***Exploring Educators' and Students' Views on Students' Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools*.**

by

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(08 JULY 2026)

DECLARATION

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***Exploring Educators' and Students' Views on Students' Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools*:**

KEY TERMS:

Discipline, educators, learners, human rights, school environment, restorative justice, corporal punishment, misbehavior, constitution, classroom, circuit, education, management, policy, law, discipilinary procedure,

DEDICATION

- I sincerely dedicate this work to my mother, Vho-Nyadzanga Ntsunbedzeni Singo, whose unwavering encouragement, sacrifices, and support have been my strength throughout my academic career. I am grateful that you instilled in me a strong passion for learning and taught me the importance of diligence at a young age.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The notion of discipline in schools should go beyond the maintenance of orderliness; it should also be concerned with how learners are treated and protected within the school community. In particular, discipline in secondary schools is highly significant to the learners' academic achievement while simultaneously addressing their rights (De Wet, 2022). Nevertheless, it is a debated and controversial issue as various stakeholders tend to interpret it differently – while the educators seek to use disciplined school settings for optimal academic outcomes, learners may perceive it as a violation of their human rights.

The above-mentioned perspectives resonate strongly within the context of Dzondo Schools, where the need for discipline may clash with the rights of learners. Thus, the study will focus on identifying and discussing the meaning of discipline as understood by both educators and learners, as well as its implications for human rights. Human rights provide the basic threshold that should be met when disciplining learners since they outline the fundamental rights and freedoms to which every individual is entitled and should be protected throughout their lifespan, including within the school community (Maphosa & Shumba , 2020). Therefore, when developing and enforcing disciplinary policies and procedures, it is of paramount importance that the rights of learners be taken into consideration. Although educators have the right to ensure the discipline of learners within their classes, they should also respect the learners' rights.

Across the world, the violation of learners' rights has become a matter of great concern due to various cases reported in the media. Currently, there are numerous allegations that learners are

being subjected to physical, psychological, and emotional abuse under the pretext of implementing discipline. Such an approach not only jeopardizes the safety and wellbeing of learners but also affects their academic performance. It is safe to argue that a conducive and safe learning environment is the foundation for all other processes in the school, including discipline. Even though the law protects the rights of learners against being harassed by their educators, such cases have become rather common in contemporary society (Bear, 2020). At the same time, there is an increase in learner misbehavior and violence in schools that makes many educators wonder whether their discipline procedures are appropriate or whether they are being abused.

According to Nations (2020), the high-crime community is more likely to cause and be affected by violence, which explains why the behavior of learners in many South African schools is a matter of major concern. Thus, the South African Schools Act of 1996 was developed to ensure the safety of learners, as well as to emphasize the need for discipline in schools. For instance, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 stipulates the following: *"a new national system for schools which will redress past inequalities in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners… uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State".*

In addition, the South Africa Constitution (RSA, 1996) gives every individual a wide range of socio-economic and political rights. More specifically, the Bill of Rights provides a list of rights that should be enjoyed by all individuals and protected by the State. Other legal frameworks that address the issue of learners' rights and the responsibilities of educators include the South African Schools Act (SASA, RSA 1996) and the Employment of Educators Act (EEA, 198). Nevertheless, the problem of learners' rights violations in South African schools has become rather severe as learners frequently report that they are harassed by their educators (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Learners' misbehavior has become a major concern in most of South Africa's schools. It is rather common that every other week, newspapers report on issues of violence and learner-learner, as well as learner-educator conflicts that occur frequently, unfortunately, resulting in the deaths of several learners.

In particular, this has been associated with several learners coming from communities where the crime rate is extremely high, and as a result, their behavior may reflect the social aspects of such areas. It is not uncommon that weapons such as kitchen Knives, guns, and other sharp objects are brought to school, where they pose a significant threat to the health of the learners and educators. There are a number of studies that address either the learners' perspective of discipline or the educators' viewpoint (UNESCO, 2023). However, few pieces of research have attempted to

review both sides of the issue. The current research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in terms of understanding the perspectives of both sides.

The study will focus on Dzondo Secondary Schools and seek to determine how discipline in schools affects the learners' right to safety within the Limpopo province. Therefore, the study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the notion of discipline within the school setting. Moreover, it will highlight the importance of human rights, as well as the need to ensure that they are respected and protected. Finally, the inclusion of both the learners' and educators' perspectives will facilitate the discussion on how to achieve the best results in terms of discipline in schools and learner safety.

1.2. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The rationale for choosing Dzondo Secondary Schools is based on the challenges facing these institutions when trying to balance discipline with the rights of the learners. Discipline in schools has always been a matter of great concern, but such practices should not override the human rights of these young individuals. Lack of clarity of the rules and their implications causes misunderstanding of the punishment that the learners have to undergo. In some situations what the educators think is fair or not fair, does not coincide with what the learners think is fair or not fair. It is also not uncommon for some rules to appear to be more important than others although they should be of equal importance. Another related challenge is that of understanding of the rights by the learners. This makes it too easy to mislead some learners into thinking that they are being denied their rights when in fact the opposite is true (Department of Education, 2021).

Dzondo Secondary Schools were chosen for this study because of the wide spectrum of learners from different cultural, social and economic backgrounds. This variation brings about differences in understanding of discipline, the rights of the learners and the perception of the rules as well as their punishment. The fact that these learners come from different backgrounds make it even more important to check if there are differences in how the rules and their punishment are enforced and if so, how to eliminate these differences (Mncube & Dlamini, 2021). This study is aimed at giving a voice to both the educators and the learners by seeking out what the educators and students have to say. By listening to what the educators and students have to say, the analysis will be able to point out the differences between what is said and what is done in far more detail. This is crucial to achieving an appropriate level of discipline in these schools.

It is hoped that this research will contribute greatly to providing solutions for a more balanced approach to discipline in these schools. The findings of this research are expected to propose recommendations that, if adopted, will help these schools to uphold human rights and in this way create a positive environment for learning for the educators, learners and staff members. Therefore, the rationale for this study is achieved through the need for balance in discipline and respect for human rights in schools. A more positive and respectful school environment is essential for the wellbeing of those in the school. By taking into account the views of the educators and learners, a better understanding of the issues will be made possible, leading to a more positive environment where everyone feels that they are treated with respect and courtesy (DBE, 2021).

1.3. LITERATURE/SCHOLARSHIP REVIEW

This section will review the existing literature on the relationship between disciplinary procedures and human rights in secondary schools. The section will highlight different theoretical and empirical studies on the impact of discipline on students' rights, educators' perceptions on student discipline, the influence of discipline on teaching and learning, and challenges in balancing discipline and human rights.

1.3.1. Disciplinary Procedures in Secondary Schools

School discipline is a key element of classroom management that enhances quality teaching and learning. Various scholars have investigated disciplinary procedures in secondary schools and their effectiveness in managing classroom discipline. In most cases, educators use punitive-based strategies such as verbal warnings, detention, suspension, and expulsion to deal with misbehavior among learners. Restorative practices such as peer mediation, conflict resolution, and counseling are also effective disciplinary procedures used by educators.

Segalo and Rambuda (2019) reveal that punitive-based disciplinary procedures such as suspension and expulsion are commonly practiced in most of South Africa's secondary schools despite the country's constitutional right to human rights as stipulated in the South African Schools Act 1996. Although punitive measures have been practiced in schools for a long time, they usually

cause more harm than good because they do not address the root causes of misbehavior, and hence, the problems persist or recur, as revealed by Wilmot (2020). Further, punitive-based disciplinary procedures such as suspension and expulsion have been found to be detrimental to marginalized groups including racially different learners and learners with disabilities (Dhlamini, 2021). Such practices are, therefore, not effective in managing discipline in secondary schools because they impede learners' right to education and dignity.

1.3.2. Human Rights in Education

Human rights in education are principles that guide learners' rights in relation to education and include the right to freedom of speech and expression, education, dignity, and non-discrimination. Like other countries, the South African education system has the following human rights principles that guide the educational sector in protecting the rights of learners. Bajaj (2019) explains that the rights-based approach in the education sector ensures that the educational system respects the rights of all learners without discrimination based on gender, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. Further, this author reveals that human rights principles are used to guide disciplinary procedures in schools so that they do not undermine the rights of learners. For example, educators' punitive measures must be used to restore the wrong rather than punish the learner by taking away his or her freedoms and dignity. Human rights principles require that disciplinary procedures enhance a child's sense of responsibility, and therefore, educators should make restorative justice their guiding principle in learner discipline. In addition, Bantekas and Oette (2020) agree that human rights principles that inform learner discipline in schools promote the use of disciplinary procedures that are rehabilitative and not punitive.

1.3.3. Educators' Views on Disciplinary Procedures

Educators are key stakeholders in education as they implement disciplinary procedures and policies in the schools. Educators' perceptions on disciplinary procedures significantly influence the strategies used to deal with misbehavior and restore discipline in schools. Most educators agree that discipline plays a pivotal role in ensuring learners' welfare through the promotion of a conducive learning environment that guarantees quality teaching and learning. Further, educators believe that effective classroom management relies mainly on the implementation of appropriate disciplinary procedures. However, educators face the challenge of enforcing strict disciplinary measures without violating the learners' rights to freedom, dignity, and non-discrimination (Lukman & Hamadi, 2021).

Many educators are also against punitive-based disciplinary procedures because they cause more harm than good to the learners' discipline and hence promote more harm than good to the

discipline in schools. Therefore, most educators are promoting restorative justice practices when dealing with misbehavior as a way of avoiding harsh punitive measures. Kilimc (2020) reveals that educators who are willing to embrace restorative practices can restore relationships with learners through enhancing mutual understanding, thereby promoting positive learner interactions that increase the chances of restoring discipline in schools. Educators' positive relationships with students enhance successful student discipline because learners are more likely to obey an educator they have a good relationship with. Segalo and Rambuda (2019) further reveal that educators' perceptions of learner discipline are greatly influenced by their socio-economic status. For instance, educators from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to advocate for strict disciplinary procedures in schools. Further, educators from rural areas use more punitive measures than their urban counterparts do. Such perceptions influence the implementation of strict punitive measures in schools, which are detrimental to achieving good learner discipline because they cause learner alienation from schooling.

1.3.4. Learners' Views on Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights

Learners are the ones who receive the benefits of education. Learners' perceptions of disciplinary procedures and human rights are vital because they indicate to the educational authority whether the disciplinary procedures used are appropriate or need replacements. Various authors have revealed the negative role that disciplinary procedures such as suspensions or expulsions play in learner discipline. According to Schmidt (2020), learners feel disempowered when strict punitive measures are used to punish misbehavior among learners. Such learners perceive the disciplinary procedures as unfair and, therefore, respond to them by becoming more disengaged from school, having poor attendance records, and becoming more likely to misbehave in the future. Thus, learners' negative perceptions of punitive-based disciplinary procedures such as suspension and expulsion lead to more misbehavior among students.

Jared and Thinguri (2021) further reveal that most learners perceive disciplinary procedures as a means of discrimination, especially among minority groups. Learners from minority groups perceive disciplinary procedures as being implemented selectively based on their ethnicity. Therefore, learners from minority ethnic groups become alienated from education, which has adverse effects on their learning and, by extension, the quality of education at the country level. On the other hand, learner discipline based on restorative justice encourages positive behavioral changes among learners, thus promoting education as they perceive discipline as a human-centered process.

1.3.5. Challenges in Balancing Discipline and Human Rights

There are many challenges that contribute to the tension between human rights and discipline in schools. First is the challenge of equity and discrimination. Various studies have proven the existence of inequity in the implementation of discipline in schools based on race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and disability (Moyo, Noncedo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2021). It is quite common for schools to use punitive-based disciplinary procedures in managing misbehavior in schools. However, such disciplinary procedures are not implemented equally based on the mentioned factors. Segalo and Rambuda (2019) reveal that learners from minority ethnic groups and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be punished using punitive-based measures compared to their counterparts from the majority ethnic group and those from economically privileged backgrounds.

South Africa's history of apartheid is still reflected in most aspects of society, including learner discipline in schools. Such a perspective explains why most schools continue to use punitive-based disciplinary procedures to manage learner discipline. The other challenge stems from the lack of training of educators on human rights principles and how to use them when interacting with learners. Most educators lack the relevant skills to implement student discipline in a way that protects learners' human rights. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) reveal that most educators are not well-versed in human rights principles and, therefore, cannot implement discipline in schools while upholding learners' human rights. Lack of knowledge on human rights undermines the ability of educators to implement appropriate disciplinary procedures for effective student discipline. Another challenge in balancing discipline and human rights is the unwillingness to implement restorative practices in dealing with student misbehavior. Lack of time or motivation to implement restorative practices hinders educators from enhancing learner discipline through the use of such practices.

1.3.6. The Need for Restorative Justice and Human Rights-Based Discipline

The literature review highlights the emergence of restorative justice as a concept in education as a way to reconcile disciplining measures and human rights values. Veriava et al. (2022) explain that restorative justice is about healing by focusing on repair, responsibility, and reconciliation. Restorative practices give learners the opportunity to learn from their mistakes, understand the impact they have on others, and move forward positively in their school community.

Restorative justice can be used in the context of human rights in education in South Africa as a way to achieve human rights goals in the educational system (Veriava, Thom, & Fish Hodgson, Basic education rights handbook: education rights in South Africa, 2022). Learners are active participants in restorative practices that seek to repair the harm done and restore relationships. As

such, restorative practices help create safe and caring school communities while repairing the rights of the wronged learners.

1.4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The aim of enforcing discipline at Dzondo Secondary Schools is to create a conducive learning environment. The implementation of the rules and regulations, however, has become a matter of debate between educators and learners. Educators are the ones who are expected to bring discipline among the learners but are under the impression that their expectations might be perceived as unfair or strict by the learners (Lumadi, 2024).

Learners feel that the educators' actions and decisions during disciplinary actions are unfair to them and disrespectful of their rights. As a result, there is a perception that learner rights are not respected at school, leaving many learners feeling disempowered and unheard. One of the reasons why learners feel this way is because of the lack of communication and understanding of the issues surrounding discipline between educators and learners. Educators focus on the need to develop rules and regulations to guide learners' behavior while learners may feel that they are being disciplined unfairly without their inputs. Discipline, therefore, becomes a demotivating measure instead of encouraging learners to be responsible citizens (Zondo & Mncube, 2024).

The educators may experience demotivation due to the perceived disregard for their efforts to encourage discipline among the learners. There are human rights principles that guide disciplinary actions in schools and ensure that the rights of the learners are upheld (Lumadi, 2024). It is evident in Dzondo Secondary Schools that human rights principles are neither understood nor integrated into the disciplinary actions implemented among the learners. Educators and learners are either unaware of the human rights principles or misunderstand them. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the perception of educators and learners on discipline and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. It also aimed at establishing the extent to which learners' rights are infringed upon in the process of enforcing discipline among the learners. The study sought to address the issues surrounding discipline by developing ways through which human rights can be incorporated into discipline to ensure that the dignity of every individual is respected.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS/HYPOTHESIS

This study will be undertaken using the following research question:

Primary Research Question: What are the perceptions of educators in Dzondo Secondary Schools regarding the efficacy and fairness of disciplinary procedures?

Secondary research questions include:

- What are the perceptions of learners in Dzondo Secondary Schools regarding the implications of disciplinary procedures, particularly in relation to their human rights?
- What are the effects of suspensions and expulsions on learners' sense of belonging, academic performance and general well-being?
- How do restorative justice practices differ from the normative disciplinary procedures in terms of promoting accountability and respect for human rights?
- What challenges and possibilities are encountered in implementing human rights-oriented disciplinary procedures in Dzondo Secondary Schools?

The questions have been formulated to capture the views of both educators and learners, as each group is likely to have divergent perspectives on the issues.

1.6. PURPOSE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.6.1. Purpose of the study

The study is intended to reveal the perceptions of educators and learners of disciplinary procedures and their human rights implications in Dzondo Secondary Schools.

This will entail an in-depth exploration of learners' and educators' views on disciplinary procedures and their implications, with a view to establishing some of the challenges encountered when attempting to enforce these procedures while at the same time respecting human rights. Researcher intend to learn more about disciplinary procedures in the schools and how they are received by educators and learners. The study will also help researcher understand how such procedures can be used to promote mutual respect and good relationships among members of a school community, including educators and learners. By focusing on the human rights implications of disciplinary procedures, researcher expect to gain more insight into ways in which these procedures can be designed to promote positive interactions and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

1.6.2. Aim and Objective of the study

Aim: The study aims to establish the relationships between disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools, as perceived by educators and learners.

Objectives:

- To explore educators' views on the efficacy and fairness of disciplinary procedures in Dzondo Secondary Schools

- To examine learners' perceptions of disciplinary procedures, with a focus on their human rights implications
- To determine how punitive disciplinary measures such as suspensions and expulsions affect learners' sense of belonging, academic performance and general well-being
- To evaluate the possibilities of using restorative justice practices, compared to the punitive disciplinary procedures, to promote human rights in schools

By exploring the relationships between disciplinary procedures and human rights, the study is expected to contribute to the development of appropriate responses to human rights issues that tend to arise during the enforcement of disciplinary procedures. This will help in developing more effective disciplinary procedures, which in turn will promote positive relationships between educators and learners. In general, the study will promote my understanding of the role of disciplinary procedures and how they can be leveraged to promote positive human interactions while avoiding adverse human rights implications.

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

1.7.1. Research approach

The research methodology and design will determine how the research on disciplinary procedures and human rights in secondary schools will be conducted to generate reliable results (Maree, 2022). The study will apply qualitative methods to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue.

1.8. Population and sampling

The strategy used in selecting the study's population and sample is an essential aspect of research design. The aspect aids in determining the type of population that will be used for the study as well as the sampling strategy that will be applied to come up with reliable results (Maree, 2022). For the study on "*Exploring Educators' and Students' Views on Students' Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools*" a well-defined population and sampling strategy will be implemented to ensure robust and reliable results.

1.8.1. Population

There are two major populations for this study: educators who are involved directly or indirectly in executing disciplinary procedures and the learners being disciplined. The educators consist of subject educators and school management personnel who develop and execute the disciplinary procedures and regulations in the schools. There are three main types of educators: class educators, subject educators, and assistant educators. The class educators perform various

duties, including discipline, whereas the subject educators are engaged in teaching and moderating examinations. The assistant educators provide assistance to the class educators in various duties, including discipline. The school management personnel consist of the school administration, including the principle, deputy principle, and the discipline committee. The school administration usually takes up disciplinary matters brought before them by the educators and learners. The school management also formulates school policies, including those related to discipline (DBE, 2021). The security personnel are also part of the educators as they assist the educators and school management in maintaining discipline and ensuring that all regulations are followed.

All the educators mentioned above participate in addressing or preventing disciplinary problems in the schools, although their roles differ. However, there are usually between five and seven educators in a school, so this study will focus on four educators for the study.

The second population is made up of the learners who are subjected to disciplinary procedures and regulations in the schools in the circuit. The study will focus on learners in Grade 10 to Grade 12 to ensure that most learners in the circuit are included in the study. However, there are usually between 200 and 800 learners in a school in the circuit. The study will focus on learners who are involved in disciplinary activities as well as those who are not to ensure the best results.

1.8.2. Sampling

To ensure that the selected participants accurately reflect the broader population, thereby enhancing the generalizability and reliability of the findings (Maree, 2022). This study employs a qualitative approach. Specifically, purposive sampling will be utilized for the qualitative interviews and focus groups. This strategy guarantees that key subgroups within the population, such as educators versus learners, and learners from various grade levels, are sufficiently represented in the sample (Maree, 2022). A random sample of educators will be drawn from distinct categories, including educators and administrators, to ensure comprehensive representation of all staff types. Similarly, a stratified sample of learners will be selected to proportionately represent different grade levels, specifically Grades 8 through 12. Furthermore, deliberate efforts will be made to include a diverse group of learners, encompassing both those who have undergone disciplinary actions and those who have not.

Regarding sample size, approximately four educators will be chosen to facilitate a diverse range of perspectives, contingent upon the total number of educators available. For learners, a larger sample size will be necessary to achieve adequate statistical power and generalizability, depending on the overall student population.

1.8.3. Qualitative Sampling (Interviews and Focus Groups)

For the qualitative component of the study, which includes in-depth interviews and focus groups, purposive sampling will be employed. This approach enables the researcher to select participants who possess specific knowledge or experiences directly relevant to the research questions. This sampling method is used to identify individuals capable of offering rich, detailed accounts of their experiences and perceptions regarding disciplinary procedures at the school.

A purposive sample of 10 to 15 educators will be selected, comprising a mix of classroom educators, school administrators, and other staff involved in implementing or enforcing school discipline. The selection process will ensure representation from various departments, positions, and levels of experience. Similarly, a purposive sample of 10 to 15 learners will be chosen, including both those who have experienced disciplinary actions and those who have not. This sample will aim to capture a diversity of perspectives, incorporating learners from different grade levels, genders, and backgrounds.

Focus groups will be organized separately for educators and learners, with each group consisting of 6 to 8 participants. These groupings will be based on participants' roles, such as one group of educators and one group of learners. The discussions are intended to uncover group-level insights into disciplinary measures and human rights.

Sample Size Considerations

Qualitative Sample Size (Interviews/Focus Groups):

Four educators will be chosen to participate in one-on-one interviews. Similarly, four learners will be selected for individual interviews. Additionally, focus groups will be formed, each comprising 6 to 8 students.

1.9. Instrumentation and data collection techniques

This section details the instruments utilized for data collection and the methodologies implemented in this study. The objective is to acquire comprehensive data that will facilitate a thorough understanding of educators' and students' perspectives on disciplinary procedures and human rights.

1.9.1. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, qualitative data will be collected using semi-structured instruments.

Qualitative Data Collection Instruments

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted to generate in-depth information on the research issue: disciplinary procedures and human rights (Maree, 2022). Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the educators and learners selected for the study to obtain their views and experiences on disciplinary procedures and measures to improve them. Focus group discussions will also be conducted with educators and learners separately to generate collective views on the same issue. Participants will share their perceptions on disciplinary procedures and human rights and critique each other's views and experiences. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face or through video conferencing if necessary. Each interview will take 30 to 45 minutes. Recordings of the interviews will be made with the consent of the participants and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Purposive sampling will be used to select participants because of their knowledge or experience with the research issue.

1.8.2. Data Collection Techniques

The participants will be informed of the study's purpose, voluntary nature, and how their data will be used. After contacting the participants, the time for the interview will be scheduled with them. The participants will be asked to provide informed consent at the beginning of the interview process. The interviews will have an informal and flexible structure to allow participants to fully describe their views, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions on disciplinary procedures and human rights. Although the interviewer will ask open-ended questions, probing will be done to obtain more information. The interviews will be recorded with the participants' consent. The recordings will be transcribed verbatim for analysis. The qualitative data obtained will be analyzed thematically to reveal themes or patterns in the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

1.9. Data analysis and interpretation

This section will discuss the data analysis procedures that will be undertaken to examine the collected data. It will also discuss how the study's findings will be reported to interpret the data and address the research issues: educators' and learners' perceptions of disciplinary procedures and human rights at Dzondo Secondary schools.

1.9.1. Data Analysis Procedures for Qualitative Data

The qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews will be analyzed thematically. Thematic analysis will help identify themes, patterns, or categories in the data collected.

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

The verbatim interviews will be organized thematically or topically to reveal patterns in the data. Triangulation will be done to verify the results, evaluate inconsistencies, and establish validity by cross-comparing themes in the qualitative data with the quantitative data results. The analysis will help establish whether there are significant associations between the themes or patterns in the quantitative survey results and similar themes in the qualitative data. For example, it will help determine if the perception of educators and learners about the unfairness of the punishment aligns with the findings of inconsistent implementation of disciplinary procedures (Creswell, 2024).

Interpretation of Results

The results of the analysis will be interpreted to provide answers to the research questions and address the research issues. The interpretations will focus on educators' perceptions, learners' perceptions, compare the two, and make recommendations.

Reporting the Findings

The quantitative results will be reported using tables, charts, graphs, and diagrams. Descriptive statistics, including percentage and mean values, will be reported to illustrate the key aspects of the study findings. In addition, inferential statistics, such as p-values, will be reported to demonstrate the relationship between variables. The qualitative results will be reported thematically. The descriptions of themes will be illustrated using verbatim statements to support the interpretations of the data. Such excerpts will provide concrete evidence of what was said to emphasize what the study found about disciplinary procedures and human rights. The final step will be to combine the quantitative and qualitative survey results to establish the extent to which Dzondo Secondary School's disciplinary procedures promote or discourage human rights. The study will conclude with recommendations based on the findings.

1.10. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY/CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Ensuring the reliability and validity of research findings, or their qualitative equivalents of credibility and trustworthiness, is fundamental to the integrity of educational studies and the utility of their outcomes for informing policy and practice (Maree, 2022). Consequently, given the focus of this investigation on educators' and learners' perspectives regarding disciplinary procedures and human rights, it is imperative to employ strategies that guarantee the reliability, validity, credibility, and trustworthiness of the results.

1.10.1. Reliability and Validity

Reliability pertains to the consistency of results obtained when a study is repeated under comparable conditions, whereas validity concerns the accuracy and relevance of the research findings in relation to the research questions being addressed (Maree, 2022).

a. **Reliability**

To maintain consistency in the data collection process, all participants will be provided with identical instructions, and the same set of questions will be administered across interviews and focus groups. Research assistants involved in data collection will receive training in standardized procedures to ensure uniform interactions with participants and accurate recording of data. Prior to the actual data collection, interview guides will be pre-tested to identify any potential issues related to wording, formatting, or structure. Additionally, a pilot study may be conducted using a small sample from a different school to assess the reliability of the instruments in capturing the intended data.

b. **Validity**

To ensure that the interview questions accurately capture the intended constructs—namely, educators' and learners' perceptions of disciplinary procedures and human rights—the development of these questions will be grounded in a comprehensive literature review and informed by expert input, including contributions from experienced educators and human rights specialists. Feedback will be solicited from scholars and colleagues with expertise in education law and human rights to confirm that the questions are both comprehensive and relevant. The study will draw upon established theoretical frameworks related to disciplinary procedures and human rights. By aligning the questions with these frameworks, the research aims to effectively measure the constructs of interest. Additionally, the wording of each question will be carefully reviewed to minimize ambiguity or bias that might compromise the measurement of the intended construct.

Given that the study is confined to a specific geographical area, the findings will be context-dependent. Nevertheless, by including a diverse sample of educators and learners from various secondary schools within that region, the study can enhance its external validity to some extent, thereby providing insights into broader patterns or practices that may be observable in other schools operating under similar contextual conditions.

1.10.2. Credibility and Trustworthiness (Qualitative Paradigm)

In the realm of qualitative research, the concepts of credibility and trustworthiness serve as counterparts to reliability and validity in quantitative methodologies. These principles are paramount in ensuring that research findings accurately represent the participants' viewpoints and the specific study context (Maree, 2022).

a. **Credibility**

To foster rapport and trust, researchers will maintain an extended engagement with participants. This methodology is intended to create an environment where participants feel at ease discussing sensitive topics, such as discipline and human rights. The study will employ a variety of data collection techniques, including interviews, focus groups, and surveys, to ensure the verification of participant-provided information. Furthermore, triangulation will be achieved by collecting data from diverse participant groups, specifically educators and learners. This comparative approach will enhance the robustness and credibility of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Following data collection and analysis, a subset of participants, comprising both educators and learners, will be invited to review the preliminary findings. This review process will allow participants to validate the extent to which the findings represent their perspectives. Any identified discrepancies will be addressed through adjustments aimed at refining the accuracy of the data interpretation.

b. **Dependability (Consistency over Time)**

Throughout the research endeavor, a comprehensive audit trail will be meticulously maintained. This practice entails the systematic documentation of all decisions enacted during each phase of the research, encompassing the initial design, subsequent data collection, thorough analysis, and final interpretation of findings. Such transparency is crucial, as it facilitates a clear understanding of the methodologies employed by subsequent researchers and upholds the rigor and consistency of the adopted approach (Kumar, 2023). Furthermore, the potential involvement of an external auditor, such as a peer researcher or supervisor, may be incorporated to scrutinize the research process and validate both the study's findings and the employed methodologies. This measure serves to reinforce the research's consistency and overall reliability.

c. **Confirmability (Objectivity)**

Throughout the research process, reflexivity will be employed to critically examine the researcher's potential biases, assumptions, and perspectives, and their possible impact on data interpretation (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2021). The researcher's personal experiences and viewpoints

concerning discipline and human rights will be openly disclosed to mitigate undue influence from personal biases on the findings. Furthermore, periodic discussions with peers or colleagues knowledgeable in qualitative research will facilitate objective and data-grounded interpretations. This peer debriefing process is intended to reveal potential blind spots and strengthen the conformability of the study's outcomes.

1.10.3. Data Collection Methods to Enhance Credibility and Trustworthiness

To enhance credibility and trustworthiness, various strategies will be employed during the data collection process:

1.10.3.1. Interview and Focus Group Methodology

To ensure that responses are both flexible and comprehensive, semi-structured interviews will be utilized. Educators will be asked open-ended questions to gather their views and experiences concerning disciplinary practices and human rights. A pilot study will be conducted to assess the interview questions and refine the procedures for both interviews and focus groups. This preliminary step aims to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the questions, thereby improving the quality of the data collected.

1.10.3.2. Data Saturation

Data saturation, defined as the point at which no new information or themes emerge from interviews or focus groups, is the target for this study. The research aims to collect sufficient data to reach this saturation point, thereby ensuring a comprehensive documentation of educators' and learners' perspectives that accurately reflects the broader community.

1.11. Summary of Strategies for Ensuring Reliability, Validity, Credibility, and Trustworthiness

Criteria	Strategies
Reliability	Consistency in data collection, training of research assistants, pre-testing of instruments
Validity	Content validity (literature review, expert feedback), construct validity (theoretical alignment), external validity (contextual relevance)

Credibility	Prolonged engagement, triangulation (data methods and participants), member checking
Dependability	Audit trail, external audits of process and findings
Confirmability	Reflexivity, peer debriefing, documenting researcher biases

1.12. RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics is one of the most crucial aspects of any study, especially one that involves human subjects. Since this research aims to explore sensitive topics such as perceptions of discipline and human rights in secondary education, it is particularly important that it adheres to the highest ethical standards in order to ensure that the rights and feelings of all participants are respected (Maree, 2022). Below are the key ethical considerations that this study will address:

a. Informed Consent

This research will address all the concerns associated with studies involving human subjects. First of all, potential participants will be provided with detailed information about the objectives of this study, as well as its methodology, risks, and benefits, so that they can give informed consent to participate in this research (Maree, 2022). In addition, the participants will sign consent forms to verify that they agree with all terms and conditions of this study and understand their role in it. Specifically, they will be told that their participation in this study is voluntary, and they can withdraw their consent at any time.

Since this study involves students, whose age may vary from 12 to 18 years old, their legal guardians must also give their consent for their participation in this research. Similar to the participants, the guardians will also be provided with detailed information about this study, including an explanation of how their child's data will be used. After providing oral or written consent, the guardians can withdraw their consent at any point in time, and students also have an option to do that.

b. Confidentiality and Anonymity

This study will take all necessary measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants in accordance with research ethics (Maree, 2022). In particular, no personal data will be used in any findings or reports related to this study. Any data collected from the participants will

be kept safe and secure and will only be accessible to the researchers involved in this project. In addition, the participants' identities will remain anonymous, and confidential, and, when disseminating the findings of this study, any personal identifying information, such as names or other details that could allow us to identify the participants, will be replaced by fictitious ones (Maree, 2022). For instance, we may use designations such as E1 to refer to the participants' responses and data.

c. Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

As mentioned above, the participants have an option to withdraw their consent at any time. It is also important for them to understand that their participation in this study is voluntary, and it is not a condition of employment or any other obligation (Maree, 2022). It is a basic right of all research participants to be able to terminate their participation in a study if they feel that it is too stressful or if they change their mind about being a part of it. For instance, if the participants feel uncomfortable discussing discipline and human rights, as the topic of this study suggests, they can ask to be removed from this study.

d. Minimizing Harm and Risk

Where possible, the researchers will endeavour to minimize any possible harm or discomfort to the participants. For instance, given that it is quite a sensitive topic, it is highly likely that discussing discipline and human rights will cause some participants to feel uncomfortable or even upset. If this happens, the researchers will encourage the participants to seek help from school counselors and, if necessary, stop interacting with them if they feel that this is the best way to deal with the situation. Thus, we will also make sure the participants are aware that we will handle all the sensitive information shared by them with care and that we will treat them with respect throughout this process (Chilisa, 2022).

e. Transparency and Honesty

As a part of research ethics, it is essential to abide by the principles of transparency and honesty in regards to the participants of this study. For instance, prior to giving their consent, the participants will be notified about the main objective of this study, which focuses on examining disciplinary measures and human rights. We will inform them about how the data they provide will be used, and we will also notify them if any reports or findings about this study are published elsewhere. In particular, the participants will be informed that no personal identifying information will appear in any of the reports published following the completion of this study (Bryman, 2020).

f. Ethical Considerations for Minors

Since the participants of this study are learners, many of whom may be classified as children, we will follow all the ethical guidelines related to working with minors. In particular, we will seek the permission of the learners' parents or legal guardians to participate in this study, and it will be their responsibility to inform their child about the objectives and methodology of this study. Thus, while the learners' parents or legal guardians have the option to withdraw their consent to participate in this study at any time, the students can also decide not to participate in this study. At the same time, we ask them to understand that providing their honest and accurate responses will contribute to positive change and ensure that discipline and human rights in education receive the attention they deserve.

g. Data Protection

This study will take all necessary measures to keep the participants' data protected (Wiles, 2023). In particular, all the data collected for this study will be held in encrypted digital documents that will only be accessible to the researchers involved in this project. All recordings will also be stored in such documents, and the participants can request that the data be deleted from such documents at any time following their withdrawal from the study or after consent forms were signed. All the data collected for this study will only be used for research purposes, and it will not be shared with any third party. In addition, all personal data will be kept strictly confidential, and no private identifying information will be shared following the completion of this study. Finally, when disseminating the results of this research, we will make sure they are presented collectively so that it would not be possible for any of the participants to be identified based on the results.

1.13. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1.13.1. Limitations of the Study

A possible limitation of this study might be accessibility to participants. Although attempts will be made to recruit a diverse group of educators and learners, it may not be possible to get everyone involved due to various factors such as time and other personal commitments. Some educators or learners may also be reluctant to participate due to concerns about confidentiality or consequences related to discipline (Bear, 2020).

Due to time constraints, the study will be limited to a few selected schools in the Dzondo circuit. Therefore, the findings may not be entirely representative of all educators' and learners' views in the circuit. The study will rely on participants' perspectives regarding school discipline and human rights, which may be subjective. Educators may feel inclined to respond in a manner that aligns

with the school's disciplinary policies, whereas learners may refrain from criticizing the existing rules due to fear of adverse outcomes.

This study will adopt a cross-sectional design since it will involve collecting data from a sample of the population at one point in time. A longitudinal study would have been more appropriate to understand the changes in views about discipline and human rights over time. However, this type of study would require more time than is available for this research.

The study will focus on human rights issues related to school discipline in the selected secondary schools in the Dzondo circuit. There is a vast scope of human rights, but this study will be limited to students' rights. Other aspects of human rights, such as economic and social rights, may not be relevant in this study.

1.13.2. Delimitations of the Study

This study will be limited to Dzondo Secondary Schools. This may affect the study's applicability in other areas since the findings may not be entirely generalizable to other circuits. This limitation is appropriate since the study will focus on human rights issues related to school discipline in this specific circuit.

This study will focus on the views of educators and learners about school discipline and human rights. Other stakeholders, such as parents, counselors, and the school board, will be excluded. Although their views could provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue, the study will focus on the perspectives of educators and learners. This delimitation will allow the study to concentrate on understanding the issues affecting these two groups in relation to school discipline and human rights.

This study will be limited to the issues of school discipline and human rights. Other aspects of education, such as school governance and academic performance, will be excluded. Although these aspects may contribute to understanding the research problem, they are beyond the scope of this study. This delimitation will enable the study to focus on the issues affecting school discipline and human rights in the selected secondary schools.

This study will use quantitative research methods to examine the research problem. This approach will allow the researchers to rely on statistical data and personal experiences to address the research questions. However, this study may not capture the qualitative aspects of the research problem. The study will be limited to secondary schools in the Dzondo circuit, which will exclude primary and tertiary institutions. Although human rights issues are applicable in all types of

educational institutions, this study will focus on secondary schools since the discipline issues affecting them are distinct from those affecting other levels of education.

1.14. DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

It is essential to define the key concepts used in this study to avoid confusion and misinterpretation (Maree, 2022). The following definitions will be used in this study:

1.14.1. Disciplinary Procedures

These are rules, policies, and practices that are enforced in schools to regulate learner behavior and ensure that learners conduct themselves in an appropriate manner (Moyo, Noncedo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2021). They are used to specify what learners should and should not do and what action should be taken if they fail to adhere to the rules and regulations. Disciplinary procedures can take various forms, ranging from informal measures, such as verbal warnings and detentions, to formal measures, such as suspensions and expulsions.

In the context of this study, disciplinary procedures will refer to actions that are taken by the school administration, educators, and other relevant personnel to address misbehavior by learners at Dzondo Secondary Schools. This includes examining whether these actions are fair and take students' rights into consideration.

1.14.2. Human Rights

These are rights that are enjoyed by all individuals and are not subject to discrimination based on factors such as nationality, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In this study, human rights will be examined in relation to the rights of learners in schools. They include a wide range of rights, such as the right to dignity, freedom from discrimination, participation in decision-making processes that affect them, and the right to education (UNCRC, 2020). They also encompass rights that are explicitly protected by the Constitution and international human rights law, such as the rights provided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

In the context of this study, human rights will refer to learners' rights in schools, with a focus on their rights in relation to disciplinary procedures. This includes examining whether disciplinary procedures respect learners' rights to dignity and freedom from discrimination, among other rights.

1.14.3. Educators

These are teachers, administrators, and other staff members responsible for maintaining discipline in schools. Their perspectives on disciplinary procedures are critical to this study since they are the ones that implement them (RSA, 1996). This means that they play a pivotal role in ensuring that disciplinary procedures are used in a manner that promotes fairness and upholds learners' rights. In the context of this study, educators will refer to teachers and administrators who are involved in enforcing discipline and protecting learners' rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools.

1.14.4. Learners

This term will be used to refer to individuals who are studying at Dzondo Secondary Schools. Learners are the ones that are affected by disciplinary procedures and, therefore, their perspectives on them are critical to this study. Their views will provide insight into how disciplinary procedures affect their rights, as well as their sense of belonging and community within the school (RSA, 1996). In this study, learners will be the main stakeholders since the focus will be on their views about disciplinary procedures and how these procedures affect their rights.

1.14.5. Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is a philosophy that emphasizes on repairing the harm done to individuals and communities as a way of achieving justice. Restorative justice focuses on restoring relationships, which means that it seeks to repair the trust that is lost when a crime is committed. Restorative justice practices often involve facilitating a dialogue between the victim and the offender, as well as other stakeholders such as family members and community members. In the context of schools, restorative justice can be used to hold offenders accountable for their actions while also promoting healing and repairing relationships (RSA, 1996). Restorative justice practices can take various forms, ranging from victim-offender mediation to restitution and community service. In this study, restorative justice will refer to the use of restorative justice practices and principles to promote accountability, healing, and relationships in Dzondo Secondary Schools. This includes examining whether restorative justice can be used as an alternative to punitive disciplinary procedures to achieve justice and restore trust.

1.14.6. Punitive Measures

These are disciplinary procedures that are aimed at punishing learners for misbehavior. Punitive measures can take various forms, ranging from relatively mild measures, such as detentions, to severe measures, such as expulsions and corporal punishment. In some cases, punitive measures can have negative effects on learners, such as demoralizing them and causing them to associate school with punishment (Moyo, Noncedo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2021). In the context of

this study, punitive measures will refer to disciplinary procedures that are used to punish learners for misbehavior by making them experience unpleasant consequences. This includes examining the effects of punitive measures on students' human rights, academic performance, and general wellbeing.

1.14.7. Fairness in Discipline

This term will be used to describe disciplinary practices that are applied consistently and uniformly to all learners, regardless of their background. It also encompasses treating learners with respect and dignity and ensuring that the punishments that are issued are commensurate with the severity of the offense. Another important aspect of fairness in discipline is providing clear explanations of the rules and consequences so that students understand why they are being punished (Mncube & Harber, 2022). In the context of this study, fairness in discipline will refer to ensuring that disciplinary procedures are applied consistently and uniformly to all learners, regardless of their background. It will also involve examining whether learners and educators perceive disciplinary procedures as fair and whether they are issued in a respectful and dignified manner.

1.14.8. School Climate

This term will be used to describe the environment and atmosphere of a school, which can be conducive or non-conducive to learning. School climate also encompasses the relationships that exist among learners, educators, and other staff members, as well as how learners and staff members feel about the school environment and how they are treated within it. A positive school climate can promote learners' academic performance and wellbeing, whereas a negative school climate can contribute to issues such as bullying and poor academic performance (De Klerk, 2022). In the context of this study, school climate will refer to the overall environment and atmosphere of Dzondo Secondary Schools, with a focus on the relationships and interactions among learners, educators, and staff members. This includes examining how disciplinary procedures affect the school climate and how the school climate affects learners' perceptions of disciplinary procedures.

1.14.9. Discipline and Human Rights Alignment

This term will be used to describe the extent to which disciplinary procedures are applied in a manner that promotes and protects learners' human rights. It will focus on examining whether disciplinary procedures respect learners' dignity and ensure that they are treated equally and without discrimination. Another important aspect of discipline and human rights alignment is ensuring that disciplinary procedures are used to promote positive behavioral change among

learners while avoiding negative consequences for misbehavior (Bray, 2022). In the context of this study, discipline and human rights alignment will refer to examining whether disciplinary procedures are issued in a manner that respects learners' rights and promotes positive behavioral change.

1.15. CHAPTER OUTLINE

The proposal for this study and its chapter outline are presented below to provide a guideline for conducting research on educators' and students' views on disciplinary practices and human rights in Dzondo Secondary schools. The study will explain how disciplinary practices in the schools either align or conflict with human rights as well as elucidate the views of educators and learners on the issue. The dissertation will have five chapters as outlined below:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

This section provides the background information for the current study. It starts by explaining why schools enforce discipline and the objectives that the rules and regulations are meant to achieve. It then reviews the relevant human rights that apply to the school setting, with a focus on learners' rights to dignity and equality. The section also delves into the challenges that arise from disciplinary actions in Dzondo Secondary Schools and how they conflict with learners' human rights. Finally, it highlights the research gap that the current study fills, which is the lack of information on educators' and learners' views on disciplinary practices and human rights in the circuit.

The research questions that this study seeks to answer are also stated in this section, as well as the research objectives that the study will pursue to address the questions. The research objectives include reviewing educators' views on disciplinary practices, understanding learners' views on human rights, and establishing how disciplinary practices and human rights balance each other. Finally, the study aims to determine how educators and learners view disciplinary practices and human rights.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section will provide the background information for the research questions. It will review concepts related to disciplinary practices and human rights in schools, as well as prior research on the same issue, to establish the extent to which disciplinary practices in Dzondo Secondary Schools respect human rights. It will also highlight the research gap that the current study aims to fill.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This section will describe the research methodology that will be used to conduct the study. It will explain the research design that will be pursued, as well as the sampling strategy that will be used to select participants from the target population. It will also discuss the data collection procedures and data analysis techniques that will be used to gather and analyze the data. In addition, it will review ethical considerations that will be taken into account when conducting the research.

Chapter 4: Results

This section will present the results of the study. It will report the findings of the interviews and focus group discussions that will be conducted to generate data on educators' and learners' views on disciplinary practices and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. The findings will be presented in relation to the research objectives and questions. The section will also report the results of the survey that will be administered to collect quantitative data on the same issue. The findings will be presented using descriptive statistics and themes that will emerge from the qualitative data. The section will highlight the differences in views on disciplinary practices and human rights between educators and learners, as well as the extent to which the practices respect human rights.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This section will discuss the findings that will be presented in Chapter 4. It will interpret the results and explain their implications in relation to the existing literature on disciplinary practices and human rights in schools. It will also highlight the challenges that arise from disciplinary practices in Dzondo Secondary Schools and recommend ways of addressing them. The discussion will focus on the views of educators and learners on disciplinary practices and human rights and how they relate to each other. It will also compare the views with the existing literature on human rights and school discipline.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The final section of the dissertation will contain concluding remarks. It will highlight the main findings of the study and discuss their implications. It will also make recommendations for future research based on the findings. In addition, it will recommend ways of improving disciplinary practices in Dzondo Secondary Schools based on the research findings.

1.16. CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide an opportunity to obtain relevant information on educators' and learners' views on disciplinary practices and their human rights compliance to promote justice in Dzondo secondary schools. The current study tries to create beneficial disciplinary practices by considering human rights in order to provide appropriate education for students and establish a disciplined study process.

The research emphasizes the educators' and learners' perception of disciplinary practices and human rights in the secondary education system. Educators and learners both strive to attain a peaceful and disciplined environment in schools. However, for effective disciplinary practices, it is essential to receive thorough training and support to maintain a respectful and just environment for students (UNESCO, 2023). Restorative justice and human rights-sensitive disciplinary actions create fair and safe environments for learners in Dzondo secondary schools and beyond. The current research is considered as the initial step in the process of promoting discipline and human rights and providing insightful information for further research and practice in the field of education.

1.17. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PLAN AND TIMELINE

The research plan covers the main stages of the study, including the necessary activities, time frames, and research details. The timeline assists in the organization of the research process and provides enough time for gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting research results following ethical guidelines (Maree, 2022).

Research Phases

Phase 1: Preparation and Literature Review (1 month)

This stage covers the initial step of the research, which includes conducting a literature review on disciplinary practices, human rights in education, and educators' and learners' perceptions of disciplinary procedures and human rights. Research tools, such as questionnaires and interview guides, will be designed, and approval from school management and an ethical review committee will be requested. In addition, the research design, sampling strategy, and interview guides will be developed and tested.

Phase 2: Participant Recruitment and Data Collection Preparation (2 weeks)

With the help of letters or meetings, participants will be informed about the research, and their consent, as well as their parents' consent, will be obtained. In addition, several arrangements for data collection, such as schedules and venues for interviews, will be made.

Phase 3: Data Collection (2 months)

Interviews with educators, including school administration and counselors, and focus group discussions or questionnaires with learners will be conducted. In addition, relevant documents, such as policies on student discipline, will be reviewed and collected.

Phase 4: Data Analysis (1.5 months)

Interviews and focus group discussions will be transcribed, and qualitative data will be analyzed using descriptive or thematic analysis. In addition, the results of the study will be compared, and research questions will be answered by combining the results of the study with the initial literature review and theories.

Phase 5: Writing the Research Report (2 months)

The research report will be written, providing the background of the study, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion. The results of the study will be related to the literature review and research questions.

Phase 6: Review, Final Draft, and Presentation (1 month)

The report and paper will be reviewed, edited, and approved by supervisors, while the research will be presented to school management and students in order to discuss the study's results and implications.

Research Timeline

Phase	Start Date	End Date	Duration
Phase 1: Preparation and Literature Review	February 2025	February 2025	1 month
Phase 2: Participant Recruitment and Data Collection Preparation	March 2025	March 2025	1 month
Phase 3: Data Collection	April 2025	October 2025	7 months
Phase 4: Data Analysis	November 2026	February 2026	4 months
Phase 5: Writing the Research Report	march 2026	June 2026	4 months
Phase 6: Review, Final Draft, and Presentation	July 2026	August 2026	2 month

Budgetary Allocations:

The proposed budget for this study encompasses the following expenditures:

1. Participant Incentives: A sum of R2000.00 is allocated for participant stipends, intended to foster engagement and participation.
2. Transcription Services: An amount of R800.00 is designated for the transcription of interviews and focus group discussions.
3. Travel and Logistics: R15, 500.00 is reserved for transportation expenses incurred by the research team during data collection, should such travel be necessitated.
4. Materials: A provision of R7, 600.00 is made for the printing of essential materials, including informed consent forms and data collection instruments.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the literature on disciplinary procedures and human rights in secondary schools. The chapter will focus its discussion on the following issues: disciplinary strategies in secondary schools, human rights in education, the views of learners and educators towards discipline in schools, the implications of human rights and discipline in the school environment, and the research gaps related to these issues. The current study will focus its discussion on the context of Dzondo Secondary Schools.

2.2 International and national context of educator professional development

The international and national context of teacher professional development is influenced by a number of educational, cultural, and environmental factors. In particular, the educational environment in the Dzondo Secondary Schools, which is located in the rural area of the Limpopo province in South Africa, is greatly influenced by international and national factors (DBE, 2020).

Understanding school discipline in the context of human rights is one of the essential aspects of modern education. At the same time, professional development of educators plays a critical role in ensuring that educational institutions exercise discipline in a fair and respectful manner (OECD, 2022). In particular, this paper will explore international and national perspectives on disciplinary

strategies, human rights, and educator professional development, with a specific focus on the context of the Dzondo Secondary Schools.

2.2.1 Intra-national context

Within South Africa, the relationship between school discipline, human rights, and educator professional development is determined by the country's history of inequality, its progressive constitution, and the challenges of educational reform (DBE, 2021). In this regard, this section analyses the South African studies addressing the ways of experiencing and perceiving discipline-related issues and human rights in general, as well as the particularities of professional development in schools. Indeed, the school discipline in South Africa is performed within the context of human rights and is characterized by the phenomenon of educator readiness and professional development, which is viewed through the prism of transformation (Tandfonline, 2020).

i. Legal and policy frameworks

After decades of apartheid, South Africa has developed legal and policy frameworks that protect students' rights to be free from corporal punishment in schools. Thus, the South African Schools Act (1996) and the Constitution of South Africa (1996) prohibit corporal punishment and ensure the dignity and safety of learners. Similarly, the Children's Act (38 of 2005) and the Bill of Rights stipulate that corporal punishment is not an appropriate disciplinary measure to maintain order in schools and that it must be prohibited by law (Mncube & Harber, 2023). Nonetheless, several studies have revealed that corporal punishment is prevalent in many educational institutions and that it is used in rural South Africa, in particular, because of the lack of resources and training and cultural beliefs (Mncube & Harber, 2023).

In particular, the Constitution of South Africa (1996) recognizes and protects the rights to dignity, education, equality, and freedom from violence. The South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) prohibits corporal punishment in schools, while the Children's Act (38 of 2005) emphasizes the need to protect children and promote their well-being in a healthy environment. Despite these legal and policy frameworks, research shows that corporal punishment is still practiced in many schools due to cultural beliefs, lack of educator training, and limited resources (Maphosa & Shumba, 2020).

ii. Learner's views towards discipline

Learners' experiences with discipline in schools are often negative, and as a result, they develop negative perceptions towards school discipline. In particular, many learners report that they

experience discipline in schools as discriminatory or overly harsh, which contradicts their constitutional rights to equality and freedom from torture or other cruel treatment (Maphosa & Mammen, 2020). In particular, learners in many low-income schools across South Africa, advocate for more participatory and consultative approaches to discipline that recognize their views and promote respect. In particular, many learners report that consultative approaches to discipline help them adhere to rules and regulations and reduce disciplinary conflicts.

South African learners have reported being humiliated and abused by educators through harsh forms of punishment, especially in low-income educational institutions. Moreover, learners have claimed that discipline in schools is characterized by discrimination, which leads to their discouragement and subsequent disciplinary conflicts. Furthermore, many learners note that consultative approaches to discipline are rarely used because learners are not considered important stakeholders in the discipline process (Prins, Joubert, Ferreira-Prevost, & Moen, 2020). At the same time, several studies have revealed that consultative approaches to school discipline are more effective methods of punishment as they reduce disciplinary conflicts and promote respectful educator–learner relationships (Prins et al., 2020).

iii. Cultural and Contextual Influences

Dzondo Secondary Schools represent a typical educational institution in rural South Africa, where cultural beliefs about discipline might hinder the promotion of positive and respectful relationships between educators and learners. In particular, corporal punishment is often used in rural South Africa and is supported by many community members (Morrell, 2021). In addition, educators in rural areas seem to have more difficulties than those in urban regions in maintaining positive relationships with learners due to large classes, poor funding, and the absence of parental involvement in school discipline. These challenges require educators to have professional skills and knowledge to cope with school discipline while respecting their learners' rights.

The cultural beliefs about discipline often contradict the legal and policy-related provisions and lead to the inability of educational institutions to ensure the human rights of learners. In particular, many communities across South Africa hold traditional beliefs about discipline, which places educators in rural secondary schools in a challenging position as they have to balance between the expectations of their communities and the learners' rights to be free from corporal punishment. In particular, educators in rural schools report that they experience greater difficulties in maintaining discipline than those in urban contexts due to large classes and the absence of resources to provide psychological support to learners and address discipline-related issues

(Morrell, 2021). As a result, educators in rural South Africa need professional support to enhance their competencies in addressing learners' discipline while respecting their human rights.

2.3 Disciplinary Procedures in Secondary Education

The discipline in schools is essential for creating a conducive learning environment. At the same time, the nature of school discipline may vary depending on the context in which it is applied. School discipline is an integral element of classroom management that helps achieve good learning outcomes (Dhlamini, 2021). Various studies have explored the nature of disciplinary procedures in secondary education and their effects on learners' learning experiences. In particular, there are different types of disciplinary procedures that may be applied in schools, including warnings, detention, suspension, and expulsion. Some schools also use restorative forms of discipline, such as mediation and counselling, to address learner conflicts (Jared & Thinguri, 2021).

While many South African schools use punitive approaches to discipline, such as suspension and expulsion, the constitution and the South African Schools Act (1996) prohibit corporal punishment and protect the dignity and safety of learners at school. However, the use of punitive measures may often lead to negative consequences for both learners and educators, since such measures often lead to loss of interest in attending school and promote subsequent disciplinary conflicts (Wilmot, 2020). In particular, research shows that punitive measures are often applied disproportionately among minority groups and learners with disabilities, which exacerbates the inequalities they already experience in the mainstream education system (Dhlamini, 2021).

2.3.1 Traditional Disciplinary Practices

Disciplinary practices in secondary schools have historically aimed to maintain order, ensure compliance with school rules, and cultivate an environment conducive to learning. The methods employed to achieve these objectives have evolved over time, with traditional approaches frequently relying on punitive measures (Maphosa & Shumba, 2020). This section examines the traditional disciplinary practices common in many secondary schools, and considers how these practices are viewed by both educators and learners.

Historically, secondary schools have utilized traditional disciplinary methods such as corporal punishment, suspension, expulsion, and detention. While these methods were often perceived as effective for maintaining order, they have faced criticism for their adverse effects on learners' psychological well-being and academic performance (Moyo, Noncedo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2021).

Such practices may contribute to school violence and negatively impact learner-educator relationships, thereby fostering an unfavourable school climate.

Traditional Disciplinary Practices: An Overview

Within secondary schools, conventional disciplinary approaches generally operate within a hierarchical framework. In this system, school authorities, including educators and administrators, implement sanctions to manage learner conduct. These methods encompass a spectrum from punitive actions, such as corporal punishment and suspension, to non-physical interventions like detention and verbal admonishments (Morrell, 2021). Historically, these practices were regarded as effective means of enforcing discipline and ensuring adherence to school regulations. However, their application has faced increasing scrutiny, particularly concerning their effects on learner well-being, rights, and long-term development (Wilmot, 2020).

Corporal Punishment: A notable and contentious traditional disciplinary practice, especially prevalent in numerous African nations, is corporal punishment. This method has been extensively employed to discourage learner misbehavior, predicated on the belief that physical chastisement fosters greater compliance and respect for authority. Despite its historical prevalence, research indicates that corporal punishment may inflict considerable emotional and psychological harm on learners (Maphosa & Shumba, 2020). While some educators perceive corporal punishment as an effective means of maintaining order, it has been associated with heightened aggression, diminished academic achievement, and strained learner-educator relationships (Maphosa & Mammen, 2020).

Suspension and Expulsion: Another prevalent traditional method is suspension, wherein learners are temporarily removed from the educational setting as a consequence of significant infractions. Expulsion, a more severe measure, entails permanent dismissal from the institution. Both practices have drawn criticism for their adverse repercussions on learners' educational pathways, as they interrupt learning and can engender feelings of alienation and exclusion (Bantekas & Oette, 2020). Moreover, learners who are suspended or expelled frequently experience academic setbacks and may face an elevated risk of school dropout.

Detention: Detention represents an additional traditional disciplinary measure, requiring learners to remain at school beyond regular hours or during breaks as a penalty for misconduct. Although less severe than suspension or corporal punishment, detention is still categorized as a punitive disciplinary approach. While not as detrimental as corporal punishment, detention can foster a negative school environment and potentially contribute to learner disengagement from the learning process (Bantekas & Oette, 2020).

Educators' Views on Traditional Disciplinary Practices

Educators' views towards traditional disciplinary practices might be formed based on their experiences in dealing with learners' discipline. In particular, educators in Dzondo Secondary's Education might view traditional disciplinary practices such as corporal punishment and suspension as effective ways of maintaining discipline in schools. In particular, educators have reported that they face many challenges in maintaining discipline in large classes or with learners who come from poor households (Dhlamini, 2021). In this regard, it might be possible that educators resort to traditional disciplinary practices because they do not have alternative ways of maintaining discipline.

Some educators believe that only severe punishments such as corporal punishment and suspension can help avoid misbehavior and ensure good educational outcomes. In particular, in under-resourced schools, educators do not have enough competencies and opportunities to use other forms of discipline, and thus they resort to traditional ones such as corporal punishment (Moyo, Noncedo, Khewu & Bayaga, 2021). However, many educators acknowledge that traditional forms of discipline are not effective ways of maintaining discipline in schools. In particular, educators admit that corporal punishment is an ineffective method of discipline that might lead to many negative consequences, including the development of learners' negative attitudes towards educators (Maphosa & Shumba, 2020).

Learners' Views on Traditional Disciplinary Practices

School discipline involves the rules and regulations that are enforced in a school to regulate the conduct of the learners. Traditional disciplinary practices include corporal punishment, detention, suspension, strict rules, and verbal reprimands among others. The views of the learners on disciplinary practices differ depending on their school experiences and expectations. Most learners are in support of traditional disciplinary practices because they enable educators to maintain good order and ensure there are no disruptions in the learning process. They enable educators to teach without the fear of being insulted, beaten, or humiliated by their own learners (Bear, 2020).

Traditional disciplinary practices such as detention and suspension also help to punish learners for their misbehavior, and they also serve as a warning to other learners who would want to do the same (Bear, 2020). However, many learners are against traditional disciplinary practices such as corporal punishment because they do not correct or rehabilitate but cause harm, suffering, or distress to the learner being punished. Corporal punishment causes more harm than good to the learner's physical and mental wellbeing while doing little to reduce discipline problems in schools. It also creates fear and disrespect for teachers among the learners. Corporal punishment is

banned in South Africa because it violates the rights of learners to be free from violence and cruel treatment (Republic of South Africa, 1996; Department of Basic Education, 2024).

Most learners advocate for positive and restorative disciplinary practices because they allow educators to engage learners in a dialogue about their misbehavior while still treating them with dignity and respect. Restorative practices and counseling allow learners to take responsibility for their actions while being guided to change their behavior for the better. Restorative practices give learners a chance to reflect on what they did and how it affected others instead of the educator simply punishing them for the misbehavior. The restorative and positive approach to discipline fosters responsibility, respect, cooperation, empathy, and good relationships among learners and between the learners and their educators (Bear, 2020; UNESCO, 2023).

Learners understand the importance of discipline in ensuring good order in schools. However, they also understand that schools must respect their rights by not using punitive measures such as corporal punishment. In cases where punitive actions are required to correct misbehavior, the punishments should be fair, just, and meant to guide the learners to change their behavior for the better.

Human Rights Considerations in Traditional Disciplinary Practices

One of the main concerns regarding traditional disciplinary practices is the issue of learners' human rights. In particular, corporal punishment has been considered a serious violation of learners' rights, including their rights to be free from violence and dignity. According to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2006), corporal punishment violates children's rights to protection from violence, abuse, and other forms of harm and should be banned in all educational institutions across the globe.

Human rights issues might also be related to the fact that suspensions and expulsions might violate learners' rights to education by preventing them from receiving the same educational opportunities as other learners. Indeed, the negative impact of traditional disciplinary practices such as suspension and expulsion on learners' learning experiences has been documented (Bantekas & Oette, 2020). In particular, these forms of punishment have been found to cause learner alienation, which leads to poor learning outcomes and the development of negative attitudes towards school. Therefore, the human rights perspective considers traditional forms of punishment to be inappropriate and ineffective ways of maintaining discipline in schools as they create an unpleasant learning environment filled with disrespect and do not help learners avoid misbehavior in the future (Wilmot, 2020).

Transitioning to Restorative Approaches

Given that many traditional disciplinary practices have been found to be ineffective and violate learners' human rights, many educational institutions are considering alternative ways of maintaining discipline. Restorative approaches are considered an effective way to foster positive learner behavior while supporting learners in taking responsibility for their misbehaviour. Restorative practices aim to repair the harm done to individuals, groups, and the educational community caused by misbehaviour and support positive school culture, where everyone takes responsibility for their actions (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). These practices include restorative circles, where learners and educators discuss issues and concerns and hold learners accountable for their misbehavior. In addition, restorative approaches might involve mediation, which assists all stakeholders in developing mutually acceptable agreements.

Restorative practices might be an effective way to address discipline-related issues in Secondary Schools as they would help address students' misbehavior in an appropriate way while taking into consideration their rights to dignity and education. Restorative approaches have been found to reduce school misbehavior, as well as create a positive school culture and supportive relationships between educators and learners (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2020). Thus, as educators and learners in Dzondo Secondary Schools begin to explore the effectiveness of traditional disciplinary practices, a chance to transition to the ones that consider learners' voices and rights to dignity, education, and participation will emerge.

2.3.2 Contemporary Approaches to Discipline

As the need for encouraging positive behaviors in learning institutions grows, so does the use of non-punitive and learner-focused disciplinary approaches. Modern approaches to discipline focus on restorative justice, positive reinforcement, and conflict resolution instead of corporal punishment and suspensions. The shift in the approach to discipline enables the achievement of inclusive education, mutual respect between educators and learners, and the respect of learners' human rights. This essay will review contemporary approaches to discipline, including restorative practices, positive behavior support, and social-emotional learning. It will also discuss the perception of the three contemporary approaches to discipline by the educators and learners at Dzondo Secondary Schools, as well as their compliance with human rights (Gibbs B. C., 2024).

Overview of Contemporary Approaches to Discipline

Contemporary approaches to discipline in secondary schools are moving away from authoritarian, punishment-based strategies toward methods that prioritize prevention, accountability, and

rehabilitation. These strategies include restorative practices, positive behavior support (PBS), and the development of social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies. The objective of these methods is to foster a school environment where learners comprehend the ramifications of their actions, engage in conflict resolution, and are afforded opportunities to learn from their errors within a supportive framework (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

1. **Restorative Practices (RP)**: Restorative practices focus on repairing harm and rebuilding relationships within the school community. RP uses dialogue and consultation instead of punishment to heal the victims and offenders of misconduct and to prevent future incidents. Restorative practices consist of restorative justice, peer mediation, and restorative conferences. Restorative circles, conferences, and peer mediation seek to heal the harm caused by the misconduct by consulting all the involved parties, including the victim and the offender. For instance, restorative circles enable the participants to raise concerns and discuss the causes, effects, and solutions of the misconduct (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

2. **Positive Behavior Support (PBS)**: Positive behavior support (PBS) is a proactive approach to discipline that seeks to encourage positive behaviors and prevent misconduct. PBS emphasizes teaching learners what behaviors are expected and promoting positive actions through reinforcement. PBS focuses on developing a school community where everyone works together to promote positive behavior. A school-wide approach and positive reinforcement through rewards and recognition are the key aspects of PBS. It has been found that PBS leads to improved academic performance and reduction of misconduct among learners (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2020).

3. **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**: Social-emotional learning encompasses the process through which a learner acquires knowledge and skills to manage emotions and behaviors, have healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions. SEL enables learners to develop empathy and prosaically behaviors. SEL has been found to promote positive student behavior, which in turn leads to improvements in school performance and reduced negative behaviors such as bullying (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2020)

4. **Restorative Justice (RJ)**: Restorative justice, which is a part of restorative practices, is intended to change the culture and climate of a school by changing the punitive and exclusionary approach to school-based disciplinary problems. RJ emphasizes consultations between the involved parties to hold every party accountable for the misconduct and help them understand the effects of the misconduct. It has been found that RJ reduces the

likelihood of suspension, expulsion, and referrals to alternative education while also improving the school climate and community-building (Mncube & Harber, Learners' Voices on Schooling Violence in South Africa, 2023).

Educators' Perceptions of Contemporary Disciplinary

Educators at Secondary Schools have adopted contemporary disciplinary approaches because they recognize the limitations of traditional approaches to discipline such as corporal punishment and suspension. Educators who have adopted contemporary approaches to discipline may perceive restorative practices, positive behavior support, and social-emotional learning differently. The perception of each approach by the educators depends on their experience with the approach.

Restorative Practices: Educators at Secondary Schools who have adopted restorative practices perceive RP as an effective approach to classroom management. Restorative circles enable educators to have dialogue with the learners on significant topics (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). Educators who have adopted RP observe that this approach fosters positive relationships with the learners because they feel that they can express themselves freely through the restorative circles. However, educators who are used to traditional approaches to discipline may perceive RP as counterintuitive because RP requires them to adopt a more empathic rather than punitive approach to managing misconduct (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS): Educators at Secondary Schools may also consider PBS an effective method for promoting desirable behavior and preventing misconduct. PBS strategies, including the establishment of explicit behavioral expectations and consistent reinforcement of positive actions, are generally well-received in educational institutions serving diverse learner populations. Educators in these settings often find that PBS cultivates a supportive classroom milieu, motivating learners to adhere to rules and rewarding their positive conduct (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2020). However, the successful implementation of PBS is contingent upon professional development and school-wide consensus, which can present challenges in resource-limited environments.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): A significant portion of educators believe that SEL programs substantially contribute to the development of a positive school culture by equipping learners with the competencies to manage their emotions and resolve conflicts. At Secondary Schools, where learners may encounter external adversities such as socioeconomic difficulties and familial instability, SEL programs offer valuable tools for stress management and interpersonal navigation.

Educators who have integrated SEL report improvements in student behavior, academic engagement, and emotional regulation (Bajaj, 2019).

Despite the growing prevalence of contemporary disciplinary approaches, educators at Secondary Schools may encounter obstacles to their comprehensive implementation. Deficiencies in resources, time, and professional development opportunities can impede the adoption of these strategies. Furthermore, resistance to these changes may arise from a lack of familiarity or concerns regarding classroom management.

Learners' Perceptions of Contemporary Disciplinary Strategies

Learners at Secondary Schools hold diverse views on current disciplinary methods. While some learners find value in restorative practices and conflict resolution, appreciating a supportive and non-punitive environment, others may initially find these novel approaches challenging, particularly if they are more familiar with traditional disciplinary systems.

Restorative Practices: Learners at Secondary Schools who have participated in restorative circles and conflict resolution processes generally report feeling acknowledged and respected throughout these procedures. These learners value that restorative practices enable them to articulate their perspectives and to rectify their conduct without resorting to punitive sanctions. Research by McCluskey et al. (2020) indicates that learners involved in restorative practices develop a sense of agency regarding their actions and the resulting resolutions. This methodology cultivates a sense of community and responsibility, as learners recognize the impact of their behavior on others.

Nevertheless, not all learners readily embrace restorative practices. Some may exhibit reluctance towards engaging in dialogue or confronting the repercussions of their actions, especially if they have previously been subjected to conventional punitive measures. A period of adjustment may be necessary for learners to acclimate to these new methods and to perceive the advantages of restorative approaches (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Positive Behavior Support (PBS): Learners at Secondary Schools tend to respond favorably to PBS initiatives that establish clear behavioral expectations and provide consistent positive reinforcement. Learners appreciate the acknowledgment they receive for adhering to school regulations and may experience increased motivation to exhibit positive behaviors when tangible rewards are associated with them (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2020). Furthermore, the PBS framework encourages students to assume accountability for their conduct and promotes a culture of respect and shared responsibility.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL): A significant number of learners at Secondary Schools express a preference for SEL programs, particularly those that assist them in managing stress, navigating interpersonal relationships, and making sound decisions. Within a school setting where learners may encounter external adversities, SEL programs furnish essential skills for coping with challenging emotions and fostering resilience. Learners engaged in SEL programs frequently report feeling better equipped to manage conflicts and pressures both within and beyond the classroom (Dhlamini, 2021).

While learners generally welcome the transition to contemporary disciplinary strategies, there remains a need for ongoing education and awareness concerning the significance of these methods. Certain students may harbor skepticism regarding their efficacy, especially if they have not yet fully experienced the benefits derived from restorative practices, PBS, or SEL programs.

Human Rights and Contemporary Approaches to Discipline

A significant benefit of contemporary disciplinary strategies lies in their congruence with human rights principles. Historically, punitive measures like corporal punishment, suspension, and expulsion have frequently infringed upon learners' rights to dignity, safety, and access to education. Conversely, contemporary disciplinary approaches, including restorative practices, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), uphold learners' rights by emphasizing rehabilitation, personal growth, and conflict resolution over punitive actions (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Restorative practices, for instance, place a premium on learner perspectives, offering them avenues for self-expression and involvement in decision-making processes. This approach resonates with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which underscores children's right to express their views and participate in decisions affecting them. Likewise, PBIS and SEL initiatives cultivate environments that acknowledge learners' emotional and social requirements, equipping them with the necessary skills for success in both their academic and personal lives.

2.3.3 The Significance of Educators in Disciplinary Processes

Educators have an enormous role since they are accountable for providing an appropriate environment, managing learner conduct and inspiring the overall ethos of the institution. Being role models and sources of authority, educators are responsible for imposing regulations and ensuring the security and well-being of their learners. This literature review will discuss the role of educators in managing discipline in Secondary Schools, considering the human rights issues and the perspectives of these professionals and learners.

Educators and Their Role in School Disciplinary Actions

Educators' involvement in disciplinary actions extends beyond the mere imposition of penalties for misconduct. Their responsibilities include cultivating a secure and nurturing educational setting, guiding learners toward constructive conduct, and ensuring the equitable and just implementation of disciplinary measures (De Klerk & Rens, The role of values in school discipline, 2023). The educator's function in discipline is multifaceted, necessitating a careful equilibrium between asserting authority, upholding learners' rights, and fostering the personal and social development of students.

1. **Authority and Responsibility**: Educators are considered to be the ultimate authorities in the classroom, and it is their responsibility to set behavioral conditions. They should appropriately enforce the rules and regulations to ensure that learners maintain proper conduct. Educators may utilize various methods, ranging from oral interventions to formal disciplinary measures, to address inappropriate behaviors. It is reported that the ability of educators to exercise authority is closely related to their capability to maintain positive relationships with learners, which ultimately enhances discipline in schools. Notably, educators should impose discipline in a fair and equal manner since it may affect the attitudes and perceptions of learners towards the school and authority in general (Mohapi, 2024).
2. **Restorative and Proactive Approaches**: Restorative and proactive approaches to discipline have been increasingly utilized to address various behavioral issues among learners. Restorative practices require educators to engage in a dialogic interaction with the learners to heal the harm done and re-establish community and social capital (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). This method requires educators to facilitate a discussion in which learners accept responsibility for their actions and recognize the consequences of their behaviors on others. On the other hand, educators who apply positive behavior support and social-emotional learning strategies focus on encouraging learners to acquire the right skills rather than punishing them for inappropriate behaviors. Therefore, restorative practices and positive behavior support help educators address learners’ misconduct and equip them with the appropriate skills (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2020).
3. **Conflict Resolution and Mediation**: Within the framework of contemporary disciplinary approaches, educators increasingly function as mediators and facilitators of conflict resolution. This transition signifies a departure from hierarchical, top-down disciplinary models toward a more collaborative paradigm wherein learners are encouraged to resolve

conflicts independently, under the guidance of educators. Through restorative justice programs or peer mediation initiatives, educators assist learners in engaging in constructive dialogues that facilitate conflict resolution and mutual understanding (Owen, Wettach, & Hoffman, Instead of suspension: Alternative strategies for Effective School Discipline, Duke Center for Child and Family Policy and Duke Law School, 2020). Educators proficient in these methodologies can substantially enhance the quality of learner-educator relationships and contribute to a more positive and supportive school culture.

4. **Advocacy for Students' Rights**: Another critical aspect of the role of educators in discipline is the advocacy for the rights of the learners. Educators should ensure that the rights of learners are not infringed during the implementation of any disciplinary measures. According to the UN convention on the rights of the child, no child should be subjected to degrading disciplinary measures; instead, physical punishment should be replaced with measures that promote the child's welfare and best interests (OECD, 2022). As the key personnel responsible for ensuring that learners are provided with a conducive learning environment, educators should advocate for the rights of learners and ensure that the disciplinary measures are implemented fairly and with utmost care. Particularly, educators should consider the needs of the learners as they implement the various disciplinary measures. When the traditional punitive measures of discipline, such as corporal punishment, are practiced, the educators should advocate for more humane approaches to addressing misconduct.

Educators' Views on Disciplinary Action

Educators' views on discipline may be determined by various factors, such as their professional qualifications, the school culture, their personal experiences, and general social context. The views of these professionals on the role of education in enforcing discipline are critical in understanding the general perspective on this issue. Since Dzondo Secondary Schools are the setting of this study, it may be vital to consider the perspectives of these professionals on the human rights issues involved in discipline.

1. **Traditional versus Modern Views:** It is possible that most educators at Secondary Schools may hold traditional views on discipline. Particularly, these professionals may advocate for stricter punitive measures to ensure that learners are made to comply with the rules and regulations. This may be attributed to the fact that many educators have obtained their professional qualifications under the traditional system, which encourages strict punishments for various misbehaviors. However, many educators have come to realize that

traditional punitive measures do little to correct the behavior of learners. In fact, corporal punishment and other forms of severe punishment have been reported to cause adverse effects on the mental health of learners, thus demoralizing them from pursuing their studies (Schmidt, 2020). Therefore, it is possible that some educators at Secondary Schools may advocate for a more modern approach to discipline, which promotes restorative practices and positive behavior support.

2. **Restorative Practices and Human Rights**: Restorative practices have been increasingly advocated for due to the numerous benefits they offer in restoring harmony in schools. For instance, restorative practices create a conducive environment for achieving good conduct among learners by emphasizing the need for mutual understanding and respect between educators and learners. Restorative practices have also been reported to enhance the social capital and relationships between these two parties (McCluskey et al., 2020). Therefore, educators who advocate for modern approaches to discipline believe that restorative justice practices would be more beneficial compared to traditional punitive measures. In terms of human rights, restorative practices support the right to a dignified life and freedom from violence in schools.

3. **Challenges in Implementing Restorative Practices:** Despite the numerous benefits associated with restorative practices, there are quite a number of challenges that may hinder the implementation of these practices in Secondary Schools. For instance, the availability of resources and relevant training is critical in the successful application of restorative justice practices. Educators who are not familiar with these practices may hesitate to implement them due to a lack of relevant training and confidence in the application of these principles. Another challenge that may be reported by these professionals is the large class sizes in most of the schools, which may make it difficult to address each learner individually. Additionally, some educators may hold negative beliefs regarding restorative practices and may be reluctant to apply them, arguing that they do not offer an immediate and effective solution to behavioral issues (Singh, 2023).

4. **Professional Development Needs:** It is evident that professional development is of paramount essence in addressing various challenges in discipline. Particularly, professional development programs on restorative practices and human rights issues related to discipline would help the educators understand the best approaches to enforcing discipline while maintaining positive relationships with the learners. Professional development could prevent educators from experiencing unnecessary stress, especially when dealing with

behavioral problems among the learners, which in turn enhances their overall well-being and job performance (Singh, 2023).

Learners' Views on Educators' Role in Discipline

It is possible that most learners perceive a variety of roles played by educators in enforcing discipline. As the stakeholders of the educational environment, the attitudes and behaviors of learners are undeniably influenced by their perceptions of the roles played by these professionals. Notably, the role of educators in discipline and punishment has been reported to influence the motivational levels and general conduct of learners. Therefore, addressing various aspects of these roles from the perspective of learners is crucial in finding solutions too many human rights issues in schools.

1. **Perceptions of Authority**: It is reported that learners, just like their elders, respect and obey those who possess authority, power, or influence. Therefore, learners are more likely to abide by the rules and regulations imposed by their elders and obey educators in schools. On the other hand, the abuse of authority or power by educators is likely to result in negative attitudes and behaviors among learners. For instance, learners may disregard or question the authority of educators who appear to be corrupt or unfair in the distribution of punishments (De Klerk & Rens, 2023). It is likely that the perceptions of learners at Secondary Schools regarding the roles of educators in discipline would be different depending on their social contexts. Most learners, for instance, would prefer to be disciplined by those who acknowledge their rights, which ultimately enables them to choose to comply with the rules and regulations rather than fear the punishments imposed by educators.
2. **Restorative versus Punitive Discipline:** A large percentage of learners appreciate the need for discipline in schools to create a conducive learning environment. However, learners usually perceive educators as the ones who impose strict and sometimes excessive punishments for various minor offenses. For example, corporal punishment is commonly practiced in some secondary schools, and is often regarded as a barrier to quality education (Nations, 2020). On the other hand, most learners appreciate restorative practices offered by many institutions in an effort to promote good conduct among learners. Restorative practices allow learners to have an equal opportunity to respond to the allegations brought against them and hold them accountable for their actions. According to McCluskey et al. (2020), learners who are involved in restorative practices report increased

motivation and attachment to education. On the other hand, learners who are exposed to punitive measures, such as corporal punishment, experience demotivation and severance from the school community (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

3. **Human Rights Issues:** It is reported that learners' perceptions of the role of educators in discipline are based on their understanding of their rights and the respect for those rights. For instance, learners whose rights are upheld in schools have been reported to appreciate and respect the roles of educators in enforcing discipline. On the other hand, learners who experience adverse conditions, such as corporal punishment and discrimination, tend to hold negative perceptions of the roles played by educators in discipline. Therefore, it can be argued that human rights issues have an enormous bearing on the perception of learners regarding the role of educators in discipline (Nations, Conventions on the Rights of the Child, 2020).

2.4 Human Rights in Education

Education human rights are fundamental principles that govern how learners ought to be treated in schools. Every child has a right to learn, express, be treated equally and respectfully and have a right to be free from discrimination. The South African education system is guided by human rights principles in the provision of education. This is because the country's constitution requires that learners undergo education in an equal and equitable manner regardless of their gender, and behavior (Bajaj, 2019).

According to Bajaj (2019), when addressing discipline, schools have an obligation to respect the rights of the learners. Additionally, schools have to use disciplinary measures that are more developmental than punitive. Thus, human rights laws require that discipline delivered in schools should be aimed at training learners to take responsibility for their actions. Furthermore, Bantekas & Oette (2020) agree that policies on discipline in education are becoming increasingly oriented towards child-centeredness and away from punishment-based methods. They add that there has been a shift in the meaning and use of the language of punishment to rehabilitation which is consonant with human rights.

Bantekas & Oette (2020) also assert that human rights in education promote restorative justice practices for learners. Restorative justice is a process that focuses on restoring the balance between the wrongdoer and the victim and healing the harm done. Restorative justice practices are founded on human rights principles because they respect the dignity of every child and ensure that justice is done without humiliating the offender. Human rights laws and treaties recognize the right to education and require that education be provided in an environment that is free from

violence, discrimination, and humiliations. The declaration and treaties recognize learners' rights to complete their studies in an environment that promotes learning and respects their dignity (Nations, Conventions on the Rights of the Child, 2020).

2.4.1 Human Rights Framework in Schools

Human rights principles are numerous and apply in different settings. Some of these principles are discussed below (Bajaj, 2019):

Right to be treated with Respect and Fairly in Schools: Under this principle, human rights require that every leaner has a right to be treated with respect and dignity at school and in the educational system at large. It also requires that every leaner is treated equally and without discrimination. For instance, human rights require that leaners are entitled to give their views and that their views are considered when making decisions relating to them, including implementing any form of discipline (Bajaj, 2019). Thus, when dealing with learner discipline, schools must respect the rights to be treated equally and without discrimination.

Right to education: Every leaner has a right to education and to receive quality education. Therefore, human rights require that education be provided in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning. Additionally, human rights require that a school should be free from violence, discrimination, and any other form of oppressive conduct.

Right to take part in decision making: Learners should have a right to participate in decision-making processes in schools. This helps them develop a sense of responsibility as citizens and feel that they are part of the school's democratic system.

Right to be treated respectfully and safely: Students should be free from all forms of humiliation, assault, and other physical contacts. Discipline imposed on them should not contain any element of degradation or assault.

The human rights framework requires that schools uphold the values of equality, fairness, respect, and dignity of learners. Thus, schools need to ensure that the rights of learners are upheld in any form of discipline that they implement. By respecting the rights of learners, schools stand a better chance of achieving positive interactions with their learners and educators (Veriava, Thom, & Fish Hodgson, 2021).

How educators help to address the issue of human rights when dealing with student discipline.

Educators play a critical role in ensuring human rights principles such as the right to dignity and equal treatment are respected in schools. This is because it is through them that discipline is enforced in schools. Therefore, it is essential that they know how to enforce discipline in a manner that respects human rights. It is especially important that high school educators address discipline in a manner that is sensitive to the learner's rights as they are the ones undergoing secondary education and thus, still at developing stages (Veriava, Thom, & Fish Hodgson, Basic education rights handbook: education rights in South Africa, 2021).

1. **Applying Discipline in a Fair Manner**

When enforcing discipline, educators must apply it in a fair manner to avoid causing any form of discrimination. The educator must also avoid practicing any form of bias when applying discipline to different learners, whether consciously or unconsciously. When applying discipline in a fair manner, educators respect the learners' dignity as human beings. Additionally, if educators apply discipline in a biased manner, they might cause adverse effects to the academic performance of the learners who would be subject to such unfairness (Wilmot, 2020). The principles of human rights forbid any form of discrimination based on gender, race, disability, or other factors. Thus, when applying discipline, educators must apply it in a fair manner to all learners regardless of their gender, race, or other differentiating features as differences do not justify inequalities.

2. **Addressing Discipline in a Positive and Restorative Manner**

Schools that follow human rights principles in addressing discipline issues adopt positive and restorative manners of addressing the issues. Restorative justice practices require that discipline be imposed in a manner that encourages discussion and collaboration between learners and educators to identify the harm caused and how to repair it. Therefore, restorative practices are useful in student discipline as they repair the harm caused to an individual, the school, and the wider community. By repairing the harm, such practices acknowledge that wrongs have been committed and focus on restoring relationships between individuals instead of punishing the wrongdoer (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). Additionally, restorative practices encourage learners to accept responsibility for their actions, make amends, and offer support when necessary. These practices help to address the wrongs committed while also respecting the dignity of every learner.

3. **Advising and Supporting Learners when Addressing Discipline Issues**

Educators usually act as advocates for every learner's rights in a school. This is because it is their responsibility to ensure that every learner is treated with dignity and respect and that the rights of every learner are protected. Therefore, when dealing with any form of discipline, educators have

the obligation to advice and support learners to enable them to assert their rights. Under human rights principles, learners have the right to be heard, including having their views considered when taking any disciplinary action against them. Therefore, when addressing learner discipline, educators should advise, and support learners to exercise their right to be heard and to make their views known. This will allow learners to take part in the process of redressing any disciplinary action against them (Bajaj, 2019).

4. **Training, Advising and Supporting Educators**

Human rights principles require that schools respect the right to education of every learner by providing education in a conducive environment that encourages learning and is devoid of any form of discrimination. Therefore, when addressing discipline, educators should adhere to human rights principles to ensure that no learner's dignity is compromised. However, educators usually receive training, advice, and support from the school management in their discipline practices and how to deal with learner discipline issues. This enables effective redress of discipline-related issues with minimal damage to the learner's dignity. Moreover, educators can provide valuable assistance to learners who have been subjected to any form of discipline by supporting them to exercise their right to be heard (Mitchell, et al., 2024).

Learners' Perspectives on Human Rights within Disciplinary Provisions

Learners' perceptions of their rights play a crucial role in determining how they view and respond to the school's disciplinary provisions. This is because, if learners understand and respect their rights, it becomes easy to convince them regarding the importance of adhering to the school rules and regulations. On the other hand, learners' perception of being denied their rights, especially their right to be treated with respect, can lead to discourtesy and disrespect towards authority.

1. **Awareness of Learners' Rights**

Most learners usually lack awareness of their rights, including the right to freedom from discrimination in schools. Thus, when addressing discipline, educators should educate them on their rights. Educating learners on their human rights empowers them to request that their rights be respected if they feel that the rights are being infringed. For instance, at Secondary Schools, human rights education can be incorporated into the school's curriculum to help learners understand their rights and responsibilities towards respecting the rights of others (Carrim, 2022). Therefore, when learners understand their rights and their social responsibility, a peaceful and respectful school environment can be achieved.

2. **Perception of Fairness in Addressing Discipline**

When asked, most learners will agree that they are more likely to respect a disciplinary measure imposed if they perceive it as fair. Therefore, human rights require that all learners are treated equally and without discrimination when facing any form of discipline. Such a stance helps reduce resentment and enables learners to accept the consequences of their actions and learn from them. However, if learners are subjected to overly punitive, discriminatory, or unfairly administered punishments, they may become depersonalized and disengaged from the school system (Bantekas & Oette, 2020). Under human rights principles, learners should be able to understand the nature of the punishment imposed on them. Additionally, human rights laws require that schools ensure that their disciplinary provisions are transparent in order for learners to understand how the system works.

3. **Restorative Justice as a Way of Addressing Discipline**

Restorative justice is a human rights-based practice that emphasizes repairing the harm done to individuals and the wider community. Most learners prefer restorative justice practices as they restore a sense of harmony and prevent future offenses without resorting to punitive measures. Learners at secondary schools would appreciate restorative justice practices as they would offer them the opportunity to participate in resolving the issues brought about by their actions instead of just receiving punishment (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

4. **Avoiding Corporal Punishment and Other Forms of Degradation**

The use of corporal punishment and other forms of degrading punishment infringes on the rights of learners to protection from harm. Corporal punishment makes learners develop negative attitudes towards learning and can cause them to experience long-term traumatic effects. Learners at secondary schools would develop negative emotions towards the school if corporal punishment is used to address discipline. Therefore, the use of corporal punishment in schools contradicts all human rights principles as it causes harm to the learners. Hence, schools should adhere to human rights principles and ensure that they do not use corporal punishment to address discipline issues in schools (Wilmot, 2020).

Challenges in the Application of a Human Rights Framework to School Discipline

The implementation of human rights in schools' disciplinary measures faces several challenges including;

1. **Resistance to Change**

There are human rights issues in addressing learner discipline in schools. One of the challenges facing the implementation of human rights in addressing student discipline is the resistance to

change. Some educators, parents, and members of the society are reluctant to embrace human rights-based approaches to addressing discipline, especially when they perceive their existing approaches to discipline as effective. For instance, some educators at secondary schools may perceive restorative justice practices as inappropriate in addressing discipline issues. This may hinder the smooth implementation of human rights-based approaches in addressing learner discipline at secondary schools (Carrim, 2022). Therefore, in order to overcome this challenge, the school administration can educate their staff on the benefits of implementing human rights-based approaches to discipline.

2. **Lack of Human Resources and Time**

Restorative justice requires time and trained personnel. Therefore, some schools, especially those with limited budgets may find it challenging to implement the restorative justice practices. Additionally, the school administrator may find it difficult to dedicate the necessary time to deal with discipline issues using these practices (Nations, 2020). Thus, the school administration should consider the availability of resources before implementing any new method of addressing learner discipline. Alternatively, they may seek external funding support to supplement their internal resource base.

3. **Cultural and Family Attitudes**

The effectiveness of human rights in addressing learner discipline is influenced by cultural practices, as well as family expectations. For instance, learners who come from families that believe in physically punishing children may find it difficult to respect restorative justice practices as a valid approach to addressing discipline. Additionally, learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may be subjected to differential consequences compared to learners from economically privileged backgrounds. Hence, it is essential for the school administration to fully understand their human rights framework and the prevailing cultural beliefs among their learners in order to effectively deal with discipline issues (Carrim, 2022).

2.4.2 The Balance between Discipline and Human Rights

It is essential to understand the interplay between the concepts of discipline and human rights in education. It is of utmost importance that schools are havens of peace, where learners feel free to express themselves while still being able to reach their full potential. However, if not applied carefully, discipline can become a tool to violate human rights (Carrim, 2022). Therefore, this review aims to examine the ways in which secondary schools, specifically Dzondo Secondary

Schools, can balance discipline and human rights, as well as explore the perspectives of learners and educators on disciplinary practices that respect human rights (Carrim, 2022).

Understanding the Balance between Discipline and Human Rights in Education

Discipline in schools is necessary to ensure order, provide an appropriate learning environment conducive to education, and enforce rules and regulations meant to promote positive behavior among learners. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the possible adverse effects of strict disciplinary measures, such as the infringement of learners' human rights. The most common human rights affected by excessive discipline are the rights to dignity, freedom from torture and degradation, and the right to education. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that measures enforcing discipline do not transgress into learners' rights to dignity and freedom from bodily harm.

Discipline as a tool for promoting positive behavior: Discipline fosters positive behavior among learners when it is used to encourage conformity to standards, promote a sense of accountability, and educate learners about respecting the rights of others. Schools view discipline as an integral element in socialization, whereby learners acquire skills needed to co-exist in society by internalizing the consequences of their behaviors (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2020). Nevertheless, it is necessary to ensure that the techniques used to enforce discipline are human rights-friendly.

Human rights in education: The principles of human rights in education are founded on the United Nations conventions and the rights of the child, which hold that education systems worldwide must be founded on the principles of respect, dignity, and freedom of choice. With regard to discipline, this would imply that mechanisms used to enforce discipline should not use force or disregard the dignity of the learner (Wilmot, 2020). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to ensure that when developing disciplinary policies, schools keep in mind the need to respect human rights.

The principles of balancing human rights and discipline in schools:

Non-discrimination: It is important to ensure that schools do not adopt disciplinary policies that are discriminatory in nature or implemented in a manner that promotes discrimination against learners based on their gender, ethnicity, disability, or other protected categories. By respecting learners' rights, schools stand to avoid policies that contain elements of discrimination and, therefore, are not in the best interests of the learner (Wilmot, 2020).

Dignity: It is vital to ensure that schools implement disciplinary measures that do not humiliate or embarrass the learner in any way, shape, or form. Learners must feel respected at all times since

they have the right to be free from harassment and dignity. In addition, it is of paramount importance that schools ensure that punishments used are not more severe than the misbehavior demonstrated by the learner (Wilmot, 2020).

Proportionality: There is a need to ensure that punishments used to deter misbehavior among learners are proportional to the seriousness of the misbehavior. If schools use excessively punitive measures to address minor misbehavior, learners could view the punishments as unfair and, therefore, have negative attitudes toward the punishment (Smit, 2019).

Restorative justice: Restorative justice focuses on re-establishing relationships between learners, staff, and parents by promoting dialogue, restoring rights, and emphasizing shared responsibility. Restorative justice provides a human rights-based alternative to punitive-based approaches to discipline. By adopting restorative justice, schools stand to promote respect and equality by fostering mutual understanding among the stakeholders. Restorative justice emphasizes respect for the rights of the learners, including their dignity and freedom of choice while emphasizing shared responsibility.

The Role of Educators in Harmonizing Discipline and Human Rights in Schools

Harmonizing discipline and human rights in schools is a primary responsibility of educators. Their thoughts and attitudes towards discipline and human rights in schools can influence many aspects of the functioning of the schools. Educators play a critical role in ensuring that the disciplinary procedures adopted respect the learners' rights while at the same time promoting an appropriate learning environment.

Authoritative yet compassionate disciplinary procedures: Educators are regarded as authoritative figures in the context of education settings. Therefore, it is essential for educators to ensure that they exercise their authority in ways that promote respect and avoid humiliating learners. Evidence shows that educators who exercise disciplinary functions with compassion and fairness can help foster positive attitudes among learners while simultaneously promoting compliance with the rules and regulations of the school (Eni & Arit, 2022). For example, an educator can foster positive behavior by rewarding desirable actions and encouraging positive behavior while penalizing undesirable actions.

Discipline procedures that respect human rights: In human rights-friendly schools, educators implement discipline through restorative measures to promote respect and dignity among the learners. Restorative justice is a learner-centered approach based on repairing the harm caused by misbehavior and fostering mutual understanding among the stakeholders. Restorative practices

used to promote discipline focus on taking responsibility for one's actions and restoring relationships between the stakeholders (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). In addition to being respectful to the learners and providing restitution, restorative justice fosters human rights education by helping the learner understand the causes of their misbehavior. Restorative justice, therefore, supports educators in promoting the rights of the learners by educating them on the causes and impacts of their behaviors while emphasizing shared responsibility.

Challenges to balancing discipline and human rights in schools: While restorative justice procedures have several benefits in promoting discipline while respecting learner rights, educators face several challenges when implementing these procedures. Lack of training on restorative justice, coupled with negative perceptions about restorative justice may hinder the widespread adoption and effective use of restorative practices in schools. When compared to traditional punitive measures, restorative justice procedures require more time to be effective. Therefore, educators may be reluctant to adopt these measures due to the time constraints associated with them (Bear, 2020).

Training to support educators in delivering human rights-based discipline: Educators require training to support them in the process of taking disciplinary action against learners while simultaneously upholding the human rights of the learners. Therefore, it is essential for schools to develop training programs on human rights education as a tool for teaching and supporting discipline in schools. Additionally, professional development training for educators should include training on conflict resolution and learners' rights, particularly in the context of discipline-related issues (OECD, 2022).

Learners' perspectives on disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools

Learners' views on disciplinary procedures are important to consider since they can influence their behaviors and, consequently, their overall school experience. In general, learners tend to view disciplinary procedures as either fair/unjust, punitive/non-punitive, or empowering/disempowering. Therefore, to encourage learners to comply with the rules and regulations of the school, it is advisable to make them feel that the rules have been developed in a manner that is fair and respects their rights.

Learners' views on punitive and non-punitive practices: Learners view disciplinary practices that use corporal punishment and those that are degrading and humiliating as excessively punitive. Most learners prefer non-punitive practices that allow them to share their views on the misbehavior and the solutions to the problem. Restorative justice procedures allow learners to take an active role in addressing the problem, which, in turn, increases their empathy and level of

responsibility (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). Therefore, learners view restorative justice practices as more empowering when compared to traditional punitive measures.

Learners' views on being treated with dignity and respect: Learners are likely to hold positive views on discipline procedures that uphold their dignity and are based on their rights. Respecting learners' rights is a fundamental human right principle that is based on the need to treat others in a manner that one would like to be treated. The core principles include the need to refrain from treating people in a manner that one would not want to be treated. For learners at secondary schools to have positive views on discipline, the school should endeavor to adopt disciplinary procedures that avoid degrading, humiliating, or even physically harming the learners (Carrim, 2022). In addition, learners are likely to develop positive attitudes toward schools that respect their dignity by providing them with a friendly environment. Similarly, such learners are less likely to engage in misbehavior, such as classroom disruptions, compared to learners who are humiliated by the educators for misbehavior.

Learners' views on having their voices heard: The learners view their voices as being essential in ensuring that discipline is conducted in a manner that respects their dignity and avoids causing them mental harm. Therefore, they want their views on the best ways to address misbehavior to be heard. When learner voices are used to inform disciplinary procedures, they are likely to be more receptive to being accountable for their actions since their views have been considered in the process. Additionally, students are more likely to accept the responsibility for their actions when discipline procedures give them the opportunity to take part in determining the best ways to address misbehavior. The learners' views on discipline are different from those of the educators because of their divergent roles and understanding of the context.

Learners' views on the right to freedom: Learners view freedom as a fundamental right, and as such, they want to be able to participate in all aspects of their lives without the involvement of force or coercion. Therefore, learners view discipline procedures that use force to promote conformity as inappropriate and are more likely to comply with procedures that foster their empowerment to make the right choices. The right to freedom highlights the need for schools to respect the rights of the learners to pursue their goals and dreams without interference. Therefore, the school must strive to promote learner-centered learning to increase the chances of attaining positive learner behavior (Simonsen et al., 2020).

Learners' views on enforcing their human rights: Learners are concerned about their human rights and, therefore, view attempts by the school to ignore their human rights as discouraging. The right to freedom of choice has helped learners across the globe to increase their expectations

regarding the way their education should be conducted. Therefore, learners are more likely to push for changes to school systems that do not respect their dignity and freedom to choose the best ways to conduct their lives. Furthermore, encouraging learners to advocate for their rights can provide the school with an opportunity to foster learner participation in decision-making processes in schools on issues affecting them (Nations, Conventions on the Rights of the Child, 2020).

Challenges to addressing student issues and balancing discipline and human rights

While it is important to address learners problems in a manner that balances discipline and human rights, several challenges could hinder the process. Some of the challenges in balancing discipline and human rights include the following:

What other cultures, societies, or systems believe: People all over the world hold different views on how discipline should be enforced and how human rights should be protected. Some cultures believe that discipline should be strict, while others believe that it should be lenient. In addition, some cultures may resist human rights-based approaches to discipline. Therefore, it is important to educate people on the need for human rights-based approaches to discipline and give them time to adjust to the new ways of addressing misbehavior (Bantekas & Oette, 2020).

System barriers: There are several system barriers that are likely to hinder the efforts of educators to address learners' issues, including limited funding, lack of appropriate technology, and large class sizes. The system barriers could prevent educators from adopting innovative ways of addressing learners' issues. Therefore, educators may resort to using traditional punitive measures to address learner issues.

Lack of training: Educators may not have sufficient information on human rights, restorative justice, and conflict resolution. This could affect their ability to adopt human rights-friendly mechanisms for addressing learner issues. It is, therefore, essential for educators to receive professional development training on human rights, restorative justice, and conflict resolution to help them become more effective in their roles (OECD, 2022).

Learners' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools

The perspectives held by learners on disciplinary procedures in schools are important since the views can influence their behavior (Schmidt, 2020). In most cases, learners report feeling disempowered when facing excessively punitive measures meant to promote discipline. The most common punitive measures used by schools include suspension. However, learners are likely to interpret such measures as being unfairly distributed. In addition to increasing student disaffection

and absences, students might resort to misbehavior if they perceive the punitive measures as unjust (MacAllister, 2023).

Learners are likely to feel that disciplinary procedures are unfair when the procedures are implemented in a discriminatory manner. Learners from minority groups are more likely to perceive the disciplinary procedures as being systematically biased. In addition to making the learners feel as if they do not belong in the school, the perception can adversely affect their confidence in the education system. As a result, students who believe that their human rights have been infringed on are unlikely to be motivated to learn, which could affect their performance (MacAllister, 2023).

Learners' views on restorative justice

Restorative justice procedures have been shown to have a positive effect on learner behavior. A study conducted by Jared & Thinguri (2021) shows that restorative justice practices have a positive effect on the attitudes of learners toward the school as well as academic performance. Restorative justice procedures that involve learner participation in addressing the learner issues are more likely to be successful compared to traditional punitive measures used to promote discipline. The involvement of learners in the restorative justice process increases their empathy and encourages them to take responsibility for their actions (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). By involving the learners in restoring relationships, the process empowers the learners to take a responsible role in solving the issues.

Learners' views on learner participation in decision-making

The learners' views on learner participation in schools are based on the understanding of the term and their expectations. The learners view student participation as essential in ensuring that their interests are considered in decision-making processes in schools.

Learner participation is viewed by learners to be a way of ensuring accountability. Therefore, learners appreciate opportunities to be involved in the process of making decisions that affect them. In addition to valuing the opportunities for learner participation, learners are more likely to be willing to accept responsibility for their actions, especially when their opinions are sought to guide the process (Nations, 2020). The positive learner attitudes toward learner participation are based on the fact that they are learners, and thus, their participation is essential in ensuring that education is learner-centered. In addition, the student participation is viewed as a means of enhancing their own leadership skills.

Learner views on learner participation in discipline and human rights issues

Learners view learner participation as being integral to ensuring that their human rights and freedoms are protected and that discipline is carried out in a manner that respects their dignity. Therefore, when learner participation is used to address issues related to discipline and human rights, learners are likely to accept the responsibility for their actions willingly. This is because the learners have an active role in identifying the solution to the problem, thus feeling responsible for their actions (Nations, 2020). In addition, learners are likely to appreciate the fact that the school administration is committed to supporting them by respecting their dignity and protecting their human rights. By participating in decision-making processes relating to their human rights, learners are able to develop awareness of their rights and, therefore, take an active role in protecting their rights.

Challenges learners face in addressing learner issues through learner participation in schools

While learner participation plays an important role in addressing discipline-related issues in schools, various challenges hinder its effective implementation. Some of the challenges learners face in learner participation in schools are discussed below.

The need for education about learner participation: Learners need to learn about learner participation, its purpose, goals, and methods before they can begin to understand the process. Therefore, education on learner participation needs to begin at an early age so that learners are able to develop the competencies needed to participate in decision-making in schools and in society. Learner participation requires collaboration and cooperation to ensure that the process is successful. However, there is a possibility that learners may engage in unhealthy conflict, especially when they do not understand the objectives of learner participation. It is important for the conflict resolution process to be addressed early to ensure that the learners understand that learner participation does not mean engaging in unhealthy arguments (Nations, 2020).

Time: Learner participation takes a long time due to the involvement of multiple stakeholders. Therefore, the time factor is a major challenge in the learner participation process. The commitment of time is required from both the learners and the school administration to ensure that the process is successful.

2.4.3 Learners' Perspectives on Discipline Essay

Learners' perceptions of discipline are integral to understanding their experiences in education and their relationships with authorities. Discipline that learners perceive as fair and that respects their rights can help create a healthy learning environment and promote positive school culture. At

the same time, learner perceptions of discipline that is overly harsh, unfair, or intrusive can cause resentment, disengagement, and other negative outcomes. This literature review focuses on learners' perceptions of discipline in secondary schools. It highlights their relationship to human rights, explores the effect of discipline on learner attitudes, behavior, and learning, and examines learners' perceptions of fairness in disciplinary practices.

Learners' perceptions of discipline often stem from their lived experiences with punishments and their evaluations of whether these punishments were justified or not. Some studies show that learners who feel that they are being treated unfairly by the disciplinary system are likely to have negative attitudes towards their school and authorities and exhibit deviant behaviors. Learners who are punished too harshly may experience resentment and disengagement from school (Smith, 2009). The discipline climate within the school is also related to human rights. Learners from vulnerable populations often face higher levels of severe punishments and report experiencing more negative aspects of discipline (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Understanding learners' perceptions of discipline can help in addressing their needs and resolving some of the negative outcomes of their negative attitudes.

The Role of Discipline in Shaping Learners' Experiences

In many ways, discipline in schools serves to regulate classrooms and prevent misbehavior. However, learners' attitudes towards their school, educators, and peers often depend on the nature of discipline, and its role in their experiences is multifaceted. Discipline should be aimed at teaching learners the reasons for misbehavior and helping them learn social norms and rules of conduct. Positive forms of discipline are often focused on creating awareness, teaching learners about their responsibilities, and developing their social skills, which leads to better adjustment among learners (Simonsen et al., 2020). In contrast to positive discipline, overly harsh punitive measures risk alienating learners from school and undermining their involvement in the learning process. The learners' perspectives of discipline and its role are closely linked to their involvement in school.

1. **The Influence of Perceptions on Learners' Attitudes towards School**

Learners' perceptions of fairness in discipline affect their engagement and attitudes towards school. Research shows that learners who view discipline as fair are likely to be more engaged and achieve better academic outcomes. On the other hand, learners who perceive discipline as unfair or overly punitive are more likely to be disengaged and exhibit deviant behaviors.

Learners' Perceptions of Fairness in Discipline

Fairness plays a crucial role in learners' perceptions of discipline. The way learners view fairness in different aspects of discipline determines the extent to which they are likely to respect the disciplinary system and its outcomes. Discipline-related decisions and policies can be evaluated based on numerous factors that contribute to a sense of fairness. These factors include equality, transparency, and the absence of discrimination.

1. **Consistency and Equality in Discipline**

The principle of consistency plays a major role in learners' perceptions of fairness in discipline. Being treated consistently is key to avoiding the feeling of receiving preferential treatment or experiencing discrimination. Learners tend to view discipline as unfair if they feel that the same rules apply to some groups of learners but not to others (Bajaj, 2019). In practice, it means that learners who perceive some learners as being favored by authorities and receive more lenient punishments are likely to have negative perceptions of the discipline system and feel alienated from school. In addition, learners who are punished for their misbehavior are likely to view the punishment as unfair if they see other learners who have committed similar misdeeds as not being penalized. Thus, equality and consistency in discipline are deeply intertwined with learners' perceptions of fairness.

2. **Transparency of Discipline-Related Decisions**

Learners' perceptions of fairness in discipline also depend on the extent to which they view the system as transparent. This means that learners should understand how the disciplinary system works, what the expectations are, and what consequences are involved. When learners are able to understand the rationale behind the rules and the way the disciplinary system operates, they are more likely to view the system as fair. In addition, learners who understand why a particular decision was made are less likely to feel that this decision was unfair (De Klerk & Rens, 2023). Transparency helps build trust in the system and reduces perceptions of favoritism and discrimination among learners.

3. **The Importance of Discipline That Does Not Discriminate**

Another major aspect of discipline-related fairness is the absence of discrimination. Treating learners equally is essential in ensuring that they do not feel that the system is unfair. Learners are often sensitive to discrimination on numerous grounds, and experiencing it or perceiving it in their schools can lead to negative perceptions of discipline. According to the human rights framework, learners are entitled to equal treatment in all aspects of school, which includes discipline (Wilmot, 2020). Therefore, schools should ensure that learners do not experience discrimination in the way

they are treated by authorities. The implementation of non-discriminatory practices can help promote positive attitudes among learners, build their trust, and enhance school culture.

The influence of disciplinary methodologies on learners' well-being

Learners' perceptions of discipline can also be influenced by how they feel about the specific approaches used in schools. The disciplinary measures that are designed to punish are often viewed by learners as harsh and disrespectful. Learners' well-being, both emotionally and psychologically, plays a major role in the formation of their perceptions. Discipline approaches and practices can impact learners' motivation, self-esteem, resilience, and other factors (Maphosa & Mammen, 2020). The implementation of respectful and positive forms of discipline is more likely to contribute to learners' general well-being and promote a healthy school culture.

1. **The Negative Effects of Negative Discipline**

In many cases, learners perceive overly punitive discipline as overly harsh and disrespectful. The use of such disciplinary methods often results in negative effects, including resentment and low self-esteem (Wilmot, 2020). Learners who experience humiliating punishment are likely to feel humiliated and embarrassed. In addition, they feel that they are being treated unfairly, which causes a range of negative emotions, such as resentment and anger. When learners receive overly harsh punishment, they also tend to believe that the punishment does not match the misconduct. In addition to resentment, such experiences often lead to psychological damage and poor mental health and negatively affect learners' motivation, conduct, and academic success. Moreover, in many cases, such punitive measures fail to prevent future misbehavior, which can result in learners completely disengaging from school, dropping out, or engaging in delinquent behaviors. Overall, overly harsh punishment practices often undermine learners' well-being, motivation, and resilience, which negatively affect their learning outcomes, attitudes, and conduct.

2. **The Positive Effects of Restorative Practices**

One of the restorative disciplinary approaches involves working with the learners to repair the harm done to them and others as a result of learners' actions. Restorative practices enable learners to take accountability for their actions and establish prosocial connections. Learners who experience these forms of discipline tend to be more successful in terms of academic performance and social development, as well as have more positive attitudes towards their school compared to those who experience punitive discipline (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). Restorative practices support learners' well-being and meet their human rights by focusing on their needs and ensuring their empowerment.

3. Empowerment through Restorative Practices

Restorative practices often focus on learners' empowerment and encourage their participation in the discipline process. This can contribute to a positive learning environment by increasing learners' sense of agency and responsibility. If learners are able to influence a certain part of their lives, particularly the rules that apply to them, they will be more likely to support this system and follow its rules. This is because the implementation of these practices allows learners to exercise their human rights, including the right to expression and participation. By empowering learners and supporting their involvement in the discipline process, restorative practices can help them develop a sense of responsibility and positive attitudes towards their school (De Wet, 2022).

Learners' Rights and Their Roles and Responsibilities in the Discipline Process

Human rights principles highlight the importance of learners' participation in the discipline decision-making process. This process often includes their right to be heard. Allowing learners to participate and provide their perspectives helps ensure the discipline process adheres to human rights standards. In this way, learners' positive perceptions of discipline are created, and their compliance with schools' expectations is supported.

1. The Right to Be Heard in Schools' Discipline Processes

The right to be heard is one of the basic human rights that should be respected in all aspects of learners' lives. This right should be exercised in all stages of the discipline process, including hearing learners' perspectives, listening to them, and taking their feedback into account and acting accordingly. In this way, learners can be able to participate in the disciplinary process according to their rights and hold positive attitudes towards it. When the learners feel that their rights are respected, they are also more inclined to comply with the discipline rules (Carrim, 2022). In addition, learners who see their views considered are likely to view the outcomes of discipline as fair and just.

2. Learner Participation and Responsibilities in Discipline Processes

Giving learners a voice in the discipline process ensures that their rights are supported and their perspectives are taken into consideration. In addition, learner participation enables them to develop a sense of responsibility for their actions. By allowing learners to take part in conflict resolution procedures and disciplinary processes, they can learn social skills, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation strategies. As the learners see the impact of their actions, this approach also promotes accountability and encourages learners to make better choices in the future (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Challenges to Learners Participation in Discipline Processes

While learner participation has many benefits, it may pose several challenges for schools and their discipline process. First of all, some learners require more attention than others, and providing this support can be resource-intensive. Moreover, school authorities may believe that learners should be completely compliant and do not deserve an active role in the discipline process. Addressing these challenges can require a cultural shift in schools that recognizes the value of learners' input and their contributions to addressing problematic situations and building a positive school culture (Gregory et al., 2020).Learners' perceptions of discipline play a crucial role in shaping their educational experiences and their interactions with authority figures. Disciplinary practices that are perceived by learners as equitable and respectful of their rights can contribute to an improved learning environment and cultivate a positive school ethos. Conversely, when learners perceive disciplinary actions as severe, unjust, or infringing upon their rights, it may result in disengagement, animosity, and behavioral difficulties. This literature review investigates learners' perceptions of discipline within the secondary education context, with a specific emphasis on the correlation between these perceptions and human rights. Furthermore, the review considers the influence of learners' disciplinary experiences on their attitudes toward schooling, their conduct, and their overall academic achievement (Kilimc, Teachers' perceptions on corporal punishment as a method of discipline in elementary schools, 2024).

Learner perspectives on discipline are frequently moulded by their encounters with punitive measures and their assessment of the fairness of disciplinary interventions. Research indicates that learners who perceive disciplinary processes as unfair or inconsistent may develop unfavourable attitudes towards educational institutions and authority figures. Additionally, learners subjected to severe punishment may experience feelings of resentment, estrangement, and a detachment from their academic environment (Smith, 2009). The cultural and socioeconomic milieu of the school significantly influences learners' perceptions of discipline, with learners from marginalized groups often reporting a disproportionate impact from stringent disciplinary policies (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021).

2.4.4 Educators' Perceptions of Discipline

Educators' perceptions of discipline are critical in sustaining an appropriate learning environment and restoring order in a school. Various aspects of these perceptions have an impact on the school's climate, learners' conduct, and academic performance. Educators' perspectives on discipline are formed by their beliefs about proper learner conduct, obtained qualifications, and experiences, as well as schools' rules and regulations and broader community views (Carrim,

2022). The current literature review focuses on educators' perceptions of discipline in secondary schools with regard to human rights. The review will also consider the impact of educators' views on disciplinary strategies, as well as the ways in which educators sustain an appropriate balance between learner discipline and respect for learners' rights.

Although educators tend to perceive discipline as a vital aspect of classroom management and learning, their perceptions are formed by diverse factors. For instance, some educators are more likely to embrace restorative practices while others resort to strictly punitive measures. Such differences stem from various ideas about classroom rules, disciplinary policies, and learners' rights and needs (Dhlamini, 2021).

Educators' Role in School Discipline

Educators play a critical role in establishing an appropriate school discipline. They are the ones who are primarily responsible for setting rules and enforcing them, as well as managing and supervising learners' conduct. Their perceptions of discipline affect their approach to classroom management both inside and outside the classroom. Such perceptions are formed by a range of factors including their qualifications, experience, and understanding of learners' rights and needs.

1. Maintaining Order Through Discipline

Many educators tend to perceive discipline as a means of maintaining order and organization in the classroom. According to this perception, discipline is necessary for sustaining an appropriate learning environment and ensuring learners' academic success (Simonsen et al., 2020). Thus, educators who embrace this approach are likely to set rules and regulations to guide learners' conduct during class. Such rules help learners understand what behavior is tolerated and what is not as well as its consequences. Additionally, teachers' expectations of learners' conduct determine how they will respond to misbehavior and enforce the rules (Simonsen et al., 2020). Although such a strategy is vital for classroom management, it often contradicts the concept of human rights.

2. Discipline-Based Discipline Education

Many educators perceive discipline as an opportunity to teach learners certain behavioral norms and social skills. Educators' views of discipline enable them to help learners take responsibility for their misbehavior and understand its adverse consequences. Thus, this approach is primarily based on restorative practices designed to ensure learners learn social skills and behavioural norms. Such practices focus on repairing the harm done to individuals and society as a whole in case of misbehavior and guide learners in understanding the responsibility for their actions. This

perception of discipline does not conflict with human rights because it is based on restorative practices (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Educators' Ideas about Students' Behavior, Punishment, and Rights

Educators' ideas about learner behavior, punishment, and rights also affect their perceptions of discipline and approach to classroom management.

1. **Authoritative vs. Authoritarian Educators**

When it comes to educators' perceptions of discipline, some educators are perceived as more authoritarian while others are more authoritative. Authoritative educators focus on establishing a close relationship with learners and are less likely to impose strict rules, as opposed to authoritarian ones. Studies have shown that the former are more effective in classroom management because they consider learners' emotional well-being and are more capable of sustaining positive relationships with them (Bantekas & Oette, 2020). Authoritative educators are more likely to embrace restorative practices and adhere to human rights in classroom management.

2. **Impact of Broader Community and Cultural Background**

Educators' cultural background and the general attitude of the broader community toward discipline also affect their perceptions. Thus, cultural background often determines the extent to which strict rules and punishment are likely to be imposed and how human rights are incorporated into school discipline. For instance, in some communities, it is common for educators to resort to severe punishment when learners misbehave. At the same time, some educators like those in Dzondo Secondary Schools have become more receptive to ideas of maintaining discipline in schools while respecting human rights (Wilmot, 2020).

3. **Education and Training in Classroom Management**

Another factor that affects educators' perceptions of discipline is their prior education and experience. Consequently, the way educators manage learners' conduct and enforce rules depends on whether they received training in restorative practices or not. Those who have received such training are more likely to use restorative practices in classroom management. On the other hand, educators who did not receive training are more likely to perceive discipline as a means of punishment and resort to traditional strategies of imposing strict rules, monitoring learners' conduct, and enforcing established regulations. However, it is worth noting that continuous education and training are vital for all educators to ensure that they sustain a positive environment in schools while adhering to human rights and discipline (Eni & Arit, 2022).

Educators' Understanding of Human Rights and Discipline

Understanding of human rights plays a critical role in educators' perceptions of discipline. Educators who have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the learners' rights are more likely to use appropriate disciplinary strategies to manage learners' misbehavior.

1. Knowledge of Students' Rights

Many educators are well-informed about learners' rights; thus, they are able to apply disciplinary strategies that respect these rights. Most secondary school educators are aware that there are basic human rights every learner is entitled to. For instance, they understand that it is their duty to ensure learners are not subjected to cruel treatment or punishment. Moreover, many educators have a clear understanding of the importance of restorative practices in discipline. Therefore, they apply these strategies as a way of communicating their expectations and teaching learners behavioral norms rather than punishing them for misbehavior (Nations, 2020). Consequently, many educators acknowledge that discipline and human rights are not mutually exclusive, they can complement each other, and thus strive to achieve a balance between the two.

2. Balance Between Discipline and Human Rights in Schools

Although there is a need for discipline in schools, it is equally important to uphold human rights. Such a balance is not always easy to achieve, but many educators are committed to doing so. For instance, some educators might have difficulty balancing discipline and human rights due to their own perspectives, colleagues' behavior, learners' conduct, or even parents' expectations. However, those who understand the value of both discipline and human rights are able to achieve this balance and create a positive learning environment (Bantekas & Oette, 2020).

Restorative Practices in Education

Restorative practices are increasingly being used in education as an alternative to traditional punitive approaches. They are designed to repair the harm done to individuals and society through misbehavior, as well as support learners in developing social skills and behavioural norms. However, educators' attitudes toward such practices affect their likelihood of being implemented in schools.

1. Effectiveness of Restorative Practices in Classroom Management

Restorative practices have been proven to be effective in classroom management. Therefore, educators who perceive them as an effective strategy for maintaining discipline are more likely to use them. Such practices help establish a respectful and positive school culture based on mutual

respect and collaboration among learners and staff. Restorative practices align with human rights since they help sustain a positive learning environment that ensures learners' well-being. They can also be used to educate learners on social skills and behavioral norms, as well as address cases of misbehavior in a constructive way. Therefore, restorative practices ensure that discipline in schools is maintained while upholding learners' rights (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

2. Implementation of Restorative Practices in Schools

Restorative practices are effective, but they can be challenging to implement. Thus, although these practices are intended to promote collaboration and partnership, they might not be embraced by educators due to various barriers. For instance, educators might not have sufficient knowledge or receive enough training on restorative practices. Additionally, some might perceive such practices as inappropriate and choose to ignore them in favour of more traditional punitive approaches. On the other hand, educators who understand the importance of restorative practices and adhere to their principles are likely to implement them successfully and use them as an effective alternative to traditional punitive strategies (Bajaj, 2019).

2.5 Challenges in Balancing Discipline and Human Rights

The main challenge in balancing discipline and human rights is ensuring equal treatment of all learners without discrimination. School discipline is often determined by learners' socio-economic status, race, and culture, among other factors (Moyo, Noncedo, Khewu, & Bayaga, 2021). This is particularly evident in post-apartheid South Africa, as the country grapples with the challenges of rebuilding society based on equality and freedom, as enshrined in the new constitution

Another challenge in balancing discipline and human rights is that educators are inadequately trained on human rights issues, which makes it difficult for them to carry out their roles as human rights educators or defenders (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). Educators also do not have the time or resources to take up restorative justice practices, as will be discussed later.

Balancing discipline and human rights remains a challenge to many educators because there are inconsistencies in implementing disciplinary policies. In other words, when disciplinary policies are not enforced consistently, human rights abuses tend to occur, particularly in schools with mixed socio-economic backgrounds of learners. In addition, when schools do not provide adequate training on human rights, educators' attempts to enforce discipline may result in rights violations.

2.5.1 Socio-Economic and Cultural Issues

The disciplinary measures enforced in schools, as well as the perceptions of learners and educators towards such measures, are significantly influenced by their cultural beliefs and socio-economic backgrounds. Both culture and socio-economic factors affect the perceptions of authority, the varying views towards punishment and power, and the implementation of disciplinary procedures in line with human rights. It is therefore essential to understand how culture and socio-economic factors influence punishment practices in order to develop effective, equitable, and culturally sensitive punishment strategies in secondary schools. This section of the paper reviews the literature on socio-economic and cultural issues affecting learners' and educators' views regarding disciplinary proceedings and human rights (Zulu, 2018).

Similar to other factors affecting learners' discipline, cultural issues shape the learners' and educators' perceptions of authority and punishment. Different cultures have different expectations from learners and educators concerning discipline and punishment in the school setting. Understanding cultural issues that influence the perception of punishment is critical to developing culturally sensitive strategies for enforcing discipline in schools

1. **Perceptions of Authority and Respect**

Many cultures place great emphasis on respecting authority, which significantly influences the views of learners and educators towards punishment and authority in general

In some cultures, educators and other school authorities are considered to be 'superiors' and therefore their instructions, including punishments, should be carried out without asking questions. As a result, educators in such cultures may be inclined to mete out harsher punishments to 'disobedient' learners. In other cultures, respect is given freely to everyone regardless of their position. Therefore, schools in such cultures can use restorative justice practices to help maintain discipline (Carrim, 2022). With regards to Dzondo Secondary Schools, cultural beliefs and practices may influence learners' views regarding punishments and authorities in general. For instance, learners from African cultures are likely to accept severe punishments without complaining due to their belief in respecting elders and those in positions of power (Dhlamini, 2021). On the other hand, learners from individualistic cultures are more likely to question the educator's authority and the legitimacy of the punishments imposed.

2. **Cultural attitudes towards corporal punishment**

The views held by different cultures towards corporal punishment also influence the views of learners and educators towards punishment and authority. For instance, some cultures perceive

corporal punishment as a necessary evil, whereas others consider it to be an unacceptable practice. Corporal punishment was once a mainstream way of enforcing discipline in many parts of the world including Africa. However, it has since been largely abandoned as it is seen as a human rights abuse. Cultural beliefs and attitudes towards corporal punishment influence how educators and learners perceive alternative methods of punishment and authority (Zondo & Mncube, 2024)

If, in Dzondo Secondary Schooling, a particular culture considers corporal punishment to be right, learners may view physical punishments as a fair way of attaining discipline. On the other hand, educators may view such punishments as an effective way of ensuring discipline in the school. In contrast, other educators may view the same punishments as an outdated and unethical practice that ought to be abandoned. This illustrates how cultural attitudes towards corporal punishment can affect learners' discipline and the perceptions of learners and educators towards punishments. Some cultures may be reluctant to adopt restorative justice in schools because they view it as being incompatible with their cultural practices. However, the implementation of restorative justice practices is essential because it enables schools to achieve discipline while respecting human rights (Dhlamini, 2021).

3. **Cultures of collectivism and individualism**

Some cultures are more individualistic whereas others are collectivistic. According to Obadire and Sinthumule (2021), these cultural differences have a significant impact on learners' attitudes and actions towards discipline and punishment. In collectivist cultures, punishment practices are aimed at restoring harmony within the whole community. On the other hand, individualistic cultures perceive punishment as a way of restoring individual rights. The cultural background of the learners can therefore affect their perceptions towards punishment, and by extension, their willingness to accept the punishment (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). According to Dhlamini (2021), learners from collectivist cultures are more likely to accept consequences resulting from their actions because they hold the belief that harmony within the society outweighs personal needs (Dhlamini, 2021). On the other hand, learners from individualistic cultures view punishment as an unfair measure and are therefore more likely to evade it.

Socio-Economic Considerations

The socio-economic status (SES) of learners has an enormous impact on their learning and attitudes towards discipline in schools. Low SES can have adverse effects on learners' discipline, which can affect their achievements. Learners from low socioeconomic backgrounds face numerous challenges in their lives that can contribute to them being undisciplined or engaging in criminal activities. Some of the negative impacts of low SES on learners' discipline were reviewed

by Education (2020). It is therefore essential to take account of learners' socioeconomic backgrounds when determining the most appropriate way of addressing learners' discipline.

1. **Influence of socio-economic status on learners' behavior**

Research indicates that lower students' SES has a negative effect on their behavioral outcomes, which affects their discipline (Education, 2020). Learners from low-SES backgrounds are more likely to exhibit disruptive behaviors, which can lead to the school taking disciplinary action against them. In addition to that, such learners may develop feelings of alienation or disassociation towards the school system. Learners from low-SES backgrounds often come from poor households that struggle to access adequate services such as health care and education. Poor living conditions can cause mental stress, which can lead to learners engaging in classroom disruptions and other forms of undesirable behaviors. In such cases, learners would view the punishments imposed as unjust, especially if they believe that such behaviors are caused by circumstances beyond their control. Educators' perceptions also play a crucial role. For instance, educators may be more likely to punish the learners harshly due to their belief that such learners are disrespectful towards authority figures and intentionally engage in undesirable behaviors (Bantekas & Oette, 2020).

The influence of SES on discipline in schools also manifests itself in the disparities in punishments enforced against low-SES and high-SES learners. According to Bajaj (2019), children from low-SES backgrounds, and especially those from minority groups, are more likely to be punished more harshly, for instance, by being suspended or expelled from school. Educators' biased views regarding the relationship between learners' SES and undesirable behaviors can lead to them enforcing punishments unfairly among learners, thus resulting in punishment disparities. Such unfair punishments also contribute to creating a climate of injustice among learners, making them view the school system as being discriminatory and unjust. This injustice can be particularly evident in secondary schools, especially for learners coming from low-SES households. In other words, if learners are exposed to adverse conditions in society due to their low SES, they may suffer as a result of the harsh punishments enforced in schools. Educators need to be mindful of such learners when dealing with discipline in schools, in order to avoid exacerbating the already existing inequalities that such learners experience in society.

2. **Access to resources and support**

SES is also a determining factor in regard to the support available to learners and educators, which in turn influences learners' discipline and the educators' ability to address such discipline problems. Learners from high-SES backgrounds have better access to resources and support

services at school, helping them to deal with their challenges and exhibit desirable behaviors. Learners from low-SES backgrounds are often unable to access such support services, which can contribute to their low levels of desirable behaviors (Gibbs, 2024). Educators that are aware of such SES-related challenges are more likely to adopt restorative justice practices to reinforce desirable behaviors and discipline among learners.

3. **Economic considerations influencing educators' perceptions towards discipline**

SES can also influence educators' perceptions towards discipline, which in turn influences their attitudes towards punishment and the implementation of restorative justice practices. Educators working in low-SES areas face numerous challenges in regard to teaching and discipline. They are likely to experience economic stress as a result of working in underpaid and unsupported areas. Such hardships influence their perceptions towards discipline in schools. For instance, educators may believe that restorative justice practices are ineffective in regard to maintaining discipline (Bantekas & Oette, 2020). In such cases, educators are more likely to implement punitive measures to ensure discipline rather than use restorative justice practices.

Educators' use of punitive measures often creates the perception of inequality in regard to discipline, which undermines their efforts to promote human rights. Learners' SES significantly influences their attitudes and behaviors towards discipline as well as the punishments imposed. The educators' SES also affects their views towards discipline and punishment. It is therefore essential for educators and school administrators to consider SES when addressing learners' discipline issues in order to ensure that the rights of all stakeholders are protected.

Recommendations for addressing socio-economic and cultural issues

As indicated throughout this section, socio-economic and cultural issues have a significant influence on learners' discipline. In order to ensure that punishments are carried out effectively while respecting human rights, it is essential to consider the cultural beliefs and SES of the learners and implement culturally sensitive punishments. Such measures would involve taking into account the various cultural backgrounds of each learner and developing relevant punishment strategies to address each learner's behavior. Furthermore, schools should formulate policies that support learners from low-SES backgrounds and ensure that educators understand the impact that SES can have on learners' behavior in order to enable them to use culturally sensitive and restorative punishment measures.

1. **Culturally sensitive punishments**

Educators need to be aware of the cultural backgrounds of the learners so that they can address discipline problems in a way that is respectful of the learners' cultures and their own human rights. In other words, understanding such cultural backgrounds and the diverse attitudes towards punishment held by the learners allows the educators to address discipline issues in a more effective and respectful manner. For instance, educators should address learners according to their cultural background in order to avoid making them feel disrespected or humiliated by the punishment imposed (Dhlamini, 2021). Educators working in secondary schools can address discipline problems in a culturally sensitive manner by undergoing cultural awareness training. The training can allow them to develop cultural competence, which will then enable them to make informed decisions when punishing learners for undesirable behaviors.

Addressing the disparities associated with students' SES is essential for ensuring that punishments are enforced equally among all learners. The disparities in the learners' access to support services and resources can be addressed by developing policies that provide such services and resources to all learners. Such policies would ensure that learners from low-SES backgrounds have equal access to support services offered to learners from high-SES backgrounds, thus helping to address the inequalities in regard to discipline. In addition, educators should be aware of the various challenges faced by low-SES learners so that they can be in a position to address their discipline-related issues appropriately (Bantekas & Oette, 2020). For instance, educators can provide counseling services to such learners in order to help them overcome the hardships in life that trigger undesirable behaviors among them. The overall aim of such measures should be to ensure that punishments are administered equally among all learners, regardless of their SES, so that the human rights of all learners are respected.

2.6 Impact of Disciplinary Practices on School Climate and a Learner Well-being

The impact of disciplinary practices on the school climate and a learner well-being is enormous. Suspension and expulsion of learners from school have resulted in negative outcomes such as increased dropout rates, social exclusion, and poor mental health (Dhlamini, 2021).

2.6.1 Restorative Practices and a Positive School Climate

Restorative practices have been increasingly used as an alternative to the traditional punitive approaches to school discipline. Restorative practices focus on repairing harm and building relationships to create a positive school climate where all learners feel safe, heard, and supported (Eni & Arit, 2022). Restorative practices differ from traditional punitive approaches because they focus on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and rebuilding trust. Restorative practices have the potential to create a positive school climate by promoting human rights and learner well-being.

The purpose of this literature review is to examine the role of restorative practices in disciplinary practices in Dzondo Secondary Schools. The paper will explore the impact of restorative practices on educators' and learners' perceptions of discipline, the school climate, and human rights issues.

Restorative practices have been found to have a positive impact on the school climate by promoting a sense of community and respect among learners and educators. Restorative practices focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships, which can help prevent future problems and create a positive school climate (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Understanding Restorative Practices in Schools

Restorative practices in schools are based on the principles of restorative justice, which emphasize the need to repair the harm caused by crime and conflict. Restorative practices focus on restoring relationships between offenders and victims and promoting empathy and accountability among offenders. Restorative practices differ from traditional punitive approaches to school discipline, which focus on punishing learners for their misbehavior. Restorative practices can take various forms, including restorative circles and conferences, peer mediation, and restorative justice programs. Restorative circles and conferences are formal processes in which the victim, offender, and other stakeholders meet to discuss the impact of the harm and determine how to repair it. Restorative practices focus on dialogue and mutual understanding, allowing all stakeholders to express their needs and concerns (Mncube & Harber, 2023). Restorative practices can help repair relationships and prevent future harm by focusing on the needs of the victim and the offender.

The Role of Restorative Practices in Conflict Resolution

Restorative practices play an essential role in conflict resolution by focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships. Restorative practices recognize that conflict is a normal part of human interactions, but it can have harmful effects if not resolved appropriately. Restorative practices focus on dialogue and mutual understanding to help all stakeholders involved in the conflict come to an agreement on how to repair the harm and prevent future conflicts (Singh, 2023).

The Benefits of Restorative Practices for School Climate

A positive school climate is critical for learner well-being and academic success. Restorative practices have been found to have a positive impact on the school climate by promoting positive relationships between learners and educators and focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships. Restorative practices can help create a positive school climate by addressing the root causes of conflicts and ensuring that all stakeholders are heard and respected.

1. **Building Positive Relationships**

One of the critical benefits of restorative practices is that they focus on building positive relationships between learners and educators. Restorative practices can help repair damaged relationships and prevent future conflicts by emphasizing the importance of respect and empathy. Restorative practices differ from traditional punitive approaches to school discipline, which can exacerbate conflicts and lead to negative outcomes such as social exclusion and poor mental health (Morrell, 2021). Restorative practices can help repair relationships by allowing all stakeholders to express their needs and concerns and come to an agreement on how to resolve the conflict. Restorative practices can help create a positive school climate by promoting respect and empathy and ensuring that all stakeholders are treated fairly.

2. **Enhancing Learner Engagement**

A positive school climate is essential for learner engagement and academic success. Restorative practices can help create a positive school climate by promoting respect and empathy, which can lead to increased learner engagement and academic achievement. Restorative practices can help learners feel more connected to their peers and educators, leading to increased motivation and better academic performance (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). A positive school climate created by restorative practices can also help reduce the negative impact of conflicts on learners' well-being and academic success.

3. **Reducing School Disciplinary Incidents**

Restorative practices have been found to be effective in reducing school disciplinary incidents by focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishing learners for their misbehavior. Restorative practices can help reduce school disciplinary incidents by addressing the root causes of conflicts and ensuring that all stakeholders are accountable for their actions (De Klerk & Rens, 2023). Restorative practices can help prevent future conflicts by focusing on repairing the harm caused by the conflict and ensuring that all stakeholders learn from the experience. Restorative practices can also help reduce school disciplinary incidents by promoting empathy and accountability, which can help prevent future conflicts.

4. **Promoting Equity and Fairness**

Restorative practices can help promote equity and fairness in schools by ensuring that all stakeholders are treated with respect and dignity. Restorative practices focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships, which can help ensure that all stakeholders are treated fairly and equitably. Restorative practices can help address the disproportionate impact of school discipline

on vulnerable populations, such as learners from low-income families, ethnic minorities, and learners with disabilities (Gibbs, 2024). Restorative practices can help promote equity and fairness by ensuring that all stakeholders have an equal opportunity to participate in the restorative process and that their needs and concerns are addressed.

Educators' Views on Restorative Practices and Discipline

Educators' views on restorative practices can play a critical role in their adoption and implementation in schools. Educators who understand the benefits of restorative practices and are willing to adopt them can help promote a positive school climate and improve learner well-being.

1. **Educators' Support for Restorative Practices**

Educators who support restorative practices recognize the benefits they can bring to schools, including promoting positive relationships, reducing conflicts, and creating a positive school climate. Educators who understand the principles of restorative practices can be more likely to adopt them in their practice because they recognize the benefits they can bring to learners and educators. Restorative practices can help educators promote a positive school climate by focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishing learners for their misbehavior. Educators who support restorative practices can help create a positive school climate by adopting restorative practices in their discipline practices and promoting positive relationships between learners and educators (Wilmot, 2020). Restorative practices can also help educators promote human rights by focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships, which can help ensure that all stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect.

2. **Challenges in Implementing Restorative Practices**

Despite the benefits of restorative practices, educators may face several challenges in implementing them. These challenges can include a lack of training and resources, resistance from other stakeholders, and the need for a paradigm shift in school discipline practices. Restorative practices require time and resources to be implemented effectively, and educators may not have the necessary support to adopt them (Wilmot, 2020). Educators may also face resistance from other stakeholders, including parents and learners, who may be sceptical of the benefits of restorative practices. Restorative practices require a paradigm shift in school discipline practices, and educators may be reluctant to change their approaches if they perceive them as ineffective.

3. **Balancing Restorative Practices and Accountability**

One of the critical challenges educators face when considering restorative practices is balancing the need to repair harm with the need to hold learners accountable for their actions. Restorative practices emphasize repairing harm and restoring relationships, which can be challenging for educators who are used to punitive approaches to school discipline. Educators may worry that restorative practices do not hold learners accountable for their misbehavior, which can lead to negative outcomes such as increased conflicts and poor learner performance (Veriava, Thom, & Fish Hodgson, 2021). Restorative practices can help promote accountability by focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships, which can help learners understand the impact of their actions and take responsibility for them (Veriava, Thom, & Fish Hodgson, Basic education rights handbook: education rights in South Africa, 2021).

Learner Views on Restorative Practices

Learners' views on restorative practices are critical in determining their effectiveness in promoting a positive school climate and human rights. Learners' perceptions of restorative practices can influence their likelihood to participate in them and their overall effectiveness.

1. **Learners Taking Part in the Restorative Process**

Learners who take part in the restorative process can have various perceptions of it, depending on their experiences and the context in which it is implemented. Restorative practices can be beneficial to learners because they allow them to take an active role in resolving conflicts and repairing harm. Restorative practices can help learners develop a sense of responsibility by allowing them to take ownership of their actions and their impact on others (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). Learners who participate in restorative practices can also develop empathy by understanding the needs and concerns of the stakeholders involved in the conflict. Restorative practices can help students take responsibility for their actions and repair the harm they have caused, which can help prevent future conflicts.

2. **Perceptions of Equity and Justice**

Learners' perceptions of equity and justice are critical in determining their views on restorative practices. Restorative practices can be perceived as more equitable and just than traditional punitive approaches to school discipline because they focus on repairing harm and restoring relationships rather than punishing learners for their misbehavior. Restorative practices can help promote equity and justice in schools by ensuring that all stakeholders are treated with dignity and respect and that their needs and concerns are addressed (Bajaj, 2019). Restorative practices can

help ensure that learners are held accountable for their actions while still receiving the support they need to repair the harm they have caused.

3. **Building a Sense of Community**

Restorative practices can help build a sense of community in schools, which can have numerous benefits for learners, including promoting positive relationships and reducing conflicts. Restorative practices can help build a sense of community by focusing on repairing harm and restoring relationships, which can help stakeholders develop a deeper understanding of each other's needs and concerns. Restorative practices can help stakeholders develop empathy and understanding, which can help prevent future conflicts and promote a positive school climate (Kilimc, 2024). Restorative practices can also help stakeholders develop a sense of belonging, which can improve students' well-being and academic performance (Kilimc, Teachers' perceptions on corporal punishment as a method of discipline in elementary schools, 2024).

2.6.2 The Role of Discipline in Academic Success

School discipline plays a critical role in students' academic success. The implementation and enforcement of discipline policies can have a significant impact on students' behavior and academic performance. Discipline policies in schools such as Dzondo Secondary Education are implemented to ensure that students adhere to the established rules and regulations while promoting their academic success. The role of discipline in academic success is complex and multifaceted and requires balancing between addressing students' misbehavior and protecting their rights and well-being (Kilimc, 2024). This literature review will examine the role of discipline in students' academic success while considering the views of teachers and students on discipline and its impact on their human rights.

Moreover, it has been found that the way in which discipline is enforced can also affect students' academic performance. For instance, positive and inclusive disciplinary practices that focus on encouraging self-regulation and respect among students can have a positive effect on their academic performance. On the other hand, exclusionary disciplinary practices such as student suspension can have a detrimental effect on students' academic performance (Eni & Arit, 2022).

The Role of Discipline in Academic Success

School discipline refers to the strategies that educators use to ensure that learners adhere to established rules and regulations while promoting a conducive learning environment. The relationship between discipline and academic success is complex; effective discipline can have a

positive effect on learners' behavior, which in turn can improve their academic performance. On the other hand, ineffective discipline can have a detrimental effect on learners' behavior, which can adversely affect their academic performance.

1. **The Need for a Structured Learning Environment**

A structured learning environment is critical for learners' academic success. Research has found that learners tend to perform better in schools that have effective discipline policies because the policies help minimize disruptions and ensure that learners are able to focus on their studies (Wilmot, 2020). Effective discipline policies can help educators address learners' misbehavior in a manner that promotes their academic success. For instance, effective discipline policies can help educators set clear behavioral expectations, which can help learners understand what is expected of them and the consequences of their actions. By providing learners with clear behavioral expectations, educators can help them focus on their studies and achieve their academic goals.

2. **Discipline as a Strategy for Encouraging Positive Behaviors**

Effective discipline strategies can help encourage positive behaviors among learners, which can have a positive effect on their academic performance. Discipline strategies such as reinforcement, punishment, and self-regulation can be used to encourage positive behaviors among learners (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020). For instance, reinforcement can be used to reward learners for demonstrating positive behaviors, which can encourage them to continue exhibiting the behaviors. Punishment can be used to deter learners from engaging in negative behaviors, while self-regulation can help learners develop the ability to control their behavior. Discipline strategies that encourage positive behaviors can help improve learners' academic performance by promoting a conducive learning environment.

3. **The Negative Impact of Disruptive Behaviors**

Disruptive behaviors can have a detrimental effect on learners' academic performance by disrupting the learning process and reducing learners' engagement in their studies. Learners who exhibit disruptive behaviors such as talking out of turn, using inappropriate language, and engaging in physical altercations are more likely to experience poor academic performance than their well-behaved counterparts (Maphosa & Shumba, 2020). Disruptive behaviors can reduce learners' engagement in their studies by making it difficult for them to focus on the lesson. Moreover, disruptive behaviors can lead to disciplinary actions such as suspension or expulsion, which can prevent students from completing their education. Effective discipline policies can help

minimize the impact of disruptive behaviors on learners' academic performance by addressing the behaviors in a manner that promotes their academic success.

Disciplinary Approaches and Their Impact on Academic Achievement

The different disciplinary approaches that can be used to address learners' misbehavior can have varying effects on learners' academic achievement. Traditional disciplinary approaches such as corporal punishment, detention, and suspension have been found to be ineffective in promoting learners' academic success and can have several negative effects on their well-being. On the other hand, restorative disciplinary approaches and positive discipline strategies can be effective in promoting learners' academic achievement by focusing on repairing the harm caused by misbehavior and encouraging positive behaviors.

1. Traditional Disciplinary Practices

Traditional disciplinary practices such as corporal punishment, detention, and suspension have been used in many educational institutions to address learners' misbehavior. Although these practices have been found to be effective in deterring misbehavior, they have several negative effects on learners' academic achievement and well-being. For instance, corporal punishment has been found to have detrimental effects on learners' academic performance by causing them psychological trauma and reducing their motivation to study (Maphosa & Mammen, 2020). Suspension and expulsion have also been found to have several negative effects on learners' academic achievement by causing them to lose instructional time and become disconnected from the school environment (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). Traditional disciplinary practices such as corporal punishment, detention, and suspension have also been found to have detrimental effects on learners' social and emotional development by causing them to develop negative attitudes towards their peers and educators.

2. Restorative Practices and Positive Discipline

Restorative practices and positive discipline strategies focus on repairing the harm caused by misbehavior and encouraging positive behaviors among learners. Restorative practices have been found to be effective in promoting learners' academic achievement by creating a positive school climate that encourages respect and empathy among learners and educators (Dhlamini, 2021). Restorative practices can help repair the harm caused by misbehavior by allowing learners to take responsibility for their actions and make amends. By focusing on repairing harm, restorative practices can help promote a positive school climate that encourages respect and empathy, which can have a positive effect on learners' academic achievement.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is another positive discipline strategy that has been found to be effective in promoting learners' academic achievement by encouraging positive behaviors among learners. PBS focuses on promoting a positive school culture by encouraging educators to set clear behavioral expectations and provide positive reinforcement to learners who demonstrate positive behaviors (Obadire & Sinthumule, 2021). PBS can help improve learners' academic achievement by creating a positive school climate that encourages respect and empathy while discouraging misbehavior.

3. The Role of Consistent Discipline in Academic Achievement

Consistent discipline plays a critical role in promoting learners' academic achievement by ensuring that learners are aware of the behavioral expectations and the consequences of their actions. Consistent discipline can help create a positive school climate that encourages positive behaviors while deterring misbehavior, which can have a positive effect on learners' academic achievement. Inconsistent discipline, on the other hand, can have several negative effects on learners' academic achievement by causing confusion and frustration among learners. Research has found that learners who experience inconsistent discipline are more likely to engage in misbehavior because they do not understand the consequences of their actions (Bantekas & Oette, 2020).

Educators' Views on Discipline and Academic Achievement

Educators play a critical role in promoting a positive school climate that encourages positive behaviors among learners while discouraging misbehavior. Their views on discipline and its impact on learners' academic achievement can influence their ability to promote a positive school climate and encourage positive behaviors among learners.

The Role of Educators in Managing Discipline: Educators and school administrators play a critical role in managing discipline in schools. Their views on discipline can influence learners' behavior and academic achievement. Educators who understand the relationship between discipline and academic achievement are more likely to adopt effective disciplinary strategies that can promote a positive school climate and encourage positive behaviors among learners. Educators who recognize the importance of discipline in promoting a positive school climate can use effective disciplinary strategies such as setting clear behavioral expectations, providing feedback to learners, and offering support to learners who are experiencing behavioral issues (De Klerk & Rens, 2023). Educators who understand the relationship between discipline and academic achievement are also more likely to encourage positive behaviors among learners, which can have a positive effect on their academic performance.

The Need for Educators to Receive Training: It is critical for educators to receive training on effective disciplinary strategies that can promote a positive school climate and encourage positive behaviors among learners. Training can help educators gain a better understanding of the impact of different disciplinary strategies on learners' behavior and academic achievement. Moreover, training can equip educators with the necessary skills to address learners' behavioral issues in a manner that promotes their academic success. It is also critical for educators to receive training on human rights issues to ensure that they are aware of their rights and responsibilities when managing learners' behavioral issues (McCluskey & Lephalala, 2020).

Learner Perspectives on Discipline and Its Influence on Academic Achievement

Learner perceptions of discipline are also essential in understanding their impact on academic achievement. If learners perceive discipline as fair, respectful, and consistent, they are more likely to be motivated to succeed and exhibit positive behaviors that contribute to good grades.

Equity and Respect in Discipline: Learners are more receptive to discipline when they feel that it is fair and respectful. Evidence indicates that students who feel respected during disciplinary actions are more likely to comply with school rules and regulations, display positive attitudes, and excel academically (Dhlamini, 2021). On the other hand, learners who feel that they are being unfairly disciplined are likely to become disinterested in school and have poor academic performance.

Influence of Discipline on Motivation and Self-Esteem: Extremely harsh discipline can also negatively impact learners' motivation and self-esteem, which can affect their academic performance. Learners who are often punished severely or excluded from school activities due to their behavior are likely to feel isolated and demotivated to attend school or participate in class discussions (MacAllister, 2023). However, learners who are motivated and made to feel important during the discipline process are more likely to maintain good academic performance.

Learner Involvement in Discipline: Involving learners in the discipline process can also affect their grades. Allowing learners to take responsibility for their actions and give their side of the story during the discipline process encourages them to be more responsible (Carrim, 2022). This can promote positive behavior, improve learners' relationships with educators, and increase their likelihood of having good academic performance.

2.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by two theoretical frameworks: Human Rights Theory and Restorative Justice Theory.

a. Human Rights Theory

The principles of Human Rights are enshrined in the South African Constitution (1996) and the South African Schools Act (1996) which prohibit corporal punishment and ensure the right to learn in a safe and secure environment. Therefore, human rights theory enables the evaluation of disciplinary procedures for their ability to meet the requirements of rights holders and respect the rights enshrined in the South African Constitution. Human Rights Theory enables the identification of how learners and educators experience disciplinary procedures. According to Human Rights Theory, there is the following:

- Right to be treated with Dignity
- Right to be Treated Non-Discriminatory Manner
- Right to Due Process in Relation to Discipline
- Right to Education and Protection from Exclusionary Practices

i. Right to be Treated With Dignity

The foundation of this study is the belief that the rights of all learners must be respected even when they are in a lower status position compared to their educators. In South Africa, dignity and freedom are enshrined in the Constitution which makes it unlawful for state agencies to act in a manner that is discriminatory or humiliates citizens. In essence, every individual in South Africa is entitled to inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected as enshrined in Section 10 of the South African Constitution (1996). In addition to the rights conferred by the Bill of Rights, learners in South Africa are entitled to additional rights under the South African Schools Act (1996) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Consequently, the UN Convention on the Rights of the learners requires that school discipline must be administered in a non-discriminatory manner (Art 28:2). Thus, even when dealing with unruly learners, educators should ensure that learners are not humiliated or made to feel as if they are lower than their educators. According to the dignity norm, punishment should take place in a manner that restores the dignity of the learner as opposed to degrading the dignity of the learner. Corporal punishment, verbal abuse, and humiliating punishment or exclusion is thus prohibited. Restorative practices are appropriate in restoring the dignity of learners and helping them to understand that their actions hurt themselves and others. By evaluating educators' views and learners' views on disciplinary procedures, this study aims to establish if learners are being humiliated through disciplinary procedures thus violating their right to dignity and security at school.

The foundation of this study lies in the principle that every learner has the inherent right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their behavior or disciplinary status. This right is enshrined in both international human rights law and national constitutional protections, and it has direct implications for how schools handle discipline.

ii. Right to be Treated Non-Discriminatory Manner

This study is based on the principle that no learner should face any form of discrimination in the school environment. The right to non-discrimination is a fundamental right both in international law and South African law. In South Africa, the Constitution (1996) prohibits discrimination in all forms and provides that everyone is equal before the law and entitled to the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution. This means that learners are entitled to equal treatment in accordance with their status as children. In addition to international and national law, learners are protected by the policy framework on education which obliges education stakeholders to treat learners equally and without discrimination.

Consequently, as the South African Constitution (1996) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child prohibit discrimination in all forms, including indirect discrimination, this study will evaluate the experiences of educators and learners to determine whether there is discrimination in the implementation of disciplinary procedures at Dzondo Secondary's. For example, there are certain learners who are frequently punished due to their status in society. Learners from economically disadvantaged communities are more likely to be punished for minor irregularities as compared to learners from economically stable backgrounds. There are some learners who have reported that they feel that they are not treated equally at school. In essence, educators need to take cognizance of learners' social and economic background when dealing with misbehavior. It is also important to acknowledge that discriminatory practices can cause long-term adverse effects on learners' school life including dropping out of school.

Therefore, this study will evaluate the views of educators on the application of non-discriminatory practices and how they handle different cultural beliefs among learners during the implementation of discipline procedures.

iii. Right to Due Process in Relation to Discipline

Due process is a key component of a rights-based approach to discipline in schools. Due process is about ensuring procedural fairness through processes that are consistent with legal principles. A due process is important for all learners regardless of their socio-economic status. In essence, due process protects learners from being punished unfairly or unlawfully by ensuring that punishments

are imposed after appropriate procedures have been followed. In South Africa, due process is enshrined in the Constitution and the South African Schools Act (1996).

According to Section 33 of the South African Constitution, everyone has a right to a fair hearing by an independent authority in accordance with the law. This implies that learners must be afforded due process when determining misbehavior. Consequently, when implementing due process, educators need to notify the learner of the allegations, give the learner an opportunity to respond to the allegations, and ensure that impartial officials conduct the disciplinary hearing. Due process is important as it respects learners' dignity and ensures that they understand the rationale for holding them accountable for their actions (Bajaj, 2019). Additionally, a rights-based policy on discipline requires that students are protected from degrading punishment, which is a key concern at Dzondo Secondary's.

iv. Right to Education and Protection from Exclusionary Practices

The principle of the right to education and protection from exclusionary practices obliges schools to ensure that learners' right to education is not unduly interfered with. This right is enshrined in Section 29(1) (a) of the South African Constitution which provides that everyone has the right to a basic education. Consequently, the right to education and protection from exclusionary practices obliges schools to ensure that learners are not excluded from attending school for extended periods of time as a result of misbehavior.

In addition to the South African Constitution, the right to education and protection from exclusionary practices is protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Art 28:2). The UNCRC obliges states to ensure that discipline in schools is administered in a manner that is consistent with the rights of the child. Further, General Comment No. 1 (2001) on the Aims of Education provides that education should be child-centered and schools should endeavor to promote inclusion. Subsequently, the exclusion of learners from school through punishments such as suspensions and expulsions should be a measure taken as a last resort. In practice, exclusionary practices such as suspensions and expulsions can have adverse effects on learners including disruption of learning and social development and have been identified as a contributing factor to students dropping out of school.

Thus, this study will evaluate the views of educators and learners to determine whether exclusionary punishments such as suspensions are used as a form of punishment and the extent to which learners and educators believe that such punitive measures interfere with learners' right to education and promote social and emotional development.

b. Restorative Justice Theory

Restorative Justice Theory views discipline as a process of restoring harmony, repairing harm, and rebuilding relationships between offenders, victims, and the community instead of meting out punishment. Restorative Justice Theory has been widely used in education to promote inclusive schools, particularly in contexts where there is tension between policy and practice. Restorative justice principles are consistent with child-centered education, child rights, and democratic school governance (Owen, Wettach, & Hoffman, 2020). This study is informed by the following restorative justice principles:

- Dialogue between Offenders and Victims
- Inclusion of All Stakeholders in Restorative Justice
- Restitution and Repair of Harm

i. Dialogue between Offenders and Victims

Dialogue is a key restorative justice practice which enables offenders to acknowledge their harms and victims to express their needs (De Klerk & Rens, 2023). Restorative justice views conflict as arising from broken relationships and not criminal acts. Restorative justice focuses on healing and repairing the harm done to individuals and the community as opposed to taking punitive measures against the offender. Restorative justice focuses on accountability, offender responsibility, and offender re-integration into the community. De Klerk and Rens (2023) explain that in restorative justice, offenders and victims have the opportunity to meet face to face or in a mediated setting to understand the impact of the conflict and come to an agreement regarding the restitution process.

According to De Klerk and Rens (2023), restorative justice requires victims to recognize their level of hurt, accept help, and acknowledge the support given in addressing the harm. In turn, offenders should express their thoughts and feelings and take responsibility for their actions. The practice of dialogue is a restorative practice that is rights-based because it promotes the rights of learners, educators, and parents to dignity, participation, and freedom. Dialogue helps to promote restorative justice and democratic rights in schools. Dialogue between offenders and victims is a useful alternative to punitive forms of discipline.

In Dzondo Secondary's, educators are challenged with disciplinary problems within the classroom due to large class sizes and limited resources. Educators have noted the limitations of punitive measures such as detention to address misbehavior. Some educators understand the negative effects of punitive measures and are willing to adopt restorative practices. However, the adoption

of restorative practices such as victim-offender dialogue is limited by limited time and resources and sometimes by the absence of appropriate skills.

On the side of learners, the option to engage in a dialogue with their educators and parents helps them to be more responsible and promotes their social and emotional development. Learners appreciate dialogue with their parents, educators, or peers as it allows them to share their views as equal participants in the restorative justice process. Dialogue helps offenders to express their emotions, accept responsibility for their actions, and understand the harm caused to victims. Learners report that dialogue helps them to feel cared for and understood and allows them to develop a sense of belonging in their community.

The inclusion of dialogue in disciplinary procedures helps to promote restorative justice and democratic rights in schools. Furthermore, the practice of dialogue in schools is consistent with the dignity and participation rights of learners and educators enshrined in the South African Constitution and international law such as the UNCRC. According to the UNCRC (Art 28:2), discipline in schools must be administered in a manner that is consistent with human rights. In particular, Article 12 recognizes the right of the child to express their views and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Thus, the practice of dialogue in schools such as Dzondo Secondary's helps to ensure that rights-based values such as participation, dignity, and freedom are promoted when dealing with misbehavior.

ii. Inclusion of All Stakeholders in Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice Theory promotes the inclusion of all stakeholders in the restorative justice process. Restorative justice views conflict as a community issue and not an individual issue. Restorative justice encourages victims to obtain moral, emotional, and material support from community members and offenders to take responsibility for their actions (Bajaj, 2019). The inclusion of all stakeholders allows restorative justice to be a community-driven initiative which is likely to be more effective in addressing the underlying causes of misbehavior in schools such as Dzondo Secondary's. Furthermore, restorative justice is a rights-based practice because it respects and promotes human rights. Restorative justice acknowledges victims' rights to dignity, freedom from violence and harassment, and the right to be heard. Restorative justice also promotes the rights of offenders to freedom, dignity, and an education.

The inclusion of stakeholders such as learners, educators, parents, and community members in restorative justice processes helps to ensure that disciplinary procedures are participatory and restorative (Morrell, 2021). This is important in schools such as Dzondo Secondary's which experience frequent disruptions due to misbehavior among learners. Restorative justice empowers

learners by allowing them to share their views on misbehavior as well as take an active role in addressing it. Restorative justice acknowledges that the involvement of learners in restorative justice processes helps to promote their rights, particularly their right to freedom and dignity in an education environment. Restorative justice also empowers educators by giving them the confidence and competence to address misbehavior in a manner that does not resort to punitive measures such as corporal punishment. Restorative justice empowers parents by consulting them as equal stakeholders when addressing the causes and consequences of misbehavior. The inclusion of all stakeholders in restorative justice practices helps to enhance their social and emotional development and encourages learners to adopt responsible behaviors. This is particularly important in Dzondo Secondary's where the use of corporal punishment continues to be a contentious issue.

Furthermore, the inclusion of all stakeholders in restorative justice initiatives is a democratic practice that helps to foster democratic rights and responsibilities. Restorative justice encourages educators to view their role in schools as more than just enforcers of rules and regulations and instead allows them to take an active part in democratic governance in schools. Restorative justice fosters community engagement and consultation on matters relating to discipline and learners' rights (Bajaj, 2019). The inclusion of parents and community members in restorative justice processes in schools such as Dzondo Secondary's promotes learners' rights as enshrined in national law and international law.

iii. Restitution and Repair of Harm

Restitution and repair of harm is a key restorative justice principle that is particularly useful for addressing misbehavior in schools. Restitution is centred on holding offenders responsible for their actions and restoring what was lost or damaged due to the misconduct. Restitution and repair of harm provide an opportunity for offenders to accept responsibility, understand the impact of their actions, and make amends (Carrim, 2022). Restitution and repair of harm enable restorative justice to offer an alternative to punitive-based disciplinary procedures such as expulsions and suspensions. Restitution focuses on repairing the harm and restoring relationships rather than taking punitive measures. Restitution practices can vary depending on the nature of the misconduct and can take the form of restitution agreements, verbal and written apologies, community service, and collaborative problem-solving. Restitution and repair of harm promote dignity and participation rights, particularly among learners (Bajaj, 2019).

Educators in Dzondo Secondary's experience the challenge of managing misbehavior in overcrowded classrooms which are not conducive to effective teaching and learning. Restitution

and repair of harm have several advantages that make them suitable for use in schools. Restitution and repair of harm are effective alternatives to punitive-based disciplinary procedures such as corporal punishment, which have been banned in Dzondo Secondary's. Restitution can help to address the underlying causes of misbehavior among learners, particularly as it is aimed at restoring relationships rather than punishing offenders. Restitution and repair of harm are particularly useful in addressing recurring misbehavior due to the fact that they focus on ensuring that learners understand that their actions have consequences and are held accountable for them. Restitution promotes dignity and participation rights as learners are allowed to express their thoughts and feelings and take an active role in repairing the harm that they cause (Bajaj, 2019).

According to Carrim (2022), learners appreciate restorative practices such as restitution and repair of harm because it makes them responsible for their actions rather than being punished for them. Restitution promotes a positive school culture as it focuses on restoring relationships rather than resorting to exclusion-based punitive measures. The restitution and repair of harm principle can be implemented through restitution agreements in which learners are obligated to carry out certain community service tasks in the school. Restitution agreements should require learners to apologize to the victims of their misconduct either verbally or in writing and take other actions to restore the dignity of their victims.

The implementation of restitution by educators should also acknowledge the importance of learners' dignity by ensuring that it is not degraded in the process. Restitution and repair of harm will help to promote the rights of learners and educators to freedom, dignity, and participation as they will involve all stakeholders in the process of repairing the harm caused by misbehavior. Restitution and repair of harm will also contribute to the promotion of democratic rights and responsibilities as it empowers educators, parents, and learners to take an active role in addressing school-related issues such as misbehavior (Carrim, 2022).

2.8. Conclusion

Based on the review, it is evident that the relationship between disciplinary procedures and human rights in secondary education is complex. Therefore, it is important to consider human rights when developing or reviewing disciplinary procedures to ensure that both policy and practice contribute to achieving quality education. In Dzondo Secondary Schools, moving towards more positive and restorative disciplinary procedures can contribute to a positive learning environment, which will support learners' rights and academic success as opposed to the use of punitive disciplinary procedures which have adverse academic consequences for learners.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This chapter presents the research methodology and design used in conducting the study on educators' and students' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. The chapter further discusses the research procedures and strategies used to ensure trustworthiness.

3.1. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is defined as a researcher's worldview or underlying beliefs about the nature of reality that inform him/her about what is being known and how it is being known (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). In other words, research paradigms relate to a researcher's ontology (beliefs about the nature of reality) and epistemology (beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how knowledge is acquired) and how this informs him/her to conduct research. In qualitative research, the following research paradigms are commonly used: interpretivism, constructivism, critical theory, and post-positivism (Lincoln & Guba, 2021).

This study is based on the interpretivist paradigm of research and analysis. This paradigm is concerned with making sense of the meanings that individuals or groups of people bring to bear in order to understand how these meanings influence human actions or behaviors (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). Specifically in this study on disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools, this paradigm is used to understand how educators and learners make sense of discipline procedures in their schools.

3.1.1. Interpretivism Defined

Interpretivism paradigm is based on the idea that reality is subjective and context-specific and therefore more than one reality is likely to exist (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). Researchers working with this paradigm seek to understand phenomena from the perspectives of the subjects under investigation. Interpretivism is a research paradigm which emphasizes on understanding the subjective experience, perception, and behaviour of individuals or groups of individuals within a certain context (Thanh & Thanh, 2020). This paradigm views reality as something which is socially constructed and multiple realities exist depending on each individual's experiences.

3.1.2. The applicability of the interpretivist research paradigm to the study

The current study is interpretivist since it seeks to establish educators' views and students' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. Firstly, the interpretivist paradigm takes a stance that the meaning individuals attach to events influences their actions and behaviour (Chilisa, 2022). In other words, it acknowledges that educators and learners hold a certain perspective about discipline practices and human rights which shape the way they perceive and respond to issues of school discipline and human rights.

Therefore, to determine the extent to which school disciplinary procedures respect or violate human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools it is important to investigate the learners' and educators' perspectives on this issue. Secondly, the interpretivist paradigm is appropriate for this study since it is interested in exploring educators' and learners' experiences and perceptions of disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools (Chilisa, 2022).

This paradigm is consistent with qualitative research since it encourages close examination of the phenomena under study which leads to the collection of rich descriptions in order to generate in-depth understanding of the issue and identify patterns of meanings (Lincoln & Guba, 2021).

3.1.3. Justification for using the interpretive paradigm for the study

The interpretive paradigm is appropriate and suitable for this study since it aims to understand the students' and educators' perceptions on issues of discipline procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. According to this paradigm, the meaning individuals attach to events influences their actions and behaviour (Scotland, 2022). Specifically, individuals develop perceptions about certain phenomena based on their experiences in life and these perceptions affect how they behave and interact with others.

In this study, for instance, the perceptions that learners and educators have about discipline and human rights will probably affect their attitudes towards each other which in turn influence how human rights are respected in the school. The interpretive paradigm views reality as subjective and context specific (Zulu, 2018). This is an appropriate paradigm for the current study since it views subjective experiences and behaviours as the appropriate basis for examining the research problem. For instance, it would be possible to examine how educators' and learners' perceptions about discipline in terms of respecting human rights affect human rights violations in the school. Additionally, this paradigm is appropriate for this study because it acknowledges that multiple realities exist and therefore encourages the researcher to seek to understand situations from the

perspectives of the participants rather than trying to impose his/her meaning on them (Chilisa, 2022).

It should be recalled that the current study investigates the human rights perceptions of learners and educators with regard to discipline procedures. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the fact that multiple realities will likely exist with regard to this issue and the researcher should seek to understand the perspectives of these two groups of participants in order to make sense of them.

3.1.1. Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions

3.1.1.1. Ontological Assumptions – Nature of Reality

An ontological assumption refers to a researcher's belief about the nature of reality (Creswell, 2024). In other words, it refers to a researcher's belief about what reality is or what exists and how a researcher knows or comes to realize that particular knowledge. According to the relativist ontology, reality is multiple, constructed, and subjective (Creswell, 2024).

In a study on the views of learners and educators on disciplinary procedures and human rights, this ontology would mean that learners and educators are likely to have different perceptions of discipline in schools. Furthermore, according to this ontology, the researcher cannot make any objective statement about discipline and human rights since the nature of this issue is purely subjective.

3.1.1.2. Epistemological Assumptions – Nature of Knowledge

An epistemological assumption refers to a researcher's belief about the nature of knowledge (Bryman, 2020). In other words, it refers to a researcher's belief about how knowledge is generated, how it is gained, and how it comes into existence. When it comes to a study on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools, an epistemological assumption refers to the position one takes when it comes to the relationship between a researcher and the research question. For instance, if one takes the position that to understand learners' and educators' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights, interviews or focus group discussions with these participants are required, he/she is taking the constructivist ontology.

According to the constructivist ontology, knowledge about a given phenomenon is constructed by individuals (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). Specifically, the subjectivist and constructivist ontologies argue that understanding of the research problem is achieved when there is an existence of both an analyzer (researcher) and an analysand (participants). In other words, the researcher's knowledge about the participants influences his/her understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This epistemology seems appropriate for the current study because it is concerned with qualitative

research. Under this paradigm, the researcher examines one's own ideas about the research process, how he/she fits into this process, and how his/her own biases and assumptions are likely to affect the research process (Creswell, 2024).

3.1.2. Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher refers to the researcher's responsibilities, position, and influence in the research process. In most qualitative studies, the researcher is involved in almost all stages of the research, ranging from designing the research, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and reporting the findings (Creswell, 2024).

This section discusses the role of the researcher in the study on *"Exploring Educators' and Students' Views on Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools,"* The researcher plays several roles in qualitative studies:

- The researcher has to establish relationships with participants by encouraging them to tell their stories and ensure that they feel free to share their views on the research topic. In other words, the researcher should facilitate a conducive environment for participants to express their views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools.
- The researcher has to maintain the objectivity of the study. In order to achieve unbiased results, he/she has to consider the influence his/herself may have on participants as well as the potential impacts that power dynamics may have on the study (Scotland, 2022).
- Finally, the researcher has to perform analysis of qualitative data in order to extract the important aspects that have been identified by participants. For instance, in a study on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools, the researcher would extract information about participants' views on this issue by analyzing the data collected from them.

3.2. Research Approach: Qualitative

A qualitative research approach involves the researcher gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon based on the participants' point of view and perspective. It is therefore subjective in nature as it attempts to understand human experiences and behaviors instead of measuring them (Creswell & Poth, 2024). In a qualitative study, data is gathered and analyzed subjectively instead of quantitatively by relying on non-numerical data such as interviews, focus group discussions and documentary analysis. Qualitative research is typically interpretive, descriptive and flexible as the researcher attempts to gather rich data that can enable them understand the issue at hand or answer the research question (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The current study sought to explore educators' and students' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. Therefore, a qualitative research approach was deemed appropriate as the study attempted to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the view of the participants. A qualitative approach was preferred as this study was concerned with understanding meaning-making processes and social reality and therefore could not rely on measurements and figures. It would be inappropriate to quantify disciplinary procedures in the current context and therefore a qualitative approach was thought to offer a better chance of generating rich and in-depth data that could help the researcher come to terms with the complexity of the issue at hand (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020).

3.3. Research Design

Research design refers to a framework that guides the researcher in conducting the study. It describes how the research will be conducted and what procedures will be undertaken to address the research problem. It includes research objectives, methodology, assumptions and research questions. Research design therefore offers the researcher direction and focuses the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2024). The design of the study also determines the kind of research approach that will be used – quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods.

The current study adopted the case study research design to explore educators' and learners' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. The case study design was preferred as it allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon under investigation within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). A case study design was therefore appropriate for a descriptive study that sought to understand issues related to discipline and human rights in a natural setting. The case study design offered the researcher an opportunity to gather comprehensive data regarding the issue from multiple sources such as interviews, focus group discussions and documentary reviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020). Using the case study design allowed the investigator to gain a holistic understanding and therefore arrive at more accurate conclusions or recommendations in relation to the research problem.

Using a case study design offered the researcher an opportunity to focus on a single case, that is, one secondary school or a small group of secondary schools within the Dzondo Circuit to illuminate the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2024). This design was therefore appropriate as it allowed the researcher to gather information from multiple sources in order to answer the research question and arrive at a better understanding of the situation and the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018).

3.4. Population and sampling

3.4.1. Population

In research, the term population refers to a group of people, elements or items that are the focus of a study or from which a sample will be taken for investigation. The population should therefore consist of all the elements or subjects that the researcher wishes to investigate and about which they wish to generalize the results of their study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). The population in qualitative studies is however dependent on the type and nature of the study and therefore differs depending on the research approach that has been selected (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020).

The target population for the current study consisted of educators and learners at Dzondo Secondary Schools. Educators in this case referred to all the full-time staff currently employed at the aforementioned schools. Learners, on the other hand, referred to all those learners that are currently based at Grades 10 – 12 at the aforementioned institutions. Educators were targeted for investigation as they are the ones responsible for enforcing the school's disciplinary procedures. Senior learners, on the other hand, were selected as the ones who are more likely to understand the concept of human rights and therefore provide richer data.

3.4.2. Sampling Strategy

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a certain proportion of items or individuals from a population as a representative of the whole. In other words, it involves choosing a sample that will be investigated, studied or measured. In qualitative research, sampling strategies such as maximum diversity and purposeful sampling are preferred over random sampling strategies (Yin, 2018).

The current study adopted a purposive sampling strategy due to the nature and type of the study and its research design. This was the most suitable strategy as the study aimed to recruit participants who were likely to provide richer data. Purposeful sampling therefore helped ensure that the researcher would secure the most relevant respondents that would enable them address the research problem effectively and arrive at accurate and reliable results. This strategy is particularly useful in qualitative studies as it helps the researcher identify participants that are of relevance to the research question and problem (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

As mentioned above, the study aimed to investigate issues surrounding discipline and human rights. Therefore, in order to ensure that the investigation would generate rich and reliable data, it

was necessary to recruit participants who would be able to discuss the issues of interest and provide informative responses. In terms of educators, this could include educators, management staff and representatives in the discipline committee. As for learners, those who provided their informed consent and who were based at different grades and therefore varying school levels would be chosen, with emphasis placed on those who had disciplinary problems. A diverse sample of participants would be beneficial to this study as they would likely come from different backgrounds, possess differing views and therefore offer more varied and rich data. As far as the sample size is concerned, this will be discussed in the following section.

A purposeful sampling strategy was therefore adopted to purposefully select respondents that would offer rich and reliable data. This strategy was appropriate for this qualitative study as it allowed the investigator to recruit those participants that expressed an interest in the study and therefore provided informed consent to participate. In addition, this strategy also allowed the investigator to recruit diverse participants who differed in terms of their years of experience in education, position at school, gender and their knowledge or attitude towards discipline and human rights issues at school (Yin, 2018).

3.4.3. Sample Size

The sample size refers to the number of individuals that will be recruited for a given study. The sample size should be large enough to yield reliable and generalizable results. However, the sample size cannot be too large as this may be impractical due to limitations in time, money and effort. Therefore, there is a need to balance between a large sample size that offers more reliability and validity and a small sample size that is manageable and not too time-consuming. In qualitative studies, the sample size is usually smaller than that of quantitative studies. It is argued that with qualitative studies, more reliability can be achieved by increasing the sample size until no new data is generated (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

In the current study, a sample of approximately 4 – 5 educators and 4 – 5 learners will be recruited. The total number of participants will therefore range between - 8 – 10. The number of learners will be based on those who are based at Grades 10 – 12 at the targeted secondary schools. As discussed earlier, learners in Grades 10 – 12 are more likely to understand the concepts of discipline and human rights and therefore provide richer data. This sample size can be considered reasonable as it is not too large and therefore manageable. However, as mentioned above, data saturation will be the main criterion that will determine the sample size.

Inclusion Criteria

- Educators must have at least 5 years of experience.
- Learners must be based in Grades 10 – 12.
- Learners and educators must have agreed to participate voluntarily.
- For minors' permission, parental consent will be sought.

As mentioned in the previous section, the target population for this study consists of learners and educators in Grades 10 – 12 at the targeted secondary schools within the Dzondo Circuit. This study will adopt a purposive sampling strategy to ensure that the most relevant participants are recruited to the study. A total of – 4 – 5 learners and 4 – 5 educators will be recruited for this study. However, it is important to note that the exact number of participants that will be recruited will depend on whether the data that will be generated will be sufficient to answer the research question.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

Data collection methods refer to procedures that can be used to gather information from participants or sources in order to address a research problem. This step is critical in a qualitative study as it will determine whether reliable and valid results will be generated. In qualitative research, data collection methods are interactive in nature and therefore allow for meaningful exchanges and discussions with participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The data collection methods used by the researcher will depend on their research design and will be determined by practical considerations, objectives, research questions and the nature of the phenomenon that is being investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

The following data collection procedures and techniques will be used to gather data and address the research problem:

- Interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Documentary review

3.5.1. Instrumentation and Data Collection Techniques

Instrumentation refers to the process and procedures that researchers use to gather and collect data. There are various instruments that can be used to collect data including Interview guides, Observation checklists, Audio/video recorders, Field notes (Yin, 2018). In qualitative research,

instruments such as interview guides and observation checklists are typically flexible and can be tailored depending on the research problem and objectives. The following instrumentation will be used:

3.5.1.1. Instrumentation

The primary instruments used for data collection were as follows:

a) Semi-structured Interview Guide

Semi-structured Interview Guide consists of questions or themes in which the interviewer asks the interviewee. In this type of interview, the interviewer and interviewee follow a flexible guide. Compared to the structured interview, the Semi-structured interview offers more freedom allowing the interviewer to explore more in-depth issues that are of relevance to both the interviewer and interviewee. Compared to the unstructured interview, however, the Semi-structured interview offers less flexibility allowing the interviewer to explore some of the issues raised instead of discussing all the issues that are of relevance to the interviewee (Creswell & Poth, 2024).

In terms of relevance to the current study, semi-structured interviews can be used to gather in-depth information from educators and learners in order to address the research problem. In addition, as this study is descriptive in nature, the data collected via semi-structured interviews will offer more flexibility, allowing the investigator to explore other areas of the topic that may not have been identified a-priori (Rabionet, 2021). Therefore, semi-structured interviews will be used to gather in-depth qualitative data from both learners and educators.

Semi-structured interview guides will be developed to gain an in-depth understanding of the views of learners and educators on disciplinary procedures and human rights issues. According to Cresswell (2024), the semi-structured interview guides that will be used in the current study will be flexible guides that will help the researcher gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the participants.

- For educators, the semi-structured interview guide will cover themes such as disciplinary methods and the challenges that they encounter in maintaining discipline amongst the students.
- For learners, the guide will focus on their experiences with disciplinary procedures and their understanding of human rights issues.

b) Focus Group Discussion Guide

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide refers to a set of questions or issues that the moderator uses to facilitate a group discussion among participants. The FGD guide ensures that the participants address the issues of relevance to the research problem. The FGD guide therefore serves as a framework within which the discussion will take place, helping ensure that the objectives of the focus group discussion will be achieved. The FGD guide will also help the moderator keep track of the direction that the discussion is taking and therefore help them keep the focus on the research problem. FGDs are typically useful in qualitative studies as they allow the researcher to identify common experiences, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors, especially regarding controversial issues (Krueger & Casey, 2022). Compared to individual interviews however, FGDs allows for more interaction and allows participants to build on each other's ideas.

In addition to individual interviews, focus group discussions will be used. Using focus group discussions, a group of learners will be asked to discuss the research problem and relate their experiences to the issues under investigation. This would allow the researcher to uncover shared experiences, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (Krueger, 2022).

c) Audio recording devices and field notes

Audio recording devices and field notes are instruments that can be used in qualitative research studies to gather data accurately and to document the information that has been gathered. Audio recording can be used to record interviews, focus group discussions and observations. By recording the discussions, the researcher can accurately recall the information that was shared and analyze it effectively. Field notes can be used to document first-hand information and observations during conversations and observations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020). By taking notes, the researcher can record the most relevant information, observations and thoughts during interviews, focus group discussions and observations. In addition, field notes can be used to record the researcher's reflections at the time of the data collection process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020). Thus, audio recording devices and field notes will be critical in the data collection process as they will help ensure accuracy in data collection and analysis.

3.5.1.2. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection techniques refer to procedures that can be used to gather information from participants or sources in order to address a research problem. These data collection techniques can be used in qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods research studies. In qualitative research, the following data collection techniques can be used:

- One-on-one semi-structured interviews

- Focus group discussions
- Documentary review

a) One-on-One Semi-Structured Interviews

One-on-One Semi-structured interviews refer to discussions that the researcher has with a single participant. In this type of interview, the interviewer has prepared a list of issues that they would like to discuss with the interviewee. The interviewer and the interviewee follow a flexible guide allowing the interviewer to explore issues of relevance to both the interviewer and interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2020). Therefore, the Semi-structured interview is appropriate for qualitative research as it allows the interviewer to explore the issue thoroughly. This type of interview offers greater flexibility allowing the interviewer to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue and gather richer data. This data collection technique will therefore be appropriate for this study as it will allow the researcher to conduct interviews with selected educators and learners. The interviews will be held individually as this will allow the researcher to guarantee confidentiality and allow the participants to feel comfortable discussing the sensitive topic.

b) Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are a commonly used data collection technique in qualitative research. FGDs typically take place in a group of 5 – 7 participants. They are conducted to allow the researcher to gather in-depth information from participants about their attitudes, behaviors or experiences in relation to the research problem. In this type of data collection technique, the discussion takes place in a natural setting allowing the interviewer to ask open-ended questions and allow the participants to share their experiences and views openly (Krueger & Casey, 2022). Thus, FGDs offer the researcher a chance to interact with participants in a less formal setting, allowing the participants to openly discuss the sensitive topic and allowing the researcher to gain richer data.

c) Document Review

Document Review refers to a data collection technique that involves the researcher critically examining relevant information and documents in order to address the research problem. When using this data collection technique, the researcher goes through relevant documents such as journal articles, reports, books, newspapers, emails, field notes, diaries and visual records in order to identify patterns, discover relevant information and verify the information that was provided by participants (Bowen, 2020). The researcher can utilize document review to supplement the information that was gathered from participants or to provide additional support for the study's

findings (Krueger & Casey, 2022). This data collection technique will therefore be used to review school policy, code of conduct and disciplinary regulations in order to gather additional information and support for the research findings.

3.5.2. Ethical Considerations in Data Collection

Ethical considerations in data collection are the ethical principles and guidelines that must be followed to safeguard the rights, dignity, and well-being of participants throughout the research process (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2021). Researchers should uphold integrity and respect while collecting data on disciplinary procedures and human rights.

Researchers must uphold ethical considerations to ensure informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation, and minimisation of harm to participants. Ethical considerations are paramount in research, especially studies on human rights and their infringement, such as on disciplinary procedures in schools (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study followed ethical considerations to guarantee participants' rights, dignity, and well-being when gathering information on disciplinary procedures and human rights in the selected Dzondo Secondary Schools.

3.5.2.1. Informed Consent and Assent

Informed consent is an ethical principle in research that requires researchers to obtain participants' voluntary agreement to take part in a study after making them understand the nature, objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits of the research (Beauchamp & Childress, 2021). Assent is the agreement to participate in the study given to children below the age of consent or those who are unable to give informed consent (Flick, 2018).

Informed consent was obtained from participants by informing them of the research's objectives, procedures, risks, and benefits. Written consent was obtained from the participants to ensure that they had a clear understanding of the study.

- Verbal consent was obtained from educators
- Written informed consent was obtained from learners aged 18 and above
- Written assent and consent were obtained from the parents or guardians of learners below the age of 18
- Participants were reminded that their participation in the study was purely voluntary, and they could withdraw from it at any time without any adverse consequences.

3.5.2.2. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity and confidentiality are ethical principles in research that require researchers to keep participants' identities secret and ensure the privacy of their information (Wiles, 2023). Anonymity is a confidentiality procedure that ensures a participant's identity is hidden by avoiding the collection of any information that could reveal who they are (Creswell, 2024). In anonymous research, participants do not provide their names or any other information that could expose their identity (Wiles, 2023). In this study, anonymity was achieved by using pseudonyms in transcripts, notes, and written reports. In addition, any information in the transcripts and notes that could expose participants' identities, such as the school names, was redacted to guarantee anonymity (Wiles, 2023).

Confidentiality is a confidentiality procedure that ensures participants' information is accessible only to the researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In this study, confidentiality was achieved by storing audio recordings, transcripts, and notes in a secure computer after scanning them as images. This study's confidentiality was further ensured by limiting access to the information to the researchers.

3.5.2.3. Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Voluntary participation and the right to withdraw are ethical principles in research that require a researcher to allow participants to participate willingly in the study and let them abandon it at any time (Wiles, 2023). Voluntary participation demands that the researcher obtains participants' consent to take part in the study while respecting their right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher must inform potential participants of their right to withdraw from the study and the availability of the withdrawal option (Babbie, 2020). The right to withdraw means that once participants give consent to participate in the study, they have every right to stop participating in it at any time (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020).

Participants were reminded that their participation in the study was voluntary. They were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, or for no reason. The participants could also refuse to answer a particular question without giving any justification, especially if the question made them feel uncomfortable.

3.5.2.4. Minimising Harm

Minimising harm is an ethical principle in research that requires the researcher to take all measures to prevent participants from experiencing physical, emotional, psychological, social, or legal harm throughout the research process (Wiles, 2023). This ethical principle obliges the

researcher to plan the study in a way that minimises potential harm to participants. It is particularly crucial in qualitative research studies because participants provide personal information, and the researcher transcribes their exact words verbatim (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2021).

This study's nature involved interacting with participants and obtaining personal information regarding their perceptions and experiences of disciplinary procedures and human rights. Therefore, it was essential to take precautions to minimise potential harm to participants while carrying out the study. Questions on human rights were carefully worded to avoid making participants feel insulted or offended, especially on issues that might be sensitive to them. If a participant became uncomfortable or upset during the interview, the conversation was ended immediately. Participants were also reminded of the resources they could utilise if any personal or emotional boundaries were crossed, for example, the school counsellor or social worker.

3.5.2.5. Ethical Clearance and Institutional Permissions

Ethical clearance and institutional permissions are the official approvals from the relevant institutional bodies that enable the researcher to undertake a study using human participants. Ethical clearance is the approval granted by the ethics review board after a research protocol has been evaluated to ensure it meets established ethical standards for human participant research (Wiles, 2023). Institutional permissions are the formal approvals bestowed by organisations that a researcher requests to carry out their study on to obtain data from human participants while upholding ethical principles (Bryman, 2020).

Ethical clearance for this study was sought from the university's ethics review board to ensure that it conformed to the ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Institutional permissions were also requested and obtained from the following:

- The Provincial Department of Education
- Dzondo Circuit Manager

3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis and interpretation are the stages in qualitative research where the researcher works through the data gathered to identify patterns and themes, explicate the meaning of the information, and connect it to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Data analysis refers to laying out the information collected as transcripts, field notes, field recordings, or documents to identify patterns of meaning, while data interpretation refers to articulating the meaning of the information gathered and tying it to the research questions (Creswell, 2024).

In keeping with this study's qualitative and interpretivist nature, data analysis focused on understanding the phenomena of disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools by interpreting participants' meanings conveyed in interviews and focus group discussions.

3.6.1. Data Preparation

Data preparation is the stage in qualitative research where the researcher lays out the data gathered in coded transcripts, field notes, or field recordings to organise it for the purpose of analysis (Gibbs, 2020). It is a crucial step because it allows the researcher to go through the coded transcripts, field notes, and field recordings to discover patterns and prepare them for analysis (Gibbs, 2020).

A meticulous data preparation process preceded data analysis to assure accuracy and reliability in the transcripts, notes, and recordings of the interviews and focus group discussions. It was vital to guarantee the accuracy of the transcribed data. Data preparation was critical to ensure that the voices of participants were captured verbatim and presented accurately. Preparation of the data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions involved the following steps:

3.6.1.1. Transcription of Audio Recordings

Transcription of audio recordings is the stage in qualitative research where the researcher transcribes verbatim the recordings made of the participants' verbal responses. Transcription of audio recordings is essential for qualitative research because it allows the researcher to identify patterns and generate meaningful insights from the verbal responses (Poland, 2022). All semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were audio-recorded (after obtaining informed consent). The recordings were later transcribed verbatim to generate transcripts. When appropriate, non-verbal utterances such as laughter and sobs were noted in the transcripts. Transcripts were generated immediately after interviews and focus group discussions to ensure accuracy.

All transcripts were appropriately labelled accordingly: for example, Educator 1 or Learner FG1. The pseudonyms were used to replace the names of participants mentioned in the transcripts.

3.6.1.2. Reviewing and Verifying Transcripts

Reviewing and verifying transcripts is the second stage in data preparation in qualitative research where the researcher reviews the transcribed verbatim record of the interviews or focus group discussions and compares it to the recording to ensure accuracy and that no crucial information was omitted (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2023).

The transcripts were cross-checked after generating them to ensure that no information was added, deleted, or altered erroneously and to guarantee accuracy and credibility (McLellan, MacQueen, & Neidig, 2023). To assure trustworthiness, transcripts were scrutinised to detect missing information that may have been overlooked or misinterpreted during transcription. At this stage, missing information, particularly when detecting unclear sections of the recording, was retrieved by rereading or listening to the recording.

3.6.1.3. Organisation and Coding Preparation

Organisation and coding preparation is the third stage in data preparation where the researcher prepares the data for coding by organising the transcripts, field notes, and field recordings and separating them according to themes or categories (Saldaña, 2021). The transcripts were prepared for analysis by organising the information gathered. This step was crucial because it involved making the transcripts ready for coding and analysis. After verifying transcripts, they were formatted for readability and coding ease by doing the following:

- Numbering all the lines
- Identifying the utterances with important phrases to highlight early patterns
- Placing the transcripts in a qualitative data manager or preparing them for thematic analysis by printing them and using coding matrices

3.6.1.4. Data Categorisation

Data categorisation is the stage in qualitative research where the researcher groups information into categories by utilising coding as a mechanism to identify patterns, commonalities, and themes within the data set to interpret it (Saldaña, 2021). Data categorisation assists the researcher in organising, clarifying, and defining themes based on similarities in the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This procedure was performed following data organisation and preparation for coding to facilitate the analysis process. The data gathered from educators and the focus group discussions involving learners were divided into two categories:

- Educators transcripts were separated from those of students
- The learners' interviews and focus group discussion transcripts were further divided into two: those of the learners who participated in the interviews and those who gave their responses during the focus group discussions

The process of data categorisation allowed for a comparative analysis between learners and educators while enabling the analysis of similarities within the students' data set.

3.6.1.5. Researcher's Reflexive Journal

A researcher's reflexive journal is a record of a qualitative researcher's reflections, thoughts, and activities relating to the research process throughout the duration of the study. A researcher's reflexivity journal enables the researcher to identify their assumptions, opinions, decisions, and thoughts as they engage in the research process, particularly in terms of research participants and the consequences of the research (Finlay, 2022). Reflexivity is a process of becoming aware, critically examining, and acting upon the impact of one's views, attitudes, and behaviours, particularly regarding research participants and the implications of the research at different stages of the research, including collecting and analysing data, making decisions, and interpreting results (Finlay, 2022).

This step in researcher's reflexivity journal ensured that I was constantly aware of my assumptions and thoughts about the study, participants, and findings. The data preparation process was integral to this study because it made it possible to accurately capture the voices of participants and prepare the data for analysis. Having undertaken the transcription, reviewing, and organisation of data, the following section details the analytical strategy adopted in the analysis and interpretation of data to uncover the meaning of participants' experiences and perspectives on disciplinary procedures and human rights.

3.6.2. Analytical Approach

The analytical approach refers to the strategy that the researcher adopts in qualitative research to identify patterns of meaning in the data gathered and articulate the significance of the findings in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2022). It is a critical component of qualitative research that aids the researcher in making meaningful sense of the data gathered. Different analytical strategies are used in qualitative research, including thematic analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, grounded theory, and critical discourse analysis. Each of these strategies varies based on its conceptual underpinnings, theoretical foundations, and philosophical paradigms (Charmaz, 2024). This study adopted a qualitative analytical strategy to interpret the data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions to reveal the meanings constructed by participants concerning disciplinary procedures and human rights.

3.6.2.1. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a method of qualitative research that aims to identify themes and patterns within a set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This approach, which has become increasingly popular in qualitative research, enables researchers to organise and describe their data set with sufficient detail and interpret it according to their research questions. It is a flexible research strategy that can be applied to a variety of qualitative data, including transcripts, videos, and field

notes, and it fits within different philosophical paradigms and theoretical orientations (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2020). The data gathered from the interviews and focus group discussions were thematically analysed to discover patterns of meaning (themes) within the data set. The following six stages were performed in thematic analysis:

1. **Familiarisation with the Data**

Familiarisation with the data is the first stage in thematic analysis, in which the researcher engages in an in-depth understanding of the data gathered. It entails gaining a comprehensive grasp of the data set by becoming familiar with its contents, context, and nuances (Braun & Clarke, 2022). As part of this step, I immersed myself in the data by reading and rereading transcripts and field notes to become familiar with the content and context of the information gathered from participants.

2. **Initial Coding**

Initial coding is the second step in thematic analysis, which involves generating initial codes by breaking qualitative data into discrete segments and labelling them to indicate their meanings (Saldaña, 2021). I began coding the data right after the familiarisation stage. I assigned line-by-line descriptive labels or tags, known as codes to capture salient aspects of the data set. The following are some illustrative examples of codes:

- Fear of punishment
- "voice in decision-making," corporal punishment persists
- Policy knowledge gap

3. **Searching for Themes**

Searching for themes is the third stage and entails generating initial themes through the collation and grouping of codes that emerged during the initial coding stage (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2020). At this point, I started grouping together various similar pieces of information to develop initial themes. To do this, I identified clusters of codes that recurred throughout the data set indicating that the data set contained common underlying factors, processes, or phenomena. For example, the themes that emerged from the data analysis were Authoritarian Discipline Culture, Fear and Compliance, and Policy Knowledge Gap.

4. **Reviewing and Refining Themes**

Reviewing and refining themes is the fourth stage and involves reviewing initial themes against data to ensure that they accurately represent the data set (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2020).

At this stage, I modified and improved on initial themes by eliminating irrelevant themes, combining similar themes, and separating distinct themes.

5. **Defining and Naming Themes**

Defining and naming themes is the fifth stage and entails defining and naming each theme based on the information, patterns, and insights that emerged from the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022). At this point, I clearly defined and named each theme. In addition, sub-themes were identified and defined separately.

6. **Interpretation of Findings**

Interpretation of findings is the final stage in thematic analysis, which entails tying together findings, interpreting them in relation to the research questions, and articulating their significance to the research topic (Patton, 2024). At this stage, the findings were interpreted in context, primarily focusing on explaining their significance in relation to the research questions and the research topic.

3.6.2.2. Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is a data analysis strategy that seeks to elicit, explain, and understand differences and similarities by comparing and contrasting the findings emerging from the data set to comprehend the phenomenon under investigation (Ragin, 2024). Comparative analysis allows the researcher to go beyond merely describing the data set to interpreting it, identifying patterns, and recognising relationships. The findings that emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions were comparatively analysed to unveil how the phenomenon of disciplinary procedures and human rights varied and/or converged among educators and students.

3.6.2.3. Researcher Reflexivity

In qualitative research, the use of reflexivity is a process that involves examining and understanding the impact of one's background, biases, and assumptions on the research process and findings. Reflexivity enables the researcher to adopt a critical stance toward the research process and its influence on study results (Finlay, 2022).

In the study discussed in the paper, the researcher became aware of his or her assumptions and engaged in reflection throughout the research process. In particular, the use of a reflective journal to record thoughts and reactions facilitated the reflective process, thus raising the quality and trustworthiness of the research findings. The analytical strategy was based on conducting a thematic analysis of the responses collected from participants in order to identify themes that

represent the perspectives of educators and learners on disciplinary procedures and human rights issues. In addition, a comparative inquiry approach was taken in order to examine differences and similarities in views.

3.7. Trustworthiness of Analysis

When it comes to qualitative research, trustworthiness is concerned with validity and reliability. In particular, trustworthiness focuses on establishing the authenticity and accuracy of the completed analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). Moreover, it should be noted that trustworthiness criteria ensure that conduct and reporting of a study are scientifically credible and ethically responsible, thus enabling researchers and practitioners to rely on them when assessing studies for rigor and trustworthiness. To put it another way, qualitative research's validity, reliability, and replicability are discussed in the framework of trustworthiness. This study aimed to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings obtained from educators and learners (Shenton, 2024).

Therefore, the following strategies have been used to ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis:

- **Credibility**

Concerning credibility, it is defined as the trustworthiness and accuracy of the research findings. In other words, credibility is about "truth value," which implies that research is conducted in a trustworthy manner so that its findings are believed by participants and researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). In addition, credibility is concerned with research findings being representative and accurate reflections of participants' views (Shenton, 2024).

Member checking: The participants received the summary of the results obtained from their responses, so that they could give their comments on them for further inclusion in the study's findings.

Prolonged engagement: The researcher became engaged with the participants through interviews and focus groups in order to establish rapport and gain in-depth insight into the phenomena of concern.

Triangulation: The study used multiple methods (i.e., individual interviews, focus group discussions) and multiple data sources in order to attain reliability and credibility of the findings (Shenton, 2024).

- **Dependability**

According to Lincoln and Guba (2021), dependability is about "the extent to which data collection and analysis procedures are consistent and controlled to yield stable results." Simultaneously, it is

concerned with time, implying that a study's design and procedures should be logically sequenced and clearly specified so that an audit trail can be followed. In addition, dependability is about "researcher's control and awareness of his or her impact on the research process" (Shenton, 2024).

Audit trail: Consistently following an audit trail helped ensure dependability in terms of control of the research process and adequate recording of findings.

Peer review and debriefing: The study's findings and procedures were discussed with peers and supervisors in order to ensure dependability through the reduction of subjective bias and the achievement of consensus.

- **Confirmability**

When it comes to confirmability, it is concerned with the objectivity of research findings (Shenton, 2024). It refers to the degree to which "researcher's values and biases influence research findings." In other words, confirmability aims at achieving "auditable trails of reasoning that connect data to findings" (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). In particular, it ensures that the findings are made based on participants' views rather than on the researcher's preconceptions. To enhance confirmability, the researcher took part in peer debriefing with a research supervisor or colleague.

Reflexivity: The researcher kept a reflective journal to become aware of his or her assumptions and feelings throughout the research process. Doing so helped reduce the influence of subjective bias on the study's findings.

Using verbatim and quotes: Using verbatim responses helped ensure that research findings were based on participants rather than on the researcher's interpretations.

- **Transferability**

In terms of transferability, it is about generalizability or applicability in qualitative research. More specifically, it concerns "the extent to which the findings of a study can be transferred to other populations, settings, and times" (Lincoln & Guba, 2021). Transferability is achieved when rich and detailed descriptions are provided "so that readers can decide for themselves whether the findings of a study are applicable to their own situations." In addition, transferability "is concerned with how meaning is created in a study" (Shenton, 2024).

Thick description: Providing thick descriptions of the setting and context helped ensure that the findings were applicable to the setting and population of concern.

Contextual sensitivity: The researcher followed the principle of contextual sensitivity, thus basing the study's findings on participants' voices in order to capture the sense of context.

Thus, the study used multiple strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis. These strategies helped enhance the credibility of the findings as well as guarantee that they were based on participants' responses rather than on the researcher's perspectives. As a result, the process of interpreting the data obtained from the participants in Dzondo Secondary Schools became transparent and was subjected to extensive scrutiny. This was achieved by using reflexive practices and providing rich descriptions that helped ensure that the study's findings were trustworthy and applicable to the context and population of concern.

3.7.1. Integration of Educator and Learner Perspectives

When it comes to qualitative research, participant perspectives are concerned with providing a representation of participants' views on the phenomena of interest. In particular, integration of perspectives involves analysing and comparing information gathered from two groups of participants. In the context of the study, this meant providing a comparison of views expressed by learners and educators and attempting to synthesise these perspectives in order to fully capture the topic of interest (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

The perspectives of learners and educators were integrated by analysing and comparing the information collected from them in order to identify commonalities, differences, and relationships. This allowed for discussing both groups' viewpoints in relation to the same themes. For instance, the theme "Lack of student voice in disciplinary procedures" was identified in the responses of both students and educators, but it was interpreted from two different perspectives.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings of the study entitled, *Exploring Educators' and Students' Views on Students' Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools*. The data used in this chapter were generated from semi-structured interviews of four educators and four learners in the selected schools.

The purpose of this chapter is to unveil the experiences, perceptions and understanding of the study participants regarding school disciplinary procedures and their human rights implications. The findings have been presented thematically as the study adopted a thematic analysis approach to generate findings from the interview data.

The chapter adopted a legal rights-based approach to understanding school discipline. This implies that the focus of the study was on issues of rights and justice in the context of school disciplinary procedures. The South African Schools Act and the Constitution of South Africa provide the legal backdrop against which school discipline should be understood and implemented. In these documents, the need for school codes of conduct and for disciplinary procedures that promote the rights and wellbeing of learners is articulated.

Pseudonyms are used for the participants with E1-E4 representing the names of the educators and L1-L4 for the learners interviewed for the study. This is for confidentiality purposes. Quotes from the participants' responses have been included where appropriate for illustration and emphasis. The chapter follows the conventional format where first the profile of the study participants is presented and then the body of the discussion of findings follows.

4.2 Demographic Profile of Participants

Eight (8) participants consisting of four (4) learners and four (4) educators were purpose sampled for the study. For confidentiality reasons, the names of the participants are not used but instead pseudonyms are used throughout the study. The demographic profiles of the participants are presented below.

4.2.1 Learners' Demographic Profile

Table 4.1 below presents the general demographic profile of the learner participants.

Participant	Gender	Grade	Age	Years at School
Learner 1	Female	Grade 10	16	2 years
Learner 2	Male	Grade 11	17	3 years
Learner 3	Female	Grade 12	18	4 years
Learner 4	Male	Grade 12	15	5 years

Summary Description

Based on the table above, the learners were between 15 and 18 years old and comprised of two male and two female students. The learners studied at the school for two to five years. In other

words, they were not new students but rather senior ones. This implies that they had interacted with the school's disciplinary procedures and could therefore provide rich insights into their understanding of the procedures and their human rights impacts.

4.2.2 Educators' Demographic Profile

Table 4.2 below presents the general demographic profile of the educator participants.

Participant	Gender	Position	Teaching Experience	Role in Discipline
Educator 1	Male	Senior Teacher	12 years	Member of Disciplinary Committee
Educator 2	Male	Departmental Head	15 years	Disciplinary Committee Chair
Educator 3	Female	Teacher	8 years	Class Teacher
Educator 4	Female	Principal	20 years	Supervises Discipline

Summary Description

Based on the table above, the educators had between 8 and 20 years of teaching experience. Two of them occupied senior management service positions and two were ordinary teachers. All the educators had been involved in discipline-related matters in one way or another. For instance, some were members or chaired the disciplinary committee while others dealt with discipline at the class or institutional levels. This meant that the educators had in-depth knowledge and understanding of school discipline and its impacts. As such their insights into school discipline were expected to reveal how discipline was practised in schools in compliance with the South African Schools Act and the Constitution.

4.3 Results / Findings

The present section provides results of the interviews conducted with four teachers and four learners. The questions asked were aimed at eliciting the participants' views on discipline and its implications for the promotion and protection of learners' human rights in the context of Dzondo Secondary Schools. Thematic analysis of the collected data was done to reveal patterns of meaning or commonalities within the participants' responses. For this reason, the following themes drawn from the interview data will be discussed in detail to provide responses to the research problem and questions.

The themes reflect the perspectives of both educators and learners on such issues as school discipline, fairness in the implementation of punitive measures, involvement of stakeholders in the policy's execution, and the respect of learners' rights during the disciplinary process. Each theme will be presented and discussed in depth to explain the researchers' understanding of discipline as a concept, its influence on human rights within the Dzondo Secondary School context, and the impact it has on human rights promotion and protection in South Africa. In addition, the themes will serve as a platform to review previous studies and relevant literature, including the South African Schools Act and the Constitution of South Africa.

4.3.1 Emerging Themes from the Interviews

Theme 1: Consistency and Fairness of Disciplinary Measures

This theme seeks to establish the respondent's perception of the issue of disciplinary measures' consistency and fairness to all learners at Dzondo Secondary Schools. The results of the interviews revealed some inconsistencies between what the educators intend to do and what actually happens when rules are enforced.

Educators' Views

The educators thought that the school has established a code of conduct to ensure that discipline is maintained among the students consistently. They added that depending on the circumstances surrounding the offence and the repeat nature of the offence, punishment could vary from one learner to the other.

Educator 1 opined:

"We try our best to treat everyone equally, although there are instances when the situation or offence's severity dictates otherwise."

Educator 2 further argued:

"As educators, we are mandated to deal with cases of indiscipline in our classes first before the issue is escalated to the management. We deal with individual students based on their cases and follow due procedure in handling the issue."

Educator 3 observed that sometimes, educators behave differently:

"Depending on the teacher's approach, discipline can be strict or lenient, thus creating the impression that the punishment is not uniform."

Educator 4 observed that depending on the repeat nature of the offence:

"Repeat offenders are often punished severely since their Behaviour is deliberately incorrect, although such learners are always aware of the consequences of their actions."

These responses indicate that although educators aim to apply disciplinary measures fairly, individual judgement and contextual factors often influence the final decision.

Learners Views

Most learners agreed that punishment is not consistent, and teachers are biased in their approach towards enforcing discipline among the learners.

Learner 1 said:

"Sometimes punishments are consistent depending on the explanation offered by the learner."

In contrast, Learner 2 observed:

"Some learners are sent to detention while others are beaten depending on who is involved and who is disciplining them."

Learner 3 added:

"Sometimes teachers punish learners based on their records or their Behaviour."

Learner 4 agreed and argued that:

"Some learners are leniently punished depending on their ability or relationship with the teacher."

Interpretation of Theme 1

The above views of the educators and the learners bring out the meaning of the theme. In the respondents' view, although teachers intend to offer consistent punishments, some factors must be considered when deciding whether to punish or not and to what extent the punishment should go. It is a common practice that learners are punished depending on the severity of the offence and whether the misbehaviour has been corrected or not.

On the other hand, learners feel that teachers are biased and do not punish everyone equally, particularly when corporal punishment is involved. This study will conclude that the concept of equality and fairness is subjective and that teachers' decisions are guided by several factors, which makes the enforcement of punishment seem inconsistent and unfair to learners. The procedural justice theory states that fairness in decision-making is defined by how predictable and logically consistent the process is (De Wet, 2022). Therefore, learners feel that due to the

subjective nature of punishment, their human rights are not respected, and they do not trust the school's system.

Theme 2: Understanding of Disciplinary Procedures

This theme seeks to understand the respondents' perception of disciplinary procedures, their implementation, and human rights.

Educators' Views

The educators said that the school's code of conduct provides necessary procedures for enforcing discipline.

Teacher 1 said:

"At the start of the year, the code of conduct is explained during assemblies, and it is used as a guideline. However, depending on the severity of the problem, disciplinary measures are sometimes taken."

Educator 2 added:

"As a member of the School Management Team, my role is to ensure discipline is maintained in my classes before being escalated to the relevant School Management Team members. However, there are guidelines for taking the issue of indiscipline seriously and appropriately addressing it."

Educator 3 argued that:

"There is always room for misunderstandings since some educators' interpretations of the code of conduct differ from their colleagues."

Educator 4 agreed and said:

"Sometimes it is necessary to take learners' rights into account before punishing a learner. By doing so, I believe that the learners' rights are not infringed through discipline."

Several educators revealed that corporal punishment is practiced by some educators even when it is prohibited.

Learners' Views

Learners revealed that they are aware of the rules but do not fully understand the procedures that are followed.

Learner 1 said:

“When you are late or disrespectful to the educator, you are sent to detention or the offices. Sometimes the parents are called.”

Learner 2 agreed but added:

“Sometimes the educator decides to punish you without explaining the reason for the punishment.”

Learner 3 revealed:

“Sometimes the educator writes your name in a register but does not explain what will happen.”

Learner 4 argued that:

“From the Life Orientation lessons, we know our rights. However, when the educator demands that we face the punishment, our rights are abused.”

Interpretation of Theme 2

Based on the views of the respondents, the theme explores the issue of the school rules and procedures and highlights the problems that exist in their application. In most cases, procedures for enforcing discipline and punishment have been established, and the teachers are conversant with them. However, learners are only aware of some procedures, and therefore, when they perceive that the process for punishing them has been compromised, they can resort to taking action against the teachers. Harber (2018) argues that there is a need for transparency in the governance of schools in order to ensure that the disciplinary procedures and policies serve their intended purpose.

Theme 3: Respect for Human Rights

This theme seeks to establish whether the school’s disciplinary procedures respect the learners’ human rights.

Educators’ Views

The educators felt that human rights were respected when dealing with learners’ misbehaviours.

Teacher 1 said:

“When dealing with a particular issue, I always ensure that a learner is called to the staff room instead of addressing the issue in public to give them some privacy.”

Educator 2 added:

“By ensuring that discipline is balanced, human rights are respected, and every learner understands that they have the right to explain their actions to the educators before a punishment is administered.”

Educator 3 argued that:

“Sometimes when I get angry, learners’ dignity is overlooked; however, I always take care to ensure that it is restored.”

Educator 4 revealed that corporal punishment is still practiced in some cases, although it is prohibited.

Learners’ Views

Learner 1 said:

“Sometimes the educator lets you explain before they punish you, so I feel my dignity is respected.”

Learner 2 added:

“Sometimes when I am shouted at or beaten in public, my dignity is assaulted.”

Learner 3 revealed:

“I learned about my rights in school, however, when I am confronted it seems like my rights are not important.”

Learner 4 added:

“Sometimes educators explain why we are punished but sometimes they do not.”

Interpretation of Theme 3

Based on the views expressed by the respondents, although educators respect learners’ dignity by ensuring that discipline is balanced, there are practices that assault dignity such as corporal punishment and public humiliation. Serfontein (2018) observed that despite corporal punishment being illegal in South Africa, the practice still persistents in several schools. Therefore, the issue must be addressed to ensure that dignity is not deliberately assaulted using corporal punishment.

Theme 4: Learner Participation and Voice

This theme seeks to establish the extent to which learners are heard in cases of misbehaviour and whether their input influences the punishment that is meted to them.

Educators' Views

The educators argued that depending on the nature of the problem, learners are given the right to explain their actions before punishment is administered.

Educator 1 said:

"Before administering any punishment, a learner is asked to give an explanation on the reason for his or her actions so that both parties are on the same page."

Educator 3 added:

"In instances where some learners misbehave severely, they are asked to present their case before the disciplinary committee with their parents."

However, Educator 4 argued that:

"Sometimes educators do not give learners enough time to explain their actions due to time constraints."

Learners' Views

Learner 1 said:

"Sometimes we are asked to explain why we did what we did, and we get a chance to defend ourselves."

Learner 2 argued:

"Although we are allowed to give an explanation, it seems like the punishment has already been decided."

Learner 3 revealed:

"Sometimes educators assume that we are being disrespectful when we try to explain our actions."

Learner 4 added:

"We are more likely to be asked to explain our actions when it comes to formal meetings than during day-to-day interactions."

Interpretation of Theme 4

Based on the views of the respondents, although the learners are given the opportunity to explain their actions before punishment is administered, it seems like the punishment has already been decided before the explanation. If the learners are going to feel that their voices are important and

influence punishment, their explanations should be considered when taking any disciplinary action against them.

Theme 5: Influence of Discipline on the Learning Environment

This theme seeks to establish how discipline affects the learning environment.

Educators' Views

According to the educators, discipline creates a conducive learning environment necessary for teaching and learning to take place.

Educator 1 said:

"Without discipline, it is impossible to achieve anything in teaching and learning."

Educator 3 argued that:

"Sometimes discipline creates fear and apprehension among learners; thus, limiting the learning environment."

Educator 4 added:

"When discipline is imposed unfairly, it creates animosity between educators and learners."

Learners' Views

Learner 1 said:

"When learners are disciplined it creates a conducive learning environment."

Learner 2 added:

"I have become better because of fear of punishment."

Learner 3 argued that:

"Sometimes when punishment is administered unfairly, the teacher and the learner face each other in hostility."

Learner 4 said:

"Fair punishment creates a conducive learning environment for learners since one respects the other."

Interpretation of Theme 5

Based on the views expressed by the educators and the learners, discipline, when implemented appropriately, creates a conducive learning environment because it facilitates respectful interactions between educators and learners. It is therefore important that educators understand the need to implement discipline in order to create a conducive learning environment. Smit (2019) argues that although some educators feel that discipline does not contribute to a conducive learning environment, it is important for achieving positive behaviour and respect among learners.

4.4 Overall Discussion of Findings

The current research aimed to establish the views of educators and learners on disciplinary practices and respect for human rights in secondary schools in the Dzondo Circuit. The results of the study demonstrated that learners and educators understood the need for discipline in schools but noted a number of shortcomings in its enforcement. In most cases, the two groups of respondents held different views on the issues of maintaining discipline, as well as the respect for human rights in the context of school discipline.

Both educators and learners agreed that discipline is needed in schools to ensure that the learning process is uninterrupted and conducive to obtaining knowledge. All respondents held positive views on discipline and its impact on learners' behavior. Thus, educators stated that rules, laws, and regulations of the school were enforced to ensure that there is order in classrooms, teaching, and learning processes take place smoothly, and learners develop responsible behaviors. Educators reported that school rules were guided by the South African Schools Act, the South African Constitution, and the school's own code of conduct and discipline. For example, teachers stated that they were responsible for classroom discipline, and they referred matters that were beyond their jurisdiction to the school management or the disciplinary committee. At the same time, many educators noted the need to remain objective and consider learners' dignity when enforcing discipline.

Learners echoed the opinions of the educators on the need for rules and regulations in schools. However, while learners acknowledged the need for rules, they stated that they were not always treated fairly when school discipline was enforced. Thus, learners mentioned that corporal punishment was still used in some cases, and teachers often imposed different punishments for the same rule violations. Learners believed that this was done because teachers held different views on the issues of discipline and punishment. According to the learners, educators held different views on what constituted a rule violation and how such a violation should be punished. Thus, some educators acted too harshly when enforcing discipline while others were too lenient.

However, most educators believed that their decisions were justified because they took into account the facts of the case, the seriousness of the offense, and the learners' behaviors.

The difference between the views of educators and learners on school discipline was also apparent in the fact that while educators felt that rules were followed fairly, learners received varied punishments for the same rule violations. When asked about the procedures that were used to enforce discipline, educators stated that learners were made aware of the rules and regulations at the beginning of the academic year and that they had an opportunity to explain their actions before any sanctions were imposed. However, learners felt that they were not aware of the rules and regulations of the school and that they were often punished without being given an opportunity to defend themselves. Thus, it appears that while formal procedures were followed, they were often modified based on the educators' views of the offense.

Both educators and learners were concerned with the lack of respect for human rights in enforcing discipline in schools. Both groups of respondents agreed that human rights were often violated when the educators imposed sanctions on learners. Violations of human rights were noted in various aspects of enforcing discipline. For example, both educators and learners acknowledged that the educators' subjective opinions often determined the imposition of sanctions on learners. However, in most cases, such subjective factors as the immediate feelings of the educator or the amount of free time they had at the moment influenced their decisions. In addition, the learners indicated that they did not receive equal attention from the educators. Thus, learners reported that corporal punishment and public humiliation were used to punish them for various rule violations.

Educators and learners also agreed that discipline played a major role in ensuring order in schools and facilitating the teaching and learning processes. However, learners pointed out that educators used fear to ensure that learners adhered to the rules and regulations of the school. According to the learners, this approach generated fear, which was often detrimental to the entire process of teaching and learning. On the other hand, many educators argued that punishments were needed to correct learners' behavior and ensure that they learned responsibility. However, such a view did not resonate with most learners, who indicated that they often felt humiliated and disrespected when punished in ways that hurt their dignity. Thus, both learners and educators agreed that fear-based strategies to enforce discipline were often counterproductive.

The findings of the study demonstrated that while most educators in secondary schools of the Dzondo Circuit held positive views on discipline and adhered to formal procedures when enforcing rules, they often acted subjectively and based their decisions of imposing sanctions on the learners on their personal preferences. The study also revealed that learners received unequal

treatment from the educators when school rules were violated and were often sanctioned based on the subjective preferences of the educators. The findings also demonstrated that learners' human rights were frequently violated when the educators imposed sanctions on them for violating school rules and regulations. The lack of uniformity in enforcing discipline and the failure to consider learners' dignity when imposing sanctions undermined the respect for human rights in schools. In addition, the study indicated that learners were generally not informed about the school rules and procedures that were utilized to hold them accountable for their actions (Bantekas & Oette, 2020).

4.5 Alignment with Literature and Theoretical Frameworks

The current research was guided by various theoretical and legal frameworks that helped interpret the relationship between school discipline, learner participation, and human rights in the context of Dzondo Circuit secondary schools. Discussing the research results in alignment with the existing literature enables a better understanding of the research findings and contributes to the scholarly information on the discipline in education field.

4.5.1 Social Learning Theory – Albert Bandura

The research results are consistent with Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura. According to Bandura, people learn from each other through observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviour of others in addition to being rewarded or punished for specific actions (Smit, 2019). For instance, a learner who observes teachers implementing discipline measures learns to respect and obey the authority when giving commands or handling matters in school. However, the same learner also learns negative behaviours when the teacher uses fear and threatens them in case of non-compliance or mistakes.

In context, the teachers were expected to act as role models in the Dzondo Circuit secondary schools. As such, it was important for them to ensure that any form of punishment or reward followed an ethical and fair procedure that taught the learner a lesson instead of causing emotional trauma. On the other hand, some teachers' unfairness and physical punishments had a negative effect on learners by making them believe that the teacher is intimidating them. From Bandura's perspective, such negative behaviours were likely to lead to negative attitudes, actions, and subsequent outcomes. Therefore, the research results align with Bandura's point of view on social learning.

For instance, the study found out that a number of learners in Dzondo Circuit secondary schools experienced fear and anxiety when dealing with school rules and regulations. As such, instead of

learners learning to be responsible and obedient, the teachers' threatening attitude made them experience fear and anxiety when the teacher gave commands. In addition, the study also found out that some teachers engaged in physical punishments when addressing learner misbehaviours. Such punishments did not teach the learner any lesson and led to traumatic experiences in most cases. In addition, some learners experienced unfairness and intimidation from the teachers when confronted with any form of punishment. In context, it was found out that such intimidation led to negative attitudes, actions, and subsequent outcomes. From Bandura's perspective, the teachers' fear-based approach had a short-term effectiveness but failed to prevent misbehaviour in most cases. On the other hand, teachers who approached discipline issues in a fair and respectful manner were able to prevent misbehaviour and promote positive actions among learners.

4.5.2 Restorative Justice Theory – Howard Zehr

The research results are also in congruence with Restorative Justice Theory proposed by Howard Zehr. Zehr argued that justice is not about responding to crime by taking away an offender's future opportunities to engage in more harmful activities. On the contrary, restorative justice calls for healing the harm done to people and communities and making the offender accountable for their actions in restoring relationships (Mncube, 2022). In addition, restorative justice views crime as a violation of human relationships. Therefore, restorative justice principles demand that the process of responding to criminal activities and school misbehaviours must be carried out in a way that facilitates accountability, restoration, dignity, and harmony.

Restorative justice makes it clear that in implementing discipline in schools, educators must be willing to understand the effects of misbehaviours committed by the learners. For instance, in context, the study found out that despite the apparent procedures used in addressing misbehaviours, the learners felt that the processes did not give them sufficient opportunity to provide their side of the story before any punishments were implemented. In addition, according to Howard, the principles of restorative justice must be used to restore relationships between individuals in the school community and rebuild safer school environments. Therefore, educators should provide an opportunity for the learners to explain their actions before any punishments are administered.

The research results also indicate that Restorative Justice Approach should be applied to promote accountability for misbehaviours committed by the students. The findings also indicate that despite the apparent procedures used in addressing misbehaviours, the learners felt that the processes did not give them sufficient opportunity to explain their side of the story before any punishments were implemented. In addition to the implementation of discipline measures, the educators should

promote restorative practices by encouraging the learners to engage in reflection before restoring relationships in the school community. In context, restorative practices can be implemented by allowing the learners to explain their actions or mistakes, reflecting on the impact caused by their actions, and restoring relationships with other members of the school community. From these results, it is evident that punitive-based approaches may be effective in addressing misbehaviours but do not contribute to creating responsible and respectful members of society.

4.5.3 Democratic Education Theory – John Dewey

The research results also align with Democratic Education Theory proposed by John Dewey. According to Dewey, democratic education calls for making school a place where learners participate in order to gain experience in democracy, its processes, institutions, skills, and attitudes, which are needed to sustain democratic life (De Wet, 2022). In context, the research results found out that while the educators believed that they provided sufficient information on the rules and regulation in school, the learners felt that they were not provided with sufficient information on the rules and regulation and that the procedures used to address misbehaviours were already pre-determined. In other words, the educators believed that they provided learners with the knowledge and information on how to prevent misbehaviours. However, the learners felt that despite the knowledge provided to them, the educators failed to allow them to participate in addressing misbehaviours. According to Dewey's perspective, the educators should use such information to allow learners to learn more about democratic values instead of treating them as subjects.

In addition, according to Dewey's democratic perspective, educators should encourage the learners to participate in decision-making on matters that affect them. It is evident from the research results that when the educators failed to allow the learners to participate in discipline matters, the learners felt threatened. From another perspective, when the educators provided the learners with more information and allowed them to participate in discipline matters, the learners learned more about accountability. Therefore, it is evident that when learners lack the information on the rules and regulation and the procedures for addressing misbehaviours, then the educators are bound to fail in promoting accountability and achieving harmony.

4.5.4 Human Rights-Based Approach to Education – United Nations and UNESCO

The research results can also be interpreted according to human rights-based approach to education proposed by UNESCO. According to this approach, learners are the right-holders while schools and educators are the duty-bearers that should respect, protect, and fulfill these rights (United Nations Educational, 2019). This perspective requires that both duty bearers and right-

holders should understand their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the human rights-based approach to education. In addition, this rights-based approach to education calls for an action-oriented, people-centred, and participatory approach to education that is based on the principles of dignity, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, and freedom.

According to this perspective, educators should ensure that the learners are treated with dignity and respect at all times. The teachers should also refrain from using any form of humiliation and punishment because such actions are likely to affect the learners' dignity and morale. In context, despite the educator's understanding of learners' rights, the study revealed that educators engaged in physical punishments and verbal humiliation of learners during the discipline process. In addition to the physical punishments, the educators also failed to provide an equal opportunity for all learners to participate in addressing misbehaviours in schools. In context, these findings reveal that while the educators claim to respect and protect learners' rights, their actions are contradictory. In other words, the research results show the difference between what the educators claim to do and what they actually do in practice.

4.5.5 South African Legal Framework

School discipline in South Africa is guided by the South African constitutional law and other legal frameworks that were developed by different governmental agencies. In particular, school discipline was guided by the South African Schools Act and the South African Constitution. According to the Act, every school must develop and implement a code of conduct in order to promote discipline and ensure that educators and learners co-exist peacefully (Africa, 2019). According to the Act, corporal punishment and any other forms of physical punishment are prohibited in schools. As such, corporal punishment cannot be used to deal with misbehaviours committed by the learners in school.

According to the South African Constitution, the learners have various rights that should be respected and protected by the educators. For instance, the learners have the right to human dignity, the right to equality, the right to freedom and security of the person, and the right to just administrative action. In particular, the right to just administrative action prohibits the authorities from failing to consider the learners' side of the story when responding to misbehaviours. In addition, the constitution prohibits any form of discrimination in the implementation of school rules and regulations.

4.5.6 Integrated Theoretical Interpretation of the Findings

The results of the current study can be discussed from various theoretical perspectives. According to the teachers' perspective, discipline is a necessity that must be enforced to ensure that effective learning takes place. On the contrary, the learners argue that the discipline procedures used in schools are not fair and that most educators engage in unfair practices when responding to misbehaviours. In other words, while the teachers' perspective focuses on maintaining order and facilitating effective learning, the learners tend to focus on their rights as students. In addition, the results of the research also show that there is a disparity between what the educators say and what they do. For instance, despite the fact that teachers claim to respect learners' rights, there was evidence that they still used corporal punishment in schools. Such incongruence between words and actions can be discussed from several theoretical perspectives.

Since social learning plays a critical role in shaping the learner's behaviour, it is possible to discuss the research results from Bandura's perspective. This perspective is concerned with the ways in which humans can learn behaviours. Such information explains why learners develop certain attitudes, actions, and subsequent outcomes. In context, the teachers use threatening and intimidating approaches to encourage learners to abide by the rules and regulations. Such an approach is likely to cause fear and anxiety among the learners as observed in the results of the current study. At the same time, the teachers who use fair and non-discriminatory approaches to discipline are more likely to encourage positive attitudes and actions among the learners. In addition, learners are more likely to become responsible and respectful adults if they grow up in an environment where they are allowed to participate.

On the other hand, the fact that educators do not allow the learners to participate indicates that they do not adhere to the principles of restorative justice. This perspective demands that restorative practices be implemented to facilitate dialogue, restore relationships, encourage accountability, and restore harmony. Restorative justice views crime as a violation of human relationships. Therefore, it calls for an approach to discipline that is based on dialogue and restores relationships (Mncube, 2022). In addition, restorative justice encourages the implementation of accountability-based practices to ensure that all participants are held responsible for their actions. In context, the research results indicate that despite the existence of formal procedures for addressing misbehaviours in schools, learners did not have a say in the process. In other words, the educators were ready to impose punishments immediately without seeking the learner's side of the story.

4.5.7 Concluding Theoretical Link

Overall, it is safe to argue that the current research adds to the existing body of literature on school discipline, learner participation, and human rights in South Africa. It suffices to argue that effective discipline cannot be achieved unless educators use rights-based approaches to school discipline and make sure that the procedures are consistent with the existing human rights principles. In addition to addressing misbehaviours, it is important for the educators to implement restorative practices and encourage learners' participation in order to maintain positive interactions and create respectful school environments.

4.6 Chapter Conclusion

The current chapter aimed to present and discuss the findings of the study concerning educators' and learners' views on disciplinary procedures and respect for human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. The information was generated using qualitative methodology. Thematic analysis of four educators' and four learners' semi-structured interviews was conducted to retrieve themes related to participants' experiences and views on disciplinary procedures and respect for human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. The themes included human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools, code of conduct, procedures governing discipline, and learners' input in disciplinary procedures. The current chapter provides an in-depth understanding of the issues related to the implementation of discipline in the selected educational setting.

The results reveal that educators in Dzondo Secondary Schools perceive discipline as a necessary aspect of teaching and learning, ensuring order and favorable conditions for education. This perception corresponds with the results of similar research, which confirm the beneficial effect of discipline on learners' performance and conditions for teaching (Joubert & Prinsloo, 202). The participants report that they address discipline in accordance with the established code of conduct and particular procedures for responding to misbehaviors. Nevertheless, it was found that the implementation of discipline is often based on educators' personal opinions about the cases rather than general regulations.

As regards learners' views, they reveal that learners experienced discrimination in the application of discipline, such as being subjected to corporal punishment and receiving unequal treatment. These findings correspond with the results of research conducted by Harber in South Africa (2018). It showed that learners there also experienced irregular enforcement of discipline and expressed dissatisfaction with the punishment procedures because of the absence of explanations. Dzondo Secondary Schools learners reported similar problems. Moreover, the participants stressed the need to consider their input and provide explanations for the decided

cases. Another problem identified through the interviews is the contradiction between the need for discipline and respect for human rights.

Although educators stated that they strived to follow human rights standards while enforcing discipline, some learners experienced severe scolding and physical punishment. Such methods are incompatible with human rights because they undermine learners' right to freedom of speech and dignity (Africa, 1996). Besides, the findings demonstrate that human rights played a vital role in the overall discipline in the schools. If the rights were respected, discipline allowed for achieving a favorable environment; otherwise, it resulted in tension between learners and teachers. The study concluded that maintaining discipline in schools was essential for promoting education and preventing misbehavior. At the same time, educators should recognize the necessity of basing discipline on human rights and minimizing the use of harsh methods, such as corporal punishment. Thus, the findings concerning the role of discipline in promoting learners' performance were discussed and integrated into the next section. The current conclusions can also be regarded as preliminary recommendations for the schools under study, which will be presented in detail in the next section.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the whole study in which the views of educators and learners on disciplinary procedures and how these procedures can support learners' human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools were explored. It provides a summary of the research conducted, conclusions based on the findings reported in chapter 4, and recommendations for future implementation based on the conclusions. The study aimed to contribute towards the understanding of disciplinary procedures and their impact on learners' human rights in a democratic society such as South Africa. The study sought to achieve this by investigating educators' and learners' views and experiences on disciplinary procedures and how these procedures can support learners' human rights.

The study was guided by the research problem which states that although disciplinary procedures in South African schools are meant to support learners' rights, educators still face challenges in implementing these procedures in schools due to factors such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate resources and lack of training on alternative disciplinary procedures. This tension between policy and practice is a matter of great concern because it creates a dilemma for educators who are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that discipline is used to achieve teaching and learning without violating learners' rights.

This chapter consists of three sections. The first section provides an overview of chapters one to five and gives a brief description of the research undertaken to address the research problem. The second section provides a summary of the research study conducted. The third section highlights the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the research.

5.2 Overview of Chapters One to Five

This section provides an overview of chapters one to five. It is important for the researcher to provide this overview since it ensures that the reader understands how the research was undertaken and how each chapter contributes towards addressing the research problem.

Chapter 1

The first chapter introduces the research study by providing the background to the study, the research problem, and purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study. It also covers the research design and methodology used in the study.

Chapter 2

The second chapter discusses the background and theoretical framework of the study. It provides an overview of literature dealing with school discipline and learners' human rights. The chapter also examines positive and punitive school discipline and the impact of each on learners. In addition, the chapter highlights policy and legal aspects of discipline and learners' rights and the gap between policy and practice.

Chapter 3

The third chapter focuses on research methodology. It discusses the research approach, design and methods used in the study. It also covers data analysis strategies and ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter 4

The fourth chapter presents the research findings in the form of an analytical review of the data collected. The findings are reported under themes that emerged from the data analysis and discussed in relation to the research problem, research questions and supporting literature.

Chapter 5

Finally, the last chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

5.3 Summary of the Study

5.3.1 Background to the Study

School discipline plays a key role in supporting teaching and learning in a school. South Africa, as a democratic country, requires the promotion of democracy and human rights in its education system. Policies such as the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 require that corporal punishment be abolished and that schools develop alternative disciplinary procedures that respect learners' human rights. This is a challenge especially in a context where there are still many teachers who are not trained in managing classroom discipline in a democratic and humane way.

5.3.2 Research Problem

Although there is a policy promoting positive disciplinary procedures, educators still face many challenges in implementing the policy, leading to inconsistent punishment of learners' misbehaviours. This occurs even though corporal punishment has been officially banned. In addition, educators experience many social and interpersonal challenges such as lack of parental support which adds to their difficulties in managing discipline. This study sought to investigate the views of educators and learners on disciplinary procedures and how the procedures can support learners' human rights.

5.3.3 Research Objectives / Questions

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- Explore educators' views on the implementation of disciplinary procedures in Dzondo Secondary Schools.
- Determine learners' views on disciplinary procedures and how these procedures can support learners' human rights.
- Examine how disciplinary procedures can support learners' human rights.
- Discuss challenges facing educators in implementing disciplinary procedures.

The above objectives guided the study and ensured that both policy and practice were considered.

5.3.4 Research Methodology

The study used a qualitative research design to explore educators' and learners' experiences and views on disciplinary procedures and learners' rights. The design was appropriate because it helped in gaining a deep understanding of the phenomenon from the perspectives of educators and learners. In addition, the design allowed the researcher to collect rich and in-depth data that helped in making connections and drawing conclusions based on the evidence collected. Purposive sampling was used to select four educators and four learners who participated in the study through semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis of the interviews helped to generate findings that are discussed in the next section.

5.4 Summary of Key Findings

This section presents the key findings of the study based on the objectives and questions outlined in the research proposal. They are presented thematically according to the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data.

5.4.1 Implementation of Disciplinary Procedures

Both educators and learners reported that although there are disciplinary procedures in schools, the procedures are implemented inconsistently. This means that punishment for similar misbehaviours vary with different educators. This can be disadvantageous to learners because it makes discipline confusing to them. Therefore, although disciplinary procedures exist, their implementation is not uniform.

5.4.2 Role of Educators in Maintaining Discipline

Educators have a very important role to play in maintaining discipline in schools. This is because they are responsible for guiding learners both academically and socially. However, the findings revealed that educators face many challenges in fulfilling this role due to such issues as misbehaving learners, lack of parental support and lack of training on effective use of discipline.

5.4.3 Learners' Understanding of Their Rights

Both learners and educators reported that they have an understanding of learners' human rights, but the rights are not always respected during the implementation of disciplinary procedures. However, they reported that their understanding helps them know when their rights are being infringed.

5.4.4 Challenges Faced by Schools in Implementing Positive Discipline

Educators identified several challenges that negatively affect their implementations of positive disciplinary procedures in schools. The challenges include overcrowding, lack of resources, insufficient training and parental challenges.

5.4.5 Need for Consistency, Support, and Collaboration

Both learners and educators reported that discipline requires consistency, support and collaboration to be effective. Lack of parental involvement was identified as a major challenge in implementing discipline. Moreover, educators reported that they need more support in implementing discipline in schools due to the lack of training on classroom discipline.

5.5 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study. The discussion focuses mainly on explaining the meaning of the findings and supporting them with literature.

5.5.1 Implementation of Disciplinary Procedures

The findings that reveal the inconsistencies in the implementation of disciplinary procedures by educators in schools were not surprising. This is because the literature shows that disciplinary procedures are not implemented consistently in many South African schools which causes discipline-related challenges in the education system. For instance, Moyo and Khewu (2021) found that despite the availability of positive discipline policies and procedures, implementation challenges prevail in many schools. According to Moyo and Khewu, the challenges are brought about by such issues as overcrowding and lack of training and support for teachers. The findings of this study were similar to those of Maphosa and Shumba (2010) who found that despite the banning of corporal punishment, educators continued to use the form of punishment to maintain discipline in schools. Therefore, it can be concluded that although policies and procedures that promote positive discipline exist, they are not implemented consistently due to various challenges.

However, unlike previous studies that have focussed on the challenges in implementing disciplinary procedures, this study goes beyond that to highlight how the lack of consistency causes confusion among learners hence affecting the ability of teachers to effectively implement discipline.

5.5.2 Role of Educators in Maintaining Discipline

The finding that educators face many challenges in maintaining discipline is not surprising. This is because previous studies have shown that although educators are expected to use discipline to guide learners' behaviour, they lack the skills and support to do so effectively. Harber (2018) argues that despite the call for banning corporal punishment and implementing positive disciplinary procedures, educators still face many challenges in implementing the recommended procedures because they were never trained on them. This adds to the pressure that educators already face in trying to ensure that learners behave appropriately in schools. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers need more support in implementing discipline. The finding that educators do not have enough training supports the findings of Moyo and Khewu (2021).

5.5.3 Learners' Understanding of Their Rights

The finding that learners and educators have an understanding of learners' human rights but the rights are not always respected shows that they understand the concept of human rights but not how the rights should be promoted in schools. Previous studies have shown that educators have an understanding of learners' human rights but they lack the skills to implement them in schools. Harber (2018) indicates that human rights should be promoted in schools through appropriate discipline but many educators find it challenging to do so due to their belief that corporal punishment is effective in maintaining discipline.

A comparison of the findings shows that although this study did not identify the lack of training as a challenge, it revealed that educators do not respect learners' human rights during punishment. Thus, despite the understanding of human rights, educators fail to take care in implementing discipline which causes learners to have negative perceptions of schools.

5.5.4 Challenges in Implementing Positive Discipline

The finding that overcrowding, lack of resources, lack of training and parental challenges cause many difficulties in implementing positive disciplinary procedures is completely in line with the findings of previous studies. For instance, Moyo and Khewu (2021) found that overcrowding, lack of resources and poor parental involvement have negative impacts on discipline in South African schools. According to the South African Department of Basic Education (2022), positive discipline is important in promoting learners' rights but it is not easy to implement it due to such challenges as overcrowding and poor parental participation. Thus, it can be concluded that positive disciplinary procedures are not implemented due to the various challenges that are faced in schools.

5.5.5 Need for Consistency, Support and Collaboration

The finding that learners and educators believe that discipline needs to be consistent in order to be effective supports the findings of the studies reviewed. For instance, the South African Department of Basic Education (2022) indicates that discipline needs to be implemented consistently and should involve the collaboration of educators, learners and parents in order to be effective. According to Moyo and Khewu (2021), parental involvement plays a big role in ensuring that discipline is used appropriately in schools. The finding that parental involvement was lacking in the study explains why educators face many challenges in implementing discipline. Thus, although discipline should be used to ensure positive behaviour in schools, it is not always effective due to the lack of collaboration between educators, learners and parents.

Conclusion of the Discussion

Overall, the discussion shows that although there are policies promoting discipline in schools, there are also many challenges that hinder the successful implementation of the policies. Therefore it can be concluded that although there is a need for discipline in schools, it should be used consistently and should involve the support of society.

5.6 Conclusions

This study was conducted to establish how educators and learners understand and experience disciplinary procedures, and how disciplinary procedures relate to the protection of learners' human rights at Dzondo Secondary Schools. According to the results presented in Chapter 4, the following conclusions can be drawn.

5.6.1 Conclusions Based on the Research Questions

Firstly, concerning educators' understanding of disciplinary procedures that influence learners' behaviour, the study concluded that, despite having established policies that guide procedures used to deal with misbehaving learners, implementation of the rules was not always efficient.

Secondly, regarding learners' experiences of disciplinary procedures, the study concluded that, while the majority were aware of the rules and regulation and understood the need for being disciplined, learners were able to notice and question any form of unfairness, and responded positively to fair disciplinary procedures.

Thirdly, in relation to disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights, the study concluded that, although there was an element of understanding of learners' rights, such rights were not always respected.

Finally, the study concluded that educators experience various challenges when trying to implement disciplinary procedures that have a positive influence on learners' behaviour. Some of the challenges included misbehaving learners, lack of cooperation from learners' parents, and lack of necessary training to enforce discipline.

5.6.2 Overall Conclusion of the Study

Based on the research conducted, the study concluded that, despite the need for maintaining discipline in schools, it had to be done in a way that promoted positive behaviour among learners, because disciplinary procedures influenced learners' attitude towards school rules. The study further concluded that rights-respecting schooling had to be encouraged in schools, because it allowed the promotion of a positive learning environment that respected learners' dignity, rights, and well-being.

5.6.3 Theoretical Implications

This study made several contributions to the existing body of literature on disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights. First, this study added to the growing body of information on disciplinary procedures in schools. Although there was a lot of literature on disciplinary procedures and policy, this study demonstrated that, while policies advocated for rights-respecting discipline, in practice, it was not the case. Secondly, the study demonstrated that disciplinary procedures were not only a policy issue but also a social issue, because different social groups – in this case, educators and learners – perceived things differently, which led to differences in opinions and practices.

5.6.4 Practical Implications

As has been mentioned above, this study demonstrated that discipline was a social concern, which meant that schools needed to be involved in social aspects of learners' lives. One way of ensuring that was by making sure that educators received appropriate training and support on how to deal with misbehaving learners. It was recommended that schools held workshops and training sessions on positive ways of enforcing discipline. The school administration and educators needed to understand that managing discipline was a complex process that required a lot of skills. It was recommended that the schools adopted positive and restorative approaches to managing discipline, which paid more attention to the needs of learners than to punishment (Harber, 2018).

Another practical implication of this study was that it demonstrated the need for greater collaboration between educators and parents. The study showed that parents were not involved in the enforcement of discipline; therefore, it was important to increase the level of parent

involvement. Another practical implication of the study was that it was important to sensitize learners – and the wider school community – on learners' human rights, so that they understood their rights and acted accordingly.

5.6.5 Concluding Statement

From the overall findings of this study, it could be concluded that schools had a great role to play in making sure that discipline was enforced in a manner that promoted positive behaviour among learners. This could be done by ensuring that there were effective and efficient ways of enforcing discipline, and by making sure that educators received appropriate training on the most effective ways of enforcing discipline.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, a number of recommendations were made to help schools to make sure that discipline was enforced properly, and that all stakeholders understood and respected learners' human rights.

5.7.1 Recommendations for Practice

The first recommendation was that schools established proper and appropriate training for educators, so that they were able to handle various aspects of managing discipline. This was important because, as the study revealed, most educators did not have appropriate skills for managing misbehaving learners, especially since corporal punishment was not an option anymore. Therefore, the study recommended that the school administration conducted regular workshops and seminars on positive ways of enforcing discipline (Maphosa & Shumba, 2020).

The second recommendation that emerged from the findings was that the schools developed clear policies on discipline, and worked on making sure that all members of the school community understood them.

The third recommendation was that schools embraced positive and restorative approaches to managing discipline. As mentioned above, this study recommended that instead of focusing on punitive measures, schools should focus more on helping learners take responsibility for their actions and make amends for misbehaving. The findings further showed that there was a need for schools to collaborate very closely with the parents of the learners.

The fourth recommendation was that schools made every effort to establish discipline procedures and policies together with the learners, so that they adopted a shared understanding of what constituted discipline in that school community. In this way, it was possible to establish rules and

regulations that all parties agreed on, and that, in turn, were more likely to be respected and enforced.

Another recommendation that emerged from this study was that schools educated the educators, learners, and parents on the human rights of the learners, as well as their responsibilities.

5.7.2 Recommendations for Policy

While this study was focused on schools and their understanding and implementation of disciplinary procedures, it did make a number of recommendations for policy. The findings revealed that, although various policies existed – for example, the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 – they were not always applied appropriately. Therefore, it was recommended that the department of Education ensured that the implementation of policies took place, so that disciplinary procedures followed the established guidelines. It further recommended that the policies paid more attention to the importance of providing training and support to educators.

5.7.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This study looked at disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights, but it did not involve a large sample size, because it was limited to a couple of schools. Therefore, it was recommended that further research explored disciplinary procedures in more schools countrywide. Future research may also look at ways of ensuring that punitive measures were eliminated from school discipline. Another recommendation was that future studies looked more into other aspects of rights-respecting schooling, such as parent involvement and teacher training.

Concluding Remark

Overall, the recommendations that emerged from this study demonstrated the need for schools to ensure that disciplinary procedures were followed, and that human rights were respected.

5.8 Contribution of the Study

This study made a number of significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge on disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights. These contributions were based on the information gathered from educators and learners, and they included theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions.

5.8.1 Theoretical Contribution

This study contributed to the existing body of literature by enhancing the understanding of the connections between disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights. While it was public

knowledge that disciplinary procedures were important in schools, this study showed that, in practice, although policies were in place, human rights were often overlooked.

The study further contributed to the existing literature by demonstrating that disciplinary procedures were not only a policy issue but also a social issue. This was because different social groups – in this case, educators and learners – had different perceptions of what happened in the school environment, which influenced the way in which discipline was enforced. By involving both educators and learners in this study, the research provided additional evidence to the existing body of literature on disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools.

5.8.2 Methodological Contribution

This study further contributed to the body of knowledge on disciplinary procedures by demonstrating the usefulness of using qualitative research in exploring sensitive issues, such as disciplinary procedures and human rights issues in schools. By using qualitative research, it was possible to gain a better understanding of the experiences of both educators and learners when dealing with human rights issues. A significant methodological contribution of this study was that it demonstrated that collecting information from both educators and learners provided more valuable information than would have been the case if only one group had been studied. Another methodological contribution of this study was that it demonstrated that using thematic analysis helped reveal the themes that were relevant to the research question and that, consequently, informed the research findings.

5.8.3 Practical Contribution

This research made a significant practical contribution to the existing body of literature on disciplinary procedures and human rights in schools, in that it provided important information that could be used by various stakeholders in addressing human rights concerns. The findings of this research demonstrated the need for ensuring that educators received appropriate training on how to enforce discipline in schools. Another practical contribution of this study was that it demonstrated that it was necessary to involve both learners and parents in developing school discipline and policies. By highlighting the importance of parent involvement in addressing human rights issues, this study contributed to the existing body of literature on human rights and disciplinary procedures, because it demonstrated that disciplinary procedures needed to be viewed from a broader social perspective.

5.9 Limitations of the Study

Despite the insightful information gained from the research conducted on discipline and learners' human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools, there are a number of limitations that should be noted.

5.9.1 Sample size and Scope

The study had a small sample size and scope as only four educators and four learners were interviewed. The interviewees were purposively selected and the sample size was adequate to allow in-depth exploration of the research problem. However, the findings cannot be generalized due to the limited number of participants and the scope of the study. The study was conducted in a limited number of schools within a certain area which means that the findings may not be applicable to other schools elsewhere.

5.9.2 Methodological Constraints

The study was qualitative in nature and relied on self-reported information from participants. This means that the information gathered may not have been accurate as respondents may have been biased in their responses. For instance, learners may have been reluctant to report on issues affecting them due to fear of victimization, and educators may have hidden the truth on various disciplinary issues affecting learners in the schools they work. In addition, the study was time consuming as it involved lengthy interviews with the participants. More time would have allowed the researcher to interact with more participants thus making the study more representative of the entire population.

5.9.3 Lack of Quantitative Data

The study lacked quantitative data in its analysis of the research problem. Although qualitative information was adequate to reveal the perspectives of the participants, quantitative data would have been useful in making generalizations and drawing statistical conclusions from the study.

5.9.4 Overall Reflection

The study provides insight into the perspectives of the selected educators and learners on disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in the schools. Although the study has various limitations, it highlights issues affecting discipline and learners' human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. In addition, the study provides a basis for further research on the issue.

5.10 Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations are factors that bound or directed the study. Various delimitations were considered in the research undertaken on disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools.

Firstly, the study was conducted in a limited number of schools within the Dzondo Circuit. This was done so as to ensure that the scope of the study was narrowed down to allow the researcher to gather adequate information. The study's aim was not to make inferences on the entire population of South Africa but to focus on a specific area. Secondly, the study involved only four educators and four learners. This was done so as to allow the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews with the participants. Thirdly, the study was qualitative in nature and aimed at examining disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in schools. Other issues related to the general management of the schools were beyond the scope of the study. Lastly, the researcher decided to make the study qualitative so as to gather extensive information on the topic from the participants.

This was in contrast to quantitative studies that usually aim at gathering statistical information from a large sample size.

5.11 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study examined disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. Although the study provides an insight into the perspectives of various stakeholders on the issue, there is a need for further research on the topic. Some of the suggestions for further research include:

1. **Expanding the Study's Sample Size and Scope**
   The current study involved a small sample size and was limited to a few schools. Further research on disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in South Africa can be done by considering a large sample size and including more schools. This would allow the study to be more representative of the entire population. In addition, such a study would be useful in comparing disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in different socio-economic settings.

2. **Examining the Effectiveness of Alternative Disciplinary Approaches**
   Further research can be done to establish the effectiveness of various alternative disciplinary approaches in promoting positive human rights practices among learners in schools. Some of the approaches that can be considered include restorative justice,

counselling and positive discipline (Harber, 2018). Such a study would be useful in establishing how different disciplinary strategies affect human rights practices in schools.

3. **Considering Other Stakeholders Involved in Discipline**
   Various other stakeholders play a role in ensuring that discipline and human rights issues are upheld in schools. Further research can be done to examine the role played by other stakeholders in maintaining discipline among learners. Some of the stakeholders that can be considered include school management, parents, counsellors and district officials.

4. **Longitudinal Studies**
   Further research on disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in schools can be done by conducting longitudinal studies. Such a study would be useful in determining the long-term impact of positive disciplinary measures on human rights practices in schools.

5.12 Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 contains the summary of the study, concluding remarks and recommendations for further research. The chapter begins by restating the purpose of the study which was to examine disciplinary procedures and learners' human rights in Dzondo Secondary Schools. This was done by providing a summary of the study which included the context, problem, objectives, methodology and analysis of data. The chapter also provides the research findings that were made in relation to the research problem and research questions. The findings were discussed in relation to various issues including the inconsistencies in disciplinary procedures, the role of educators in implementing disciplinary measures, learners' awareness of their human rights and the effectiveness of positive disciplinary approaches in promoting human rights practices in schools.

Based on the research findings, the chapter provides the concluding remarks that emphasize the need for positive disciplinary procedures that uphold human rights practices in schools. The chapter also highlights the theoretical, methodological and practical contributions of the study. In addition, the limitations and delimitations of the study are discussed. Lastly, the chapter provides recommendations for further research that include examining alternative disciplinary approaches, increasing the sample size of future studies and considering other stakeholders involved in ensuring discipline and human rights practices in schools. Overall, Chapter 5 highlights the importance of ensuring that disciplinary procedures in schools are implemented in a manner that promotes human rights practices among learners.

6 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Ethics Approval

UNISA university of south africa

College of Education _ERC

NHREC Registration # : (if applicable)
Ref #: 10005
Name: Mr shavhi mawela Singo
Student #: 16023773
Staff #:

Date: 21/11/2025

Dear: Mr shavhi mawela Singo

Decision: Ethics Approval from 21/11/2025 to 21/11/2028

Researcher: Mr shavhi mawela Singo
MUTSHA KHWEKHWE
THOHOYANDOU

singothivhalitshi@gmail.com 0717796435

Supervisor: Professor Rudzani Israel Lumadi lumadri@unisa.ac.za

Co-Supervisor:

Co-Researcher(s):

Email address:

Exploring Educators' and Students' Views on Disciplinary Procedures and Human Rights in Dzondo Secondary schools

Qualification: MEd

Thank you for the application for research ethics approval by the College of Education _ERC for the above-mentioned research study. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the College of Education _ERC in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising during the undertaking of the research study that may affect the ethical integrity of the study, including those involving research participants, third parties, or juristic persons, must be reported in writing to the College of Education _ERC without delay.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that may affect study-related risks to research participants, juristic or third persons, must be reported in writing to the College of Education _ERC, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research study complies with all applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines, and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Where applicable, adherence to the following South African legislation is essential: the Protection of Personal Information Act (No. 4 of 2013), the Children's Act (No. 38 of 2005), and the National Health Act (No. 61 of 2003)

6. Future use of this research data is permitted only in de-identified form and only for secondary research with objectives similar to those of the original study. Any secondary use involving identifiable human data will require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue beyond the stated expiry date (21/11/2028). A completed Research Ethics Progress Report must be submitted as an application for renewal and is subject to approval by the Research Ethics Committee. A Close-Out Report must be submitted upon completion of the research study.

8. The College of Education _ERC may require the submission of regular progress reports on an annual basis, in alignment with Section 7.2 of the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics (2024).

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from the research participants and Unisa.
2. Research data must be stored in compliance with the university's research data management policy for a period of up to 15 years.
3. When publishing the results, the researcher must take appropriate precautions to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of the research participants, juristic persons, third parties, and the university, in accordance with institutional policies and ethical standards.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication Practices, specifically Principle 7 on Social Awareness, must be ensured. This principle states: 'Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups, or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible.' The University of South Africa (Unisa) accepts no liability for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 10005 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Prof Justin Oswin August
Chair of College of Education _ERC
E-mail: augusjo@unisa.ac.za



APPENDIX B: Provincial Permission

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: Makgati DC Tel No: 015 290 9409 E-mail:MakgatiDC@edu.limpopo.gov.za

SINGO SM
PO BOX 539
LAMBANI
0906

16023773@mylife.unisa.ac.za/ Singothivhalitshi@gmail.com [071 779 6435]

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH.

1. The above bear's reference.

2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to undertake research titled: **"EXPLORING EDUCATORS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS ON STUDENTS' DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN DZONDO SECONDARY SCHOOLS"** has been approved.

3. The following conditions should be considered:

3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not in any how disrupt the academic programmes at the school(s).

3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations, especially in the fourth term.

Cnr 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X 9489, Polokwane, 0700
Tel:015 290 7600/ 7702 Fax 086 218 0560

3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected and treated with dignity).

3.6 Upon completion of the research, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

4 Additionally, you are expected to produce this letter at School(s)/Office(s) where you intend to conduct your research as evidence that permission has been granted for access to the research site(s).

APPENDIX C: Circuit Permission

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

VHEMBE DISTRICT

DZONDO CIRCUIT

Confidential

05/02/2026

Ref: Dr LC Makhuvha
Contact No:0823869199

TO HOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION OF YOUR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN DZONDO SCHOOLS IN RESPECT OF SINGO SM

This letter serves as a confirmation of your authorisation to conduct research project entitled " Exploring educators' and students' views on disciplinary procedures and human rights in Dzondo secondary schools".

You are kindly advised to observe the following stipulations:

-Your research should not temper with contact time.

-Observation of ethical considerations should be prioritized.

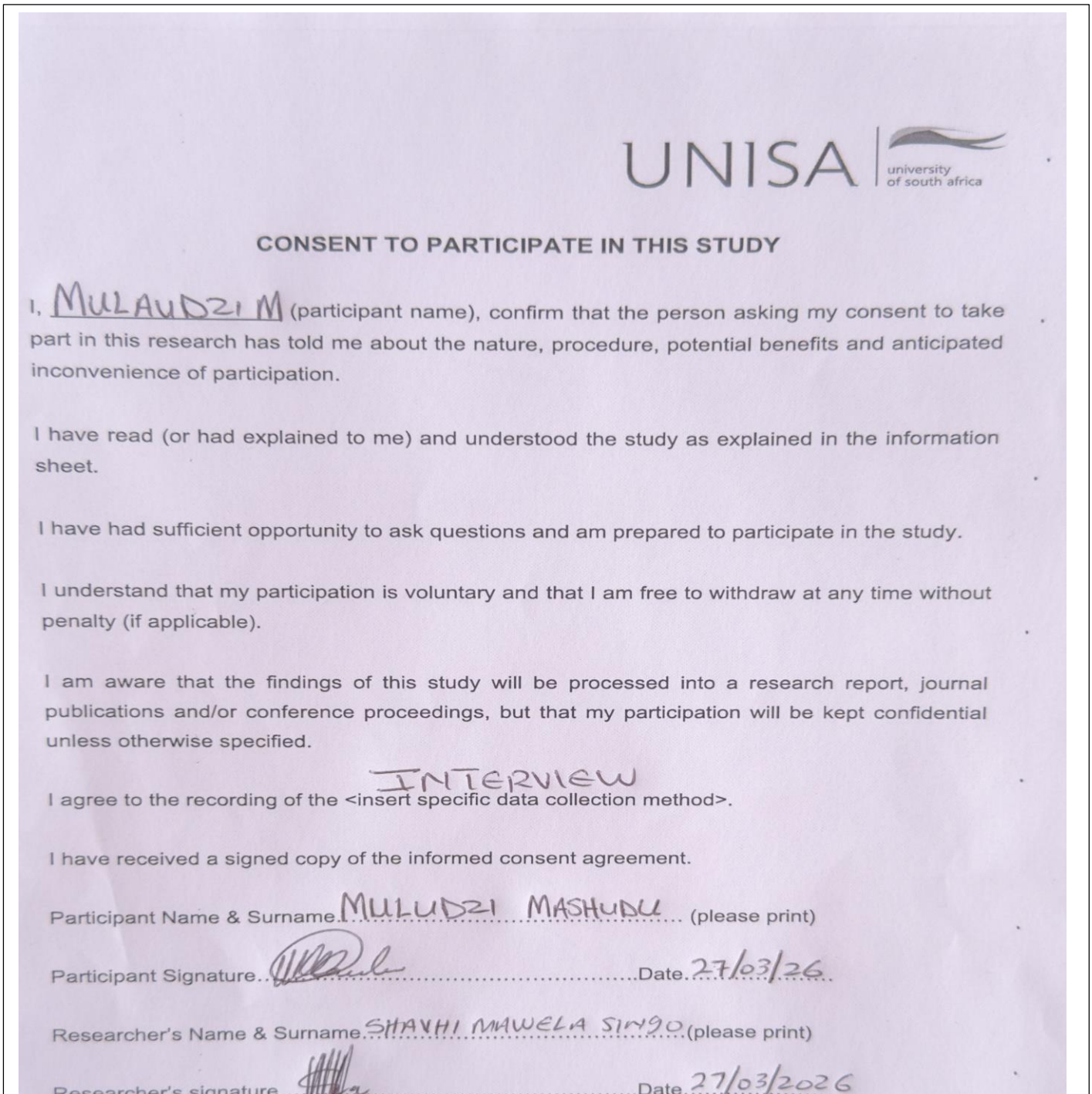
We wish you all the best in your studies.

Regards

---------- 05/02/2026

---------- Date:--------

APPENDIX D: Consent Form from Educators



UNISA university of south africa

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, MULAUDZI M (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the INTERVIEW <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname MULUDZI MASHUDU (please print)

Participant Signature ..... Date 27/03/26

Researcher's Name & Surname SHAVHI MAWELA SINGO (please print)

Researcher's signature ..... Date 27/03/2026

UNISA | university of south africa

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, KHOBO M (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the INTERVIEW <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname MUSIWALO KHOBO (please print)

Participant Signature ..... Date 27/03/2026

UNISA | university of south africa

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, MUTUWA T (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

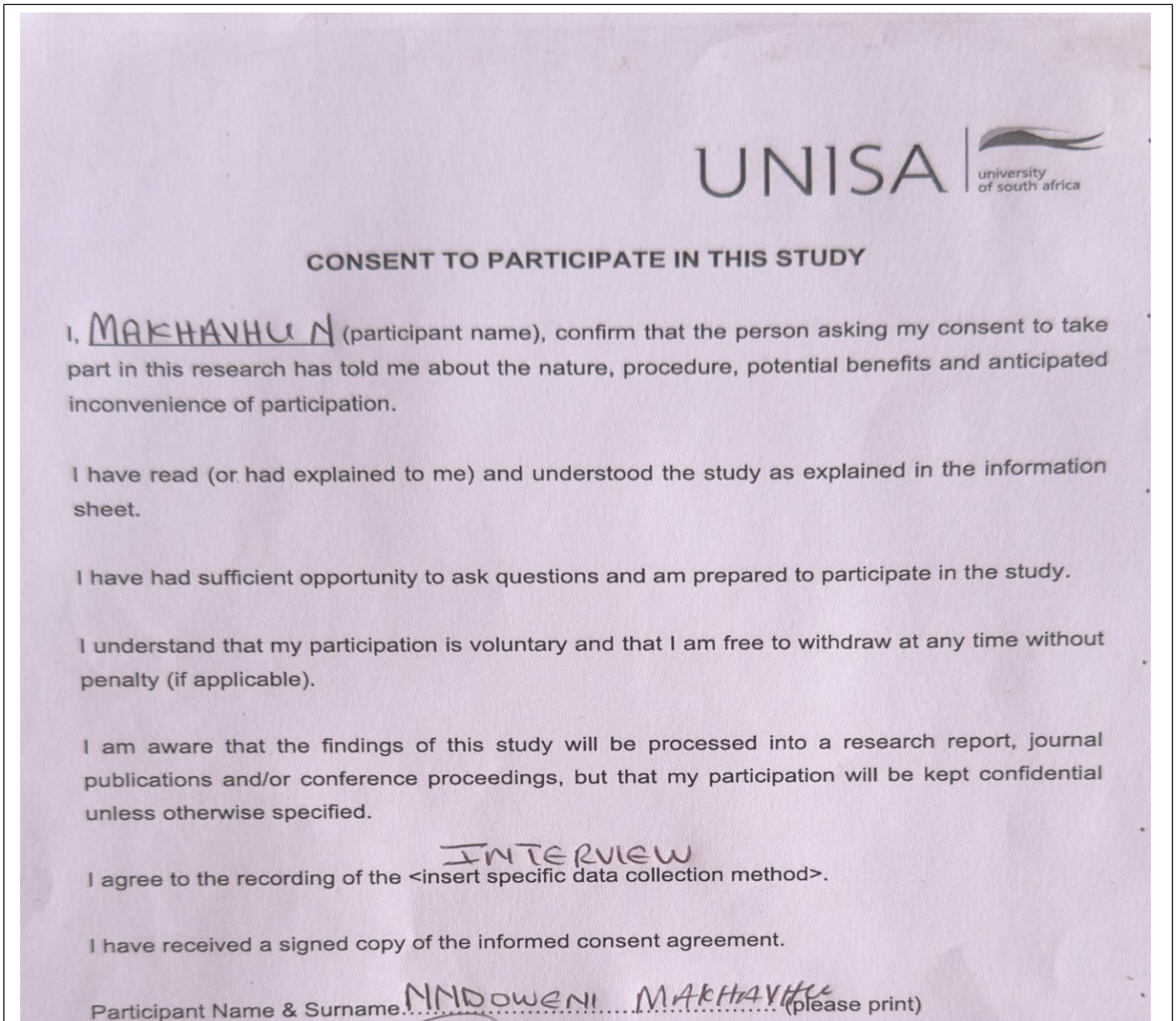
I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the INTERVIEW <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname THOMAS MUTUWA (please print)

Participant Signature Mutuwa T Date 27/03/2026



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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, MAKHAVHU N (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

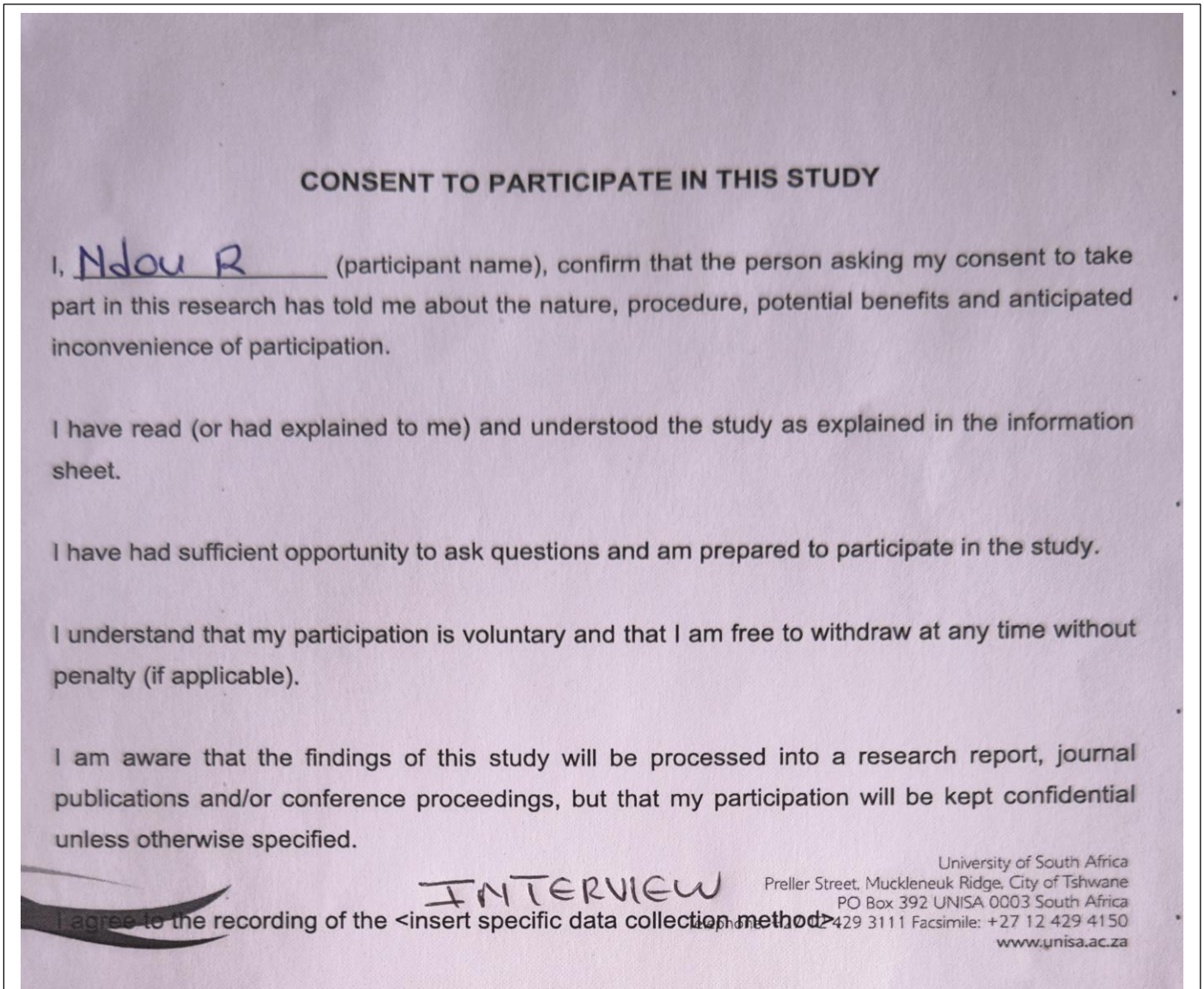
I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the INTERVIEW <insert specific data collection method>.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname NNDOWENI MAKHAVHU (please print)

APPENDIX E: Consent Form from Students



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, Ndou R (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

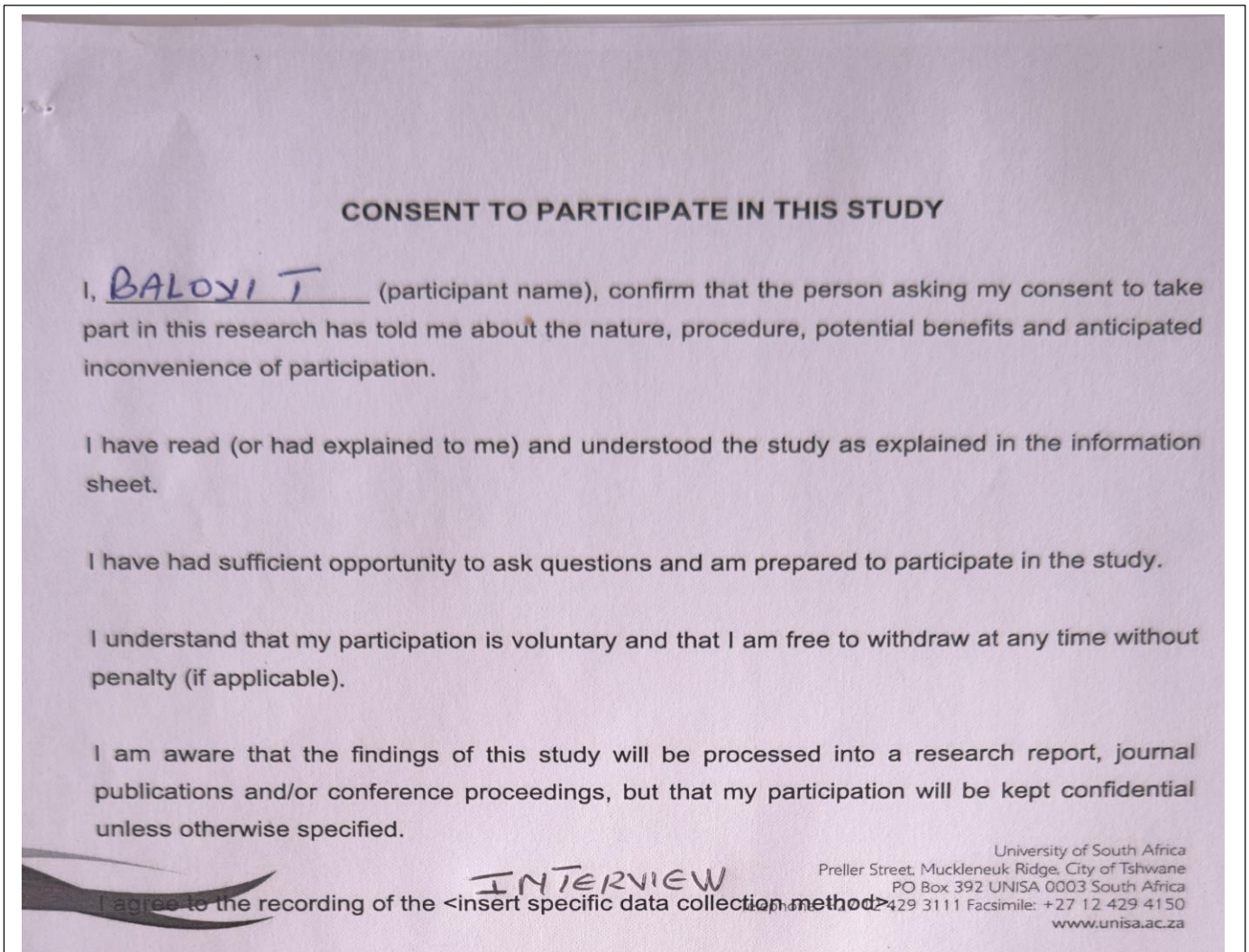
I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method> INTERVIEW

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Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, BALOYI T (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

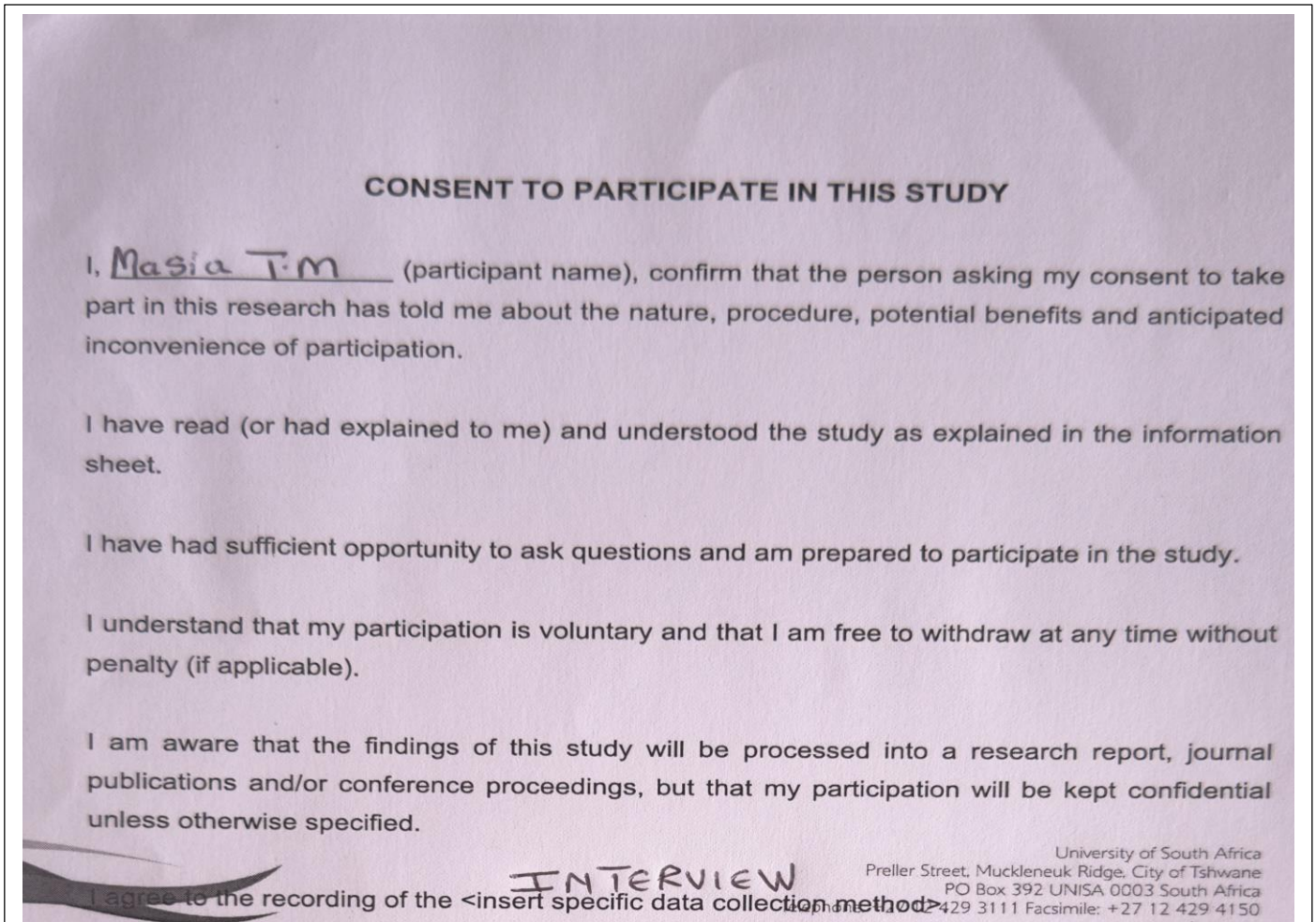
I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method> INTERVIEW

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, Masia T.M (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

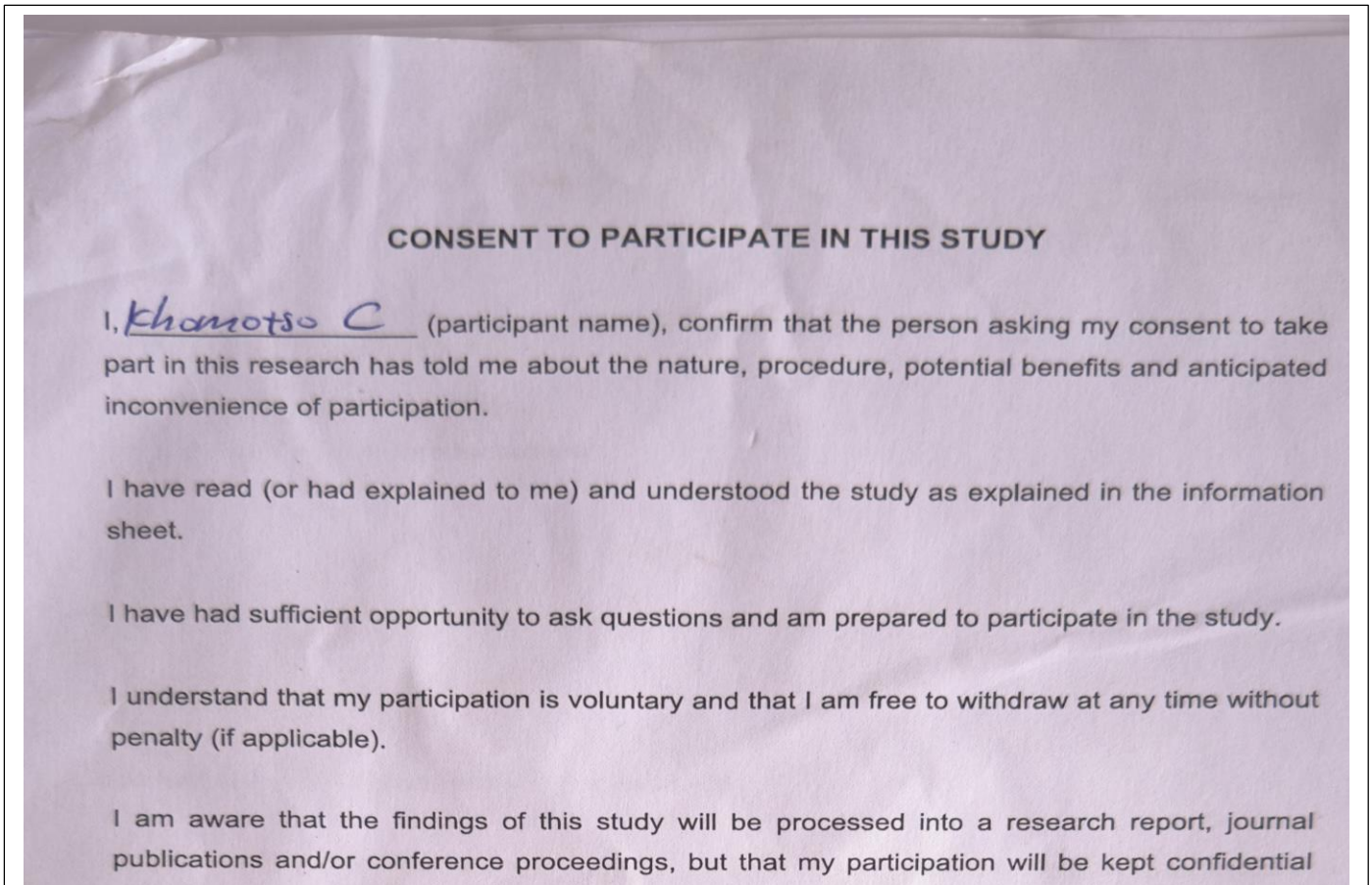
I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the <insert specific data collection method> INTERVIEW

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PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150



CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, Khamotso C (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential

2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

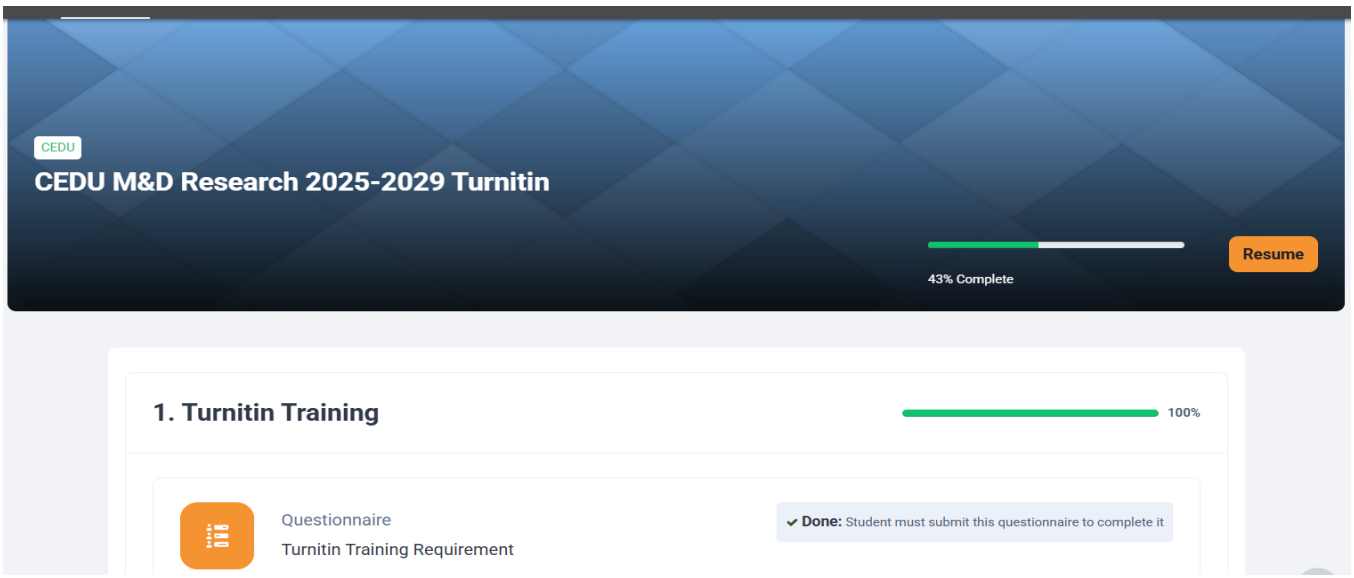
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS:

1. In your opinion, are the disciplinary measures applied consistently among learners? Please explain.
2. What role do you, as a teacher, play in implementing school discipline?
3. How do you balance maintaining discipline with respecting learners' human rights?
4. Have you ever experienced a situation where a disciplinary measure may have violated a learner's rights? Please elaborate.
5. Are there any school-based programs that promote human rights awareness among teachers and learners?
6. What are some of the main challenges you face in maintaining discipline at your school?
7. How do parents or guardians respond to disciplinary actions taken by the school?
8. What improvements would you suggest to the current disciplinary system in your school?

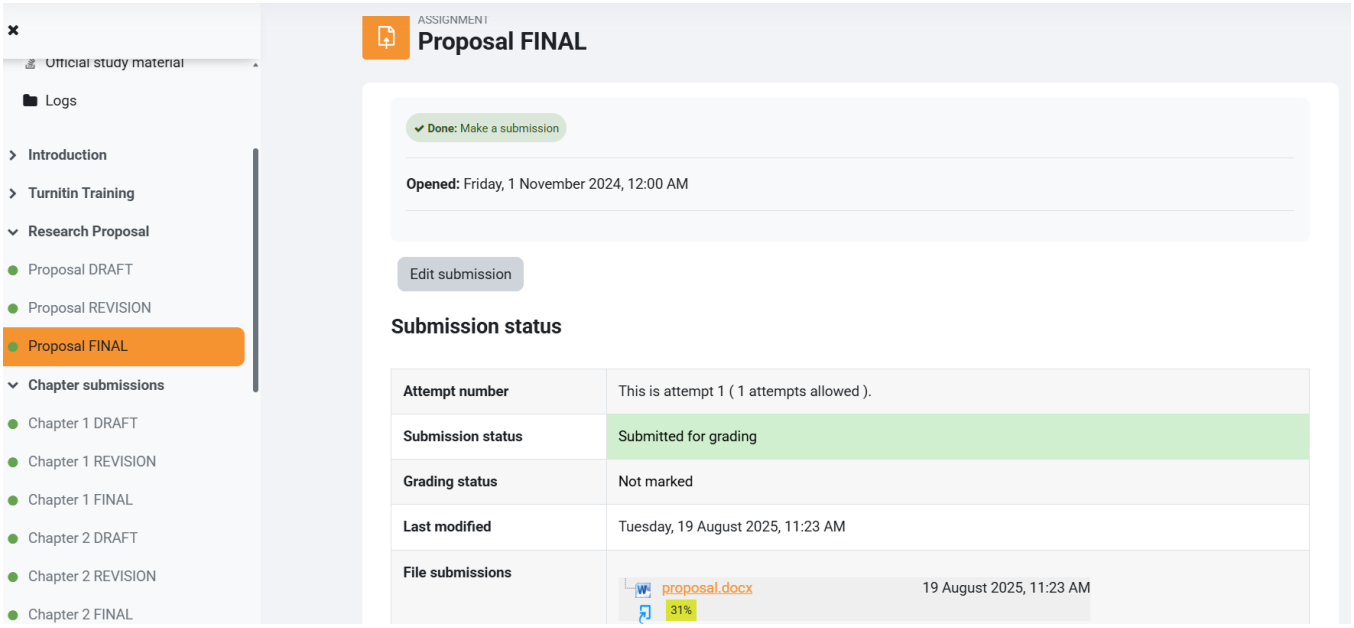
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS

1. What kinds of punishments or disciplinary actions are commonly used in this school?

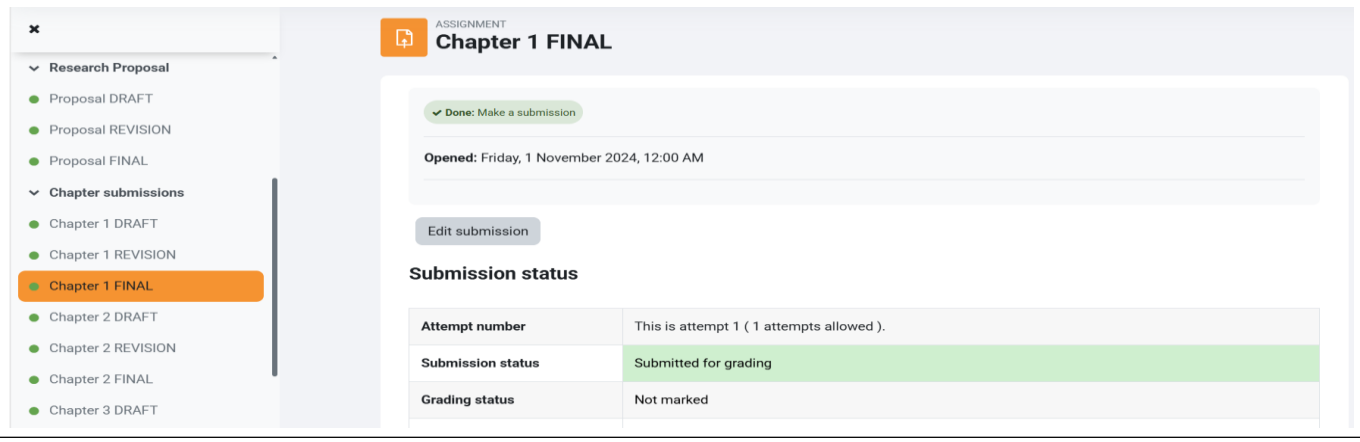
3. CHAPTERS PERCENTAGE



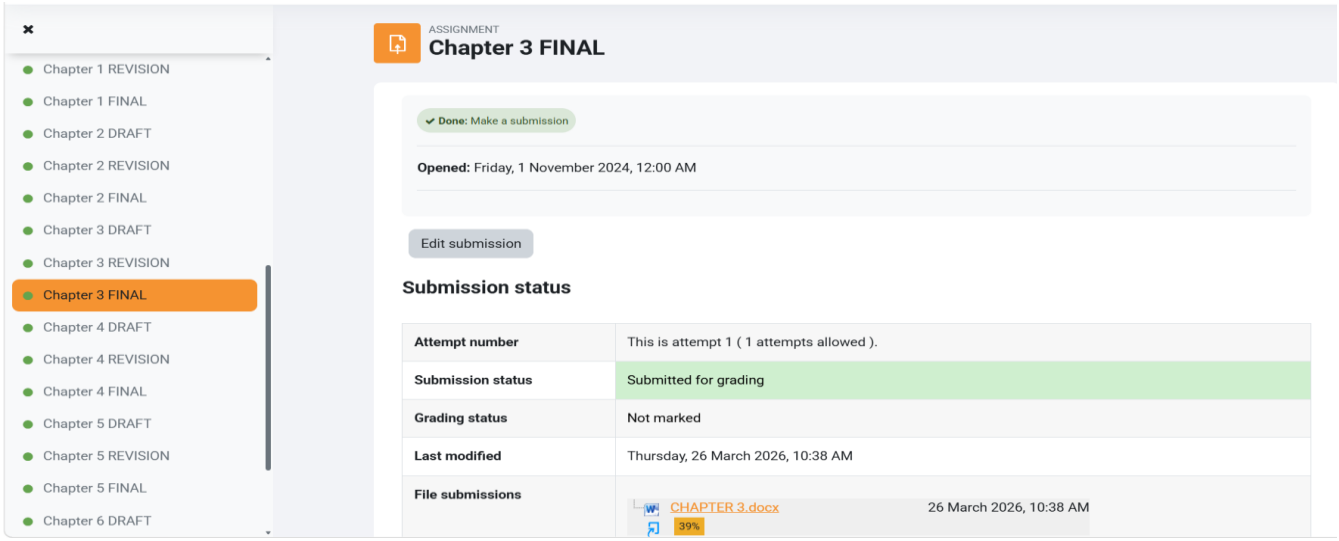
CHAPTER ONE



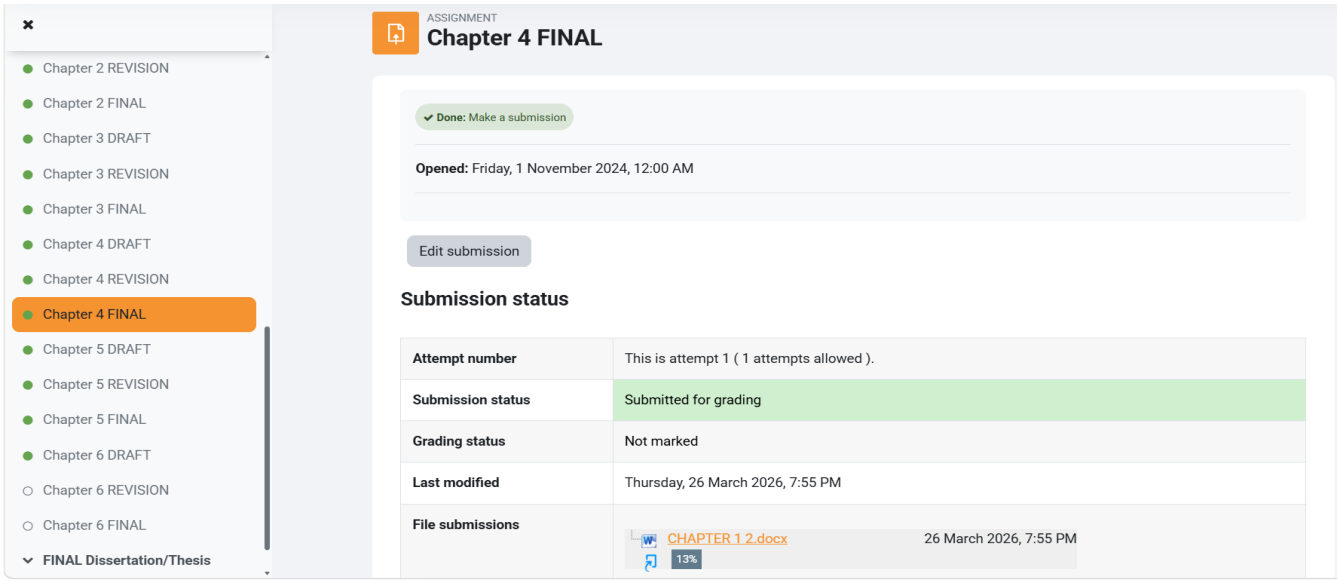
CHAPTER TWO



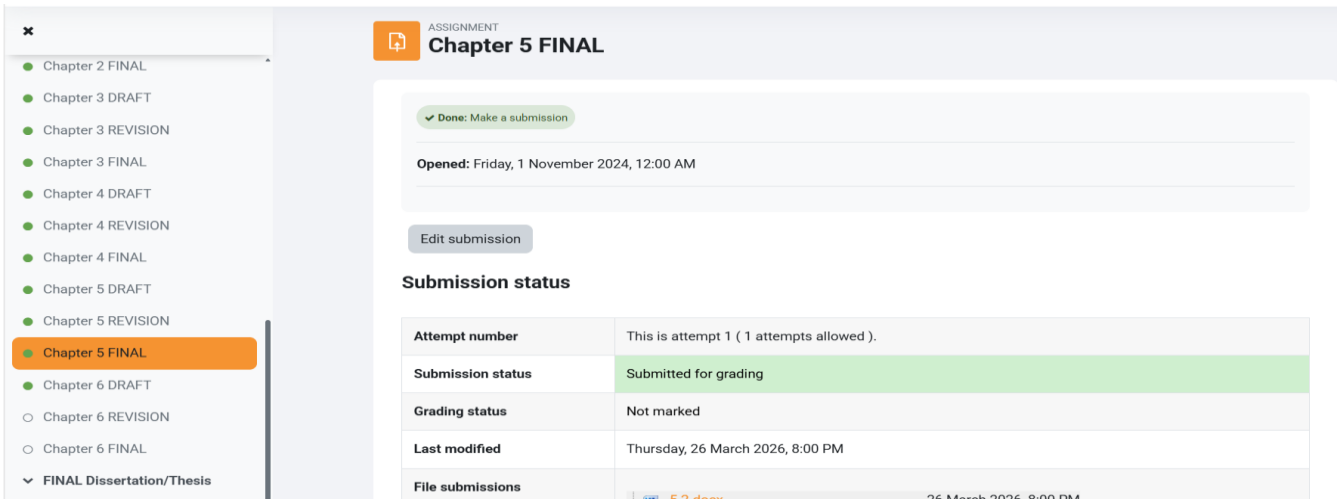
CHAPTER THREE



CHAPTER FOUR



CHAPTER FIVE



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