who displays problem behaviour can be dealt without disrupting the lesson and other learners will not be disadvantaged as they will continue with their given tasks.

6.6: Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that the findings obtained from the schools I have chosen may not be generalised to all schools in Midrand, South Africa. This study intends to provide new information presented to help individuals, namely teachers, who experience problem behaviour in the classroom with strategies to manage the problem behaviour in the classroom.

The information proposed in this study is limited to what can be accessed and read in the allocated time frame. Time was a major constraint due to the fact on the availability of the hours in a day, together with the COVID- 19 pressures at hand. Due to the pandemic, interviews were conducted using online platforms such as email, Microsoft teams and Zoom. The data obtained is therefore somewhat limited given the constraints on time, availability of participants, and the means of obtaining relevant data under the prevailing conditions.

6.7 Suggestions for future research

From the research obtained, future researchers need to engage with more schools. Future researchers should also look at public schools and semi-private schools and the occurrence of problem behaviour in such schools and the strategies adopted by teachers in such schools to deal with the problem. In addition, for future research, the continuous change in social

conditions and the impact on children's' behaviour needs to be considered, as it accounts for an explanation of the manner in which children behave. Future research could also look at the extent to which the race/gender of teachers may affect learners' behaviour. The current study focused on private schools, it could be of value therefore, in future research, to examine the experiences of teachers at other schools to get a different perspective of the resources available, the difference in the teachers' experiences of problem behaviour, the ways they understand and explain such behaviours, and the strategies which they adopt to deal with such behaviours.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information Letter

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Problem Behaviour in the Classroom: Teacher's Explanations and Interventions in selected primary schools in Midrand, South Africa.

Institution: University of Witwatersrand, School of Education.

Dear Participant

My name is Lizanne Leslie Jacob, M.Ed student from the University of Witwatersrand Education campus. I am conducting a study which focuses on teachers' explanations and interventions of Problem behaviour in the Classroom. The study aims to identify problem behaviours in the classroom and analyse strategies used by teachers in their management of problem behaviour in schools in Midrand, South Africa.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. Your participation involves participating in an interview (1 hour). With your permission, this interview will be recorded in order to ensure accuracy. Interviews will be scheduled at a date, time and venue convenient to you. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and your identity will be kept anonymous. Before agreeing to participate, it is important that you read and understand the explanation of the purpose of the study and the study procedures. This information sheet will help you decide if you would like to participate in this study. Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. If you agree to participate in this study in the form of an interview, you may refuse to answer any questions you would prefer not to, and you are still able to withdraw from the study at any stage and this will not be held against you. If you do decide to participate in this study, you will need to sign this document to confirm that you understand the study and agree to participate. You will be given a copy of this document to keep. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Purpose of the study

Problem behaviour in the classroom is a major concern for teachers seeing that it impacts the learners' academic performance and disrupts effective teaching and learning in the classroom. This study aims to identify some of the behavioural problems that occur in the classroom. It will proceed to give an account of the strategies used to deal with these problematic behaviours. Lastly, the project will evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

Risks and Benefits

There are no risks involved in participating in this study and you the participant and the school will be kept anonymous. The benefit of the study is that we intend to help improve the teaching system as well as promote inclusive education in the classroom. There is no assurance you will benefit from this study. However, your participation may contribute to the literature around this phenomenon.

Confidentiality

All information obtained during the course of the study, including the interviews, will be strictly confidential and kept anonymous. There will be no names mentioned in the study. Participants will be given access to the interview reports. Your records, to the extent of the applicable laws and regulations, will not be made publicly available. Only the researcher and the supervisors will have access to the confidential information being collected. All of your responses will be kept confidential, and no information that could identify you will be included in the research report. Any information obtained during the course of this study will be stored and analysed only for the purposes of this study for a period not exceeding two years if the research report is published and five years if no publications emanate.

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecon-medical@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Lizanne Leslie Jacob.

Researcher:

Lizanne Leslie Jacob

Supervisors:

Dr Peter Aloka, Peter.aloka@wits.ac.za, 01171773065

Mr Rashad Bagus, Rashad.Bagus@wits.ac.za

Appendix B: Informed Consent to participate

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Informed Consent

Problem Behaviour in the Classroom: Teachers' Explanations and Interventions in Selected Primary Schools in Midrand, South Africa.

Lizanne Leslie Jacob.

I,, agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve. I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below).

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous	YES	NO
---	-----	----

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in his / her research report	YES	NO
---	-----	----

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
--	-----	----

I agree that the information I provide may be used anonymously after this project has ended, for academic purposes by other researchers, subject to their own ethics clearance being obtained.	YES	NO
--	-----	----

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher Lizanne Leslie Jacob about the nature, conduct, risks and benefits of the study. I have received, read and understood the participation information sheet involving the study. I am aware that I may at any stage be able

to withdraw my consent and participation from the study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and (of my free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

..... (signature)
..... (name of participant)
..... (date)

..... (signature)
..... (name of person seeking consent)
..... (date)

Contact details

Cell number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Biographical Questions

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Job Title: _____

Department: _____

Years in present position: _____

Number of years' experience in teaching: _____

Elaborate on teaching experience: _____

Qualifications obtained: _____



Appendix C: Informed Consent to be interviewed

Consent Form for being Interviewed

I _____ consent to being interviewed by Lizanne Leslie Jacob for her study on Problem Behaviour in the Classroom: Teachers' Explanations and Interventions in Selected Primary Schools in Midrand, South Africa. I understand that;

- Participation in this interview is voluntary.
- That I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer not to.
- I may withdraw from the study at any time.
- No information that may identify me will be included in the research report, and my responses will remain confidential.
- The recordings and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person in this organisation at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher.
- All recordings will be destroyed after the research is complete.
- No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or the research report.

Signature

Date

I, Lizanne Leslie Jacob, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature and conduct of the above study.

Study researcher

Lizanne Leslie Jacob

Printed name

Signature

Date

Appendix D: Interview Questions

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Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of Problematic Behaviour in the context of the classroom?
2. If you have identified learners with problematic behaviour, in your opinion, what do you think the causes of problem behaviour may be? Explain your answer.
3. What are the problem behaviours that learners display?
4. What is the most common problem behavior that stands out causing the disruption of the lesson?
5. What are the most problematic behaviors that are displayed by learners the classroom?
6. What do you find difficult when teaching in a classroom situation when learners display problematic behaviour? Explain your answer.
7. Being a professional teacher in a school, how do you cope/ teach learners with who display problematic behaviour? Explain your answer.
8. What strategies do you implement to address your concerns of problem behaviour? Explain your answer.
9. Have you received any form of training to help you gain knowledge of Problem Behaviors and how to manage learners who display problem behaviour? If so, which ones? Explain your answer.
10. If you have received training, do you feel that you need more/ regular training is required?

11. If you have not received training, do you feel that appropriate and adequate training is required?
12. Can you briefly tell me your confidence levels regarding learners with Problem Behaviours, how confident are you about managing these learners in the classroom?
13. At what point do you as a teacher seek extra intervention to help learners who display problematic behaviours?

Appendix E: Ethical Clearance



Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

R14/49 Jacob

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: H21/11/22

PROJECT TITLE

Problem Behaviour in the Classroom: Teachers' Explanations and Interventions in Selected Primary Schools in Midrand, South Africa

INVESTIGATOR(S)

Ms L Jacob

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT

Wits School of Education/

DATE CONSIDERED

19 November 2021

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved
Risk Level: Minimal

EXPIRY DATE

12 December 2024

DATE 13 December 2021

CHAIRPERSON

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Knight'.

(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr P Aloka and Mr R Bagus

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10004, 10th Floor, Senate House, University. Unreported changes to the application may invalidate the clearance given by the HREC (Non-Medical)

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to submit an amendment of the protocol to the Committee. I agree to completion of a regular progress report. For Minimal and Low studies, this is due annually on 31 December. For Medium and High Risk studies, this is due twice annually on 30 June and 31 December.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Jacob'.

Signature

14 / 12 / 2021
Date

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES