

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PUPIL BEHAVIOURS : A STUDY
OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS' ATTITUDE

by

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study lies in its clarification of the nature and extent of behaviour problems among a sample of African adolescents in a specific representative area of Pretoria (Mamelodi). A questionnaire (Conner's Teachers Rating Scale) was used to survey high school teachers from Mamelodi about the perceived serious or disturbing nature of pupil behaviour. The perception of the behaviours was scored on a four point Likert scale. Behaviours were ranked according to the results and compared with previous studies. Data were also analyzed to identify variables related to five types of pupil behaviour: misbehaviour, violent behaviour, substance abuse, preparedness for class, and classroom behaviour. It was found that, while variables not under school control (for example, pupils' family background, school control, and grade span) are important predictors of pupil behaviour, some school practices and policies are also significantly associated with pupil behaviour. Also that aggressive behaviours were perceived as more serious than passive behaviours and that rankings of the Mamelodi teachers to some extent agreed with those of previous studies. Further results include a factor analysis which extracted five fairly distinct factors which could be related to dimensions of behaviour rating scales. Specifically, schools (in Mamelodi area) with high-achieving and interested pupils, drug/alcohol free environments, disciplined, structured environments, positive climates and involved parents have fewer behaviour problems. Implications for research involving the use of pupil behaviour ratings are discussed.

DECLARATION

I declare that the work on which this dissertation is based is original and that neither the whole work nor any part of it has been, is being, or is to be submitted for another degree at this or any other university.


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M.V. MAROLE

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my husband, Joe

and

my two sons, Themba (5) and Thapelo (1)

whose sacrifice has been

unlimited

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The traditional approach to behaviour problems in secondary school or high schools has been largely negative. Elton's 1988 enquiry prompted by teachers' expressed concern about the perceived increases in disruptive pupil behaviour in the United Kingdom found no empirical evidence to substantiate the claim that bad behaviour was more common than in previous years. According to Tattum (1986), it may in fact be teachers' tolerance of bad behaviour which has decreased in the face of rising demands from four range of curricular and examination innovations and reforms. Moreover, there is a feeling among teachers worldwide that their power to deal with pupil indiscipline has been ended with the abolition of corporal punishment, which was never replaced by any single meaningful sanction (Ogilvy, 1994).

Before going any further, it is necessary to try to ascertain the nature of the discipline problem experienced in secondary schools, that is, the types of behaviour teachers find most troublesome. It may also be informative to look at perceptions of causations as these have implications for the types of approaches which might be taken. The Elton Report gives a good variety of the types of classroom behaviour teachers find most troublesome. The behaviours cited appear to be annoying rather than serious.

While they may disrupt both teaching and learning, they do not sound like the types of behaviour which would lead to a pupil being suspended or excluded. It appears, therefore, that the consequences of persistent trivial misbehaviour may be considerably presumable as approval increase in line with teachers inability to deal with these misbehaviour effectively (Gersh & Noble, 1991).

The debate about causation revolves around three sets of factors: those emanating from within the child; those emanating from the home and/or the community, and those pertaining to the school. These might respectively be termed 'the sick child', 'the sick society' and 'the sick school' perspective. The next trend was towards socioeconomic explanations, that is, the source of the problem was considered to lie in the poverty of the home and community along with inadequate parental discipline. More recently the emphasis has switched to change and towards a focus on current causation from the immediate environment which is, in principle at least, more amenable to control. The shift has been largely due to the research evidence on school effectiveness (Graham, 1988).

The problem with the causation debate has lain in the dogged quest for single causes, which results in the blame being switched from the child to the home to the school. A linear explanation of the "cause" of the problem is just not helpful in terms of understanding children's behaviour. While a child may be predisposed by personal or social factors to be "difficult" in schools, the way he or she is handled there and the

nature of the demands made on him/her will determine the outcome (Ogilvy, 1994). While the main-cause view of difficult behaviour maintains a problem-focused perspective, which views bad behaviour as arising within a specific context out of the mutual interaction between human (pupil/teacher) and social (school) systems. This perspective provides the basis for a proactive approach to problem behaviour, which focuses on prevention rather than "cure" (Gersh & Noble, 1991).

There are thus, broadly speaking, two perspectives on problem behaviour: the problem-focused approach and the contextual approach. The problem-focused approach or perspective is based on a reactive crisis management model, which treats the pupil as the source of the problem. Typically, there is an escalating scale of disciplinary sanctions, which ranges from those administered by the class teacher (e.g. verbal reprimands, extra work, lines and punishment exercises) to those involving other personnel within the school (e.g. sending the child to another class or referring the child to the guidance teacher for counselling or for further disciplinary sanctions, possibly involving the parents).

From this point, the "problem child" is referred to external personnel (e.g. to the psychological service for 'child guidance' or to the social work department for concurrent treatment). If these attempts fail, the last resort is to suspend or exclude the child from the school altogether or to refer him or her to off-site provision, for example

a day unit, with a view of reintegration after assessment and 'treatment' (Gersh & Noble, 1991; Ogilvy, 1994).

The interactionism or systems perspective looks for the source of the problem within processes rather than within individuals, for example, by investigating the constraints, placed on the child by the school/classroom organisation and by the curriculum. This approach is used reactively by psychologists in their casework. Its main strength, however, is proactive, providing a framework for preventive work. Strategies include: implementing reward systems in place of punishment systems and improving teachers classroom management skills via inservice training; specifying an individual curriculum in consultation with learning; support staff in developing a whole -school policy on behaviour management in consultation with the school management team; and setting up school support teams. Problem focused approaches to behavioural difficulties have not been demonstrably successful (Gersh & Noble ,1991; Ogilvy , 1994).

Most strategies lack clear educational objectives and the evaluative evidence that is available suggests that they have little success in providing teachers with a response in dealing with perceived problem children. As such, the availability of the special unit or special school offers schools a way out when previous disciplinary sanctions have failed. The trouble is that "the provision of external resources that enable schools to dispose of their most difficult children merely reinforces their tendency to do so" (Graham, 1988, p. 46). That is, nothing changes from a systems perspective.

According to Ogilvy (1994), the failure of the ultimate problem-focused resources (the special unit) to return "cured" children to their mainstream schools is not surprising. After all, the school is the context in which problems arose in the first place. Any intervention should therefore take place within the school. The starting point within a contextual approach is to find out what is maintaining or encouraging bad behaviour within a school. As already mentioned, overuse of disciplinary sanctions may promote rather than discourage bad behaviour. The introduction of a reward system in place of existing punishment sanctions may therefore be appropriate.

Strategies like the Behavioral Approach to Teaching Secondary Aged Children (BATSAC) are designed to improve classroom behaviour in troublesome classes (Ogilvy, 1994). BATSAC teaches staff how to observe pupils and respond effectively to their behaviour, paying positive attention to them when they are behaving well and reducing the number of negative responses. The approach is particularly well-suited to tackling the type of minor misbehaviour teachers find so troublesome (talking out of turn, hindering other children). In addition to consequence management, manipulation of antecedents is included. Classroom seating arrangements are important - for example, seating children in rows rather than groups is more appropriate for individual work, being associated with more on-task behaviour and less disruption. Another suggestion is for teachers to negotiate classroom rules with the children. The issue is one of developing teachers classroom management skills, an area which is inadequately dealt with in initial teacher training (Wheldall & Merrett, 1992). The only method of gaining

such information in South Africa, is to study teachers' perceptions of students behaviours separately from their perceptions of individual students as they engage in these behaviours (Graham, 1988).

Teachers are commonly used as evaluators to assess children's emotional and behaviour problems. In fact, for certain types of problems, parents can be considered to be the best sources of information of the child's functioning. Some researchers have found that high school teachers were viewed as more useful informants than sibling or parents for adolescence internalizing problems, oppositional behaviour, and conduct problems. Consistent with this view, considerable research has relied almost exclusively on teacher reports of childhood problems (La Greca & Silverman, 1993).

Although teachers are widely used resources, there has been little acknowledgement on the part of researchers that many teacher may be reluctant to focus on positive aspects of their pupils' functioning or to provide such information in the context of psychological research. No data are available on the characteristics of black youngsters whose teachers voluntarily agree to provide information regarding their pupils' functioning. Such a study is important as a way to discern potential biases or selection factors which may influence the data that are obtained in published reports and thus, lead to inaccurate and possibly restricted conclusions.

There is a dearth of empirical information concerning teachers' attitudes to high school pupils' behaviours particularly in South Africa (Stuart, 1994; Schaughency & Fagot, 1993). Hence Stuart (1994) reports that since the publication of Wickman's monumental study of children's behaviour and Teachers Attitudes - 1932, researchers have been interested in teachers' perceptions of the serious or disturbing nature of student's behaviour in the classroom. It has been documented clearly that teachers' beliefs and attitudes about their students affect the students' behaviour and academic performance (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Kagan 1992). Teachers' attitudes toward individual students are influenced by those students' behaviour in the classroom (Siberman, 1969 ;Helton & Oakland, 1977). Stuart (1994) observes undesirable behaviours are more likely to evoke unfavourable impressions of the student, with resultant negative attitudes on the teacher's part (Yee, 1967).

Theoretically , it is difficult to separate the student and the behaviour (Dreikurs, Grumwald & Pepper, 1982) as together form the 'self' student. As a result of this complement, it is important to ascertain which behaviours are likely to produce a negative attitude in teachers. Generally , the pupil's disturbing behaviour in and out of the school environment has a negative effect on the teacher's attitude towards that pupil and the consequent effect of the teacher's attitude usually affects the pupil's classroom behaviour and academic performance. The only method of gaining such information is to study teacher's perception of pupils behaviours separately from their perceptions of individual pupils as they engage in these behaviours (Stuart, 1994).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information about teachers' perception of pupil behaviours in schools has been available for more than a century. For example, in 1928 in the United States of America, Wickman (1932) studied the differences between the attitudes of American teachers and mental hygienists toward 50 types of behaviour manifested by elementary school children. He asked 511 teachers and 30 mental hygienists to rate the seriousness of such behaviours as truancy, nervousness and enuresis, and found a correlation of -0.11 between teachers' and mental hygienists' ratings, Wickman deduced that teachers were most aware of over aggressive behaviours and were much less concerned with behaviours indicative of social or emotional problems not directly related to the school situation. Boys were reported more frequently than girls for behaviour problems. Teachers preferred the more passive behaviour of girls to the more aggressive behaviour of boys and viewed desirable behaviour in terms of the distinguishing characteristics of 'girl behaviour'. On the other hand, mental hygienists considered withdrawing and other nonsocial forms of behaviour most serious (Stuart, 1994).

In his study, Wickman upheld the rankings of the mental hygienist and blamed teacher education, as well as their desperate need to keep the job, for what he saw as wrong judgments by the teachers. He claimed that teachers distinguished between attacking

and withdrawing types of behaviour problems, but their attitudes were principally determined by the attacking nature of a child's conduct. Aggressive behaviours according to Wickman, were considered more serious because the teachers, resulting frustration aroused him or her to counter attack, whereas responses to withdrawing types of behaviour were accompanied by sympathy and protective feelings. Schrupp and Gjerde (1953) were critical of Wickman because he issued different instructions to teachers and mental hygienists. While teachers were asked to evaluate the present problems, mental hygienists were asked to evaluate its impact on the future life of the child, and whereas teachers were given a strict time limit and asked to rate the behaviours as quickly as possible the mental hygienists were given no time limit and asked to be as objective as possible. In order to compare their data with Wickman's, Schrupp and Gjerde used exactly the same instructions with data collected from 59 elementary school teachers, 60 secondary teachers and 37 mental hygienists from the US. Significant correlations of 0.88 and 0.70 were attained from the mental hygienist groups and the teacher groups respectively (Stuart, 1994).

Schrupp and Gjerde found that defiance, rudeness, obscene notes and pictures, disobedience, disorderliness, heterosexual activity, masturbation and lying were rated as more serious by teachers by at least 15 points. They concluded that the attitudes of teachers were closer to those of clinicians in their study than in Wickman's although the disagreements were still in the same areas, that is, teachers still appeared to be less

concerned about behaviours associated with withdrawal and more concerned about those perceived as transgressions against decree and morality.

After reviewing studies up to 1957 that used Wickman's model, Berlin (1959) concluded that :

1. Since 1928, teachers' attitudes had moved toward those of clinicians.
2. There may have been some change in the attitudes of clinicians.
3. Critics employed in evaluating the behaviour problems of children differed for elementary and secondary school teachers.
4. More boys were identified as maladjusted than girls.
5. The criteria of maladjustment could differ for each sex.
6. The sex of the teacher could affect attitudes toward children's problems.

Tolor, Scarpetti and Lane (1967) used the Staten Island Behaviour Scale to survey 118 American elementary school teachers and 23 psychologists. Teachers and psychologists differed significantly on 66 of the 295 items in the scale, with 21 of these items occurring in the 'aggressiveness' category and a further 19 in the 'effect expression' category. Tolor et al saw in their results a tendency for teachers to evaluate behaviour that could be described as regressive, aggressive or emotional quite differently from psychologists, considering such behaviour to be more pathological than psychologists would. The major shortfall of this study is that suspects were requested to judge the behaviour of children between the ages of 1 and 16 years. Given such a

wide range, it is remarkable that subjects were able to make judgements about behaviour at all. Rajpal (1972) asked 100 teachers of grades 3-6 and 20 school psychologists from Western New York to rate the Wickman behaviours according to how serious or undesirable they were in any elementary schoolboy. On his seven-point Likert scale, Rajpal found strong disagreement between the 1928 and the 1972 groups of teachers among four behaviours: heterosexual activity, masturbation, unhappiness / depression and unsocial behaviours.

Rajpal explained the rating changes for the first two behaviours in terms of educational and cultural change in 1928, children repeated classes for more often than in 1972 under the age-grade promotion system, so that children of widely differing ages could be found in the same classroom, and under these conditions heterosexual activity could become worrying. In addition, the segregation of boys and girls had largely disappeared by 1972, and heterosexual activity (broadly defined as boys and girls laughing and joking together) was more socially acceptable than in 1928. His results indicated that attitudes to masturbation has also changed by 1972, many more teachers were regarding masturbation as a more natural activity for children. Rajpal explained the greater degree of seriousness attributed to unhappy and unsocial behaviours as due to a greater awareness by classroom teacher of children's emotions and their significance. Vidoni, Fleming and Mintz (1983) replicated Wickman's study using 185 fifth to eighth-grade teachers, 504 eighth-grade students and a group of 36 psychologists, two psychiatrists and nine psychiatric social workers in America. The

results indicated a shift in mental health professionals, attitudes in the direction of those of teachers. The experimenters suggested that this was because mental health professionals were taking a more pragmatic approach and were being integrated into school settings (Stuart, 1994).

Stuart (1994) mentioned that, Wickman (1932) believed teachers reacted differently to boys and girls, and Berlin (1959) pointed out the possibility that teachers' gender affected their attitudes toward students' behaviour. Strouffer and Owens (1955) tried to establish discernible gender differences in problem behaviours perceived by American teachers. Overall, they found that men reported fewer instances of immorality, transgression against authority, smoking, undesirable personality traits, profanity exhibitionistic behaviour and lack of cooperation than women, but reported more violations of general school regulations, problems of personal hygiene and swooning, irrelevant, trivial and non-behaviour type of problems, and gum-chewing. In general, however, Strouffer and Owens felt that individual - differences between teachers were more revealing than difference between the sexes.

In examining gender differences in American high school teachers' attitudes, Berlin and Werner (1957) suggested that the differences occurred in the types of behaviour valued and in the types of behaviour regarded as indicative of poor adjustment. Evidence in their data implies that male high school teachers were more inclined to value maturity, good judgment, dependability and trustworthiness, while the women tended to value

such items as humility and modesty, and placed more stress on negativism, hostility to authority, and discipline problems as criteria of poor adjustment.

In general, female teachers used 'character control' criteria (that is, whether a student exhibits self-control in the classroom) more than when male teachers used 'emotional-personality' criteria (that is, whether students show emotional maturity). It is to be noted that in more recent Australian studies, other gender differences have emerged. Tobin (1988) states from observation that teacher gender might have an important influence on the pattern of classroom interaction. Alder(1988) has claimed that male teachers find the disruptive behaviour of girls more difficult to cope with than that of boys. Data collected by O'Connor and Clarke (1990) imply that stress arising from student factors is related to the teacher being female.

Variables Predicting Pupils' Problem Behaviours

Weishew and Peng (1994) have suggested a reciprocal caused relationship between achievement and behaviour. A brief review of the literature involving these variables follows.

(a) Community

Studies have found that schools in large or urban communities have higher rates of aggression, vandalism and robberies (Bayh, 1972). However, it was found that greater misbehaviour in urban schools was not consistent across behaviour and was usually not significant when the effects of other school and student variables were controlled for. Weishew and Peng (1994) reported that it has been found that there was greater violence in schools in which the surrounding communities had high rates of poverty, unemployment, crime, female-headed families and little education.

(b) Family

Many studies have found a relationship between a variety of family background variables and student behaviour. DiPrete and Peng (1981) concluded from their analysis of a large national data base that :

(a) students living in families with both parents have better school behaviour records than those in single-parent families

(b) students from middle-income families had fewer behaviour problems than those from either low or high-income families, although the relationship between income and behaviour was weak;

(c) Hispanic students had poorer conduct than either Black or White Students; and

(d) Black sophomores had somewhat poorer conduct than did White sophomores, whereas the reverse was true for seniors.

However research findings on the effects of specific family background variable on behaviour problems have not always been consistent (Weishew & Peng, 1994). It has also been reported that children from one-parent families were more likely to have a behaviour problem than those from two-parent families once economic circumstances were taken into account - were on welfare or unemployed to be unrelated to school vandalism. Other family variables shown to be related to student behaviour include parental supervision and parental involvement in school.

(c) Students

Much of the research on student variables and behaviour involves academic achievement. In general, it has been found that students who do poorly in school have much higher rates of misbehaviour (DiPrete & Peng, 1981). Some evidence indicating that low achievements in school may cause misbehaviour was provided by Elliot and Voses (1974), who discovered that after many "delinquents" dropped out of school they stopped being "delinquents". Other have suggested an indirect relationship between achievements and behaviour caused by the mediating effect of self-esteem (DiPrete &

Peng, 1981). Other variables found or suggested to be related to student behaviour include educational expectations and student participation in school and activities (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1983).

(d) Schools

Despite small sample sizes and methodological problems in many studies, past researchers and theorists have identified many variables that may be related to student problem behaviours. Some schools have little or no control over some of the variables, including grade levels, school control, student assignment practices, student-teacher ratios, and school-size. Studies have found greater behaviour problems in schools with higher grade levels public schools, schools with desegregation programmes, schools with high student-teacher ratios and larger schools. Many variables related to student behaviour are under school control. Research has shown that schools with positive climates have fewer behaviour problems. Positive school climate has been defined as teacher-administrator cooperation, staff concern for and positive teacher attitudes toward students, sense of community, teacher praise and attitudes emphasizing the expectations of academic success. Achievement is also viewed as a school variable by some researchers. It has been suggested that schools cause disruptive behaviour by not providing all students with opportunities to success and labelling students with grades. A school's discipline practice also may affect behaviour. There is no research available in South Africa that focused particularly on the above-mentioned findings. Thus

, indicating a wide spectrum of possible research areas . In a research done with school children in Pretoria and Witwatersrand areas whereby achievement motivation was compared between male and female school children , it was found that parents played a major role in encouraging their children to succeed . There is no mention of the effect of the teachers' attitude on the success or failure of those male and female school children. (Thomson , 1990).

Practices such as strict enforcement of rules that is usually followed by strict disciplinary action have been related to best misbehaviour. However, Gottfredson and Gottfredson (1985) found that more punitive attitudes resulted in greater teacher victimization. Control procedures are closely related to discipline practices. Other school variables that appear to be related to behaviour include availability of programmes such as counselling services, quality of teaching staff/curriculum and extent of school substance abuse problems. Quality of teaching staff and curriculum includes teacher experience and behaviours and modern, relevant curriculum that corresponds to students ability levels.

Conners' Teacher Rating Scale (a revision of Wickman's scale) was used to determine which pupil behaviours are regarded as most serious or disturbing by teachers in Mamelodi area. The use of such a scale would provide more specific information about pupil behaviours than, for instance, questions employed in studies of teacher stress, as it requires teachers to respond to normal behaviour rather than to open-ended

questions. It was felt that the Conners Rating Scale would attract a higher response rate, as it is less personal than a survey of teacher stress (Stuart 1994).

As no black South African data have been collected for the Conners' or Wickman survey, it was decided in this present study to investigate whether teachers' attitudes toward student behaviours are in fact constant across time and culture, as well as whether behaviours mentioned as highly disturbing in other studies retain that designation in Mamelodi. Conners' version of Wickman's questionnaire, as the above literature survey shows, remains the most widely used and reliable scale of its type.

In South Africa, there is little research on the incidence and prevalence of emotional and behaviour problems in high school pupils. Whereas there is this lack in South Africa, there has been a growing body of research on this topic conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom. There is evidence that among adolescents between the age of 12 and 18, higher rates of behaviour problems were identified and that these problems were related to environmental conflict and personal disturbances, the two main headings various sources believe are major behaviour problem characteristics that distinguish pupils with behaviour disorders. This evidence suggests that environmental conflict includes three behaviour characteristics, namely: aggression-disruption, hyperactivity, and social maladjustment; and that personal disturbances include: anxiety and withdrawal.

In their research with 112 male and female teachers who rated behaviourally disordered pupils, Bullock and Brown (1972) found that teachers were significantly in agreement that the behaviour problems they encountered were aggression, disruption, and hyperactivity. About one-third of these teachers also indicated that withdrawal behaviour and poor social relationships were significant problems. In another research by Quay, Morse, and Cutler (1966), 60 teachers rated 441 behaviourally disordered pupils and the factor analysis identified 3 dimensions of problems which teachers significantly agreed upon, and these were conduct problems, which included disturbing levels of restlessness, attention-seeking, boisterousness, disobedience, hyperactivity, and disrespectfulness; inadequacy-immaturity, which included sluggishness, dislike of and disinterest in school, preoccupation and daydream, as well as tendency to be led astray by others; and personality problem, which included feelings of fearfulness, depression, hypersensitivity, shyness, and withdrawal. These teachers used such behaviour measurements as Behaviour Problem Checklist and the Conners' Teacher Questionnaire. For the fact that there were significant agreement between teachers in their ratings, this shows the relevancy of the kinds of measurements used which were able to measure what they were intended to measure.

Studies that compare the different ratings given by teachers and teacher aides revealed significant differences in the responses of each group. It was found that aides evaluations were generally more positive than teachers and that aides interacted with pupils in a more positive environment and were less likely to have had negative

experiences with them. On the other hand, teachers had an opportunity to build up negative expectancies which may have been based on negative incidents or knowledge about pupils' background. Furthermore, those teachers who suffer "burnout" may have negative perceptions of pupils (Rickel, 1982). In a comparison of ratings between teachers and parents on more than one thousand pupils, Verhulst and Akkerhuis (1989) found low to moderate agreement. The difference in the ratings of these two groups was found to be related to situational and informant factors. For instance, teachers scored pupils higher on problems which related to academic performance as well as peer relations, while parents rated them higher on behaviours related to "externalising syndromes". These authors believed that teachers and parents observe pupils in different settings and that different environments can result in different kinds of behaviour in pupils.

In the present study, behaviour problems that will be looked at are conduct problems, hyperactivity, and inattentive-passive problem. These three problems were chosen because literature search indicated that these problems are the most encountered problems by teachers in schools in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

There is no model in South Africa that has been developed to aid in the identification of behaviour problems. This therefore, suggests a need in this country for research in the development and/or standardization of identification methods. The overseas principle can still be used, that is, developing and standardizing rating scales or

checklists ; tests and questionnaires .There are different available overseas methods for assessing emotional and behaviour problems and these include rating scales or checklists that may be used with teachers or parents; tests; questionnaires; and many more. Although the format of these instruments vary, their common principle is that they all provide an assessment of a pupil's current status in relation to a number of behaviours (Earls, 1980). These methods of screening have a number of advantages like being cost-effective and efficient; they are capable of incorporating direct observation, and they provide data which can be used in repeated ratings of pupils. In addition, information obtained by using these methods can point to the potential strengths and weaknesses of subjects who are assessed. Furthermore, the use of these rating scales provides the opportunity to evaluate forms of intervention that are made by assessment before and after the intervention using the same instrument (Kolka, 1988).

While recognizing advantages of rating scales, other researchers emphasized the need for caution in drawing conclusions from rating scales, checklists and questionnaires. Crowther, Bond and Rolf (1981) question the validity of behaviour ratings because the criteria for defining disorders are extremely uncertain at some developmental stages like the preschool stage. The data obtained in their study confirms the incidence and prevalence found in the other research projects, they raised questions about whether or not conclusions can be drawn from adults' perception of behaviour problems. They

also raised the fact that disturbed behaviour may be defined by the tolerance of adults in the pupil's world rather than by objective criteria of what constitutes abnormality.

One of the instruments that can be used to identify pupils with emotional and behaviour problems is the 28-item short version of the Conners' Rating Scale specifically designed for use with teachers (CTRS-28 i.e. Conners' Teacher Rating Scale-28). This version has been the instrument of choice for the present study. It is a widely used instrument for clinical and research applications with pupils. It is used with pupils up to the age of seventeen and its normative data were taken from Gayette, Conners and Ulrich (1978). The authors collected data on a sample of 578 pupils and split the data by gender and age. There is a tendency for levels on the three factors of Conduct Problem, Hyperactivity, and Inattentive-Passive to decrease as the pupils age. In general, the scores for boys tend to be higher, on average, than the scores for girls at the same age. It is efficient and co-effective screening procedure (Schachar, Sandberg & Rutter, 1986).

It is reliable, valid and it is easy to administer and score. It can be administered in 15 minutes and scored in less than 5 minutes on Quick-Score TM Forms. It measures major types of behaviour problems exhibited by the pupil (Trotes, Blouin & Laprade, 1982). It can be used as a routine screening device in a number of settings including schools, outpatient clinics, inpatient clinics, residential treatment centers, child protective services including placement and referral decisions, special education and

regular classrooms, juvenile detention centers, and private practice offices. It can be helpful in evaluating various treatment strategies and social programs. It is supported by more than 20 years of research (Conners, 1990).

Several decades of research studies have shown the version to be useful for characterising a number of symptoms and behaviour problems in pupils. It is international in its acceptance with studies of pupils in Austria (Holborow & Berry, 1986), Brazil (Brito, 1987), Hong Kong (Luk, Leung, Lee & Lieh, 1988), Italy (O'Leary, Vivian & Nisi, 1985), New Zealand (Werry & Hawthorne, 1976) the People's republic of China (Shen, Wang & yang, 1985), Spain (O'Leary, Vivian & Nisi, 1985, West Germany (Sprague & Sleator, 1977), and United States as well as Canada (Trotes, Blouin & Laprade, 1982).

Like any psychological screening instrument, it is not a perfectly valid means that not all problem cases will be identified by the instrument - false negatives. Similarly, some pupils who do not really have clinically significant levels of problem behaviours may be identified as clinical problem cases because of lack of perfect validity or reliability for the instrument-false positives. The CTRS-28 was factor analyzed by Goyette, Conners and Ulrich (1978) based on the responses of 383 school teachers. Items were analyzed using a varimax rotated factor analysis using principal factors. Conduct Problem, Hyperactivity and Inattentive-Passive account for 61,7% of the total variance.

Assessment is described by Van Greunen (1990) as useful in aiding with the psycho-education picture of the problem. One of the most common ways of assessing social, personal, academic and other functioning of pupils involve asking someone to provide information about it. The informant may either be a teacher, parent, classmate, the student him/herself, or anyone else in the position to know the information (Van Greunen).

A teacher is perceived as a person with above average academic ability, wide interests, ideas and experience that can be used for the benefit of his pupils (Mathunyane, 1992). As educators and companions, teachers should intervene in pupils' lives and assist them (Chandler, 1981) in situations which they are incapable of handling.

The teacher's involvement with adolescents is the motivating factor for teacher intervention. Blom, Cheney and Snoddy (1986) suggested that they are educationally well-founded reasons for teachers' becoming involved in the identification of adolescents' emotional and behaviour problems. Although some assessment instruments such as tests, checklists, questionnaires and other related materials may be administered by trained people, teachers should be involved in the identification and, if possible, assist victims of excessive emotional and behaviour distress, otherwise, refer those victims to relevant professionals like: psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and physicians (Barker, 1988). Because teachers have constant contact with pupils in the school environment over an extended period of time, this gives them the opportunity

to observe and interact with those pupils. Consequent to these, if a positive teacher-pupil relationship exists (Steenekamp, 1991), the teacher can be a "source of support and a pillar of strength" to the pupil (Kruger, 1992).

Identifying emotional and behaviour problems in adolescents can be very helpful in that adolescents can be assisted in over-coming those stressful events in their lives which cause them to behave in inappropriate ways. Stress is a condition of physical or psychological strain that imposes pressures for adjustment on the individual (White, 1989). Problems related to stress can be grouped according to social, cognitive, affective and physical (Rutter & Hersov, 1985).

The socially-related problems include breakdown in interpersonal relations, isolation and withdrawal, unwillingness to accept responsibility and failure at ordinary daily tasks (Crowder, 1983). Other negative influences exerted on the social development of the adolescent include: mood swings, low self-efficacy, constant irritability with people, running away from home, verbal and physical aggression, a feeling of being a target of other people's hostility, loss of sense of humour, and excessive shyness. Cognitively, the adolescent may experience such symptoms as anxiety, depression, lack of motivation, unrealistic goal setting, daydreaming, retreats from reality, fear of failure and success, underachievement, truancy and low self-esteem (Kaplan & Sadock, 1991; Kruger, 1992). According to Caudill and Carrington (1986), too much stress on the

adolescent may result in high absenteeism, disinterest in class- and homework, lower student satisfaction and self-esteem.

Chandler (1987) concluded that children tend to equate academic competence with self-competence. Allen and Green (1988) maintained that when children experience overwhelming stress, they begin to deviate from normal development and experience emotional and behaviour difficulties that can have far-reaching consequences. Affectively, psychological and emotional problems resulting from stress include: fatigue, boredom, unhappiness, poor eating or over eating, depression, resorting to denial and avoidance, substance abuse, nightmares, irritability, self-destructive behaviour and suicidal thoughts.

According to Crowder (1983), physical symptoms include such complications as abdominal ulcers, asthma and high blood pressure. Other complications include: heart disease and cancer, diarrhoea, wetting pants, insomnia, intense itching and skin disorders (Caudill & Carrington, 1986). These authors believed that it is the teacher's responsibility "to identify those pupils with dangerously high stress level."

Like other settings, high schools can be some of the important settings in which preventative health care work can be implemented to help troubled adolescents.

This could be helpful in that members of staff can easily participate in the planning, management and control of programmes. However, this strategy raises three influential questions:

- (i) In what ways do high school teachers respond to disturbed adolescents whom they have frequent encounter in their daily work situation?
- (ii) What do these teachers perceive as appropriate interventions for these adolescents?
- (iii) What are challenges facing professionals who wish to render mental health care services to the community?

Many high school teachers do not have training in preventative mental health care and it is therefore important that they should have basic skills in this area as they work with children who can develop emotional and behaviour problems as a result of stressors inside and outside the school environment. These teachers should have exposure to formal psychological concepts of what the indicators of emotional and behaviour problems in adolescents are. It should be understood that this view does not suggest that these teachers would not be aware of adolescents with special needs. Their experience of daily work with these adolescents might result in the development of a

number of skills and competencies. So welfare training programmes (Jordaan, 1992) would build on those already existing skills.

Aims

1. To help high school teachers differentiate between "normal" and "abnormal" behaviour in pupils; to empower them to deal with stress that bother adolescents they work with; and to be able to refer them, if necessary, to relevant professionals like psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and physicians.
2. To provide evidence on the incidence of adjustment at selected schools in Mamelodi.
3. To gain insight into certain factors of the problem while ascertaining the nature of adolescent's adjustment problems and other related factors.

Significance of the study

Although many studies have been undertaken in the identification of children with behaviour problems, there seem not to be any precise research which has attempted to study adolescents' adjustment problems in South Africa. This present study attempts to fill this gap .

Some specific questions of interest in this context are:

1. Will several factors (such as Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity, Shy-Inept/Nervousness-Anxious, Daydream - Inattentive and Withdrawal) similar to those identified by previous researchers, emerge on the data collected?
2. Will teachers rate aggressive behaviours as more serious or disturbing than passive behaviours?
3. Will rating of South African subjects agree substantially with those of previous studies especially from America and Australia.
4. Will there be a significant difference between the rating of male and female teachers when responding to boy and girl pupils?
5. Will teachers with longer period of contact rate pupils better than those with shorter period of contact?
6. Will community, family and school variables relate to five types of pupil behaviour (misbehaviour violent behaviour, substance abuse, preparedness for class and classroom behaviour).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Subjects

Subjects participated in the study were 65 volunteers obtained from the teachers population in the nine high schools in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Mamelodi was chosen as an area of research because it has a larger number of high schools than any other area in the vicinity of Pretoria. These subjects comprised of 30 males and 35 females with age range between 23 and 57. Their period of contact with the pupils they rated ranged between 4 months and 72 months. Their teaching experiences were between 1 year and 32 years. Judgement on the selection of pupils considered experiencing some behaviour or emotional problems was left entirely upon guidance teachers and / or their assistants with the notion that they know pupils better than the researcher .

The researcher held a meeting with guidance teachers and/or their assistants, each at his/her school and his/her time to explain details of the study. Those guidance teachers and/or their assistants were asked to convey the message to the teachers and find volunteers who could together decide on pupils with emotional and behaviour problems that could be used for the study. Teachers who volunteered were then asked to rate those selected pupils according to the behaviour rating scale provided. Each pupil was

to be independently rated by three teachers with whom he/she had some form of contact. The researcher decided that the rating be done by three teachers (on each pupil) with the purpose of obtaining a fair picture of the particular pupil and to see if there was any agreement between teachers.

3.2 Instruments

Behaviour Rating Scale

The behaviour rating scale used in this study was the short version of the Conners' Rating Scale (a version of Wickman, 1932 survey) specifically designed for use with teachers. It has 28 items rated with four responses, that is, not at all, just a little, pretty much, and very much. Responses are coded as 0, 1, 2, or 3. Each item describes a behaviour and provides the teacher with multiple choice replies. Subjects were shown a set of these items and asked to rate the degree to which the behaviour is present in a pupil for the past month using the four response options.

The short version includes scales for Conduct Problem, which is given an abbreviation key of A; Hyperactivity, a key of B; Inattentive-Passive, a key of C; and Hyperactivity Index, a key of D . The Hyperactivity Index was developed to provide an easily measured, empirical assessment of the extent to which the pupil performs behaviours

that are usually considered to be indicative of an underlying diagnosis of hyperkinesia (Conners, 1990).

The version has separate profile forms for males and females, and scores for boys tend to be higher, on average, than scores for girls of the same age. Interpretation was based upon scale scores and their elevations. T-scores (which are scored on the profile form to indicate elevations) were interpreted using the guidelines provided in Table 3.1. Clinically elevated test score (in the metric of T-scores) was defined as one which is above 65. This meant that if no test scores were above 65T, the profile was considered to be a sign of "normal" pattern. Where there was only "one-point code", the profile was regarded as an indication of a moderate evidence of a problems. And, where two or more scores were clinically elevated, the profile was categorized by the two scales which were the highest and such a designation was called a "two-point code". And, those two-point codes formed the basis for configural profile interpretation.

In order to examine the experiences of high school teachers and their practical knowledge they have of pupils with emotional and behaviour problems, concepts like "emotional" and "behaviours" indicative of disturbances in pupils needed to be defined in order to assist teachers to help them understand exactly what the researcher was looking for, as well as to create a common ground for communication between them and the researcher.

The use of a behaviour rating scale in this study was designed to serve two purposes. Firstly, to provide participants with a formal perspective of what constitute indicators of emotional and behaviour problems. Thus, providing a common conceptual framework between the researcher and the teachers. Secondly, to provide participants with an example of the type of instrument that can be possibly used to identify pupils with special needs. Thus, this rating scale was chosen for this study because it is short, easy to administer and score, and especially designed for use with teachers.

3.3 Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed to teachers at staff meetings and in the staff room. Subjects were requested to read the instructions carefully, give honest answers and to answer all questions. It was made clear to all respondents that their participation was voluntary. Six pupils were rated in each of the nine schools sampled. Each pupil was independently rated by three teachers to make a total number of completed checklists to be 18 at each school, and, a total number of 162 in all the nine high schools sampled. Wherever possible, the questionnaires were completed in the presence of the investigator, so that queries and misunderstandings could be resolved, in accordance with the standard ethical guidelines of research.

3.4 Data Analysis

Raw data were summed for each behaviour, means added for items with missing scores, and ranked. Analysis of variance and other relevant statistics were computed for rankings for each group. Raw data were treated by item and factor analysis, being collated and analysed by means of SPSS⁺ by 6.0+ packages on an IBM Computer. All items were subjected to a principal component analysis with orthotran/varimax transformation.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Table 4.1

Correlations for rankings of 65 high school teachers compared with previous studies outside South Africa.

	Teachers (this study)	Wickman	Schruppe & Gjerde	Rajpal
Wickman	0.68*			
Schruppe & Gjerde	0.61*	0.73*		
Rajpal	0.64*	0.58*	0.74*	
Vidoni et al	0.77*	0.8*		0.62*

* Significant at p:0.01

Ranking of Mamelodi teachers were more in line to Vidoni et al's teachers, followed by Rajpal teachers. Correlations of rankings from the various schools in this study showed the following results:

- Group I correlated higher than 0.79 with other groups.
- Group II correlated higher than 0.74 with other groups.
- Group III correlated higher than 0.79 .
- Male / Female teachers correlated higher than 0.79
- Ranking for Boys / Girls correlated higher than 0.79

Factor Analysis

On a principal analysis with orthotran / varimax transformation, 10 factors were extracted. As many items loaded on more than one factor, the factor analysis was re-run with five factors specified arbitrarily. Table 4.2 shows the loadings above 0.352 (significant for 50 subjects, $p < 0.01$, Guilford & Fruchter, 1978; Stuart , 1994) on individual factors in order of significance.

Variability between Groups

The high correlations between the teachers in three groups of schools show that rankings were consistent and that other school-based variables, e.g. climate did not affect the rankings significantly. This could mean that Mamelodi high school teachers attitudes toward pupil behaviours are consistent over schools.

Ranking of Behaviours

Teachers in Mamelodi schools differed from teachers in previous studies (e.g. Wickman, Rajpal etc). Behaviours deemed more serious by 12 points or more by Mamelodi teachers were pupils irrational comments to their peers in the classroom.

Table 4.2

Ranking of Pupils problem behaviours and Item loading significantly on five factors in a Rotated factor analysis.

Item	Rank	1	2	3	4	5
Aggression	1	0.9				
Temper outbursts	2	0.9				
Truancy	3	0.87		0.31		
Absent-mindedness	4	0.86				
Fighting	5	0.72				
Bully Behaviour	6	0.71				
Restlessness	7	0.64				0.21
Alcohol/Drug Abuse	8	0.53				
Quarrelsome	9	0.54		0.39		
Stealing	10	0.54			0.28	
Destroying/Violence	11	0.42				
Cheating	12	0.32				0.6
Whispering	13	0.21	0.31			
Cruelty	14		0.09		0.27	
Disobedience	15		0.17		0.28	
Imaginative lying	16		0.68			0.32
Masturbation	17	0.53				
Defiance	18		0.73			
Rudeness	19		0.52		0.77	
Profanity	20		0.23		0.65	
Smoking	21		0.21		0.7	
Lateness	22		0.21	0.34	0.54	0.31
Fearfulness	23			0.39	0.32	0.34
Nervousness	24			0.37		
Heterosexual	25			0.51		
Activity	26					
Physical Contact				0.57		
% Total Variance		21.5	12.3	6.4	4.1	2.1

Behaviours regarded as less serious by 10 points or more by Mamelodi teachers were heterosexual activity, nervousness and physical contact. These might be explained by the change in cultural norms in recent times, for example today it is generally not thought problematic if boys and girls interact, laugh and joke together; and shying away from physical aggression has become rather a virtue at least in a new South Africa. Only in three items was there substantial disagreement between Mamelodi teachers and previous studies. Temper outburst, absentmindedness and restlessness were thought to be far more serious by the Mamelodi teachers. The change in the ranking of masturbation may reflect the difference in types of teachers surveyed as Stuart (1994) employed middle school teachers, many of whom would have been involved with younger students than the Mamelodi teachers. It appears that imaginative lying and quarrelsome were regarded as more pathological by the Mamelodi teachers and this may again reflect the age range of the pupils involved.

However, aggressive behaviours were, in general, regarded as more serious or disturbing than passive behaviours. It is arguable whether this is because, as Wickman claimed, the teacher is aroused to counterattack when confronted with these behaviours, or because aggressive behaviours often result in real danger for the teacher or the students in his or her care. Another variable to be considered according to Ogilvy (1994), is the obvious nature of the aggressive behaviours which would come to the attention of a teacher far more readily than passive behaviours. Ranking of teachers in

this study correlated very highly with those of previous studies, the lowest correlation being between this study and that of Rajpal (0.7).

Factor Analysis

The reused factor analysis extracted five fairly distinct factors, of which the first could almost be termed a general factor for the survey. Some of these factors correspond to the factors found in behaviour rating scales. Factor I include such items as aggression, truancy, fighting, bully behaviour, quarrelsome, destroying school property, and cheating corresponds well to the Conduct Problems factor of behaviour rating scales and to the aggression factor of Connors Teacher Rating Scale (Stuart, 1994); Factor II, with such items as depression, rudeness, defiance, suspiciousness, cruelty, profanity, smoking corresponds to the Shy/Inept/Nervous/Anxious factor; Factor III incorporating hyperactivity, lateness, fearfulness and physical conduct seems to correspond to the 'Hyperactivity' factor although it may be more appropriately termed 'Disorganized'; Factors IV and V may correspond to daydream - Inattentive and Withdrawal factors. The major factors that have emerged in this exploratory study of teachers attitudes toward pupil behaviours thus correspond well with factors extracted in previous studies of teachers ratings of students classroom behaviour. This may support Stuart's (1994) assertion that teachers' responses to behaviours anywhere in the world regardless of whether they are asked to rate the behaviour of a particular pupil or to consider pupil behaviours on a more general plane. Hence, pupil behaviours are entities not

necessarily attached to individual pupils (Dreikurs, Grunwald & Pepper, 1982). Zero-order correlations between the predictors and the dependent variables are presented in Table 4.3. The five dependent variables were regressed separately on the community, family, student and school variables. The programme used to perform the regressions calculated the unique contribution of each variable, after all variables have been taken into account.

The regression of misbehaviour on the independent variables was highly significant, $R^2(432) = .49, p < .0001$. Seven variables were significantly related to this behaviour after all other variables were controlled. Two community and family variables were significant predictors of pupil behaviour. In particular, more suburbanized schools and schools with greater percentages of disadvantaged students had higher rates of misbehaviour. The severity of schools' substance abuse problems was the most important predictor of misbehaviour; a more serious substance abuse problem was associated with greater misbehaviour. Other important school variables included school climate and students' perceptions of the school. Better climate and more positive perceptions of the school were associated with lower rates of misbehaviour.

The regression of violent behaviour on the independent variables was significant, $R^2(422) = .32, p < .0001$. The most important predictor of violent behaviour in school was the presence of a serious substance abuse problem. Great span was the strongest predictor of substance abuse. Prohibiting pupils from leaving school grounds and a

more disciplined, structured environment were associated with a less severe substance abuse problem.

The regression of preparedness for class on the independent variables was highly significant, $R^2(342) = .36$, $p < .0001$. Nine variables were significantly related to preparedness for class after all other variables were controlled. Only one family variable was significantly associated with preparedness for class. Schools with pupils who spent more time at home with no adult present had pupils who more often came to class unprepared. Pupils characteristics that were significant predictors of greater preparedness for class included higher achievement, better self-perceptions, and less participation in out-of-class activities. Several school variables were also significant predictors of preparedness. The strongest predictor of preparedness was pupil-reported boredom while at school. In schools where pupils reported less boredom, students more often reported being prepared for class.

The regression of classroom behaviour on the independent variables was significant, $R^2(332) = .31$, $p < .0001$. The strongest predictor of classroom misbehaviour was pupil achievement. Not surprisingly, lower achievement was associated with greater classroom misbehaviour. Positive pupil perception of teachers also strongly predicted better classroom behaviour. Other variables significantly associated with classroom were the availability of more counselling services, pupil boredom and negative school climate.

Table 4.3

Zero-order Correlations Between Behaviours and Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Misbehaviour	Violence	Substance Abuse	Preparedness	Classroom Behaviour
Community Suburbanicity	0.01	-0.3	0.21*	0.02	0.03
Family Background	0.09	0.06	0.03	-0.04	0.02
Student Characteristics	-0.08	0.01	-0.13	0.11*	-0.03
School Practices	0.12*	0.14*	0.03	0.14	0.12*

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study is valuable in that it has isolated and grouped the behaviours about which teachers have strong views and which they are likely to feel less able to manage. The behaviours ranked as most serious or disturbing by Mamelodi teachers all loaded significantly on Factor I, "Conduct Problem". The study indicates that teachers feel more worried about such behaviour and that they would welcome alternative methods of dealing with them in the classroom. The study further demonstrated in particular, a need to clarify the reasons for teachers' reactions to students' behaviours. Also, it has highlighted the differences in teachers' reactions to various pupil behaviour.

The relatively high multiple correlations indicate that the individual problem behaviours were predicated well by the regression models. Many variables were significantly related to student problem behaviours. However, although several variables were related to behaviour problems overall, none were consistently related to all problem behaviours. Thus, results are discussed separately for the five dependent variables.

Misbehaviour - The results revealed the following relationships between misbehaviour and independent variables:

- Mamelodi schools with more substance abuse problems had greater misbehaviour.
- Mamelodi schools with greater percentages of disadvantaged pupils had more pupil misbehaviour.
- Schools with better climates, more positive pupil perceptions of their schools and fair discipline had less misbehaviour.
- Lower misbehaviour was associated with more severe action for injuring a pupil, but less severe action for repeated serious offences.
- Schools in which teachers had been teaching longer had higher rates of misbehaviour.

Many of these results are consistent with past research, including the findings involving suburbanity, pupil background, school control, school climate, school enrolment, pupils' perception of the school, fairness of discipline and extent of substance abuse problems (Purkey & Novak; 1984, Purkey and Smith, 1983).

Action for repeated misbehaviour including (drug / alcohol / weapon possession and use) may be associated with more misbehaviour for several reasons. School officials

may believe that high rates of this behaviour are being caused by behaviour such as alcohol and drug abuse and may be trying to eradicate these causes. One could also argue that strict discipline for more serious offences causes students to increase their misbehaviour either in relation or as substitute behaviour to cope in an environment that is not meeting their needs (Heitzman, 1982; Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1985). Lack of data and the nonexperimental nature of this study prevented discovery of the true reason for this result. Finally, schools in which teachers had been teaching longer had higher rates of misbehaviour. Perhaps this was related to teacher burnout, as revealed in the introduction, over 45% of the teachers rank continual student misbehaviour as the main cause of job-related stress.

The results suggest that schools try to reduce misbehaviour by eradicating substance abuse, improving their climates and students' perceptions of their schools and enforcing discipline fairly. For example, teachers and school counsellors could be instrumental in identifying substance abuse and referring students for treatment or gauging pupils' attitudes and concerns about their schools. In addition, programmes to counteract the effects of students' disadvantaged backgrounds and dividing the school into smaller units would probably be helpful.

Violent behaviour - As with misbehaviour, several of the findings on violent behaviour are not consistent with past research. The association of more violence with strong action for repeated serious offences seems counter intuitive. However, rather than

suggesting that these actions are not effective, these findings may simply mean that schools with high rates of violence are taking more severe disciplinary actions for violent behaviour to lower the rate of violence. The causes of violent behaviour are undoubtedly much more complex or situation specific as indicated in a small amount of variants (27%) accounted for by all independent variables and the low correlation with the first canonical variate.

Substance abuse - The relationship between substance abuse and all significant predictors (parental supervision, grade span, disciplined structured environment, flexibility of school environment and prohibiting pupils from leaving school grounds) are consistent with past research (DiPrete & Peng, 1981; Purkey and Smith, 1983). The results suggest that schools create disciplined and structured, but not rigid, environments to reduce substance abuse. Parents should also be aware that when their children are at home with no adults present, they may have more opportunity for substance abuse.

Preparedness for class - the results reveal the following relationships between the preparedness and the independent variables: Schools in which pupils reported being bored more often were low achieving, had poorer self - concepts, participated more in out-of-class activities, and had negative perceptions of their school, had pupils who were more often unprepared for class.

- Large schools in which teachers more often tracked and corrected homework had pupils who were more prepared for class.
- Schools in which pupils spend more time at home with no adult present had pupils who were less prepared for class.

Results consistent with past research include the relationships between preparedness and parental supervision, self-perceptions, achievement, school enrollment, pupils' perception of school, pupil boredom and teacher feedback. The results suggest that Mamelodi schools can increase their pupils' preparedness for class by reducing pupil boredom (e.g. by improving teaching/curriculum or tailoring curriculum to pupil needs) trying to increase pupil self-esteem and sense of control (e.g. through counselling activities, increased pupil responsibility, or pupil input into school decisions), restricting the time pupils spend out-of-class activities, and encouraging teachers to provide feedback to pupils.

Classroom behaviours - The relationship between the availability of counselling services and classroom behaviour seems counter intuitive. Schools could reduce classroom behaviour by improving the pupil-teacher relationship, for example, school counsellors could serve as mediators in pupil-teacher conflicts, or in-service training could be used to help teachers improve their relationships with pupils.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were several limitations to this study. First, because of the nonexperimental nature of the research, no causal relationship can be specified. This study's results can only suggest possible causal relationships and areas for further research. Future research should attempt to use longitudinal data that will investigate these relationships further. Second, this study had the same problems as other studies that relied on questionnaire research including subjective response scales and inability to fully define constructs. Third, although attempts were made to eliminate highly correlated/redundant variables, there was some intercorrelation among the independent variables that may have affected the results. Finally, some important predictors may have been omitted from the regression models, particularly community characteristics such as crime level, political violence, racism and homelessness, which have been shown to be related to pupil behaviour.

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