

Title: Strategies used by the School Management Team in managing learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the strategies used by the School Management Team (SMT) in managing the late coming of learners in a Cape Town school in relation to the Department of Education policy on late coming of learners. The need for this study has its origin in the current difficulties the school is experiencing in managing late coming of learners despite the existence of the Department of Education's policy on late coming. The data was collected from 7 members of the School Management Team, 3 parents and 3 learners from the school, and was collected using semi-structured interviews. Results firstly confirmed some of the findings from the literature concerning the causes of learners' late coming which include transport, gangsterism, parents leaving their homes very early for work and child headed homes. The SMT members, learners and parents had limited knowledge of the Education Department's policy on late coming and, more particularly, the circular on late coming, and this was found to be the main barrier for the school in managing the late coming of learners. The SMT was inadequately capacitated in dealing with the challenges of late coming. Poor communication between the parents and the teachers was also evident in the study. Finally, the study made a number of recommendations regarding how the school could manage its challenges on late coming of learners.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Nombuyiselo Nonkonana. She taught me to persevere and face life's challenges with resilience.

AKNOWLEDGEMENT

To the Creator, My God, Thank you for the gift of life, thank you for the courage and strength to keep pushing, you never cease to amaze.

To my supervisor Dr Kwenda, thank you for your support, for being patient with me. You provided guidance and encouragement throughout this journey. It was a privilege to work with you. I am truly honoured.

A special thanks to my family, I love you and I appreciate you.

I would also like to thank my colleagues for their assistance and all those who participated in the research.

DECLARATION

I Thulisa Nonkonana declare that ***Strategies used by the School Management Team in managing learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school***, is my own original work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by a complete list of references.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DOE	Department of Education
ETC	Employment and Training Corporation
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SASA	South African Schools Act
SMT	School Management Team
SPMDS	Staff Performance Management and Development System <i>for Public Personnel</i>
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The study investigated the strategies used by the School Management Team (SMT) in managing learners' late coming practices in a Cape Town high school. Late coming can be described as an individual or group of people's inability to arrive at an agreed venue at the agreed time (Lauby, 2009). In general, late coming is a negative aspect of school life. According to Okpupara and Chuwuone (2007) late coming affects learners' learning negatively, the same way it affects the production in a company. Late coming of learners is a major problem in schools. It can lead to serious consequences such as missing out on lessons, failing, disrupting the class, school dropout, time wasting and extension of the period spent by learners in schools (Marwan, 2014). It also inhibits the achievement of school goals (Dafiaghor, 2011). It is therefore common knowledge that for effective learning to take place in schools and, more particularly, in the classrooms, late coming needs to be managed well.

Late coming of learners has been a problem in schools in many countries. In an empirical study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which surveyed learners from different countries, a significant percentage indicated learners arriving at school after lessons had already started. For example, the USA indicated that about 32% of its learners reported arriving at school late. The United Kingdom (UK) reported that 27% of its learners were arriving at school late. Australia also reported that about 35% of its learners were arriving at school late

(OECD, 2013). South Africa is also not immune to the problem of late coming. Wittenberg (2005) found in her study that 20% of the South African learners reported to school when the school has already started.

In response to the continuous late coming of learners, the Department of Education and, more particularly, the Western Cape Education Department developed a policy on how to deal with late coming and absenteeism (DoE, 2000; WCED: circular 0029/2010). Despite the existence of the policy for almost 17 years, learners still arrive late in some schools. Thus this study focuses on the strategies used by the SMT in managing the learners' late coming at one of the Western Cape schools. This is important as the results of the study will hopefully contribute to improving the school practices in managing late coming of learners.

1.2. THE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Late coming contributes negatively to the teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom. A number of schools, more particularly township schools, are still faced with the problem of late coming (Nxumalo, 1995). This is despite the number of policies put in place by the Department of Education to ensure that effective learning takes place. In addition, the abolishment of corporal punishment has led to many teachers feeling disempowered in managing late coming of learners.

Moreover, the SMTs which include the school principal, deputy principal and all heads of departments, were established in schools in order to ensure that successful teaching and learning takes place in these schools (Sister, 2004). In other words, the SMT's responsibility includes managing any learner behaviour such as late coming which may compromise the successful learning of others in schools. It is believed that if late coming is not managed well, it may lead to many problems which include poor academic achievement, disruption in class, difficulty in keeping accurate records, reduced ability to meet instructional targets and damage to the school reputation (ETC, 2009).

Therefore, the good management of learners' late coming is important in ensuring scholastic success. The SMTs may play an important role in managing learners' late coming and improving the quality of education in schools.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research study was conducted in one school within the Metropole East District under the Western Cape Education Department. The school has a problem with the late coming of learners. Though there are no late coming statistics in place at the school, the extent of the problem is visible as large numbers of learners are locked outside the school gate after the school has started. The item of late coming is always on the agenda at the school meetings. Maile and Olowoyo (2017) argue that there is hardly any school that is spared from the problem of late coming as this is a general problem in schools. The school has learners from a poverty-stricken community where there is also

overcrowding as people live in RDP houses (Government funded social housing project). The school has a large number of learners enrolled, with overcrowded classes.

There is a high unemployment rate in the area and the few people that are working are employed in factories, the building industry and the majority of them work as domestic workers and earn below the required minimum wage. Most learners depend on government grants for living. Some of the learners come from child-headed families with no stable income. The school is a no fee school and learners are expected to contribute a donation of R130.00 and a ream of printing paper per term.

Since the majority of caregivers work as labourers, they leave their homes very early and are unable to monitor the time their children leave for school. Some of these learners arrive at school very late and the teachers find it difficult to manage these learners' late coming. These problems could contribute to the late coming of learners as it was found in Chiu's study (1993) where he identified factors such as age, family commitments, change of jobs on the part of parents, health problems as some of the factors that may affect late. The main aim of this study was to investigate how the School Management Team manages the learners' late coming. The study also looked at the experiences of the School Management Team in managing the late coming of learners. The study further examined the strategies and methods used by SMTs in relation to the Department of Education circular 0029/2010 and the Education policy on learner attendance and procedures on late coming. The circular contains measures on how to manage and monitor late coming. The circular is meant to guide teachers to instil

discipline among the learners, more particularly with regard to the arrival time. Despite the guidelines from the circular, learners still arrive very late at schools and some teachers feel helpless in dealing with this challenge as some of the old methods which include corporal punishment are no longer allowed in schools. The context described above outlines the research problem identified for this study, namely that late coming remains a significant problem in South African schools despite the promulgation of policies and establishment of school structures to address the challenge.

This study thus seeks to explore the experiences of the School Management Team and more particularly their strategies in managing the late coming of learners in one selected school.

The following research question was asked:

- Which strategies are used by the SMT to manage learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school?

To assist in answering this main research question the following sub-questions were asked:

1. How does the School Management Team currently manage the late coming of learners in relation to the Western Cape Education Department circular 0029.2010 and the Education policy on learner attendance and procedures (2009) on late coming?

2. What are the experiences of the SMT regarding the management of late coming?
3. Which challenges does the SMT experience in managing late coming at the case school in line with the WCED circular 0029/2010 and the Education policy on learner attendance and procedures?
4. Which strategies can be developed for the SMT to effectively manage learners' late coming?

1.4. OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study was to establish which strategies are used by the School Management Team (principal, deputy principal and all heads of departments) in managing late coming of learners in a Cape Town high school. In particular this study looked at the SMT's experiences and challenges regarding the management of late coming of learners in their school. The study suggested strategies that the SMT in question can use to manage the late coming of learners.

1.5. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

This section helped the researcher to reflect on the research problem and gain an understanding of it from reviewing similar previous research. This helped the researcher to identify the theoretical framework to guide this research study. Different literature

sources were consulted pertaining to previous and current theories and the definition of the research problem. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this study.

Late coming is defined as the situation where an individual arrives after the scheduled or proper time (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 2010). It can refer to when a person fails to arrive at the agreed time and venue (Lauby, 2009) The possible causes and effects of arriving at school late are discussed in this study based on this definition. The nature of the problem is discussed in comparison with other developed countries such as the USA, UK and Australia. This comparison helped the researcher to understand the extent of the problem in South Africa.

1.6. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1. The Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to understand how the SMT in a particular school manages the phenomenon of learners' late coming at school. This research process involved looking at the methods and strategies used by the SMT to manage late coming.

The SMT's strategies in the management of late coming was the focal point of this study, from which alternative strategies can be developed for the SMT to manage the learners' late coming. It is hoped that the results of the study will contribute to

enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the SMT in managing late coming in this school. Hopefully, this will also assist in the development of effective strategies in managing late coming of learners in schools in general.

Given the experiences of SMTs in managing late coming of learners as a phenomenon being studied, an interpretative stance was chosen. This is because an interpretative paradigm stresses the importance of taking into consideration the context of the phenomenon being studied (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003). Subjective meanings and reasons behind certain actions is the focus of the interpretative paradigm to explain such actions. The interpretative paradigm allowed the researcher to partake in the participants' experiences of managing late coming, as personal experiences are more subjective in nature and might lose their actual meaning if they are studied in an objective manner.

1.6.2 Research methodology

1.6.2.1 Participant selection

Purposive sampling was adopted for this study and 7 SMT members, 3 learners and 3 parents participated in the study. This method allows the researcher to select a sample that has an experience of the phenomenon being studied and can articulate their experiences (Strydom & Venter, 2002). Using purposive sampling, the 3 learners and 3 parents were interviewed in order to investigate their experiences of how late coming is managed within the school. Learners' experiences and parents' views are important as they provide a means to verify and cross-check the experiences reported by the SMT. A small sample size was chosen because it was manageable for the researcher, given

time limitations. Small samples are suitable for case study research which relies on deep, rich narrative data (Dworkin, 2012).

1.6.2.2. Data Collection Methods

In order to collect the data required for this study, the following methods were used:

1.6.2.2.1. Documents

Harding (2013) argues that the use of documents as a data collection method is always advantageous as a document is easily accessible and saves a researcher's time. The school code of conduct on late coming was perused to see the school's rules pertaining to the management of late coming. The code also provided the researcher with more information regarding what learners know and how the school manages late coming. It was important to determine whether learners are provided with a copy of the school code of conduct and with information regarding the circular on late coming. The same applied to parents, the study was interested in finding out whether they were familiar with the policies and the requirements of the school code as well as how these parents assisted the SMT in implementing the requirements. The school and class registers were also used to find out whether learners' late coming was recorded and to determine the extent of late coming. The discipline book was also perused to check the recorded disciplinary measures taken to manage late coming.

1.6.2.2.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used. Harding (2013) indicates that interviews are advantageous because of their flexibility and adaptability and the fact that they offer an opportunity to ask probing questions in order to understand the phenomenon being studied. This method was conducive for obtaining data for this study, as it provided the researcher with an opportunity to ask questions. The questions were in the interview guide and assisted the participants in narrating their personal experience and perceptions regarding the phenomenon being studied. The interview questions asked were shaped by the main objectives of the study (see Appendix A). Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with all the research participants (7 SMTs, 3 parents and 3 learners). Open-ended questions relating to the strategies they use in managing late coming of their learners were asked (see Appendix A).

1.6.2.2.3. Observations

Observation as a data collection method was used during the research process. The observation method is advantageous in the sense that a researcher is directly involved in the evaluation of research participants while experiencing the phenomenon that is being studied.

By observing the research participants in different practices within the school, the researcher could explore how the SMT managed late coming among learners and how they involved both learners and their parents in managing it.

Observation notes were also taken throughout the research process. The observation notes reflected the participants' actions during the management of the late coming as

well as their reactions during the interviews regarding their facial expressions, body language, voice tone and comments during the interview, as this assisted the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied (see Appendix B).

1.6.2.3. DATA-ANALYSIS

The data collected were analysed following the procedure as suggested by Denscombe (2007), as summarised below:

1.6.2.3.1. Data presentation

This process started by transcribing the tape recorded data collected from the interviews and comparing it with field notes collected from research observations.

1.6.2.3.2. Initial exploration of the data

The data were read several times in order to elicit words and phrases that described the actual experiences of the participants. This process involved identifying, aligning and categorizing the recurring themes and any issues that arose from the research observation, field notes and transcribed data. This information was then organized into categories and sub-categories. The researcher then identified themes that were similar and those that were different and related these to the research question and the literature review in making sense of the responses.

The interpretation was supported by means of direct quotations of verbatim responses of the research participants derived from the transcribed data. Discussion of these results was also done within the context of the reviewed literature.

1.6.2.4 Trustworthiness of data

All results from all data collection methods were triangulated. The results were shared with the research participants to check the correctness of the data collected and analysed. Details are provided in Chapter 3.

1.6.2.5. Ethical Considerations

It is clear that in this research study, the researcher interacted individually with the research participants and this also involved observing their daily activities in their own space to collect the data. This raises ethical issues that need to be considered when one embarks on a research project of this nature. Crestwell (2014) listed several issues that the researcher should regard as an obligation when dealing with human beings. He indicated that researchers should respect the dignity, needs, values and desires of the research participants. Therefore, the following measures were taken to ensure that ethical issues were addressed:

1.6.2.5.1. Informed consent

Ethical research clearance was sought from the Faculty of Education Research Committee. Since this study was conducted at a school, the researcher requested

permission from the Western Cape Education Department and from the school where the study was conducted before the commencement of the interviews. The research participants (7 SMT members, 3 parents and 3 learners) were informed about the purpose of the research and this included informing them about how the data would be collected before the researcher commenced with the study. Thereafter, the researcher requested a signed informed consent form from the participants (See Appendix C, D & H). Since 3 of the participants in the study were learners, permission was also sought from them and their parents since they are considered minors. This form spelt out all the details of the study for participants to read, ask questions, understand and then sign the form (See Appendix C & D).

1.6.2.5.2. Harm and risk

The researcher ensured that there was no harm or risk (physical or psychological) to the research participants as the observations and interviews were conducted in a safe place where participants felt comfortable. Interviews and observations were conducted during the normal school day time.

1.6.2.5.3. Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

The researcher ensured the anonymity of the research participants and numerical codes instead of their real names were used to identify the participants. The interviews were conducted in a safe environment. Since interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis and not as focus groups it was possible to protect the anonymity of the

participants. The data collected was not disclosed to any third parties and was treated confidentially and kept on a password-protected computer.

1.6.2.5.4. Voluntary participation

The research participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they would under no circumstances be forced to participate in this study. They were also informed that they had the right to change their mind and withdraw their participation at any time during the process of data gathering.

1.7. CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters in this thesis are arranged as follows, starting with the preliminary information:

- i. Abstract
- ii. Dedication
- iii. Acknowledgements
- iv. Declaration
- v. List of Acronyms
- vi. Table of Content

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 presents an overall introduction to the study. The chapter covered aspects such as the context and the background to the study including the research questions.

The chapter provided an overall introduction to the study and outlined the rest of the chapters in the thesis.

Chapter 2 presents an extended and more comprehensive review of relevant literature out of which the theoretical framework guiding this study was developed.

Chapter 3 presents the study's research design and methodology. The rationale for the methodology is explained. The data collection strategies used, which include observations, review of school documentation and semi-structured interviews, are explained in detail. Ethical considerations and the approach to data presentation and analysis are also explained.

Chapter 4 presents the research data which will then be subjected to critical analysis, and empirical postulations advanced in this study. The analyses will be supported by relevant citations, which serve as control mechanisms to mirror or refute the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of the implementation and management of late coming by the School Management Team.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion and recommendations. It contains a summary of the study on the key findings and conclusions. It also provides recommendations, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on reviewing literature that is relevant to the study. There will be a discussion on the meaning, causes, effects and different strategies for combatting late coming. The role and purpose of the School Management Team (SMT) in combatting late coming in schools will also be explained by reviewing the relevant policy documents relating to its constitution and functions. This will be followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework that guided the researcher in understanding the results of the study.

2.2 Definition of late coming

Late coming can be defined as the situation where an individual arrives after the scheduled or proper time (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 2010). This definition is similar to Lauby's (2009) definition of late coming which refers to people who are not showing up on time to a specific event. Therefore, learners' late coming is viewed as their coming to school or to the class after the scheduled time or when the first subject teacher starts giving a lesson in the morning (Weade, 2004).

In many schools, a student is considered late when she/he comes after the bell has rung. Coming to school at the scheduled time is regarded as important for the success of learners (Ivcevic & Brackett, 2014). Being present and on time at school are

important factors contributing to the success of the students (Zeiger, 2010) cited in Bilocura (2012).

In the Western culture, arriving on time is used as a competitive tool for both individuals and organizations while the Africans adopt a more relaxed approach when it comes to time (Daily Maverick, 2010). However, although arriving on time is the most important factor that also determines the success of learners in schools, the fact is that late coming among students is a common problem affecting schools (Sprick & Daniels, 2007).

The emphasis placed on the concept of late coming is arriving after the scheduled time or when a bell has already rung. This requires a learner to do his/her best to arrive on time and the management of the school to be firm and do everything in their power to help learners to arrive on time in schools. The truth is that late coming is still a major problem affecting South African schools (Nthebe, 2006). This is particularly true for schools in the townships (Nxumalo, 1995). This could be an indication that schools are disempowered in dealing with late coming of learners. There could be many causes or reasons why learners continue coming to school late despite missing the huge benefits of arriving early at school. The next section will focus on the factors associated with learners' late coming in schools.

2.3. Factors associated with late coming

The issue of late coming is currently the focus of intense activity in schools in South Africa, more specifically in township schools. It is regarded as one of the major priorities of the national government to reduce the late coming of learners. Government policies including circulars were sent to all the schools, setting out how the schools should manage late coming of the learners. Despite all the efforts by teachers and school management, learners still arrive late at schools. The following discussion will look at various factors associated with late coming.

A review of research done by Marwan (2014) and Dafiaghor (2011) identified a variety of causes of learners' late coming to schools which include the following:

i) Going to bed late

This is regarded as one of the major causes of lateness to school. For example learners might go to bed late and struggle to wake up in the morning and eventually arrive late or become absent from school.

ii) Poor organization

Ineffective time management or organisation might lead learners to waste time and arrive at school very late.

iii) Cultural background

In some societies it becomes a norm to arrive late which results in punctuality not being taken as seriously as it is perceived in Western cultures and developed countries.

iv) Family background

In some families it is a habit to be late. For example, a learner may copy parents' bad habits such as lateness, thus always arriving very late at school.

v) Distance and school location

If the learner lives far from the school it is likely that the learner may arrive later than one who lives closer to the school. Dafiaghor (2011) argued that this could be due to distractions and obstacles a learner may encounter on the way to school which could hinder his/her punctuality.

vi) Watching films late

Some learners might spend more time watching movies late at night, resulting in fewer hours of sleep, fatigue in the morning and consequent reluctance when they have to go to school, thus taking a long time to arrive at school. Others would watch films or TV in the morning and become so absorbed in the program that they end up forgetting that they have to be at school on time.

vii) Domestic chores

Some learners are obliged by their parents to do domestic chores at the wrong time which causes learners to arrive at school very late.

viii) Lack of consequences for late coming

Learners would come to school late if they perceive that there would be no consequences.

ix) Logistical reasons

In some cases learners become obsessed by their appearance and thereby spend more time in dealing with how they appear, hence Oghuvwu (2008) argued that this is more common among females than males as they require more time to work on their body and facial care.

x) Beginning of class being seen as not important

In some cases learners would take it less seriously or as not important to attend the beginning of the school. Other learners would rather miss the subject they dislike, leading them to arrive at school late.

xi) Lack of school policy

Lack of firm and consistent policy regarding late coming could also be the cause of late coming since learners would come to school late with no consequences attached to this negative behaviour.

xii) Poor reaction from teachers

Another study by Pimentel and Quijada (2011), cited in Bilocura (2012), showed that teachers' response to learners' lateness has been regarded as a contributing factor. For example, some teachers would ignore learners that are late and sometimes send them to the principal's office. Some teachers would be lenient to learners that are late till the problem becomes very severe, giving the impression that the learners lost nothing by being late. It is argued by Wachob (2009) that this may lead to confusion as to the importance of being on time at school, especially during the first few minutes of the school day.

xiii) Psychological factors

In contrast to Marwan's (2014) contextual factors, psychological theorists point to individual factors, such as the personality of learners which includes low self-esteem and anxiety as triggering factors of late coming. They argue that being late is an inborn quality and is biologically determined (Santillano, 2010).

2.4 The effect of late coming on learners

Previous research has highlighted a number of negative effects which result from learners' late coming to school. Nakpodia and Dafiaghor (2011) argued that late coming does not only affect learners as individuals but also those surrounding them in the classroom. For example, a learner that arrives late in the classroom distracts the rest of the learners and disrupts the flow of the lesson. This situation also affects late learners as individuals as they would need to put in extra effort by asking others to explain the

work that was done during the time they were not yet in the classroom in order to catch up. Late coming also affects the welfare and the productivity of the whole school.

Zeiger (cited in Bilocura, 2012) noted in his study that there is a relationship between arriving at school on time and the school results. He found that those learners who were punctual at school attained good results while those that arrived late obtained poor school grades. He noted that the late comers displayed behaviour problems which led to suspension and other disciplinary measures. He also highlighted the relationship between students that were regularly late at schools and their jobs. He found that those who were always late during their schooling years were expelled from their jobs. This was supported by Weade (2004) who found a correlation between late coming at schools and work late coming.

According to Dafiaghor (2011) late coming could lead to absenteeism. For example, a learner might feel that he/she has been late from school for several times and decide to be absent as he/she does not want to feel embarrassed. This eventually affects the individual's academic performance and achievement. Ali (2007) argued that this situation could lead to a loss of confidence which may lead a learner to engage in premature sexual activity causing a learner to fall pregnant and create more stress for other learners.

2.5. The effect of late coming on teachers

Late coming is the most annoying breach of the rules to teachers in any school (Lauby, 2009). It disturbs the flow of teaching causing distractions to other students (Nakpodia and Dafiaghor, 2011).

2.6. School Management Team (SMT)

2.6.1. Composition of the School Management Team

The school management team is comprised of the principal, deputy principal and the heads of department (Personnel Administrative Measures, 1988). This does not mean that the SMT replaces the principal and hierarchical setup of the school. The principal remains the one who occupies the most senior position and is followed by the two deputy principals depending on the size of the school and lastly by the heads of departments.

2.6.2. The role of a School Management Team

One of the roles of the SMTs is to make sure that schools are run effectively and efficiently under the guidance and leadership of the school principal (DoE, 2002:24). This means that the SMTs will never make any final decision without the approval of the principal. This demonstrates the need for the SMTs to work very closely with the school principal if they want to be effective. Their relationship is guided by the policies and the regulations of the Department of Education such as Personnel Administrative Measures 1998 and South African Schools Act (1996) which aim to ensure the professional running of the school. Its role is to support the staff members in all the school activities

including matters relating to the curriculum. This does not mean that the members of the SMT are relieved of their individual duties in schools. For example, the principal is expected to take the leading role in the management of the schools. The deputy principals are expected to assist the principal with the management of the school. The HODs have a responsibility to support the classroom teachers in implementing the curriculum. The only thing that is common among the members of the SMTs is their role of teaching, administrative and communication duties and also the management of the extra curriculum activities. The teaching role of SMT members differs in terms of the amount of time spent on teaching, with the principal spending less time in the classroom because of the administrative duties expected of him/her (PAM, 1998).

2.7. The management of learners' late coming in schools

2.7.1. How late coming was managed before 1994

The current management of late coming in schools can be understood by analyzing how it was managed before 1994. The following statement which appears in a publication of the Education Department (2000:5) shows how ill-discipline which involves late coming was managed in the past:

“The Christian National Education was designed to support the apartheid system by schooling children to become passive citizens who would accept authority unquestioningly. Teachers (educators) were encouraged to use the cane during this era as a way of keeping control and dealing with those who stepped out of line. Beating children to discipline or punish them was simply taken for granted in a

society so familiar with violence. During the 1970s, however when resistance to apartheid swelled, student organisations began to demand an end to abuse in the classroom and in the 1980s learners, educators and parents formed Education Without Fear to actively campaign against the whipping of children”.

This quotation shows that corporal punishment was used to maintain discipline in schools. If a learner was late, he/she was subjected to corporal punishment which involved spanking, slapping, pinching, paddling, hitting a child with a hand or an object such as a cane or shoe, pulling them by the hair, denying a child from going to the toilet or to have meals. This also involved forcing the child to pick up dirt around the school premises or forcing the learners to do physical exercises such as running or forcing the child to sit in an uncomfortable position for a long time. As the statement depicts, the aim was to inflict pain and fear among the learners. Corporal punishment was acceptable to the society and its effects were taken for granted (Nthebe, 2006).

Corporal punishment was regarded as necessary for the upbringing of learners as many parents were raising their children in desperate conditions which could add to these parents’ stress if corporal punishment was not applied to discipline their children (Soneson, 2005). Many parents were the products of corporal punishment and never experienced any serious physical harm as a result, and this justified their continuous acceptance of it (Du Bois, 2002). Anbarasan (cited in Nthebe, 2006) argued that teachers relied heavily on corporal punishment and that many teachers felt that without

its use, the schools would descend into chaos as the children in schools would become unruly.

2.7.2. Education Policy on Late Coming Post 1994

In South Africa, there are 9 provinces with each having its own provincial education department to look at assisting schools to initiate practices of good school governance. Although the local or provincial department of education has a duty to ensure good governance of the schools, they cannot micro-manage each school in their district. Their duty is to ensure that schools create an environment that is conducive to learning and one that ensures the educational success of the learners. They are also responsible for creating regulatory frameworks and this includes developing policies that strengthen each school's ability to educate its learners and to assist schools in maintaining a positive school culture (DoE, 2002).

As was stated earlier, late coming among learners has been regarded as a major problem affecting many schools in South Africa. There is a general consensus among researchers that late coming has been associated with poor academic performance (Jumare, Maina & Ankoma-sey, 2015; Khumalo, 1995). To deal with late coming which seemed to affect the school progress of the learners, the National Department of Education developed a policy on late coming (No 32414). This policy was circulated to all the schools via their provincial departments and this includes Circular 0029/2010. The policy on late coming of learners is in line with the constitution of the country which

stipulates the rights of all learners to basic education. The following discussion will focus on the policy in detail.

2.7.3. Education policy on late coming

As has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs, Circular 0029/2010 was published in all the schools to deal with learners' unauthorized absenteeism and more particularly late coming. It also refers to those learners who are marked present and leave school during tuition time without permission. The circular in line with the policy gives guidelines to the teachers on the measures that should be taken to manage the late coming of learner

If one takes a closer look at the policy, it differentiates between different forms of late coming. For example, if a learner goes home during lunch time and fails to return in order to complete the remaining school time, that learner is regarded as absent without permission. Moseki (2004) regards such learners as truants.

The purpose of the circular is discussed according to three prongs. The first purpose of the circular is in line with the first prong in section 29(1)9a) and (b) of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. It looks at the right to basic education each and every individual has and this includes adult education and further education. It also indicates basic measures that should be taken to make sure that education is accessible to everyone. As discussed in chapter 1 late coming disrupts the learning that

takes place in the classroom. Therefore it needs to be managed properly so as to ensure that all learners receive education as stipulated in the constitution. This means that if the basic education rights of each learner is respected, this is likely to create an opportunity for teachers to unleash the potential from each learner. A problem arises when such opportunity is prevented or disrupted as in the case with late coming, hence the Department introduced circular 0029/2010 to ensure that such a right is respected (Government Notice *No 32414* of 2009). Therefore, the schools are obliged to develop policies and plans that would help them to restrain learners from arriving late at schools, as long as they do not violate the children's rights and quality of life (Bogden, Thomas, Barrios, & Collins. 2004).

To deal with late coming, the policy stipulates that gates need to be locked during the school day to ensure the right of other learners to learn in a safe environment. There should be a strict control with regard to late coming and this involves keeping the records of such learners and restraining learners from going home for lunch. According to the policy ((Government Notice *No 32414* of 2009), schools should avoid turning learners that are late away as they have a basic right to education. The interesting thing about the first part of this policy is that it is more reactive rather than proactive as it states what should be done when learners arrive late. Therefore, the SMTs have to develop strategies and measures to prevent learners' late coming from happening rather than reacting to it. This requires them to shift from the role of being a teacher to the role of being a parent as they will have to address the socio-economic factors affecting learners which might also be contributing to the problem of late coming in their schools.

The second purpose of the policy is to ensure that the principals and SMTs know how to manage learners who arrive late, for example, it provides guidelines as to when a learner may leave school during the normal school hours. It stipulates that a learner may leave school during the normal school time only when there is a written letter by parents stipulating the compelling reasons. It further states that the parent or the designated person should come to the school's administration to fetch such a learner. This will require the school to sign the learner out before releasing such a learner to the parent. Permission is required from the principal, senior district manager and a parent of the learner if such a learner is going to leave school to engage in sport activities during normal school hours. During an emergency and if parents cannot fetch the learner from school due to various valid reasons, it is the duty of the teacher to accompany such a learner to the learner's home in order to ensure his or her safety. In order for the above purpose to be realized, it requires cooperation between the parents and SMTs. This is likely to contribute to an environment conducive for learning since reducing learners' late coming will facilitate learners' success at school (van Wyk, 2008).

The third purpose of the policy focuses on the implementation process regarding how disciplinary issues should be handled. It looks at the process that should be followed should a learner be required to leave the school premises during the normal school hours. In other words, the policy focuses on the implementation process within the school level and focuses on the role that should be played by both the principal and the

teachers who are regarded as representatives of parents and the department of education during school hours. Learners become the focus on which the activities are directed to ensure their safety and establish an environment conducive to learning.

2.8. The extent of the learners' late coming problem in South Africa

In recent times it is common to hear the teachers in school corridors complaining about learner behaviour and more specifically the late coming of learners and truancy. It appears as though many schools do not have a solution to deal with this problem as many schools resort to locking the learners outside the school premises and violating the children's rights to basic education (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017; Dhlamini, 2016).

2.9. Theoretical framework

The researcher's approach to the study was informed by the ecological systems theory. This theory is relevant to the study because it stresses the relationship between an individual and the systems within the general social context. A proponent of this theory is Bronfenbrenner (1979) whose theory stipulates that there are layers or levels of interacting systems resulting in change, growth and development; namely physical, biological, psychological, social and cultural. These are inter-related in that what happens in one system reciprocally affects the other systems (Swart & Pettipher, in Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005). Hence human behaviour, experiences and actions cannot be understood if the contexts in which they happen are not taken into

consideration. For example, one cannot understand the teachers' experiences in managing late coming without considering the context within which they operate.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model explains the direct and indirect influences on an individual's life by referring to various levels of environment or contexts affecting the individual's development. A major challenge to the current education system is in understanding the complexities of the situation, interactions and interrelationships between the individual learner and multiple other systems to which he or she is connected (Landsberg et al. 2005). The teachers' experiences do not exist in isolation from surrounding systems. On the contrary, these systems play a role in the success of their teaching as offered by the school. If all the systems work well together, the learners ought to benefit.

According to this theory, an individual is seen as part of the sub-systems of society, which are also interrelated. There are challenges at all levels which impact on the effective management of late coming and therefore learners are affected in the process. The researcher considers the teachers' experiences in managing late coming in their schools to be a valuable resource to the schools especially in implementing the policy from the Department of Education on late coming. The following are systems identified by Bronfenbrenner as important for human development and they are: macro, exo, meso, micro, and chronosystems. These systems will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Microsystem

Environments in which an individual develops which are characterized by events and those closest to one's life are called micro environments and involve continual face to-face contact with each person (Swart & Pettipher in Landsberg et al. 2005). The microsystem involves the relationships within the crucial setting of the learner, in this study, the school, home, classroom teachers, parents and the principals, as the most immediate people who should ensure that the learner reaches his or her highest potential. At the micro level most of the SMTs appear to be experiencing difficulties in managing late coming in schools. According to this model teachers will get an opportunity to share ideas, emotions, feelings, thoughts and understandings they have on all the levels of the education system.

Mesosystem

Pettipher in Landsberg et al. (2005:11) defines the mesosystem as the relationship that develops and exists between the micro-systems, and influences the relationship between the school, districts and teachers, as they interact with and modify one another. One may encounter differences even within the same province (such as Western Cape) because of the differences in the needs of the environments which different district offices serve (Sethosa, 2001). The way the teachers function in townships differs according to the context in which they are based, while in other affluent areas teachers may function differently. Therefore, the system has no uniform

structure, which may mean that what happens in the school, district or Province can influence the way teachers fulfil their duties and in turn affect the learner.

Macrosystem

Bronfenbrenner (2005) describes the macrosystem as a cultural context in which the child lives. It involves the socio-economic status of the individual, family, ethnicity or race. For example, South Africa is a democratic country and we choose our own government in a democratic way or through having elections even though we come from different races and ethnic groups. The macro system will thus have an influence on how learners behave since the system involves socio-cultural conditions which can support or hinder acceptable behavior in individuals.

Chronosystem

The chronosystem includes the developmental timeframes that cross through the interactions between these systems and their influences on individual development. This means that at this level the attention will be on the teacher, whether he or she is able to manage late coming effectively over time as the systems interact.

As a summary of the various systems, therefore, the DoE is at the macrolevel where policy is formulated, after which the nine provincial departments, at the exosystem level, are responsible for implementing it according to their provincial needs, followed by

districts at the mesolevel. Finally, at the microlevel, the schools are required to implement it on a practical level. To ensure that every system is interacting together so that a complete whole will be established, there should be feedback, monitoring and reporting strategies from the lowest level of the system to the highest.

However, Bronfenbrenner's theory presents certain restriction when dealing with African children. For example, it fails to address how an African learner interacts with the environment. There is no consideration of the spirituality of the learner and how he or she interacts with the ancestors which at times helps the learner to become resilient to the socioeconomic challenges faced by the learners especially the South African learners who have a history of being discriminated by the Apartheid government.

For the purpose of this study, I have decided to use Bronfenbrenner despite the its limitations because it allows research to understand the context in order to the individual. Therefore, I will only focus on the microsystem and mesosystem since they are the ones relevant to the formulation of the policy/ circular I will be basing my study on, as well as the school code of conduct and the implementation thereof.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher gives an overview of the research methodology that was used in the present study. The chapter focuses on the research paradigm and the design employed as well as the methodological process followed in the empirical phase of the study. The data collection and analysis procedures followed are presented and discussed. This chapter also focuses on the ethical measures observed and provides a discussion on the measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness and the dependability of the data collected.

Late coming among learners continues to be a major challenge in many schools and more particularly in schools from the poor socioeconomic communities. Considerable research has been done on late coming of learners which mostly focuses on the causes of late coming (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017; Jumare, Maina & Ankoma-Sey, 2015). However, limited research results are available on how school management teams manage it. Yet, late coming interferes with the learning of many learners which is the core objective of schools (Oghuvbu, 2012). Consequently, with not much research done on the SMT's management of late coming of learners and the fact that late coming of learners continues to be a major problem across the country, it was imperative for further research to be conducted to explore this phenomenon. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the SMT's experiences in managing the late

coming of learners at a high school in Cape Town. To achieve this objective the following sections describe and explain the empirical research procedures which were followed in carrying out this research.

3.2. Research Paradigm

According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), a paradigm is a researcher's world, a view, a general perspective or thinking that helps the researcher to break down the complexity of the real world or to understand the meaning of the data. Johnson and Christensen (2014) define it as a perspective based on the set of shared assumptions, values, concepts and practices used in undertaking research. In other words, a paradigm guides the researcher to think about the development of knowledge. Planning for any research activity starts with the determination of the paradigm in which the study will be positioned which in turn affects the whole research process. This is because the paradigm helps the researcher to examine the methodological aspects of the research project and to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed. This study was based on the interpretive paradigm which describes reality as multidimensional with each dimension being intertwined with others and is context specific. The primary goal of this study is to explore the human experience of School Management Team members and the emphasis is therefore on the subjectivity and the complexity of humans.

Within the interpretive or constructivist paradigm, this study adopted a qualitative phenomenological approach as explained in detail below. A qualitative approach aims

to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern it (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). A qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher wanted to obtain an in-depth understanding of the SMT experiences of managing late coming. A quantitative approach was not going to help the researcher very much, as the main interest was not to generate quantitative figures but rather to understand participants' experiences.

3.3. The Research Design

This study adopted a phenomenological approach using a qualitative case study design to understand how the SMT in a particular school manages the phenomenon of learners' late coming to school. This research process involves looking at the methods and strategies used by the SMT to manage late coming. According to Blaikie (2010), designing any study involves summarizing what the researcher intends to do, from the definition of the study's hypothesis to operational inferences, for example, to the ultimate analysis of data. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) noted that designing a study involves the presentation of the logical steps the researcher intends to take in order to coherently link the research questions to the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation of the study findings. This is done in order to provide the best responses to the stipulated research questions.

According to Neuman (2011), case study research examines one or a few cases over a duration of time using detailed, varied and extensive data, which are usually in qualitative form. Hence, a phenomenological approach is suitable for this study as its

emphasis is on the subjectivity of the participants who go through the experiences, and on the concept of totality which involves capturing what participants' experiences mean to them in their own words (Moller, 1995).

Given the experiences of SMTs in managing late coming of learners as the phenomenon being studied, an interpretative stance was chosen which stresses the importance of taking into consideration the context of the phenomenon being studied (Reeves & Hedberg, 2003). Subjective meanings and reasons behind certain actions is the focus of the interpretative paradigm which aims to explain such actions. It is hoped that the interpretative paradigm will allow the researcher to live the participants' experiences of managing late coming as personal experiences are more subjective in nature and might lose their actual meaning if they are studied in an objective manner.

3.3.1. Sampling

Purposive sampling was adopted for this study. This method allowed the researcher to select a sample of participants who have experience of the phenomenon being studied and can articulate their experiences (Strydom & Venter, 2002). Using purposive sampling, 7 SMT members, 3 learners and 3 parents were interviewed in order to investigate their experiences of how late coming was managed within the school. Learners' experiences and parents' views were important as they provided a means to verify and cross-check the experiences reported by the SMT. It was important, for instance, to determine whether learners were provided with a copy of the school code of conduct and with information regarding the circular on late coming. The same applied to

parents, were they familiar with the policies and the school code of conduct, more particularly those related to late coming? How did they assist the SMT in applying the code of conduct? The size of the sample was chosen because it was manageable for the researcher given time limitations. Small samples are suitable for case study research which relies on deep, rich narrative data (Dworkin, 2012).

3.3.2. Data Collection Methods

In order to collect the data required for this study, the following methods were used:

3.3.2.1. Document analysis

Harding (2013) argued that the use of documents as a data collection method is always advantageous as a document is easily accessible and saves a researcher's time. However, there are a few areas of concern that researchers need to think about before conducting research using document analysis. For example, the information in the documents is stable but was not created with research purposes in mind and might not provide useful data required by the researcher. The data contained in the document might be inaccurate or inconsistent (Bowen, 2009). To limit the above concerns, the researcher thoroughly evaluated and investigated the subjectivity of documents and sought understanding of their data in order to preserve the credibility of the research (O'Leary, 2014). The school policy was perused to see the school's rules pertaining to the management of late coming. The school policy provided the researcher with more information regarding what learners know and how the school manages late coming. The school and class registers were used to look at whether learners' late coming was

recorded and to determine the extent of late coming. The discipline book was also perused to check the recorded disciplinary measures taken to manage late coming as well as the agendas and minutes of their previous meetings, and correspondence with the parents.

3.3.2.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used as a primary data-collection method. Harding (2013) indicated that interviews are advantageous because of their flexibility and adaptability and the fact that they offer an opportunity to ask probing questions in order to understand the phenomenon being studied. This method was conducive for obtaining data for this study, as it provided the researcher with an opportunity to ask questions.

Furthermore, an interview guide was used to guide the discussion and the interview on the topic being studied. Mathews and Ross (2010) indicated that the interview guide is useful, especially to provide structure on how the topic should be approached and assist the researcher to remember important points to ask about during the interview.

The questions were listed in the interview guide and assisted the participants in narrating their personal experience and perceptions regarding the phenomenon being studied. The interview questions asked were shaped by the main objectives of the study and included the questions in the Appendix A. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with all 13 research participants (7 SMTs, 3 parents and 3 learners)

The researcher took into consideration and guarded against the limitations of using interviews, which include providing the participants with unconscious cues that guide the participants to give answers expected by the interviewer. Open-ended questions relating to their personal experience in managing late coming were asked, as it was believed these questions would elicit an unlimited number of possible answers and provide an opportunity for the participants to answer in detail and offer clarifications when needed.

3.3.2.3. Observations

Observation as a data collection method was used during the research process. The observation method is advantageous in the sense that a researcher is directly involved in the evaluation of research participants while experiencing the phenomenon that is being studied. It also provides the researcher with an opportunity to check nonverbal behavior which helps the researcher to understand the expressed feelings and attitudes. Observation also helps the researcher to understand the interactions within the environment, how they communicate with each other and how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997). It also helps the researcher to observe some activities and provide some information the participants might be unable or unwilling to share during the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

The researcher used non-participant observation rather than participant observation. This helped the researcher to explore objectively, as a bystander, how the research

participants managed late coming among learners, their understanding of late coming, their interpretation of the circular on late coming and how they involved both learners and their parents in managing late coming . Although participant observation helps the researcher to see and experience what people do rather than what they say, in this study it would have affected the findings, firstly because the information gathered would have been skewed or misrepresented the actual experiences of the SMTs in managing late coming, as the researcher's presence would have caused participants to change their usual behaviour. For example, the learners and the SMTs would act differently because they would see that the researcher is actively observing them which would affect the validity of the findings. Secondly, other staff members would have felt uncomfortable by the presence of the researcher in the school activities. Lastly, it would have been impossible for another person to repeat the same research as participation would also involve one's personality and skills.

Observation notes were used throughout the research process. The observation notes reflected the participants' reactions, including their facial expressions, body language, voice tone and comments during the interview which assisted the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied.

3.3.3. Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed according to the following five stages as suggested by Denscombe (2007):

3.3.3.1. *Data presentation*

This process started by transcribing the tape recorded data collected from the interviews and comparing it with field notes collected from research observations.

3.3.3.2. *Initial exploration of the data*

The data was read several times in order to elicit words and phrases that describe the actual experiences of the participants. This process involved identifying, aligning and categorizing the recurring themes and any issues that arose from the research observation, field notes and transcribed data. This information was then organized into categories and sub-categories. The researcher identified themes that were similar and those that were different and related these to the research question and the literature review in making sense of the responses.

3.3.3.3. *Presentation of data*

After the process of sifting, interpretation and the categorization of the data collected, the researcher presented the findings in writing and this gave meaning to the data in the context of the research problem focused on in this study. The interpretation was supported by means of direct quotations of verbatim responses of the research participants derived from the transcribed interview data. Data analysis was guided by

the units of systems provided by the theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner discussed earlier. Analysis was done within the context of the reviewed literature.

3.3.3.4. *Trustworthiness of data*

In many instances, a researcher will conduct research having vast life experience that could influence his worldview and thereby influence how questions are chosen and asked during research data collection which could influence how participants respond. This could eventually create a sense of bias that may affect the trustworthiness and the credibility of the research findings (Bell, 2004). In a qualitative study, Franklin (2012) argues that the aim of trustworthiness is to support the argument that the findings are worth paying attention to. He further argues that there are four components that demand attention, namely; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Therefore, in order to ensure trustworthiness and credibility of the research findings, the researcher took the following measures:

3.3.3.5. *Credibility and verification*

The original field notes gathered during the research process were revisited and verified against the conclusions made. The research participants were contacted to obtain clarity and feedback on the data collected and conclusions made. The conclusions were compared with the findings from other studies as reflected in the literature review.

3.3.3.6. *Transferability*

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results can be transferred or applied beyond its bounds (Cohen, 1988). In other words, the results should be able to be applied to any situation similar to the situation based on the research findings. To ensure transferability, sufficient data was provided by the researcher to help the reader make a conclusion whether the research findings are applicable to his or her situation or not. This approach of ensuring transferability is also recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as they stated that a researcher should not provide a paradigm for transferability, rather, the reader must create it through his or her conclusions.

3.3.3.7. *Dependability and confirmability*

To ensure dependability and confirmability, the researcher applied research data collection methods and data analysis methods that are in line with the aims of the study. The methods include having field notes taken during observations, keeping of original interview transcripts, disclosing of data analysis methods and ensuring that the data can be used by other researchers upon request without divulging the information that might affect the confidentiality clause signed by the research participants.

3.3.4. Ethical Considerations

It is clear that in this research study, the researcher interacted individually with the research participants and this also included observing their daily activities in their own

space to collect the data. This raises ethical issues that need to be considered when one embarks on a research of this nature. Crestwell (2014) listed several issues that the researcher should regard as an obligation when dealing with human beings. He indicated that researchers should respect the dignity, needs, values and desires of the research participants.

Therefore, the following appropriate measures were taken to ensure that ethical issues were addressed:

i) Informed consent

Ethical research clearance was firstly sought from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. Since this study was conducted in schools, the researcher asked permission from the Western Cape Education Department (See appendix I) and the school where the study was conducted before the commencement of the interviews. The research participants were informed about the purpose of the research and this included informing them about how the data would be collected and used before the researcher commenced with the study. Thereafter, the researcher asked for informed consent in writing from all the participants.

ii) Harm and risk

The researcher ensured that there was no harm or risk (physical or psychological) to the research participants as the observations and interviews were conducted in a safe place where participants felt comfortable. Interviews and observations were also conducted during the school day time.

iii) Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

The researcher ensured the anonymity of the research participants and numerical codes instead of their real names were used to identify the participants. The interviews were conducted in a safe environment. Since interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis and not as focus groups it was possible to protect the anonymity of the participants. The data collected was not disclosed to any third parties and was treated confidentially and kept on a password-protected computer.

iv) Voluntary participation

The research participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and they would not under any circumstances be forced to participate in this study. They were also informed that they had the right to change their mind and withdraw their participation at any time during the process of data gathering without any questions being asked.

3.3.5. Summary

This chapter has described the research design and the methodology that was applied throughout the study. The following chapter will present the research findings.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 discussed the research design, methodology, strategies employed to collect the data, how the data was analysed, the trustworthiness of the research and the ethical considerations. In this chapter the researcher focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data derived from this research study. It is important to analyze the data as it will shed light on the problem statement.

The research was aimed at exploring the experiences of the School Management Team in managing late coming of learners in a Cape Town high school. In particular, it focused on their experiences and looked more specifically at the methods and strategies they used to manage late coming of learners. Research questions which framed this study included, among others:

- i) What are the experiences of the SMT regarding management of late coming at the case school in relation to the WCED circular on late coming?
- ii) What challenges does the SMT experience in managing late coming at the case school in line with the WCED circular?

In total, 7 SMT members, 3 parents and 3 learners participated in the interviews. The participants were asked to complete biographical information in order to see whether there is a difference in how they experienced the management of late coming by learners based on their biographical details. The participants were asked identical questions. There were two members who could not participate in the study as they were heavily committed to their duties. To ensure that their responses were kept confidential, participants' responses were coded by being allocated a numerical code.

This chapter gives full details of the SMTs responses and those of parents and learners. Deliberate attempts are made to connect the findings from this study to the literature which relates to the main title of this study. The following themes and subthemes were identified through a process of data analysis. Each theme or subtheme will be discussed and augmented by the use of quotations or responses from the participants. Where possible, reference to the literature and the theoretical framework will be made in order to give meaning to the results that are presented. It is important to note that there are grammatical errors in certain responses of the participants as some participants preferred to respond in English which is not their mother-tongue. However, their responses were clear and easy to understand and are quoted verbatim.

4.2 Theme 1: SMT roles and responsibilities understood differently

The SMTs were asked what they thought their responsibility was and they responded as follows:

“...to manage the school, see if the curriculum is drawn correct, making sure that all the teachers perform their duties accordingly. Learners are assessed correctly and school programmes run smoothly as planned. ” (PARTICIPANT 1)

“...I am more in the infrastructure at the school.” (PARTICIPANT 2)

...drafting of the school timetable also serving in the exam committee, and assisting the principal with administrative duties and attending SMT meeting as well as liaison with the parent component when it comes to policy making and discipline of the learners as well as being in charge of the English department and to ensure smooth running of the school. (PARTICIPANT 4)

...my responsibilities mostly is IQMS, the HOD of English department is managed by me, SPMDS (managing the chefs cooking for learners and cleaning the offices) and the learners in general. Even the principal's responsibilities are mine when he is not at work or is out of the office. (PARTICIPANT 5)

It is clear from the above that the SMT members understood their roles differently. Some saw their role as being that of administrator while others saw it as managing the school. These results are contrary to the results of Maja' s (2016) study where the

SMTS saw their duties as ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place in their school. In both these studies the SMTs do not mention teaching in the classroom as also being one of their roles and this is contrary to the roles listed for SMTs in PAM (1998).

4.3. Theme 2: Lack of policy awareness

In terms of their knowledge regarding the late coming policy in their school, the participants responded as follows:

“...there is no circular that I know of that deals with late coming, however there is a conduct where other teachers would go to the gate and lock it if learners are later by 15 minutes from the school time.” (PARTICIPANT 1)

“I won’t lie, there is no circular that am aware of that deals with late coming”.
(PARTICIPANT 3)

“...there is circular that is in place”. (PARTICIPANT 4)

“...The last time I checked we had a circular. I don’t know if it’s still there.”

(PARTICIPANT 5)

It became clear that some of the participants in this study were not aware of the existence of the policy on the management of learners’ late coming. The analysis of the school documents reveals that there was no circular filed or school policy that focuses on late coming. This is congruent with the findings of Boshego’s study (2012) where members of the school management team had limited knowledge of the school circular on late coming. This makes it difficult for the SMT to manage the school as the teachers do not have a policy at hand to guide them on how they should manage late coming of learners.

4.4. Theme 3: SMT’s desperate measures

They were also asked as SMT members how they managed learners’ late coming in their school and they uttered the following responses:

“...to lock the gate and learners are locked out of the school and that’s about it... they stay in principal’s detention asked to do their homework and do some cleaning within the school just to punish them...” (PARTICIPANT 1)

...We let the leaners clean the building since there is no corporal punishment. We also notify the parents about the late coming so that they can be aware because at the end of the day it has negative impact on the child's education... As I have mentioned before that there are engage in cleaning the school and do more work like sweeping the floors and picking up the papers. (PARTICIPANT 2)

... I think as you already know the school closes the gate at 8h30, unless individual teachers do their measurers in their classes. For example, in my class I let them stand against the wall, sometimes I don't let them in my class and when they come late they don't just get in the class, there is a specific way to enter my class, they knock and wait until I respond, in my class I beat them once a month just to scare them, as you know that can't be official. (PARTICIPANT 3)

...We have a period register, some measure we cannot write because they are illegal, where leaners are forced to pick up papers and clean the school. The principal would ask the late comers to run around the field as their form of punishment and the leaners hate that and the following day the number of late comers would decrease. (PARTICIPANT 5)

The above responses are indicative of the participants' desperate measures of managing late coming in their school. They used different measures which ranged from locking the gate, letting late comers clean either the classrooms or the school field to running around the sport field. This was confirmed by some of the learners interviewed who responded as follows:

"...They control it the right way because learners who arrive late are being locked outside the school or get punished" (LEARNER 1)

It was surprising to hear that some teachers resorted to corporal punishment despite its abolishment. An analysis of the school's documents suggests that there is no recording of the learners that arrive late nor the kind of punishment that has been given to the late comers. There was a school register which indicates which learner has been absent from school and the class register which indicates which learner has been absent in a particular lesson. However, in the two documents, there is no recording whether a learner has been late or not for that lesson. These results are consistent with the results from Boshego's (2012) study where SMT members used similar measures to manage late coming of learners. These measures are contrary to the policy on late coming. This gives an indication that the school does not utilize the strategies listed as a guide in their education policy or circular on late coming.

4.5. Theme: 4 Mixed perceptions regarding the effectiveness of measures to manage late coming of learners

The participants were asked whether they thought their measures were effective in managing late coming of learners and they responded as follows:

“... not really, it is not effective in the sense that I am sure the management with the teachers; they don't follow up the policy up to the best of their ability” (PARTICIPANT 2)

“...Yes it is effective more especial the one where they stand against the wall, they become intimidated, though in some cases it might be non-effective because they don't come to my class” (PARTICIPANT 3)

To certain extent, it does work... In my case if they are late it's not a big deal I let them in, but then when it's time for others to go home I decide to keep them behind and they don't want that. And nobody does it, it's only me. When they stay behind with me they know they will have to account at home.
(PARTICIPANT 4)

...No, even if the school has the circular it needs to be revised. Because the learners we have don't see nothing wrong by being late for school unlike the previous learners we used to have. The previous learners if the bell rings they would run before they are locked outside the school premises. The current learners are democratic. They don't run when the bell rings. so they feel since they have rights, they have rights in everything. (PARTICIPANT 5)

There were mixed responses regarding the effectiveness of their measures to combat late coming of learners. On one hand, some of the respondents felt that their strategies to combat late coming were effective as there were few learners from their classes coming to school late. On the other hand, some felt that their strategies were not effective as there was no policy in place to guide them. This was confirmed by some of the learners interviewed who responded as follows:

"...I think they are trying because late coming is not the same like before. Before they didn't arrive on time" (LEARNER 3)

An analysis of the school meeting agenda and minutes suggests that late coming is still a major problem in that school as it has been an item included in the minutes of most meetings. It was surprising to note that even though it was an item to be discussed in the meeting, no strategies to deal with the problem were recorded. These results are

consistent with Boshego's (2016) study where some of the strategies employed were not effective in reducing late coming. Instead, some deprived the learners of an opportunity to learn as they would miss a lesson while they are locked outside the school gate. This is contrary to the constitution of South Africa which promotes the right to education and it is also contrary to the roles of SMTs as they are required to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in their school (PAM, 1998).

4.6. Theme 5: SMTs' wrong assumptions regarding learners' knowledge of the school rules

The participants were asked whether they thought learners knew their school rules and whether these learners were given the rules by the school and they responded as follows:

...Yes, they know it, there are fully aware of that, these rules are communicated in their report card on the school code of conduct it's also discussed in each and every parents meeting which are held from time to time. It also mentioned where there is intervention for learner, parent and teacher. All parties are reminded about that and its consequences.

(PARTICIPANT 1)

“...they do know the rules, everybody knows, but they take chances just to see what will happen if they break the rules. The first time they place their foot at school they get the rules and regulations that states how you should behave and what not.”

(PARTICIPANT 4)

“...they do because in assembly the principal always mentioned that they must keep time in classes they are reminded because when they come late they are disturbing the teaching and learning in the classroom”. (PARTICIPANT 5)

“...Honestly speaking, the rules are there, the problem is that we do not actually communicate them or remind them because they sometimes forget, because they are children”. (PARTICIPANT 6)

The above responses suggest that the participants assumed that learners knew about the school rules. Interestingly, there was not even one participant who admitted having discussed or given the learners the school policy on late coming directly. An analysis of the school documents suggest that the school code of conduct was given to learners only once when they start grade 8 and there are no records that suggest that learners at other levels were given the school code of conduct. This could be the reason why the SMT is still having difficulties in managing late coming of learners. The school might receive new learners in grades higher than grade 8 and if the school code of conduct is

given only to grade 8 learners, new learners might not know the school rules pertaining to late coming.

4.7. Theme 6: SMTs' perception regarding parents' knowledge of school policy on late coming

The SMTs were asked whether they thought parents knew about the school policy on late coming and they responded as follows:

“... yes they know these rules during parental meetings they being addressed.” (PARTICIPANT 1)

“...I think parents know about school rules, they were being told during parental and grades meetings. I think they know school rules, that gate will be closed and do some punishment exercises. They are told during assembly and parental meetings.”

(PARTICIPANT 3)

...the parents know, they are given the rules when their kids get to the school for the first time, not only that every year we meet with the parents where

teacher and parents are introduced to each other and the rules are given to them. (PARTICIPANT 4)

“...some of the parents they know the school rules, in parents meeting, we always complain about the learners that come late to school and the parents they would respond and say they prepare for their children before I leave for work”.

(PARTICIPANT 5)

It became obvious from the responses of the participants that parents were told about the school rules during the school meetings, thus teachers assumed that these parents knew about such rules. The following is the parents' responses when they were asked as to whether they knew or were given the school rules or policy on late coming:

“...I don't want to lie, no” (Parent 1)

“...yes, we were called by the school to inform us about the school rules”

(Parent 2)

“...yes I was told by my children” (Parent 3)

It is clear from the above that some parents were aware of the school rules on late coming thereby confirming the assumptions the participants had about the parents. However, there was no indication as to whether parents were given written or oral rules directly by the school management team. A large number of parents might have missed the school meetings and hence missed being given school rules on late coming. The poor communication channel between the school and the parents should be a reason to be concerned about and more especially when the school wants to manage late coming of the learners effectively. For example, some of the parents responded in the following way when they were asked how they knew that their children arrived at school on time:

“... no, they don't communicate with me” (Parent 1)

“... I don't know when my child is late at school” (Parent 3)

As can be seen from the above, there is poor communication between the parents and the school. Bronfenbrenner stresses the importance of the communication between the teachers and parents as they both have direct influence on the learner on the microsystem level. Poor communication between them may negatively affect the learner as in the case with some parents who indicated that it was not communicated to them whenever the learner arrived late in school. This could be one of the reasons why it is difficult for the SMT to manage late coming in their school.

4.8. Theme 7: SMTs' perception regarding their school teachers' knowledge of school policy on late coming

The SMTs were also asked whether they thought teachers had knowledge of their school policy on late coming and they responded as follows:

“...yes staff members know, they are communicated during briefings and principal always talk about it and in staff meetings and in some of the committees.” (PARTICIPANT 1)

...Since I said am not aware of any circular but I should think staff know about late coming rules because principal always talk about it when he is making announcements and it is stated in the code of conduct for both educator and learners. (PARTICIPANT 3)

“...I wouldn't know, because it was never given to them but it is communicated verbally”. (PARTICIPANT 5)

“...I’ll presume yes, and we normally communicate them during our meetings”
(PARTICIPANT 6)

As can be seen from the above, there were mixed responses regarding whether the SMT members thought the teachers had a knowledge of the school policy on late coming. Some SMT members indicated that teachers know about the school policy on late coming while others feel that they might not know about it as it was not given to them. Some SMT members’ responses suggested that school policy regarding the management of late coming was communicated to them verbally during the staff meeting. This supports the findings in the above paragraph that through the analysis of the school documents, there was no school policy on late coming. There was a school code of conduct document which mentioned late coming. There is only one sentence that specifies the school rule on late coming and four points on the measures to be taken when learners arrive late at school. It is clear from the above that the school code of conduct is not explicit as to the roles each teacher and SMT members should take to manage late coming of learners. The school code of conduct talks about detention and it does not specify how that should be managed by the teachers. This could have left many teachers confused and helpless in how they should apply it. Furthermore, an analysis of the school documents suggests that no training was provided to the SMT members, to both the new and old teachers.

4.9. Theme 8: SMTs' challenges in managing late coming of learners

In dealing with the late coming of learners at their school, the SMTs expressed the following challenges:

...Public transport, violence crime, these are the factors that as school we cannot control same as learners coming to school and being late. Sometimes it's not learners themselves, there are reasons like trains are late. Are you not aware the buses are striking. Also the social environment doesn't allow the school to be consistent. (PARTICIPANT 1)

...although they reside in the area, there is big problem, they are from less privileged homes so there is no money for taxi for most of them, so they walk, some of them who are closer to school they don't care, as much as they have to walk but the distance is short and those that are punctual are coming from Mfuleni by the school bus. (PARTICIPANT 5)

"...gangsterism, sometimes there are cases where even the school learners intentionally break the school rules." (PARTICIPANT 6)

...okay, the leaners take advantage. Their parent prepares them and they leave for work but these leaners they take time to finish to get ready for school. Some of them they come to school early but they get delayed by friends. It's peer pressure. If they have not done their homework so they are hiding by arriving late so as to miss the classes or some they use drugs and are in gangsterism. (PARTICIPANT 4)

The challenges expressed above indicate that external factors such as public transport, peer pressure and gangsterism made it difficult to manage late coming. These findings are similar to the results of Maile and Olowoyo's (2017) study where transportation and peer pressure were listed as some of the causes of learners' late coming. Some of the learners take advantage of the lack of supervision at home as some parents leave their homes very early and are unable to monitor their children. This is in line with Bronfenbrenner's theory, because what occurs in the microsystem of home and community has an impact on what happens in the microsystem of the school, since these micro-systems are linked so that they mutually affect each other in the mesosystem. As predicted by Bronfenbrenner's model, the breakdown of a child or learner's microsystem (children left without proper supervision by parents) caused some children to arrive late. According to the theory, understanding the child's behavior or school progress requires examination of four levels in the model, two in which the child directly participates (microsystem and mesosystem), and two in which the child does not directly participate but he/she is affected (exosystem and macrosystem). According to the circular causality principle of the ecological model, poor

supervision by parents affects the child's behaviour, including his/her progress at school (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

4.10. Theme 9: Strategies used by SMTs' to deal with the challenges of managing late coming of learners

The SMT members were asked about the strategies they used to deal with challenges presented by external factors and they responded as follows:

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“Yes we have partnership with community structures.” (PARTICIPANT 1)

...yes, for instance the health welfare, in terms of welfare they do get grants and when it comes to health they do have a clinic a youth clinic where they can go even with their school uniform, so the school does have relationship because the health workers would come into the school and talk to learners about love life. (PARTICIPANTS 4)

“...We report to the police station and the police will patrol around the school for the safety of learners.” (PARTICIPANT 5)

“...we are still struggling to overcome that problem, it is an ongoing problem, but we have partnership with governmental organisations like social workers who are helping us”. (PARTICIPANT 6)

It is clear from the above that the SMT works very closely with community organizations to assist them with late coming. In an analysis of the school documents which include the school code of conduct, there is no mention of the procedure to be followed when a matter requires the intervention of the community organizations. This could be one of the reasons why late coming of learners remains a major problem.

4.11. Theme 10: SMTs’ perceptions regarding external factors contributing to late coming

Concerning factors outside the school which make management difficult for the SMTs, the participants responded as follows:

“...Oh child headed homes, yes not a big number but there is quite a few that have that role of being a child at school and a parent immediately after school.”

(PARTICIPANT 1)

...I'm sure it is the socio economic background of our learners, because there are learners who come from very poor families. for instance during rainy days some of them come from informal settlements (in a shacks) and it is not easy to just wake up and come to school ... gangsterism, sometimes there are cases where even the school learners intentionally break the school rules. (PARTICIPANT 6)

“...Definitely. Because some of them they stay on their own and they have to look after siblings. Their families are in the Eastern Cape. And one has to grow up.”
(PARTICIPANT 4)

...For instance some learners they travel with train so when they come late and the school is also aware of the train problems/ delays and others don't live with their parents for example I have a learner in 12B she is always late, she come after 9am. (PARTICIPANT 3)

In line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems' theory, children living in child headed homes have so many challenges which affect their schooling. For example they have to spend more time playing a role of being a bread winner for survival and less focus in their schooling. Some of the participants attributed the problem of late coming by some children to the fact that they come from child headed homes.

If we take a closer look at Bronfenbrenner's theory, it suggests that there are different layers or systems (e.g. microsystem, mesosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem) that affect the child's development, including his behavior. This theory relies on the belief that a child should not be looked at in isolation, but holistically, considering that all the above systems are interconnected. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model posits that development occurs within an interactive system of nested influences between the child and the environment. An emerging argument is therefore that the learners' behavior and more particularly late coming cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration their environment and the value of each system surrounding the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1999). This theory provides a useful framework for exploring the various levels of interactions and influences that have an impact on how SMTs manage late coming of learners.

4.12 Document Analysis

According to Crestwell (2014), document analysis provides the researcher with valuable information to assist in comprehending the themes. For the purpose of the study, the researcher spent two weeks studying and analysing the following school documents:

4.12.1 Class Daily Attendance Register

In this document, the class teacher records learners that are present and absent. The register was fully completed by teachers and there was a signature by the grade head.

Of the 5 classes' daily attendance registers examined, there was no indication or records of when the learner arrives at school late. Records only showed when a learner was absent.

4.12.2 Period Register

This document records learners that have not attended a particular lesson. It is also used to monitor class bunking and also serves as proof for teacher attendance. There are 5 or 6 columns in the register (Name, Subject, Date, Teacher signature and number of absentees). There is no standard form that is used by the teachers. Each teacher designs his/her own column in a register book with suggested sections as stated above. This document is submitted to the principal by the class representative and is checked and signed by the principal every Friday. There were no records of late coming in the registers of 5 teachers that were analysed.

4.12.3 Movement Register

Only a permission slip signed by the class teacher is used to release a learner when permission has been granted to leave the school premises during school hours. There are no formal records of learners' movement control and teachers only issue a permission slip which is produced to the gate controller to release the learner. The information from the permission slip is not recorded in the movement register. No information of the follow-up with parents is recorded when such a permission is given to

a learner. This could be one of the reasons why teachers feel helpless in managing late coming as there is no control on the movements of learners and more specifically a follow-up communication with parents informing them about their child's movements.

4.12.4 Incident Report/log book

This document has records of all the incidents including the visits from the local police or official from the Department of Education. There were no records of the learners that arrived late and no records of the disciplinary measures taken to manage late coming. This clearly suggests that the school does not have statistics of the late coming of learners and how it is managed. This makes it difficult for the school to assess the effectiveness of their strategies to manage late coming. Some of the factors evident from the interviews included transport which was mentioned as the main factor that caused learners to arrive late at school. It also surfaced from participants' responses that some of the learners were living alone at home without an adult and had to take care of the younger siblings before heading to school. These results are consistent with the results of other studies conducted on late coming (Daphiaghor, 2011; Mboweni, 2014; Boshego, 2016). It can therefore be concluded that the relationship between the learners and teachers at the micro level is being affected by the poor communication at the meso level between the school and more particularly the teachers, parents and learners regarding school policy on late coming. The macrosystem also contributes to the late coming as there is a problem with transport for learners to go to school.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The main aim of this study was to explore the strategies used by SMT members in managing late coming of their learners at a selected school. The previous chapter detailed the findings of this study. An overview of the findings, including the conclusion, will be presented in this chapter. This will be followed by an attempt to integrate the findings of this study with the previous research findings which are related to the study and which were reviewed in Chapter 2. This chapter will also draw on a discussion of Bronfenbrenner's (2005) bio-ecological model. Finally, limitations of the study will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be highlighted.

The study has presented some insights on how the SMT in this study manage the late coming of learners in their school. The continuous late coming of learners in the school convinced the researcher of the need to conduct this study. The study generally confirmed the SMT's strengths and shortcomings in their management of late coming among learners and recommendations will be made that may contribute in lessening the problem.

The discussion of the findings of this study is guided by the research themes that emerged from the results and the following research questions:

1. What strategies are used by the SMT to manage learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school?

Sub-questions:

- 1.1. How does the School Management Team currently manage the late coming of learners in relation to the Western Cape Education Department circular on late coming?
- 1.2. What are the experiences of the SMT regarding the management of late coming?
- 1.3. What challenges does the SMT experience in managing late coming at the case school in line with the WCED circular?
- 1.4. What strategies can be developed for the SMT to effectively manage learners' late coming?

5.2. SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study utilized a qualitative research design. In order to collect the data, a purposeful sample was used. Interviews were used to collect the data. The participants of the study included 7 SMT members, 3 parents and 3 learners.

The findings from the analysis of the data indicated that the participants were aware of their difficulties in managing late coming of learners. This finding is consistent with the results of a study by Boshego (2012) where the management, including educators, were aware of their difficulties and felt overwhelmed by the extent of the learners' late coming problem in their school.

The results also suggest that the school had a code of conduct on late coming. However, it was never communicated to all learners in the senior grades as it was only given to new learners in Grade 8 and there was no procedure in place as to how different circumstances contributing to late coming could be addressed. Similar findings were made in Boshego's study (2012) where the school management team had limited knowledge of the application of the policy on late coming and this was regarded as a reason for the school's poor management of late coming of learners.

Although the school was given a policy or a circular by the WCED, the teachers were not given hard copies of the policy on late coming nor provided with staff development training on the management of late coming. This could be the reason why teachers feel helpless and hopeless in dealing with late coming of learners.

According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the micro level of development involves people close to the child. In other words, it involves proximal interactions between the learner and those close to him/her. In this case, teachers are very close to the child or learner. If there are any problems on this level, they would eventually affect the individual learner. If teachers, as is the case in this study, are not familiar with the WCED policy on late coming, it will be difficult for them to follow the necessary steps to manage late coming. Their microsystem is characterized by the lack of communication between the teachers and learners regarding how late coming can be managed at the school. This significant gap in the understanding of the school policy on late coming could be the reason why learners continue arriving at school late despite the existence of the policy.

Parents revealed general knowledge that late coming was not acceptable. The mere fact that they were never given a copy of the policy and school rules on late coming and that the same policy was never discussed with them could be contributing to the problem the school has in managing late coming. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, poor communication between parents and teachers which happens at the meso level could affect what happens at the micro level and the learner in particular.

Furthermore, the lack of proper guidance and support for the parents was also highlighted in the study and could be contributing to the late coming of learners at the school. For example, the results also suggest that while the parents had general knowledge that late coming was not acceptable they were only informed verbally about the school rules on late coming during the parent meetings. It is likely that a large number of parents do not know the school policy on late coming as it is a trend in township schools that parents miss attending the school meetings (Maluleke, 2014).

Only a few learners doing Grade 8 were given copies of the school code of conduct and the rest of the learners doing higher grades received copies in previous years, while new learners in higher grades than Grade 8 did not have copies of the policy either and so did not know the consequences of their late coming. The results also suggest that the SMTs were still using traditional methods to curb late coming. For example, many SMT members are still locking late learners out of the premises and these methods are problematic as they impinge on learners' right to basic education.

This study has also shown how the negative interactions between the systems affect the learner in the classroom. For example, this negativity is evident in the lack of communication on the micro level between the learner and teachers, between parents and teachers, and parents and learners. The poor communication regarding late coming occurs within the mesosystem where the two microsystems of home/community and school intersect. Poor communication also occurs within each of the two microsystems. This could be the reason why learners continue to arrive at school very late despite the existence of a school code of conduct.

The findings reveal that the school code of conduct stipulates that learners who are late will be locked outside the school gate till 11h15. The researcher also observed gate controllers locking learners out that arrive at school late. The gate controller would open the gate after a while depriving those learners their constitutional right to education and an opportunity to join other learners to catch up with the sections they missed during the lesson. This clearly indicates that the school did not have the means or effective strategies in dealing with late coming and felt overwhelmed by the extent of a problem.

The Department of Education's policy on late coming is part of the macrosystem. The policy provides a blue print on how late coming should be managed in school and how members of the microsystem should be treated. The constitution of the country and the policies are likely to have an impact on the child's development (Rosa and Tudge, 2013). Although there are policies within the Department of Education on late coming,

they seem unlikely to influence the learners' behavior in this regard. Hence there is a continuous reliance on locking learners outside the school gate when they are late.

5.3. Limitations of the study

Although this study has contributed to the knowledge on how late coming is managed by a select SMT, the study is subject to some limitations. Cresswel and Clark (2007) argue that there are limitations involved with all investigations and potential weaknesses in the design and application often occur. In this regard, the limitations of the study include the following:

- The sample was a purposeful small sample and therefore cannot be generalized to the entire population of schools in Cape Town and South Africa at large.
- The researcher is an educator familiar with research and this could have affected the responses of the SMT members. Perhaps if the interviews were conducted by a neutral person, results would be different.
- The timing of the interviews was also another limitation as almost all the interviews were conducted during lunch time and the participants could have provided short answers as they wanted to enjoy their lunch time or were thinking about rushing back home. The interviews were done during a period where participants were dealing with the marking of examination papers and could have felt rushed to finish the interview hence two participants could not participate during the interviews.

5.4. Recommendations

It is evident from the reviewed literature and empirical evidence that late coming of learners continues to be a major challenge to the majority of schools nationally and abroad, and consequently quality learning continues to be compromised. Since there is limited research and sparse literature available on how SMT members manage late coming, this necessitates further research on how SMT members in schools in general manage the challenges and their successes on late coming of learners.

The study also found a gap in the knowledge of parents as they were never given a school policy or had the policy explained to them regarding late coming of learners. Further research may be conducted on the challenges and the role of parents in managing late coming of their children in schools.

A comparative study with other schools and other provinces on how late coming of learners is managed is recommended. Another study could focus on the demographic variables in relation to late coming of learners.

Late coming of learners should be reviewed quarterly by the SMTs and the statistics of the extent of late coming should be recorded as this is likely to help the school to review the effectiveness of their strategies.

The following strategies can be adopted by the school to improve attendance of learners as is the practice in some UK & USA schools (Oregon Council of Hispanic Achievement, 2004; Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Welsh Assembly Government (2011):

- The school needs to have an attendance and late coming policy in place. The school is encouraged to develop a policy that sets out its systems and procedures for ensuring regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance. The school is encouraged to develop a policy in consultation with other teachers, pupils, parents and the Department of Education, Social Welfare Service, administrative and auxiliary staff, school governing body and senior management.
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- The school needs to consider the use of electronic registration. The use of electronic attendance registration software which assists in more effective and efficient monitoring of attendance on a daily basis as well as allowing the identification of longer-term trends is recommended and this information can be used to inform the school policy and practice. This facilitates the process of contacting parents and automatically informing them about lateness or absenteeism of their child.
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- Use of correct and appropriate attendance codes is recommended. Registration of late coming should be clearly outlined in the school policy and repeated in the staff handbook for legal purposes.

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- It is also recommended that the school should make use of the data available. This information will be used to analyse the patterns and reasons for late coming, which might be misleading at times. The information will also be used for strategic planning to address issues affecting attendance.
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- The school should have a first day contact system in place. Parents should be told of their responsibility on the first day, such as the need for them to inform the school immediately if a learner is going to be late or absent on that particular day. If a learner is absent or late on that particular day, parents should be informed immediately. The school is encouraged to raise the profile of attendance with the parents and the community during the parent meeting. It is also encouraged to use posters and leaflets to promote attendance. The school is encouraged to create easy access for parents such as having a special telephone line for parents to contact the school at any time regarding any learner that will be absent. Frequent communication with parents about positive achievements and improvements is encouraged. Regular meetings with parents in order to discuss strategies for improving attendance, is also encouraged.
- The school is encouraged to work closely with the Social Welfare Department.
- The use of rewards and incentives is encouraged. For example, the school can use letters to praise learners for good attendance. If learners have been

absent from school, the teachers are encourage to reintegrate them positively into the class by welcoming them when they return.

- The school can use scheduled and unscheduled attendance checks. This includes having a Social Welfare official and staff member taking names at the school gate of learners arriving late. Letters are then sent to the parents informing them that their child has been noted for being late.
- Further training and development for the teachers is recommended. It should focus on empowering them with knowledge of the policy on late coming and skills on how late coming could be managed.

It is also recommended that another study be conducted to focus on the development of a model that will be more applicable to all the schools nationally and, more particularly, overcrowded schools to help manage late coming of their learners.

Further research could also be carried out in the following areas:

- The experiences of learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds who have a history of late coming;
- The nature of collaboration between all stakeholders in advancing the management of late coming of learners in schools;
- Factors that influence successful schools in their management of late coming; and

- Training and developmental needs of teachers in general in the management of late coming of their learners.

5.5. Conclusion

The researcher is of the opinion that the research questions were answered appropriately and the objectives of the research study were realized. It is evident that the SMT members are doing their best to manage late coming of learners despite the challenges. These challenges can be dealt with successfully if all the stakeholders can be involved in line with Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic model. During the study, it became clear that the SMT members are overwhelmed by the extent of late coming of their learners in their school, which eventually affects the quality of learning and teaching in their school and they need further support and training with regards to the successful management of late coming. The Department of Education has a responsibility to ensure that late coming is managed well in schools so that learning and teaching is not compromised. This also requires pro-active SMT members in terms of acquiring training and ensuring that all other stakeholders involved with learners are properly trained and supported. Finally, the successful management of late coming of learners can only be genuinely achieved through collaborative efforts and support of all the stakeholders.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Semi-structured interview schedule (Educators)

My name is Thulisa Nonkonana and I'm doing Med at CPUT. Thank you so much for making time available to talk to me. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences you have had as an educator, more particularly in managing late coming in your school. I hope the information gathered from this interview will contribute in developing programs meant to manage learners' late coming effectively. The interview will be confidential, and in the reports I will not include your name or that of your school. Since this conversation will be confidential, I hope you will be as frank as possible. The interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you ready to respond to my questions?

Let me begin by asking you about the following questions:

Section 1: Introduction

2. How long have you been an educator?
3. How long have you been serving in the school management team?
4. What are your responsibilities in the school management team?

Section 2: Issues

5. **What are the experiences and perceptions of the School Management Teams (SMTs) regarding Circular/Policy document on late coming?**

Sub-questions:

- 5.1. Is there a circular that you know that deals with late coming?
- 5.2. Do you find this Circular to be an effective measure to manage problems of late coming? Please tell me more about it.
- 5.3. What measures do you take as a school to manage late coming?
- 5.4. Do you find each practice that you mentioned effective in managing late coming of learners? If yes or no, please tell me more about it.

- 5.5. Do you think learners know the school rules regarding late coming? If yes, when do you normally communicate them to learners? If no, what could be the cause?
- 5.6. Do you think the parents know the schools rules? If yes, when do you normally communicate them to parents? If no, what could be the cause?
- 5.7. Do your staff members know the circular that deal with late coming? If yes, when do you normally communicate them? If no, what could be the cause?

6. What are the challenges to the effective implementation of the Circular/ Policy document on late coming?

(Factors within the school premises)

- 6.1. What are the factors identified within the school that makes it difficult for your school to control learners' late coming guided by this circular?
- 6.2. Does your school have learners who double as learners during the day and parents/caregivers in the evening?
- 6.3. Which kind of responsible activities do you involve your learners in, especially those identified as regular latecomers?
- 6.4. Does your school encourage learners to be involved in sporting activities?
- 6.5. How often are you invited for training as SMTs for purposes of skill development in school management?

(Factors outside the school premises)

- 6.6. What are the external factors which make it difficult for your school to effectively control and manage late coming of learners as mandated by the Circular/policy document on late coming?
- 6.7. What have you done as a school to overcome such external problems that makes it difficult for your learners to arrive on time?

- 6.8. Tell me about your learner catchment area, and the mode of transport to and from school?
- 6.9. Does your school have partnerships with the surrounding community, other schools in the neighborhood, or agencies such as welfare, health, child protection, etc.?

7. *What are the disciplinary procedures employed by the sampled schools' SMTs to sustain the effective implementation of the Circular /Policy document on late coming?*

- 7.1. Does your school have the *Code of Conduct for Learners* compiled in accordance to the Circular /Policy document on late coming?
- 7.2. How often is your *Code of Conduct for Learners* revised?
- 7.3. Do you have written plans and procedure to guide you in the management of the challenges/problems of late coming and absenteeism during school hours?

Appendix B: Observation

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrival of teachers and starting times	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrival time of learners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does the school close the gate when the lessons start	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The keeping of school records, by the participating SMTs.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How the school manages those that arrive late	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities and services	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mode of transport used by the learners	

APPENDIX C:

Project Title: Strategies used by the School Management Team in managing learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ms Thulisa Nonkonana from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The purpose of this study is to investigate Title: Strategies used by the School Management Team in managing learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her Master's thesis.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to allow your child to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an interview that will be administered to individual participants in your child's school. Your child will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to how late coming is managed at school by SMTs. All the interviews will be audio recorded.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require 30 minutes of your child's time and this will be done during the break time.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your child's involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include providing:

Payment for participation

There is no payment for taking part in the study

Confidentiality

The researcher will ensure the anonymity of the research participants and letters of the alphabet instead of their real names will be used to identify the participants. The interviews will be conducted in a safe environment which offers privacy and comfort. The data collected will not be disclosed to any third parties except being presented at conferences and to the school upon request.

The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your child's identity. All data will be stored in a secure location and will be kept on a password-protected computer. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual with their answers will be destroyed.

There is one exception to confidentiality we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your child's participation is entirely voluntary. He/she is free to choose not to participate. Should you and your child choose to participate, he/she can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your child's participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Researcher's Name: Ms Thulisa Nonkonana

School :

Masiyile Senior Secondary School

Technology

Email Address: Nonkonana@gmail.com

Telephone: (072) 8285544

Supervisor's Name: Dr C. Kwenda

University:

Cape Peninsula University of

Email Address: kwendac@cput.ac.za

Telephone: (021) 6801503

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. C. Kwenda

Chair, Research Ethics Committee

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

(021) 6801503

kwendac@cput.ac.za

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

I give consent for my child to be audio recorded during their interview.

Parent's initials: _____

Name of Child (Printed)

Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed)

Name of Parent/Guardian (Signed)

Date

Name of Researcher (Signed)

Date

APPENDIX D:

Project Title: Strategies used by the School Management Team in managing learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school

Learner Informed Consent

Identification of Investigators & Purpose of Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ms Thulisa Nonkonana from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). The purpose of this study is to investigate Strategies used by the School Management Team in managing learners' late coming in a Cape Town high school. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her Master's thesis.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an interview that will be administered to individual participants in your school. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to how late coming is managed at school by SMTs. All the interviews will be audio recorded.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require 30 minutes of your time and this will be done during the break time.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include providing the school with information and recommendations on how the school could improve managing late coming of learners.

Payment for participation

There is no payment for taking part in the study

Confidentiality

The researcher will ensure the anonymity of the research participants and letters of the alphabet instead of their real names will be used to identify the participants. The interviews will be conducted in a safe environment which offers privacy and comfort. The data collected will not be disclosed to any third parties except being presented at conference and to the school upon request.

The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. All data will be stored in a secure location and will be kept on a password-protected computer. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches individuals with their answers will be destroyed.

There is one exception to confidentiality we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Researcher's Name: Ms Thulisa Nonkonana

Supervisor's Name: Dr C. Kwenda

School:

University:

Masiyile Senior Secondary School
Technology

Cape Peninsula University of

Email Address : Nonkonana@gmail.com

Email Address: kwendac@cput.ac.za

Telephone: (072) 8285544

Telephone: (021) 6801503

Questions about Your Rights as a Research Subject

Dr. C. Kwenda

Chair, Research Ethics Committee

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

(021) 6801503

kwendac@cput.ac.za

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. I have been informed that a permission to interview me has also been granted by my parents/caregiver.

I give consent that I may be audio recorded during their interview. **Learner's initials:**

Name of SMT member (Printed)

Appendix E: Documents Analysis

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circular/policy document on late coming	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class register	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register for late comers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disciplinary book	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication records with parents	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Period register	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication records with the SMT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School code of conduct	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff meeting agenda and minutes	

Appendix F: Semi-structured interview schedule (Learners)

My name is Thulisa Nonkonana and I'm doing Med at CPUT. Thank you so much for making time available to talk to me. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences you have had as learner, more particularly in making sure that you arrive in school on time. I hope the information gathered from this interview will contribute in developing programs meant to manage learners' late coming effectively. The interview will be confidential, and in the reports I will not include your name or that of your school. Since this conversation will be confidential, I hope you will be as frank as possible. The interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you ready to respond to my questions? Let me begin by asking you about the following questions:

Section 1: Introduction

1. How many children are there at your home?
2. With whom do you live at home?
3. How many children are currently attending school?
4. How long have you been attending school?

Section 2: Issues

5. What time do you go to sleep during the week?
6. What time do you wake up the following day?
7. Who prepares you for school?
8. How far is the school from your home?
9. What means of transport do you use to go to the school?
10. What time do you leave for school?
11. Do you know the school rules regarding late coming?
13. What measures does your parent or caregiver take at home to make sure you arrive at school on time?

Appendix G: Semi-structured interview schedule (Parents)

My name is Thulisa Nonkonana and I'm doing Med at CPUT. Thank you so much for making time available to talk to me. I would like to ask you some questions about your experiences you have had as parent, more particularly in making sure that your children arrive at school on time. I hope the information gathered from this interview will contribute in developing programs meant to manage learners' late coming effectively. The interview will be confidential, and in the reports I will not include your name or that of your school. Since this conversation will be confidential, I hope you will be as frank as possible. The interview should take about 30 minutes. Are you ready to respond to my questions?

Let me begin by asking you about the following questions:

Section 1: Introduction

1. How many children do you have?
2. Are you working? If yes, what time do you leave home?
3. How many children are currently attending school?
4. How long have they been attending school?

Section 2: Issues

5. What time do your children go to sleep during the week?
6. What time do they wake up the following day?
7. Who prepares them for school?
8. How far is the school from your home?
9. What means of transport do they use to go to the school?
10. What time do they leave for school?
11. How do you know your child arrives at school on time?
12. How often do you communicate with the school or class teacher?
13. Do you know the school rules regarding late coming? If yes, how were they communicated to you?
14. What measures do you take at home to make sure your child arrives at school on time?

APPENDIX H

Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za

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Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

REFERENCE: 20180704–3993

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Ms Thulisa Nonkonana
Arctic Street
Mitchells Plain
7785

Dear Ms Thulisa Nonkonana

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: STRATEGIES USED BY THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM IN THE MANAGEMENT OF LEARNERS' LATE COMING IN A CAPE TOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **17 July 2018 till 28 September 2018**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.

9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

Directorate: Research

DATE: 05 July 2018