DUT DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

The Nature and Causes of Violence Among Learners

Within One Primary School In Umlazi Township, Durban

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Technology in the Department of Public Management in the Faculty of Management Sciences at the Durban University of Technology.

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ABSTRACT

The overall aim of this study was to examine the circumstances under which violence occured among learners at Phatheka Primary School, situated in the township of Umlazi, and in doing so explore the causes of violence among learners at this school. The study further aimed to explore the complicit role of the school as an agent in shaping the manner in which learners relate to violence and vis à vis shaping learner behaviour. The research was driven by three objectives: Firstly, to investigate the gendered, class and ethnic nature of perpetrators and victims of school violence. Secondly, to examine the intra-group interactions among peers and their positioning of each other in terms of violent behaviour. Lastly, to explore how the discipline regime of the school shaped the constructions of violent and peaceful behaviour among learners.

The qualitative research approach was utilised to obtain detailed and rich data. Ten educators and ten learners were purposively chosen from one urban primary school in the Umlazi Township. The ten learners that were interviewed, were identified from teachers' observations of conflict situations at the school, in the classroom and on the playground. The ten most senior educators formed the sample of educators for this study. Seniority was determined according to the number of years the educator had been teaching at this school. Four of the most senior male educators and six of the most senior female educators were selected.

The data was collected through face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews. The composition of the group consisted of learners with different interests and cultures in order to stimulate debate. The questions asked in the focus group interviews were similar to the questions used in individual interviews to broaden the data by comparing the responses of respondents when they were on their own, to their responses in a group situation.. The data analysis process was organised according to the research questions and based on themes that emerged from the contents of the interviews. A list of themes was formed of each transcript. These themes were then grouped and organised according to similarities. The list of themes was compared to the data and codes were allocated. The data was then divided and organised into categories, relevant themes and sub-themes.

The findings of this study revealed that violence at this school was mainly interpersonal. Physical violence at this school took the form of hitting, kicking, punching, slapping and other acts that caused physical pain or injury. This study found that many learners believed that certain types of muthi provided advantage to the user in conflicts and fights. Many boys at this school used vernacular expressions of stick fighting to reinforce their dominance over other boys, as metaphors of manhood that bolstered their position among peers. Physical confrontation often involved the use of sticks. Labelling also served as a trigger to ignite violence among learners. Learners labelled each other in terms of their physical appearance, their citizenship as well as their academic performance. There was strong evidence from learners' interviews that they competed and labelled each other around issues of classroom

practices and academic performance. This created tension among the learners which also led to physical confrontation and violence. Many boys subscribed to certain hegemonic notions of masculinity which created a mentality where the boys demanded respect and exercised power over girls. Boys often used violence or the threat of violence to claim and exercise this power. Romantic relationships with girls often caused boys at Phatheka to get into conflict situations in their attempts to avoid humiliation, to prove heterosexuality and to enjoy a particular status at the school. This study found that a large proportion of learners who reacted with violence when provoked, had learnt this behaviour through role models provided by parents, siblings, relatives and community members, either directly or indirectly, and that this was often reinforced at school by peers, bullies and figures of authority. Role models actively encouraged learners to defend themselves, or to solve problems, by means of force and aggression, which contributed significantly to shaping violent behaviour among learners.

This notion among the learners at Phatheka Primary School that violence is the best way to resolve conflict, with or without weapons, meant that fighting became the norm at this school. Although school fights are common and every fight is different, this study found that some common causes do exist. It was also found that the school complicitly contributed to the violence among learners through school policies and the disciplinary practices of educators.

Key concepts: school violence, school discipline, gender.

DECLARATION

The Nature and Causes of Violence Among Learners Within One Primary School In Umlazi Township, Durban

I declare that the thesis herewith for the MTech: Public Management at the Durban University of Technology is my own original work and that it has not been previously submitted for a degree or examination at any other university. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.

_____

Angel Duduzile Dlungwane

I hereby approve the final submission of the following thesis.

_____

Dr Vijay Hamlall

On this _____ day of _____ 2017, at the Durban University of Technology.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis especially to:

My parents, Mrs Norah Ntombifuthi Dlungwane and the late Mr Muziwabantu Before Dlungwane, who struggled to build my future and who taught me the value of education and from whom I shall continue to draw inspiration.

My son, Mzuvele Malaza, for his support, patience and understanding when I was not around him during my studies.

And

To my nieces, Hlengiwe and Lungile, who looked after my family during my studies, as well as to my siblings for their encouragement and great support. May this study inspire you that hard work and sacrifice will be followed by success or good outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY

COSATU- Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSVR- Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation
DUT- Durban University of Technology
ICAPAP- International Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Association and Allied Professions
NGO- Non-Government Organisation
NSVS- National School Violence Study
SACE- South African Council for Educators
SADTU- South African Democratic Teachers Union
SAPS- South African Police Services
SASA- South African Schools Act
SBV- School-Based Violence
SMT- School Management Team
SRGBV- School-Related Gender-Based Violence
SWPBS- School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support
UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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Chapter 1: General overview of the study

Introduction

The content of this chapter includes the background, rationale and motivation for the study. Outlined is the problem statement along with the focus of the study. Furthermore, this chapter clarifies the overall aim of this research study, the questions of the research, as well as the ultimate goals of the study. Highly imperative aspects of the conceptual framework are described. The brief outline of the research design, data analysis, organisation of the remaining chapters and a chapter summary concludes the chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

This study examines the current status of violence at a primary school in the Umlazi Township and the contributing factors that lead to violence among learners.

Violence in schools is a problem all over the world and South African schools are no exception. It was stated in the constitution (South Africa 1996: 3) that everybody needs to reside within a safe environment. However, the provision of safety is only impartially achieved in South African schools owing to violence. The media is flooded with terrible reports of many different occurences of violence in our schools.

While violence among learners is the main focus of the study, other basic concerns related to this problem are also investigated and discussed. The research study explored the different kinds of violence that learners at this particular school encountered and some of the issues that contributed to these problems. Harsh forms of discipline and control often lead to learners also adopting violent ways of resolving conflict. Shaikhnang (2012: 75) in his study argues that, for a school to be regarded as a social institution, it needs to have certain basic regulations controlling and directing the behaviour of its members, the majority of whom are learners. For the purpose of confidentiality, the pseudonym "Phatheka Primary School" was used throughout the study instead of the actual name of the school. The researcher is an educator, but not employed at Phatheka Primary School. Phatheka Primary School is located within a poverty stricken community where some learners do not live with their immediate families. These learners are raised under single-parent headed households due to employment-related immigration, teenage pregnancy and orphanage resulting from HIV/AIDS. Similar living conditions among the learners increase feelings of worthlessness, helplessness and frustration, emanating in anger and acts of violence at school. The school atmosphere must be safe and secured for effectual education and learning to occur. Lack of infrastructure and official security presence adds to learners feeling unsafe and threatened within the school environment as there is no form of protection against violent behaviour from other learners. Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 87), as well as Duma (2013: 2) and Mthiyane (2013: 2) in their studies of school based violence reveal that the increase of incidences of violence in schools in South Africa is very worrying. Journalists, both online and in

newspapers, report daily about cases of abusive acts that are physically, sexually and gang-associated in local schools. It has become standard practice to carry weapons to school such as knives and guns. All of this has highlighted the escalation of crime and violence that the society experiences. It is to be expected that this would impact negatively on the educational system and on the dynamics of the school environment (Mncube and Harber 2013).

In the township of Umlazi the prevalence of violence is serious. Dzanibe (2014: 1) reported that learners went on the rampage at the embattled Vukuzakhe Secondary School at L Section, Umlazi, attacking the teachers and stoning their cars. As a result, 32 of the 44 teachers employed at the school stayed away for two weeks. In another incident, Maluleka (2010: 1) reported that two pupils from Umlazi schools died after being stabbed in incidents of violence at school. While there are no official media reports about the research study school, community stories about violence at this school are known to everybody. Verbal harassment, threats, bullying and violence are part of daily life for learners at this school. In this community, most people are unemployed and the crime rate is high, with a high rate of drug and alcohol abuse contributing to the social ills of the community.

Internal and external factors all contribute to the problem of school violence. These are often interconnected with the school's physical location and the socio-economic status within which it operates (Duma 2013: 3). For example, many learners come from situations where abuse is the norm and therefore they transfer that way of behaving into social situations on the playground or in the classroom. School-based violence affects both primary and secondary schools and has negative repercussions for learners (Mthiyane 2013: 8). The biggest challenge for the South African education system lies in promoting and ensuring safety of all learners and educators in schools (Mthiyane 2013: 5). Mthiyane further argues that the government has introduced numerous pieces of legislation, policies and programmes (banning corporal punishment at schools, mandating schools to have codes of conduct for learners, allowing schools to search learners for dangerous weapons and banning initiation of learners at school) to stem the tide of violence besetting schools with very little tangible proof that it is succeeding.

1.2 Rationale and motivation for the study

School violence is a key challenge confronting numerous educators in educational institutions and is obstructing the process of teaching and learning (Scott and Hargreaves 2015: 244). It has caused some teachers to leave the teaching profession, while others express their intention of doing so (Higgs 2011: 8, Stander 2010: 3). School violence has affected student teacher recruitment negatively, as people have become reluctant to become teachers (Higgs 2011: 8, Stander 2010: 3). Personal experience of the researcher as an educator in witnessing various forms of school violence such as fighting among learners, stabbings of learners by other learners, bullying, gangsterism, verbal abuse of learners towards other learners and educators has been the greatest motivation for undertaking this study. Present-day learners' misbehaviours, either internal or external to the school premises, cause disruption and

disturbance to the learning atmosphere, resulting in learners' poor academic performance (Scott and Hargreaves 2015: 244).

According to Jacobs (2012: 4), research from a variety of disciplines has shown that there is insufficient understanding of learner violence in schools. The main focus of this research is to investigate the causes of violent acts among learners within one primary school in the Umlazi district and the extent to which this school creates conditions for, or reduces the possibilities of violence between and amongst learners. This focus is addressed by investigating the cultural influences, labelling, competition and gender issues that influence aggressive and violent behaviour among learners.

Beyond any doubt, discipline problems and associated outbreaks of violence, have reached unprecedented proportions (John 2013). An important aim of this study is to make practical recommendations on how teachers can manage and lessen violence among learners. Moreover, the current essence of knowledge will be supported and extended through the findings of this study. It should be of great assistance to educators as it will enable them to embrace further progressive ways of creating a discipline-orientated culture and peace amongst learners. Furthermore, the study hopes to help educators to develop independent, different methods of handling learner violence in line with their personalities and philosophies, considering the necessities and social realities faced by the school and the community.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The statement of the problem in qualitative research, offers a rationale for studying a specific matter (Creswell 2007).

School violence promotes insufficient productivity within the schools; it results in ineffective teaching time and subjects learners and teachers to dangerous conditions (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 7).

Ngqela and Lewis (2012: 87) argue that township schools are more prone to violence than their suburban counterparts. Maphosa and Shumba (2010: 390) confirm that violent behaviour presents a challenge in South African schools, especially those situated in disadvantaged areas where learners have to deal with threats, physical confrontations, bullying and assaults on a daily basis. Phatheka Primary, which is situated in a poor socio-economic community in the township of Umlazi, is no exception. Serame *et al.* (2013: 1) argue that ill-discipline and violence contribute to a culture of disrespect and immorality. As far as educators try to be encouraging and effecting positive educational dynamics among learners, the social environment, which should be conducive to this objective, is disintegrating. This is not only demoralising, but also a demotivating situation faced by educators in South Africa.

Drawing from both the literature review and the researcher's personal encounters as an educator, learner violence has proved to be an obstacle for educators in performing their tasks. Scholars concerned with educational issues (for example Smit 2013: 345 and Rampa 2014) have directed attention to the fact that educators lack sufficient information or the required expertise to regulate and control violence amongst learners in the classrooms. This stems from a lack of understanding the causes of learner violence (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 7).

Violence in schools is a multi-layered challenge and understanding and determining the reasons for its existence has been problematic for scholars and professionals alike. This study examines the different types of interpersonal violence among learners and the causes of this violence which is contextualised within one primary school in the Umlazi district in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.4 Focus of the study

The main focus was to explore the causes of interpersonal violence among learners and the extent to which this school created conditions for - or reduced the possibilities of - violence between and amongst learners.

Before discussing the focus of this research, the approach of the research in terms of the causes of violence, will be clarified. According to Burton (2007: 12) there are different causes of violence. He explains that it tends to be, "a series of interconnected factors [that] impact on young people in different ways, one of which be in the perpetrating of violent acts against other young people and society in general". He states that it is unfair and impossible to single out one reason for the high rate of violence in schools. It tends to rather be a variety of related and interconnected factors that are compounded and that contribute to the extreme level of violent actions amongst children of South Africa, which spills over into their school environment. Burton (2008) argues that, in order to understand the reasons for violent behaviour within the schools, one must investigate and examine the wider environment that surrounds the learning institution especially household circumstances and the greater society. This should mean that violence is not only reduced to the individuals guilty of the acts, but that the society contributing to the problem, is addressed too.

This focus has been addressed by investigating various situations and conditions within the school and beyond that influenced learner violence referred to as causes in this study. Guided by this focus, the study investigated the various causes of learner violence and how the school steered the manner in which violence was handled by the learners. To support this investigation, the study explored where aggressive behaviours stem from, as well as factors that lead to aggressive behaviour becoming more intense. Furthermore, this study investigated how the practice of educators encouraged or discouraged conflict resolution and violence, as well as the measures that were in place at this school to control learner

behaviour. What impact did these conditions and practices have on conflict and violence among the learners at this school?

1.5 Research aims and objectives

The overall goal of this study was to explore the circumstances under which violence occured among learners at Phatheka Primary School (situated in the township of Umlazi) and in doing so, to investigate the causes of violence among learners at this school. The study further aimed to explore the complicit role of the school as an agent in shaping the manner in which learners relate to violence and vis-à-vis shaping learner behaviour.

The following were secondary objectives:

- To investigate the gender, class and ethnic nature of perpetrators and victims of school violence.
- To examine the intra-group interactions among peers and their positioning of each other in terms of violent behaviour.
- To explore how the discipline regime of the school shape the constructions of violent and peaceful behaviour among learners

The following questions drove this research study:

1. Who were the perpetrators of violence at the school?

2. Who were the victims of violence at the school?

3. What were the main causes of violence among learners at the school?

4. What was the role of peers in the perpetration of violence?

5. How did the school discipline system influence violence among learners?

6. How did teachers' handling of discipline influence violent behaviour among learners?

1.6 Definition of key concepts

The comprehensive descriptions of key concepts frequently utilised in this research study are presented below:

1.6.1. School violence

According to De Wet (2016: 1) a range of forms of violence, from psychological to physical, are found in schools. These include assault (physical or sexual); rape; hazing and initiation. Milder forms of violence like intimidation, sexual harassment, gangsterism, drug trading

robbery and theft occur regularly, while vandalism and racially encouraged learner protests are usually the result of protests in the community (SACE 2011 cited in De Wet 2016: 1).

According to Miller and Kraus (2010: 15):

"School violence includes, but is not limited to such behaviours as child and teacher victimisation, child and/or teacher perpetration, physical and psychological exploitation, cyber victimisation, cyber intimidation, fighting, bullying, classroom disruption, physical and psychological injury to teacher and student, cult-related behaviour and result activities, sexual and other boundary violations, and use of weapons in the school environment." This study understands school violence to mean child and/or teacher perpetration, physical and psychological exploitation, cyber victimisation, cyber intimidation, fighting, bullying, classroom disruption, physical and psychological injury to teacher and student, cult-related behaviour and result activities, sexual and other boundary violations, and use of weapons in the school environment.

De Wet (2007: 249) argues that many school community members, inclusive of students, teachers, non-teaching staff, visitors or parents and even the public could be affected by violence at the school in the form of threats, intimidation, abuse, or assault and that these should all be included in the broader term of school violence.

1.6.2 School discipline

According to Ahmad (2011), school discipline is defined as a code of conduct, with punishments and policies appropiate to the offense to regulate learners' behaviour and the maintainance of order within the schools. It's purpose should be to establish a non-violent and effectual learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Thomson Reuters (2016) states that discipline refers to the control gained by imposing obedience. He explains that discipline is usually achieved by certain rules for behaviour that institutions (like schools) create and that need to be adhered to by their members (learners). In terms of individual self-discipline, it refers to self-control and to the ability of individuals to resist augment, and to act cooperatively to the benefit of both the individual and the community around him/her. These definitions have been central to educators' efforts and needs to find the effective and suitable, constructive ways to support the development of learners and learning.

The term *discipline* has been purposively used in this research study to imply a "state of mind", a prequisite to control, organise and conduct order and obedience among learners at school for effeive teaching and learning.

1.6.3 Gender

According to Siann (2013: 3), gender refers to:

". . . the way in which culture defines and restrains not only the differences in the way in which women, in general, live their lives compared to men, but also the differences in the way in which individuals view both themselves and others, in terms of female or male dichotomy."

Siann further states that gender and the labelling linked to it - there are certain primary descriptors, "feminine and masculine" - are neither invariable nor unchallengeable, varying on cultural formation.

According to Brannon (2016: 9), gender is regarded as social labelling and not as a biological description. The features assigned by culture to each gender, and gender-related features that persons ascribe to themselves, are included in this labelling.

According to Nanda (2014: 2) gender is a matter of social, cultural and psychological constructions that are based on the biological differences of sex. He feels that this difference between sex and gender, courtesy of the social scientists, has been useful in challenging the notion that biological sex "regulates the roles and powers of men and women in society". Social scientists viewed biological sex (male versus female) as "natural" and universal; and gender (the opposition of man and woman) as culturally constucted and variable. This distinction was a step toward moving away from biological deteminism, especially with regards to the undermining of women's roles.

This study used the term gender, with the aim of investigating violence that takes place among learners because of their culturally constructed gender roles and perception.

1.7 Review of literature

De Vos *et al.* (1998 cited in Tiwani 2010: 8) interpret the purpose of literature review as "the contribution towards a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem under investigation".

In this research study, literature is used to obtain a more clear understanding of impacts of school violence among learners. Various sources such as journal articles, books and dissertations on school violence, as well as reports from organisations, newspaper articles and policy statements were reviewed.

1.8 Research design and methodology

A summary of the research design and methodology is provided below:

1.8.1 Research design

Duma (2013: 6) stated that the design of the research is of utmost importance in planning how the research study will be conducted. Therefore, the researcher should systematically collect and analyse the information required to reply to the research questions. A research design would develop once the researcher gained clarity of the research questions.

In the context of this research study, the method of qualitative research was purposefully utilised in obtaining detailed and rich data. According to Tiwani (2010: 9) qualitative research values expressive data, captured in the participant's own written or spoken words. It is also essential to be able to classify the respondent's beliefs and values that underlie the research question. Qualitative research is more concerned with understanding the issues at hand, than explaining them. Observation of real-life manifestations, as well as the subjective investigation of these realities, are more important than controlled measurements.

In this study, data collected through interviews and data analysis were utilised as means of gathering information.

1.8.2 Sampling

In this study, one primary school in Umlazi township had been chosen. A sample of ten educators and ten learners at this school were used to collect data. Educators should assist the researcher in the selection of learners as participants in the study. Nieuwenhuis (2007 cited in Duma 2013: 8) argues that, in order to obtain detailed and rich data, purposive sampling needs to be employed. This means that the context and participants need to be chosen as a result of certain defining features which would make them suitable to the study, thereby serving as valuable sources of information. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting educators and learners to be interviewed. The researcher was of the view that the most senior educators at this establishment were in the best position to supply rich data that allowed for multi-faceted description during the analysis phase. Furthermore, the researcher found that learners who were directly involved in conflict situations and those that refuted violence, were more able to explain the factors that influence violent reactions or outcomes to conflict situations.

Ten educators and ten learners were purposively chosen from one urban primary school in the Umlazi Township. The ten learners that were interviewed were identified from teachers' observations of conflict situations at the school in the classroom and on the playground. The teachers identified those learners who diffused the conflict peacefully and those who fostered violent reactions. The learners were chosen from the senior primary phase, (ten to fifteen years of age). The ten most senior educators formed the sample of educators for this study. Seniority was based on the number of years the educators had taught at this school. Four of most senior male educators and six of the most senior female educators were selected.

1.8.3 Methods of data collection

This study utilised interviews which were conducted face-to-face and focus group interviews. These methods were chosen to facilitate better understanding of the participants' views and perceptions. Data was collected to examine the contributing factors of violence at school among learners and the school's role in reducing violence at school. The interviews were conducted after school in the staffroom. Data was collected using a dictaphone.

1.8.4 Process of data analysis

In this study the transcription of interviews was coded using pseudonyms. Common views were clustered to form various themes. According to Duma (2013: 8) analysis, at whatever stage, is necessary because the process and the product of analysis provide the basis for interpretation. This study analysed data according to themes from the findings.

1.8.5 Ethical issues

Conen *et al* (2008 cited in Duma 2013: 9) argue that all participants need to be assured of the confidentiality regarding their identities. It is very essential to inform the participants that the information will be made available in public. The participants would be provided with feedback.

This study was part of a project. Ethical clearance was sought and granted by Durban University of Technology. A letter requesting permission was sent to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, the selected school, parents of the learners' who were selected to take part in this study, as well as to educators chosen to be part of this study before conducting this research.

1.9 Organisation of chapters

The research study is divided into the following five chapters:

The preliminary chapter is Chapter One that includes the background of the study, the rationale and motivation for the study, the problem statement, the focus of the study, the research aims, questions and objectives. It also provides the description of key terms utilised as the basic terminology of the study.

Chapter Two reviews international and national literature on school violence. In this chapter, various types and causes of violence occurring at schools of South Africa are investigated.

Chapter Three provides the research design and methodology which is situated within the interpretative paradigm using a qualitative research approach. This chapter also explains the sampling and selection, data collection and processing of data.

Chapter Four presents, discusses and analyses data into various themes and sub-themes from the findings.

Chapter Five examines the role of the school in managing violence among learners at the school, which is summarised in conclusion at the end.

Chapter Six presents the conclusion and recommendations which are made based on the findings of the study.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overall view of the context of this study, the background to the study and the school selected as the research site. The purpose of and rationale for the study were specified and the main research questions were formed. The research design and methodology were described and the field of study was demarcated.

This study provides and extends the existing learner violence literature and aims to create a broader insight of the causes of violence in the schooling context which may assist educators in promoting positive learning. This chapter explained the key objectives of the study and the methods which are going to be employed to attain the aforesaid objectives. Lastly, a summary of this study was presented. The following chapter undertakes a review of the literature that has a bearing on the key research questions of this study.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

In this chapter, a range of related literature will be examined which have a common bearing on the key research question of this thesis which is to explore the status of violence at this school and the contributing factors that lead to violence among learners. Presenting the main conceptions that underpin the research study, and to identify and discuss the literature surrounding these conceptions is the aim of this literature review. The chapter begins with a short introduction outlining the problem of school violence both internationally and locally. The rest of the chapter is discussed under the following sub-headings: Definition of Violence, Theoretical Framework, The Legislative Context and School Violence, Issues of School Violence, Violence in South African Schools, International Studies of School Violence, The Causes of School Violence, and The Effects of School Violence.

This research study focuses on challenges of school violence predominantly at the micro-level. If these challenges are not resolved at micro-level, it has further ramifications in the meso-level and macro-level (Ward 2007: 13). The literature investigates local and international studies in order to make sense of issues relating to the micro-level. Maphumulo (2010 cited in Jacobs 2014: 2) states that the printed media regularly informs the public about incidences of school violence, for instance learners being assaulted and killed and learners using weapons like scissors, knives and firearms to injure each other. Jacobs (2014: 2) states that educators and learners are portrayed as both victims and perpetrators in that the violent relationships include learners to learners, learners against teachers and teachers against learners.

The school violence problem has become one of the most pervasive issues of education in schools internationally (Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 204). Physical fights are often cited as the most common type of school violence, particularly at primary school level (Antonowicz 2010: 6). Abusing power can also be violence in the case of bullying (Piotrowski and Hoot 2008: 357). According to Kapari (2010: 95) there is a link between the internal characteristics of a school and school violence. Kapari (2010: 96) interprets these internal characteristics according to the clarity of rules, fairness of rules, perception of school safety, the nature of the school's response to violence, respect for students and student influence in decision making. Oosthuizen and Roos (2003: 39 cited in Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 204) describe a secure environment as ". . . a place where a learner adapts to the school rules". They argue that there are numerous intertwined issues which affect both the perpetrators and the victims of violence and that these factors seldom function in isolation. A wider view of learner violence is therefore essential. (Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 204).

The researcher widely reviewed literature on school violence, concerning causes and outcomes of this problem (Mncube and Harber 2012: 13; Enescu 2012: 4), as well as its nature and effects (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 8; Bester and Du Plessis 2010: 224).

2.1 Definition of violence

This is a brief review of the different definitions of violence that exist, followed by an explanation of the reasons for selecting a particular definition to operate in this thesis.

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation, but acknowledges that the inclusion of 'the use of power' in its definition expands on the conventional meaning of the phrase.

This description links intent with the perpetrating of the act itself, regardless of the consequences it produces . Jacobs (2014: 2) explains that "anything that is turbulent or excited in an injurious, damaging or destructive way, or presenting concomitant risk may be described as violent or as occurring violently, even if not violence (by a person, against a person)".

According to the Department of Education (2014: 1) violence and other types of abusive acts are often behaviours meant to create and exert control over families, partners, colleagues, persons or groups. Whereas violent abusers are usually known by their victims (family members, estranged, intimate partners, peers, or colleagues), acts of violence and abuse may also be committed by strangers.

According to the Department of Education (2014: 1) violence is divided into six distinct forms:

1. Physical violence occurs when someone uses physical actions or an object to control a person's actions.
2. Sexual violence occurs when someone is forced to take part in sexual activity.
3. Emotional violence is comitted when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.
4. Psychological violence occurs when someone intimidates and causes fear in an individual to gain control.
5. Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual views to manipulate, dominate or control that person.
6. Cultural violence occurs when someone is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition.

Krug *et al.* (2002, as cited in Encyclopedia of Violence 2014: 1) state that "violence can be divided into three broad categories according to the differentiating features of those committing the violent act, that is: self-directed violence, collective violence and interpersonal violence".

Self-directed violence is further divided into suicidal notions and self-abuse which involves self-harming thoughts, attempted suicides - also known as parasuicide or intentional self-injury in certain countries - and accomplished suicides.

Collective violence is further divided into social, political and economic violence. This violence contains certain actions which stem from a power relationship, including threats and intimidation, neglegence or acts of omission, to the more observable violent acts. Violence has a wide variety of negative consequences, which includes psychological harm, deprivation and maldevelopment. It is possible for violence to not lead to injury or death, however it poses considerable burden on individuals, families, societies and the health care system worldwide. Various different types of violence against women, children and the elderly, for example, can end in physical, psychological and social difficulties. These outcomes can be instant, as well as latent, and can have a continuous existence for years after the initial abuse. Defining results exclusively in terms of injury or death therefore limits the understanding of the complete effect of violence.

The focus of this study is interpersonal violence among learners. While the definition of violence can be approached from many perspectives (as can be gathered from the above review), this study adopts the definition of interpersonal violence advanced by Hearn (1998: 16) where he argues that interpersonal violence directly refers to physical violence from one person to another in a specific, distinguishable circumstance or situation.

This definition of interpersonal violence is very relevant to this study as interpersonal violence directly refers to violence from one person to another in a distinguishable circumstance and is often physical in nature (Hearn 1998: 16). The declaration of constitutional law by South Africa (1998) states that physical violence is often referred to as "beating" which includes acts such as hitting, kicking, punching, slapping, stabbing, or any other act that causes physical pain or injury to a person. Violence in this study is therefore understood to be physical in nature, that is, the infliction of bodily harm on another person (Archer and Browne 1989: 11).

2.2 Theoretical framework

The theoretical frame of this research study is cast in a socio-constructivist approach which is guided by the perspective that behaviour is socially constructed according to the social conditions in which people are situated (Connell 1995).

According to Baran and Davis (2006: 382):

> Social constructionism argues that once social institutions such as schools, churches, businesses and military organisations are constructed, the individual's power to oppose or reconstruct these institutions is limited. Its proponents see these institutions dominating the practice of culture on a day-to-day basis.

The social theory school is also regarded as the social construction of reality (Baran and Davis 2006: 382). Social constructionists perceive social constructions to exert considerable power over culture and, due to this perception with regard to culture, they argue that society is governed by a reality beyond our control.

According to Andrews (2012: 1):

> Social constructionism originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality. It has its origins in sociology and has been associated with the post-modern era in qualitative research.

According to Hammersley (1992) "social constructionism is basically of an anti-realist, relativist stance". Charmaz (2000: 509) argues that the impact of social constructionism is a present concern in founded theory and, as such, a comprehension of its basic conceptions is essential in assessing its impact on the methodology. Constructivism suggests that each person psychologically builds the world of experience through reasoning procedures, whereas social constructionism has a social rather than a cognitive focus (Young and Colin 2004: 373).

According to Burr (2015: 1):

> Social constructionism can be understood as a theoretical orientation which, to a greater or lesser degree, reinforces all newer approaches, which are presently offering radical and critical alternatives in psychology and social psychology, as well as in other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Furthermore, social constructionism draws its tenets from a number of disciplines, including philosophy, sociology and linguistics, making it multidisciplinary in nature.

Social constructionism focuses mainly on explaining and clarifying the ways in which people come to describe, explain and make sense of the world in which they live (Gergen and Davis 2012: 9). It also tries to make common forms of understanding relevant as they exist in the presenet, as well as the way they have existed in past historical eras, and might still exist in the future. From a theoretical perspective, social constructionism has traditionally been related to and connected to the sociology of knowledge. In essence, it believes that:

> Cultural knowledge and representations of reality are interactionally constructed, socially transmitted, historically sedimented and frequently institutionally congealed,

and finally communicatively reproduced on site (Gunnarsson, Linell and Nordberg 2014: 1).

2.3 The legislative context and school violence

In this section the legislation is outlined that governs and protects learners' safety and security in schools and in the country. This will serve to inform later analysis of the manner in which the school handles violence and regulates learners' behaviour.

In South Africa, to learn in a safe and secured surroundings is a constitutional right (Mgijima 2014: 198). According to Mgijima (2014: 199), the Bill of Rights, included in the Constitution, assures all South Africans the right to human dignity, equality, freedom and security. The declaration of human rights by South Africa (1996) entitles everybody to the right to be protected against being treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading manner. The South African Schools Act (SASA) (1996) states that:

> Nobody may allow any dangerous object on the public school premises, carry any dangerous object in the public school premises, or cause any form of violence or trouble which can negatively impact on any public school activities.

The declaration of SASA (1996) also states that the principal of each school is responsible for making sure that learners are not subjected to crimen injuria and other harmful acts like assault, harassment, wrongful treatment, degradation, public humiliation or intimidation from educators or fellow learners.

Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools (South Africa 2002: 68) defines crimen injuria as "the illegal and intentional violation of the dignity or privacy of another, in circumstances where such violation is not of a trifling nature". It also defines assault as intentional threatening or intimidation of another person, accompanied by personal violence which would make the threatened person believe that the other has the power and intention to carry out the threat. Lastly, it also defines in loco parentis, as "someone who has been appointed in a parental position who has entrusted the custody and control of his or her child to an educator or another person during normal intramural or extramural school activities".

It was stated in the policy (South Africa 2002: 69) that every learner has the right to freedom and security of his or her person, which includes the right to be dafe from different forms of violence or assault, and also to not be treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman, or degrading way. The Regulations to Prohibit Initiation Practices in Schools (South Africa 2002: 69) state that a safe environment is one that is contributes positively to education. In order to achieve this, the environment needs to ensure the security of property and person. School facilities need to be well-maintained, including school furniture and equipment and toilet facilities. It needs to be free from harassment in attending classes, writing tests and examinations, and

when participating in extramural activities or sport. These aspects all contribute to a positive learning environment and all-round education of learners**.**

Following these regulations, Mgijima (2014: 199) emphasises the role of any person who acts in loco parentis, to take effective measures to protect the learner from every form of physical or psychological violence, including sexual abuse. This study examines the role of the school in implementing these policies and the factors that influence in the enactment of these policies.

2.4 Violence in South African schools

Violence in South African schools has reached alarming proportions (Stevens 2000). Conflict and violence has plagued South African schools since the 1970s. The involvement of school children in violence can be tracked back to the 1976 Soweto uprising where learners protested against unfair education policies regarding African learners (Morrell 2001). Other schools around the country were also affected by this action. In the 1980s, schools were used as sites for mobilising communities in their protest against apartheid. As reported in the White Paper (South Africa 1998: 3) these protest actions often turned violent and involved school children. The transformation from the apartheid education system to an inclusive system, has created new challenges for the youth of this country. Many of the youth are stressed by the new challenges and a new struggle has begun which include identity definitions, competition for resources, cultural intolerance and dealing with economic and social ills like crime and substance abuse (Independent Projects Trust, 1999).

Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 2) argue that the increase of violence in schools in South Africa proved to researchers that learning institutions are rapidly turning into places rife with violent behaviour, not just among learners but also among educators and learners, learners from other schools, and associated gang conflict. Because of extreme occurences of violence in schools, the schools are no longer regarded as safe and secure places where learners can learn, experience pleasure and feel protected.

Burton (2008a) found that "12.8% of the learners had been threatened with violence, 5.8% had been assaulted, 4.6% had been robbed, and 2.3% had experienced some form of sexual violence at school". These results reveal that learners are victimised by school violence as these occurences took place within the school premises (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 2).

The report on school violence by the Department of Justice (2010) suggests that "students aged twelve to eighteen years old were victims of approximately 828 000 non-fatal victimisations at school". This document (Department of Justice 2010) reported an increase in the number of deaths in recent years due to school shootings, as well as an increased need to implement of stronger safety and security measures in public schools. It also argued that youth were likely to engage in violent behaviour in and at schools due to a variety of risk factors. Aggressive bahaviour which often resulted in incidents of violence, seemed to be

aided by substance use, delinquency, and gang involvement in particular. The harmful behaviour further extended to learners who were exposed to violence at school as they subsequently suffered negative outcomes including alcohol and drug use, depression, anxiety, trauma and physical injury, even fatality. It was stated that ". . . treatment and prevention efforts may mediate the relationship between exposure to school violence and adverse outcomes".

Ntuli (2015: 1) reports that South Africa is the second country after Jamaica with the most incidents of violence at schools. These negative statistics were declared by the South African Council of Educators (SACE) chairwoman, Veronica Hofmeester, during the SA Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) seminar on violence at schools, which took place in Durban (2015), attended by principals from all over the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Hofmeester, who is also the deputy president of SADTU, said according to reports, that 22% of learners in South Africa had been threatened with violence, assaulted, robbed or sexually assaulted at school. "The National School Violence study revealed that learners were perpetrators of 90% of the violence that happens in schools, whether against other learners or teachers", she said (Ntuli 2015: 1). The statistics indicated that about 24% of the province's learners between the ages of seven and eighteen had endured violence and verbal abuse at school.

2.5 International studies of school violence

Pinheiro (2006 cited in Mncube and Harber 2013: 3) argues that internationally, violence not only affects schools, but is also perpetuated by schools. Williams (2009 cited in Mncube and Harber 2013: 3) argue that in England, for instance, approximately 14 learners from the age of five and above are suspended daily from school for violent behaviour in the form of pushing and shoving an educator or other learners. Girls in Nepal reported "being sexually harassed by male learners and being subjected to inappropriate touching by male teachers, who touched their buttocks, breasts and even undid their bras" (Mncube and Harber 2013: 3). The United International Children's Emergency Fund organisation, UNICEF, (2009 cited in Mncube and Harber 2013: 4) contends that in Brazil, nearly 75% of the 4150 schools included in a national survey, reported acts of violence. The investigation revealed that the most regular type of violence among learners was physical aggression (66%), followed by adult aggression towards children and adolescents (28%) and derogatory comments (20%). De Mattos (2009 cited in Mncube and Harber 2013: 4) argues:

> Reviewing the level of school failure in Brazil from 1996 to 2006 has shown that violence promotes failure but that, at the same time, school failure has in turn been generating violent practices among teachers and learners, leading to young people being excluded from educational opportunities.

The International Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Association and The Professions Associations (ICAPAP) that represents 37 countries, classified Romania in the top group of schools with high incidence of violence, while Holland was one of the schools with the lowest

incidence of violence in schools, scoring only 7% (Enescu 2012: 4). The research has proven that from the seventh or eighth year of primary school education at least two out of ten learners are afraid of being bullied by their peers, teachers and even parents. Hungary is leading this rank with a score of 75%, while Romania holds a similar percentage of 70% of the learners joining lessons with fright and anxiety (Enescu 2012:4). According to the same study, the schools of Denmark and Singapore are the most safe schools, reporting only 6% and 8% of the learners not to feel safe within the schools respectively (Enescu 2012: 4).

Participation in academic activities seemed to make Asian American girls vulnerable to school-based victimisation, in contrast to girls from other racial and ethnic groups, for whom participation in academic activities were not related to school-based victimisation (Peguero and Popp 2012: 7). Lee (2009 cited in Peguero and Popp 2012: 7) argued that the "model minority" stereotype typically shows Asian Americans as role models for other minorities by setting the standard for the "ideal" youth and their school experiences. Peguero *et al.* (2008 cited in Peguero and Popp 2012:7) argued that taking part in some forms of activities in school may expose certain learners as suitable targets for victimisation. They argue that:

> . . . more specifically, learners who participate in academic activities such as the student government, the yearbook, the band, or the school play may be viewed as weak and susceptible to victimisation. The target suitability risk associated with academic activities is gender-biased. (Peguero *et al.* 2008 cited in Peguero and Popp 2012:7).

Wilcox *et al.* (2009 cited in Peguero and Popp 2012: 7) found the same phenomenon with regards to boys' participation in academic activities, as this made them more vulnerable too as targets for victimisation. In addition, their vulnerability is often increased as schools provide less guardianship and supervision after school hours.

Sports participation at school seems to be a favourable activity for European American boys, safeguarding them from victimisation, whereas participation in sport for ethnic minority boys seems to be a negative element in terms of exposing them to school-based victimisation. (Peguero and Popp 2010: 7). This is very unfortunate as Esbensen and Carson (2009 cited in Peguero and Popp 2012: 7) point out that taking part in school sports is frequently connected to developed and successful educational access and outcomes, while school-based victimisation is associated with reduced learning access and negative consequences.

2.6 Issues of school violence

While the earlier discussion focused on a general definition of violence, the issues of school violence will now be the focus.

Henry (2009: 1253 cited in Muschert *et al.* 2014: 161) describes violence at school as:

> . . . any acts, relationships, or processes that use power over others, exercised by whatever means, such as structural, social, physical, emotional, or psychological, in a school or school-related setting, or through the organization of schooling and that harming another person or group of people by reducing them from what they are, or by limiting them from becoming what they might become, for any period of time.

Schur (1980: 8 cited in Muschert *et al.* 2014: 175) declares that the definition of school violence involves not only groups who wield the power to impose or extend violence, but also others who deviate from favoured moral stances. Although transgressors are subjected to school-administered punishment, there is often also a process of stigmatisation that implies social standing or acceptability for these groups. Henry (2009:1269 cited in Muschert *et al.* 2014:175) concludes that in the wake of incidents of school violence,

> . . . although we can examine the psychological processes and situational explanations why students acted violently, we need to step outside of the micro-contexts to explore the wider framing discourses of gender and power, masculinity and violence, and social class and race that produce social exclusion, victimisation, anger, and rage.

In the sections to follow, these issues are explored in more detail.

The South African Council for Educators (2011: 4) has researched the far-reaching challenge of continuing violent behaviour in South African schools. The findings state that this challenge is the one that is a main issue to the government, the teaching profession, as well as civil society. According to Burton (2008: 11), there is increasing concern within South Africa that primary and secondary schools are more often becoming the sites of violent activities. According to Leoschut (2008) the problem of school-based violence is not a new phenomenon, but the progressively serious nature of the violents is what is more worrying. The sort of violence experienced by learners have moved on from typical bullying to more serious forms of victimisation that include the use of brute force. This is evident when 16-year-old Jacques Pretorius was killed with a samurai sword at a Technical High School on the West Rand in Gauteng in 2008. The research conducted by the South African Council for Educators (2011: 4) revealed dangerous consequences of school violence which involved the stabbing to death of a grade 9 learner by means of a pair of scissors; the axe killing of an eight-year-old boy by two peers; the stabbing to death of Mfundo Ntshangase, a grade 11 student, at a house party; and recurring violence in the form of shootings, assaults and rapes on the parks of schools on the Cape Flats. Burton (2007) states that:

> What is becoming evident in South African society, is that violence is a serious concern in both primary and secondary schools, across age, gender, race and school categories. Notably, not only learners, but also teachers, are being affected by the high rates of

violence in schools. The findings of the research is that in various circumstances learners are the perpetrators of the violence, with teachers also becoming the victims.

Being alert as to who the aggressors are in schools, allows authorities of the school to react properly and to attend the needs of the victims and perpetrators alike to avoid more victimisation (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 40). Institutions of learning require truthful and detailed information regarding the occurences of violence taking place in their amenities to be able to react appropriately. But this action on the part of people in authority depends on learners coming forth and reporting their experiences of violence and not being intimidated to do so (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 41).

A study conducted by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 4) adds that property destruction is also a considerable challenge in the schools. A teacher stated that:

> Vandalism is rife in our school. In the past, two six-year-olds entered our school, painted everything black and green (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 4).

One learner said:

> Our calculators and textbooks get stolen and sometimes our books are torn up. Doors are broken and door locks are stolen (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 4).

This shows that certain classrooms had damaged windowpanes and that many doors were now unlocked as the locks were destroyed. Drug abuse and gangsterism are prevalent in these schools. The respondents validated that gangsters continued to operate in their schools, which posed severe difficulty as there were no fences at their schools.

Jefthas and Arts (2007: 47) found that the most common type of violence in schools involves learners acting and bahaving aggressively towards other learners. They also found that the perpetrators were very often children using weapons such as knives and guns, engaging in forceful acts. Burton and Leoschut (2013: 33) reported the findings of the National Schools Violence Study (NSVS) (2012) that showed that, in more than 9 out of 10 cases of school-based violence, the perpetrator was a fellow learner. Burton (2008a: 37) contend that therefore fellow peers or classmates seem to be the leading perpetrators of school-based violence. Ward (2007: 114) argue similarly that "most victims of school-based violence reported that the perpetrators were either other learners or youth from outside the school". This study will focus largely on violence that involves learners.

2.6.1 Gender and violence in schools

According to the Department of Education (2015: 2):

> School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) is defined as acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools, perpetrated as a result of gender norms and stereotypes, and enforced by unequal power dynamics.

It is also refers to the dissimilarities between girls' and boys' experiences of, and susceptibilities to violence. School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) include explicit threats or acts of physical violence, bullying, verbal or sexual harassment, non-consensual touching, sexual coercion and assault, as well as rape.

Female students' educational progress is often undermined by their experiences of harmful acts such as bullying and sexual harassment (Peguero and Popp 2012: 2). Male students report more incidences of victimisation while on school grounds than female students (Peguero and Popp 2012: 2). Wilcox, Tillyer and Fisher (2009 cited in Peguero and Popp 2012: 2) found participation in academic activities to be associated with increased probabilities of assault and victimisation for both female and male students. "Both male and female learners are affected by violence. Nevertheless, certain types of assault have been more powerfully related to the individual sexes" (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 19). It seems that gender-based violence, acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape are experienced at far higher levels by female learners, while males are generally found to experience higher levels of physical assaults. When the victimisation rates were analysed together,the statistics pointed to a total of 24.3% of female learners falling victim to violence at school that year, compared to 19.7% of male learners (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 19).

According to Kapari (2010: 97) victimisation is found to be:

> . . . the result of bullying, which involves the exposure of a student or a group of students less powerful physically or psychologically to the intentional, systematic and unjustified aggressive behaviour of another student or group students that are more powerful. In other words, bullying and victimisation are considered as two different aspects of the same phenomenon (Kapari 2010: 97).

Burton and Leoschut (2013: 19) also reported from their study that both genders of learners had similar experiences of victimisation and suffering intimidation, as well as exposure to acts of violence, although the types of violence experienced was very distinct. Male learners seemed to be more guilty of, or exposed to, robbery and assault, while female learners experienced higher incidences of sexual assault, including rape (7.6%), compared to male learners (1.4%). In addition, female learners were often exposed to other types of victimisation taking place within the learning institution. Approximately one in seven female learners – a total of 15.1% – reported being victimised in ways other than the criminal

activities explored. Most of these incidents involved unwelcome touching (70%), being pushed or shoved into toilets (14.9%), being subjected to verbal abuse or teasing (6.8%), or being hit, punched or slapped (4.5%). These gender-based incidents involved either individual perpetrators or numerous perpetrators who tended primarily to be male (90%). Violence levelled against females is regularly undergirded by the intention to intimidate or humiliate, or serves the sexual interest and acts of bravado on the part of boys or men (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 20).

2.6.2 Power and violence in schools

According to Barker (2005: 6) violence occurs within specific structural dimensions and circumstances of power, social class structure and cultural context. Gendron *et al.* (2011: 152) stated that "students who are disconnected from significant others such as teachers, faculty, administration and other students could be less likely to act in a cooperative and pro-social manner". This could influence learners' perception of the acceptability of school violence negatively as these learners might come to view their schools as hostile, unfair, as well as non-supportive. This might cause them to lack a need or sense of adhering to rules.

Cuadrodo-Gordillo (2011: 75) maintains that "in order to support a culture of peace and non-violence, school administrators need to share power and distribute leadership". Liontos (1992 cited in Cuadrodo-Gordillo 2011: 75) argues that:

> Transformational leadership is a form of leadership representative of organisations that had participative decision-making and shared power. The suggestion of transformational or transactional leadership comes from the business world. In contrast, instructional leadership characterises school management that supports Western cultural values of war and violence (Cuadrodo-Gordillo 2011: 75).

The leadership and management model is a descending, pyramid structure, where learners and educators are closely observed.

Henry (2000: 21) stated that school violence often involves power being exercised over others in school related settings, denying those subjected to it their humanity to make a difference, either by reducing them from what they are or by limiting them from becoming what they might be. Mthiyane (2013: 82) argues that "all instances of violence relate to power relationships. Inherent in these relationships is the conflict emanating from the unequal statuses involved". Mthiyane (2013: 82) argues that violence is also perceived as a sign that an individual (or a group) is searching for power, but that they do not necessarily have it. It can also be a response to some threat or feeling of inadequacy, as with bullying. Pepper and Craig (2000 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 82) stated that, for example, a power relationship can be observed in many instances, such as in a bullying relationship (between the perpetrator and the victim) where there is systematic abuse of power and the victim is in a subservient position. Kiriakidis (2011 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 82) also posit that with bullying, there is

ordinarily an imbalance of power, physically (the victim may be smaller or weak), numerically (the number of bullies may be many) or psychologically (the victim may be less robust in comparison to the bully) and that it is accompanied with malicious intent. Peterson (2005 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 82) argues that violence and misbehaviour promote a culture and climate of concern and fear to both learners and teachers and that this sense of fear disempowers its victims. Mthiyane (2013: 82) argues that perpetrators of violence had some form of power over their victims and that victims felt powerless in these situations unless teachers intervened.

2.6.3 Masculinity and violence in schools

Witt (1997) contend that boys' and girls' initial exposure thoughtful to gender-role expectations stems from their caregivers. The most important institution in shaping the beliefs, attitudes and values of children, which has tendency to feed into socially based role stereotypes, is the family. Girls are obliged to be caring and sensitive, while boys are expected to be strong, brave and impassive. Boys are consequently socialised into aloof and independent ways of being in which they are encouraged to not cry, to be strong, and to be successful. The South African Council for Educators (2011: 9) has found that boys tend to repeat the violent acts and powerseeking nature of adult males. It can be argued that these constructions of masculinity are what society expects of boys and that it raises the likeliness of boys resorting to violence. For example, the boy who is capable of fighting, is constructed as the "superman". Importantly, this heroic masculinity does not exist in isolation but requires victims or villians of violence. This superman-villain dynamic tends to lead to school-based violence, which is used as a means of showing off boys' masculinity.

The literature on the relationship of masculinity to violence by and large focuses on the causal associations between masculinity and violence. Flowing from the researchers' study are policy deliberations to reduce male violence against females, and to contribute to building a climate of non-violence, peace and democracy (Breines, Connell and Eide 2000). This work has found expression in the field of education as well, where numerous studies have analysed violence, homophobia, misogyny, bullying and other forms of gender inequitable behaviour (Connell 1996; Swain 2005). The literature by and large assumes that aggression automatically leads to violence and that violent masculinities are only violent - rather than violent at particular times under particular circumstances. Indeed, according to Messerschmidt (cited in Mac and Ghaill 1996), "even those specifically aggressive, competitive, controlling and dominant masculinities express themselves differently in relation to violence depending on prevalent structural potentials and constraints". This literature was especially helpful in analysing the male learners' and teachers' responses to perceptions and experiences of violence.

2.6.4 Social class, ethnicity and violence

The South African Council for Educators (2011: 27) argues that an important factor that needs to be taken into account when attempting to understand the reason for such high rates of

school-based violence in South African schools, is the greater social, cultural and political context. Ward (2007: 113) states that South African people have been deemed to have a violent culture. Burton (2008a) argues:

> The country is presently having to manage the outcomes of the apartheid regime in which discriminatory policies were at the root of structural forms of inequity and promoted high levels of poverty. During this period, the youth, especially black youth, were brought up in an environment in which violence was a part of everyday life and was constructed as a means of dethroning the apartheid regime. It can thus be argued that the apartheid regime developed an estranged generation for whom violence was the only means of operational change.

According to Jefthas and Arts (2007: 41) the consequences of apartheid on school-based violence also meant that the experiences of white children are often overlooked. A dominant reason for neglecting white youth is that, as recipients of the apartheid government's legislation on policies, they were not victims of the persecution, and their experiences of the structural violence it produced are massively different from those of the black youth. They also argue that ". . . the partial loss of the rights this race group enjoyed during apartheid and the related fears can be argued to have manifested in the cumulative tension and violence in white homes".

The UNISA report (2012 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 34) found that the other forms of violence that reflects the wider society and exists in schools, relates to racial or ethnic discrimination, namely hostility towards the 'other' based on skin colour or cultural differences. According to Mthiyane (2013: 34) the wider apartheid political system and resistance to it definitely impacted on schools in a violent way in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. According to Harber (2004) schools have been used to teach learners hatred and intolerance of learners from other ethnic groups. This duplicated racial and ethnic tension and violence from the outside world at school level in many different societies. The affiliation to activities associated with this at school and victimisation of the youth at school varies according to gender (Popp and Peguero 2011), nationality and tribe (Peguero 2009; Peguero *et al.* 2011). The multifaceted affiliation among sex, nationality, tribal and violence has posed difficulty for research of criminology through all the ages (Miller 2008). The high rates of violence are not the consequences of racial background, but of social class; or pointers of social class such as education, income or occupational status (O'Kefee and Sela-Amit 1997: 54). According to O'Keefe and Sela-Amit (1997: 55) ". . . children from poor and minority families are more likely to be labelled 'abuse' than children from more affluent families with comparable injuries". Fuchs (2008: 22) argues that children of families in harshly disadvantaged socio-economic conditions tend to be more violent than children of wealthy families. The effects may be directly from the socio-economic disadvantage, but it could also be a result of the perception of relative deprivation compared to wealthy classmates, which would all stimulates violent reactions. (Fuchs 2008: 22). According to Benson and Fox (2004) violent perpetrators do not usually just act violently; instead, violence evolves in interaction with the social characteristics

of the environment and also with other individuals. In a socially-integrated setting, a low-intensity violent behaviour or provocation by one student might well be engrossed by fellow students who are not acquainted with violent conflict solving strategies.

According to Fuchs and Schmalz (2010: 134) the family is a main factor in the occurrence of school violence as domestic violence and hegemonic masculinity increase the prevalence of violence at school, while parental support for their children might decrease the likelihood to them turning violent in school. The average level of domestic violence, of parental support and of hegemonic masculinity in a given class also contributes to the frequency of violence committed by those students who themselves are not subject to such disadvantaged conditions. Ndimande (2012: 543) argues that upper class and upper middle-class families often get better educational opportunities for their children because of their cultural and social abilities to relate to or negotiate social structures, including school.

2.6.5 Anger, rage and aggression

Lochman *et al.* (n.d.:115) argue that:

> School specialists are challenged not only with the direct effects of anger and aggression, such as threats of violence and fighting among students, but also with the indirect effects that appear in the form of learning difficulties and social alteration problems.

Lazarus (1991) describes anger as:

> A person's response to a threat, or the perception of a threat against an individual or group. The types of threats that tend to trigger an anger response are broad in scope and include both physical threats and psychological threats, or threats to a person's pride or dignity.

Spielberger *et al.* (1985) state that anger can develop from assertive anxiety and that notions of prejudice is also associated with psychological elements like aggression and pessimism. Goleman (1995) argues that "anger can be adaptive by invigorating an individual and heightening cognitive awareness to take action against a threat or perceived threat". Lochman *et al.* (n. d.: 115) interpret anger as "an emotion that is often difficult to control because of the intense physiological reactions involved in the fight-or-flight response that triggers anger". According to Lazarus (1991) a retorted fight is caused by a reflex reaction to defend itself from the perceived threatening situations. Lochman *et al.* (n.d.:115) refer that intense unrestrained experiences of anger are often related by externalising problematic behaviour, specifically aggression. Lochman *et al.* (n.d.:115) define aggression as a behavioural action which ends with damaging or harming others. Dodge (1991) states that children engaging in proactive aggression usually use aggression to meet a certain goal:

For example, if the learner wants to take other learner's belongings, the proactively aggressive learner will simply use aggression to take the object from the other learner. Proactively aggressive children commonly use aggression to obtain social goals. When the antagonistic behaviour yields the looked-for reward, the child is more likely to engage in proactive aggression the next time he or she intends to meet a goal.

Lochman *et al.* (n.d.:115) argue that ". . . children who act aggressive usually not seek to meet goals through their aggressive behaviour. Instead, those children react negatively to perceived or actual threats and are easily annoyed and provoked". Lochman *et al.* (n.d.:117) state that children who show problems with aggression are so much more in danger for a numerous reasons. The American Psychiatric Association (1994 cited in Lochman et. al. n.d.:117) found that aggression is associated with psychological health problems in children, including externalising disorders such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder, as well as internalising problems, such as depression and nervousness. According to Dodge (1983) aggressive behaviour compromises children's social relationships, causing children often to be rejected by their peers. Lochman *et al.* (n.d.:117) state that ". . . difficulties with anger and aggression are also highly likely to disrupt children's educational experiences". Risi, Gerhardstein and Kistner (2003) found that aggressive children showed higher levels of academic problems, were more likely to be retained, and that they were also more likely to drop out of school prematurely.

In recent years bullying has taken centre stage in addressing learner violence and it has also been the focus of violence reduction intervention strategies. In the next section the cause and effects of bullying will be discussed in a school context.

2.7 Bullying

O'Connell, Pepler and Craig (1999:438) define bullying as "negative doings which may be physical or verbal, have antagonistic intent, are recurring over time and involve a power differential". They contend that bullying unfolds in a social context, commonly in a peer group, on the playground and in the school environment. The report on the state of bullying in South African schools (Department of Education 2013) suggests that:

> Bullying can take many forms such as physical violence, threats, name-calling, sarcasm, rumour-spreading, persistent teasing, exclusion from a group, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation and abusive comments. The report further suggests that bullying can be direct and indirect. Direct bullying involves physical contact or verbal abuse whereas indirect bullying involves subtle social manipulations such as gossiping, spreading rumours and exclusion.

2.7.1 School bullying

Tintswalo (2014: 55) categorised bullying into two types, namely, learner to learner bullying and teacher to learner bullying. Tintswalo reported that learners were being bullied by other learners in their schools. The bullying seemed to occur mostly when teachers were not in class, during breaks and in toilets. Tintswalo stated that learner to learner bullying assumes many forms, among others direct physical contact such as unwelcoming touching, explicit sexual innuendos in speech, teasing, beating, spreading rumours and competing for the attention of other sexes. He argued that both boys and girls are being bullied at schools, but that the rate at which girls are being bullied, is higher than that of boys. Girls, as the physically weaker sex, are bullied by both boys and fellow female learners (Tintswalo 2014:55). Tintswalo argues that teacher to learner bullying also takes place and that teachers as authoritative figures in school are also perpetrators of violence in schools. Le Roux and Mokhele (2011) state that most of the educators in township schools are less qualified than their suburban counter parts and therefore are unable to teach effectively. This situation is acerbated by overcrowded classrooms as well as a lack of good work ethics on their part. This also results in teachers' overreliance on physical abuse through, but not limited to, corporal punishment (Tintswalo 2014:55).

The report by the Department of Education (2013) suggests that bullies often influence their peers to become active participants alongside them. Some learners tacidly empower bullies and learn from watching passively. Victims are in turn notorious for conscripting assistance of their "brothers" that are quite often not fellow pupils at the same school, seeking vengeance. The report (Department of Education 2013) identifies the results of bullying at school to include: "loss of self-esteem, shame, anxiety, truancy, concentration problems, reactive aggression, stress and serious psychological problems and even suicide". The bullies themselves also agonise and often experience anxiety and depression. They are often at a high risk of suicide and other self-harming practices because of the web of criminal activity they tend to become involved in (PLAN 2008: 36-41). Akiba (2008 cited in Mncube and Harber 2013: 9) argues that in most other countries the majority of pupils believe that they are protected while they learn at school. The report (Department of Education 2013) suggests that bullying is not limited to male learners. Bullying among female learners is a recurring problem that consists by and large of verbal abuse, sexual insults and that it often includes an element of competing for the attention of boys. Bloom (2009 cited in Mncube and Harber 2013: 9) argues that, apart from the psychological problems caused by bullying, that frequent absenteeism and learners eventually leaving the school in order to escape the problem, is a more serious consequencec of serial bullying.

> Bullying and violence at school can have serious and life-long results for learners such as a decrease in self-esteem, continued absenteeism, school avoidance, feeling unsafe and insecure in the school setting, and derailment of educational process and success (Esbensen and Carson 2009; Peguero 2008).

Youth victimisation specifically at school, is disturbing as schools are socialisation institutions (Esbensen and Carson 2009). Muschert and Peguero (2010), argue that ". . . understanding and addressing the victimisation that takes place in schools is essential in order to try to establish a safe and healthy learning environment for all young people" (Esbensen and Carson 2009). In studies of school bullying (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 4) it was found that, on the playground, bullies demanded money from other children, that they often ate these children's food and would beat children up or harrass them if they did not have money or lunch.

> There are various roles that learners can adopt within bullying interactions, including that of ringleader, follower or reinforcer, as well as outsider or defender. It is clear that, within a school system, it is likely that most children will become involved in bullying one way or another (Smith 2004: 98).

Bullying remains associated with a high rate of dropout at high school (Gevers and Flisher 2012: 179). Townsend *et al.* (2008: 21) state that female students in particular tended to drop out of high school due to being victims of bullying. They argue that a significantly higher rate of male dropouts were either bullies themselves, or the victims of bullying compared to the male students who remained at school. Liang *et al.* (2007: 161) state that "bully-victims had comparable risk profiles to the bullies themselves, and that they also exhibited similar levels of violent behaviour".

2.8 The home, the community and school violence

In a study by Ncontsa and Shumba (2013: 5) learners reported that violence in their communities contributed to violence at school. For instance, a pupil reported that:

> Violence is very common in school and surroundings. This leads to a lot of damage to our schools in that learners come to school carrying weapons and they also indulge in drug abuse.

Sacco *et al.* (2012: 10) state that ". . . the community is responsible for its younger citizens and thus bears the responsibility of embracing its schools and offering them the maximum support possible".

According to Contrenas and Cano (2016: 45) exposure to violence within the family is often associated with the later onset and development of violent behaviour. Margolin *et al.* (2010:198) examined the contributions of different violence spheres (parent-to-youth aggression, interparental physical aggression and community violence) to specific outcomes, reporting that delinquent behaviours were often consequencial to parent-to-youth aggression and physical interparental aggression, and furthermore, that parent-to-youth aggression showed a direct and significant connection with aggressive behaviours.

Children who had been mistreated by their peers showed more physical, emotional and psychological abuse towards their parents compared to those adolescents who did not suffer such violence at home (Ibabe and Jaureguizar 2011: 265).

Calvete Gámez-Guadix and Orue (2014: 1176) in their study indicated that victimisation at home was often directed towards mothers in harmful physical and psychological ways.

Children who reside in homes marked by domestic violence are exposed to various kinds of aggression which may include recurring physical assaults with guns and knives, threats of suicide and homicide, as well as destruction of property (Thompson and Trice-Black 2012: 233).

They further stated that childhood exposure to domestic violence is related to the attitudes that children develop concerning the use of violence as an acceptable strategy to deal with personal stress and as an acceptable approach to conflict resolution. Tintswalo (2014: 53) in his study stated that learners' experiences of violence mirror the exposzureerience of violence at home and the broader community. The use of drugs, learners' assault and robbery at home are significant variables in learners' experiences of violence at school.

Other system issues within the community, including poverty and social inequity, also contribute to youth violence as youth react to the constant experience of disempowerment and as they try to protect some personal power in any area and in any way possible (Gevers and Flisher 2012: 176).

Burton (2008a) states that school violence is not only a phenomenon found in economically disadvantaged communities and their schools. Certainly, research evidence suggests that violence in its different manifestations, is widespread both in low income and high income schools. However, in addition to financial difficulty and inadequate resources in many families and communities, levels of family violence, family involvement in crime, and leisure boredom contribute to school violence as the school, home and community contexts are often very integrated (Biersteker and Robinson 2000: 26; Caldwell *et al.* 2004: 4). The inadequate support for victims and perpetrators of violence, and their families, is also problematic. Victim-survivors and their families are hardly ever properly treated and councelled for trauma.

Without addressing the effect of their violent behaviours with perpetrators, the conduct is not remediated and the cycle of violence from childhood to adulthood is perpetuated at various levels of society (Gevers and Flisher 2012: 176).

School-related violence is frequently perpetrated by fellow learners or school staff, and at times perpetrators from the community, or from other schools, come into the school specifically to commit violent actions (Gevers and Flisher 2012: 177). The other forms of external violence could also influence the provision of education negatively. For example,

gang violence including theft, drugs and weapons often spill from the surrounding community and streets into the schools where learners are seen as easy targets. This can occur on the way to and from school and inside school premises as well when gang members enter schools to sell drugs, steal or extort money (Le Roux and Mokhele 2011: 318).

> Even though this is not a direct form of 'external' violence, it is an indirect form of external violence as some learners at the school may be in league with gang members and may help and facilitate their activities while other learners may be willing consumers of drugs (Le Roux and Mokhele 2011: 318).

The school environment and the feeling of fitting in and knowing yourself among learners may be an important element in these cases. (Le Roux and Mokhele 2011: 318).

Ward (2007) contends that social contexts that are part of the everyday situations in which children learn and grow, and that these play a critical role in the socialisation of children. Furthermore, one could argue that violent communities shape violent behavious in children from early on. The South African Council for Educators (2011: 27) states that:

> Violence in communities reaches across class areas and does not only exist in poor and impoverished communities. From a social and societal point of view, it is a problem nonetheless, that the experience of violence has become normalised within South African society.

According to the National School Violence Study, a high percentage of the secondary school learners reported feeling safe and liking their neighbourhood despite high levels of crime. The South African Council for Educators (2011: 27) argue that other concerns in the community contributing to higher incidences of school-based violence, involved the presence of weapons and drugs in schools as this implies that these goods are easily available outside of school in the home or community context.

Tintswalo (2014: 52) stated that poor provision of material, conditions of poverty and disruptions in black communities in South Africa have contributed to the low value placed on schooling within these communities. According to Le Roux and Mokhele (2011) the traditional opposition to schooling and the disruption and deprivation experienced in schools and communities continues to hinder education within township schools. Christie (2008: 286) stated that many educators and learners in townships schools felt that they were being treated unfairly by the school system. They masked their anxiety, fear and dissatisfaction by blaming others and performing their tasks at a minimum level. Even when some teachers and learners attempted to implement solutions, the school systems were found to be a stifling environment that inhibited attempts to improve conditions. Tintswalo (2014: 52) argues that the problems that township schools face stem from the general environment in which they are located: poor townships. This study is set in a school located in a poor black township in Umlazi, South Africa.

In a study conducted by O'Keefe (1997: 368), a sample of high school students was found to be vulnerable to high levels of violence in their communities and schools. It was found that:

> Above 45% of the students had witnessed various forms of violence such as shootings or stabbings in their communities or schools during the year prior to the study. Hierarchic analysis showed that, in the case of males students, exposure to community and school violence was an important predictor of aggressive acting-out behaviours. For girls, only exposure to school violence seemed to be an important predictor of aggression.

The O'Keefe (1997: 370) study recommended the need to develop school and community interference programs to treat violence and its impact on society because of these high levels of violence experienced by adolescents in their communities and schools, and the related increase in behavioural problems.

2.9. Interpersonal violence in schools

Interpersonal violence takes place ". . . when one person uses power and control over another through physical, sexual, or emotional threats or actions, economic control, isolation, or other kinds of coercive behaviour" (Kimmel *et al.* 2005).

"Abuse is any behaviour towards one another that is physically violent or involves emotional coercion, or both, with one person in a position of authority" (Kimmel *et al.* 2005). This research focuses on the physical nature of abuse in a school setting.

> Bullying is a type of harassment that can be either verbal or physical, or both. It can also take the form of coercion where a person is threatened by another person and as a result of those threats, the bully's victim feels daunted and pressured into acting in a certain way or performing a certain deed (Kimmel *et al.* 2005).

This study will be investigating how bullying leads to interpersonal violence among learners.

The study conducted by Gevers and Flisher (2012: 178) states that about "15.3% of school learners in South Africa have reported experiencing some form of interpersonal violence at school in the last 12 months".

Steffgen *et al.* (2013: 300) in their study found that interpersonal violence at schools comprises of many different behaviours to intimidate or harm others emotionally and physically, and that these could range from intentional physical attacks to less serious behaviours. "Physical aggression and violence include acts such as hitting, kicking, stabbing, shooting, pushing and shoving others, as well as throwing objects" (Singh and Steyn 2014: 83).

De Wet (2016: 1) states similarly that "violence in the school context can take on a different shape from psychological to physical forms of violence, including hazing or initiation, assault (physical or sexual), violence and learner upheavals that turn violent". However, interpersonal violence involving bodily harm like punching, poking, strangling, kicking, hair pulling, beating, biting and tripping was the most common form of violence that occured among learners at school (De Wet 2016: 30).

In the next section the causes of violence in schools is discussed.

2.10 The causes of school violence

Henry (2009 cited in Muschert 2014: 185) defines multiple levels of causation in school violence and argues for an interdisciplinary, integrative approach in theorising about problems of school violence.

2.10.1 Discipline and Violence

A lack of discipline is associated with violence at school as pupils lose all sense of self-control and tend to misbehave (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 5). Ill-discipline is destructive in the school setting with outcomes such as fighting and misbehaviour as the status quo of the day. According to one of the educators, ill-discipline result from:

> . . . disrupted homes and lack of recreational facilities at our schools. As a result of this learners are not engaged all the time. In some instances there is shortage of educators where educators who are on leave are not substituted (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013:5).

Kinnes (2012 cited in Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 61) said some learners attended school every day, but not for educational purposes - to work on teachers' nerves. "There was an occurrence where one learner brought a firearm to school and wanted to shoot another learner".

This is however also the responsibility of educators as they ought to take care of learners. But it is problematic because these learners demand to be respected by their educators. For these learners, adhering to school rules and discipline procedures is not a priority (Thorsborne and Vinegrad 2008: 10). Discipline should be a fair process. Learners and their parents, as well as teachers, are far more likely to accept the umpire's decision about how a matter has been dealt with, if they have experienced the process as fair. In matters of discipline, a fair process in a restorative sense is when teachers, learners, and parents are engaged in the process of problem-solving and in determining what is needed to create a normal and functional environment conducive to cooperation and learning. Teachers, learners and parents must have a chance to tell their story and to be heard. If you have misbehaved, you will be given a chance to make amends and to put things right. Opportunities should be created for all parties (teachers, learners and parents) to understand, reflect on and learn from the experience in a

respectful way. Dialogue should be participative and voluntary. The repair of relationships and community is paramount and overrides institutional imperatives. In this way there will be a sense of collective liability and responsibility in resolving school violence.

Boccanfuso and Kuhfeld (2011 cited in Sharkey and Fenning 2012: 96) state that:

> School discipline is a significant issue among educators and the larger public, as disruptive behaviours impact significantly on school climate and classroom instruction and inevitably feeds into acts of aggression and violence. Suspension for discipline issues, which involves being denied access to the school for a certain periods of time, is a commonly applied zero-tolerance policy – the most broadly implemented discipline policy in the United States.

Skiba and Knesting (2001 cited in Sharkey and Fenning 2012: 96) explains that "zero tolerance assigns specific, predetermined, and punitive discipline strategies in response to violations of school rules, ranging from mild to severe regardless of individual circumstances". Algozzine *et al.* (2011: 3) argue that:

> Students with discipline problems have heightened risk for behavioural challenges and that the common strategy of classroom exclusion, applied through office discipline referrals and suspension, naturally exacerbates a student's academic and behavioural difficulties.

Flannery *et al.* (2012: 118) state that "effective discipline strategies include comprehensive educational, social and emotional support and services". One of the most potentially powerful tools to support positive discipline as an alternative to exclusionary discipline tactics is Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support (SWPBS). Simonsen *et al.* (2011: 213) refer to SWPBS as "an empirically validated framework in general education settings with emergent research in alternative settings as well". He explains that that SWPBS involves teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviours while readdressing and replacing negative behaviours.

> SWPBS includes staff training, schoolwide expectations for behaviour, frequent positive reinforcement, and behaviour modification councelling for students who need additional support (Simonsen *et al.* 2011: 213).

Vincent *et al.* (2011: 219) believe that SWPBS does not eliminate disproportionality and says that further work on how to implement SWPBS with a culturally responsive framework is recommended to increase fairness in discipline practices. Bear (2012: 174) made a critical point that "successful discipline strategies should include a balance of consequences and incentives within a warm, safe school climate". In general, Bear advocated an integrated prevention-oriented approach to discipline that combines the tenets of social-emotional learning and SWPBS as an alternative to traditional discipline.

Labels and stereotypes affect the lives of individuals in direct and real ways. Labels are often applied to learners by peers, but especially by teachers. Sampson and Laub (1993 cited in Barker 2008) argue that learners who are frequently accused of violence may be more likely to use violence. Further, low-income learners who have been told by teachers, parents and the media and the world around them that they are violent, are more likely to become violent. Studies confirm that learners who have attention deficit problems or other school behavioural and discipline problems are more likely to use violent behaviour. However, attention deficit problems do not cause violent behaviour, although parents and teachers often label these behaviours as troublesome and react in authoritarian or controlling ways. The cycle often goes like this: a learner acts out in a minor way but is punished disproportionately for his actions. Chafing at this discipline, he acts out even more, and the punishment the next time around is more severe, causing him to act out again in even more dangerous and violent ways.

2.10.2 Muthi and Violence

According to Ashforth (2005: 212) muthi is referred to as:

> Substances fabricated by an expert hand, substances designed by persons possessing secret knowledge to achieve either positive ends of healing, involving cleansing, strengthening, and protecting persons from evil forces, or negative ends of witchcraft, bringing illness, misfortune, and death to others or illicit wealth and power to the witch.

Witches try to cause harm using poisonous muthi; while traditional-healers seek health by using muthi as a cure. Witches using muthi are capable of causing a range of disease and misfortune.

> In South Africa, healers are believed to be able to cure every disease (including AIDS, though many know better than to mention this to outsiders) and to rectify every misfortune ever suffered. A competent healer will advertise his services to supply muthi to guard one's house against burglars and one's car against hijackers, to keep husbands faithful, help children pass their exams and keep the boss at work happy. The healer will also have muthi to cure high blood pressure, diabetes, swollen ankles, and whatever sickness one might suffer. Such a healer may also claim to provide medicines to defend clients from police and criminals alike, make one invincible during a fight and might even claim the ability to turn bullets into water (Ashforth 2005: 213).

> The popular image of the traditional healer is one of a highly skilled sage dispensing secret recipes of natural herbs, recipes that have been handed down through generations and that embody the collective wisdom of indigenous knowledge (Ashforth 2005: 214).

Damba (2012: 1) reported an incident where three sangomas were suspects of providing muthi to teen gang members and learners in Khayelitsha in order to help them fight. They faced the rage of residents after being corralled by taxi bosses. About fifty school pupils/learners seemed to be gang members. Apart from the weapons like knives, pangas and axes that were confiscated, containers of protective muthi were found around the necks of many of the suspected gang members.

Damba (2012: 1) reported that, in another incident:

> The teenagers, mostly still dressed in their school uniform, waged a running battle through the streets for over two hours until police arrived, whereupon they scattered into surrounding streets. Four boys and four girls went to a good sangoma (witchdoctor) and were found putting muthi on each other by a leader of the crime prevention campaign. They were also found to be in possession of dangerous weapons.

2.10.3 Culture and Violence

According to Coetzee (2002: 1) the great warriors preceding Shaka (the Zulu King), like so many historical figures and events, are hidden from recognised history and forgotten even in the oral traditions. He further states that during Shaka's reign, stick fighting was used as a means of training young men for both self-defence and war. Zulu stick fighting provided an opportunity for men to build bravery and skill, to distinguish themselves as proficient warriors, and to earn respect in the community. Nonetheless, in present times, stick fighting is a game and dynamics of stick fighting are usually playful. The exceptions are when sticks are used for self-defence or in a faction fight, or when *amashinga* (professional stick fighters) compete (Coetzee 2002: 1).

"In South Africa stick fighting is popular and a type of peer-based male socialisation" (Carton and Morrell 2012:1). They further stated that:

> Zulu boys in the countryside are among the keen exponents of this martial recreation, which moved with migrant labourers into urban areas by the twentieth century. Many stick fighters revel in a sport that evokes the challenges of future manhood and glorifies the bygone battlefields.

Even though traditional Zuly stick fighting is not practised as a form of battle anymore, the tradition is still alive in the culture and young boys eagerly learn about this martial art from their elders. Unfortunately these "games" sometimes get out of hand. One such incident happened at a northern KwaZulu-Natal school and caused it to be shut down for two weeks just before the start of the final matric examinations.

Speaking at the meeting, principal Lernard Khuzwayo, said the trouble began just before the end of the third term when, after a traditional Zulu stick fight between groups of boys from different villages spilled over the school. The jostling for position and physical confrontations continued for the whole of the next term (Mngoma 2013:1).

Mngoma (2013: 1) further reports that cultural expert, Dr V.V.O. Mkhize, founder of the Umsamo African Institution, said that in stick fighting young men were pitted against each other in a "friendly" confrontation.

This was done for them to know their strengths and weaknesses and to train for manhood so they could stand up for their families and community. Stick fighting is done under the watchful eye of obhekeni-community leaders who control things, making sure the rules are followed (Mngoma 2013: 1).

Mkhize did agree that the fighting often spills over to the school:

Stick fighting is a proud and disciplined practice, done under supervision in specific areas and circumstances. Grudges should not be carried over into other places – that means there is no more discipline. It shows that as a nation, we have lost our Traditional African ethics and morals and [are] hiding, doing wrong things in the name of culture and tradition (Mngoma 2013: 1).

2.10.4 Violence in Township Communities

A contributing factor which increases school violence is poverty (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 6). A learner who witnessed a fellow learner attacking another by holding a knife and robbing him within the premises of the school, said, "I saw one of the learners taking out a knife and threatening him, demanding money". Such an occurrence is typical of pupils who carry dangerous weapons at school and use drugs. Unemployment is linked to poverty and 55 of the learners who participated in the study proclaimed that unemployment causes school violence. The learner said, "I believe that students involve themselves in violence because of poverty, stress and depression". The other learner said:

Poverty can cause violence because if a learner is hungry the learner can steal others' lunch; when you find out who took your lunch you will be beaten by him or her and it could lead to violence (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 6).

According to Gellert (2010: 136):

> The problem of violence in inner-city schools cannot be isolated from the problem of violence in greater society. Violent neighbourhoods and communities will produce violent schools whatever measures a school adopts.

Public health scientists acknowledge that some of the core dimensions of violence and the factors contributing to violent behaviour are not amenable to traditional preventative health strategies. Unemployment, poverty, lack of educational access, hopelessness, and exposure to violence all contribute to violent behaviour and are not traditional targets of public health intervention.

> The pervasive situation of poverty, especially in African communities (who generally live in townships) allows for unemployment, resulting in many people in these areas being economically challenged for long periods of time, and sometimes indefinitely (Benett-Johnson 2004: 200).

This has often resulted in people looking for social and economic survival through selling alcohol and drugs. Therefore, the higher informal presence of alcohol and drug sellers in the streets, has contributed to social conditioning of learners and adolescents to deem it acceptable and even admirable, patterning themselves on these observed role models. The "modelling" continues to other violent behaviours such as using weapons and joining gangs, with this kind of behaviour spilling over into schools (Benett-Johnson 2004: 200).

Socio-economic factors within the community and society also contribute to school violence (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 91). The ready availability of drugs in these communities, as well as the high percentage of adults involved in crime further increases the possibility of youth or learners' participation in violence (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana 2010: 222-225). Unemployment rates in townships were (and are) still high (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 91). "Poverty and tension from overcrowding resulted in internally violent communities" (Kaldine 2007: 245-247). "It was, and still is, a very 'normal' experience for township learners to witness assaults, stabbings and shootings" (De Wet 2007: 253-255).

2.10.5 Competition and school violence

According to Deutsh (2015: 89):

> Learners compete for educators' attention, for grades, for status and for admission to prestigious schools because many schools do not provide much constructive social experience for students. Too often, schools are structured in ways that pit students against one another.

Lavy, Paserman and Schlosser (2011: 208) in their study state that a higher proportion of low-ability learners has disadvantageous effects on educators' pedagogic practices and on the

quality of inter-learner and learner-educator relationships, and that it increases the level of violence and classroom disruption. Jarmal *et al.* (2013: 13) in their study state that "violent behaviour and substance use are often a strong indication of a lack of belonging and bonding at schools where learners feel educationally marginalised or unsafe". They further stated that positive relationships with educators appear to be critical in promoting wellbeing and limiting risk-taking behaviour. However, certain aspects organisation and education policies within schools constrain this, increasing the likelihood that learners try to find a sense of identity and social support via health-risk behaviours and violence. Being the victim of violence at school can cause learners to seek sources of 'escape' either by leaving school at lunchtime, or for longer unauthorized spells, or through substance use. According to Morris (2015: 12), when we pit people against each other in order to drive up standards - often by placing them in rank order of performance - we pitch them into a battle of egos and involve the powerful emotions of shame and pride. Peloyakgomo (2012: 6) in his study argues that learners have a competitive nature which is often fuelled by educators' unfair and inconsistent treatment of their charges. This heightened competition increases the possibility of violent acts by learners.

2.10.6 Labelling and school violence

Nashiki and Florenting (2012: 100) in their study stated that violent conduct among learners such as intimidation, physical and psychological ill-treatment by a boy or group of boys against another boy or group of boys is called bullying and includes a series of negative actions of different kinds, like jokes, mocking, blows, exclusion, abusive conduct with sexual connotations and physical aggression. They further stated that girls are often the target of mocking. In their reports, girls say that aggressors are upstarts, the class-know-it-alls and abusive boys. The bullies are evil, mean and criminal, their main actions are insult, mocking, hitting, destroying or hiding objects from the victim and trying by all means to marginalise her or him from the group or to ignore her or him. They promote the dissemination of rumours regarding the sexuality of the victim. In the case of boys, calling them sissies (which means boys who are girlish) is very offensive, in as much as calling girls mannish women is very insulting. Attackers also use physical force as a means, either as in gesture or as an actual blow, to mark the limits of their strength. Strength as a constituent part of violence is favoured over other ways to solve conflicts, and boys frequently use it against girls (Nashiki and Florentina 2012: 101).

According to Nashiki and Florentina (2012: 101) fighting is one of the most evident manifestations of violence. Other aggressive attitudes emerge everyday among children such as mocking either the manner of speaking, the intonation used or the form of expression employed by some learners. On other occasions, there are openly xenophobic attitudes aimed to discredit the victim, either because of their place of residence, the colour of their skin, or their gender. An expression like, "girls are quite chicken (evil) moaners", is sometimes used to taunt victims.

Ncube (2011: 38) stated that in most cases perceived isolation and abuse can lead to sexual pervasion as some learners seek to deliberately become antisocial. He claims that some adolescents become involved in gay relationships either to spite social institutions or to appease those who are perceived to be strong and influential. Violence becomes a way of the learners to appear musculine.

Moldavan (2015: 112) in her study stated that learner to learner violence is the most frequently mentioned form related to verbal violence (high tone, insults, screams, strife) and these incidents are considered tolerable and customary in any school in the current social context (verbal violence experienced on the street and in the media).

2.11 The effects of school violence

Learners who were affected by the occurrence of violence can suffer from depression which may have a negative impact on their learning ability (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 5). Due to the fear of what the bullies may do to the victimised learners at lunch time or after school hours their concentration is compensated. One learner said:

> "I get worried all the time and I cannot concentrate on my studies. This affects my performance in class and sometimes I feel like not coming to school. I am scared of the bullies" (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 5).

A substantial number of the learner respondents affirmed similar experiences of being unable to focus on their studies due to violence at school. Sometimes learners had done things unintentionally because of threats from their peers. For instance:

> One learner reported that he was once forced to steal by a gang of fellow learners. Fifteen learners ended up bunking classes and in some cases, learners even dropped out of school because of peer victimisation. As a result, 36 of the learner respondents reported that their grades had fallen (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 5).

Schaffi (2001: 56 cited in Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 87) states that:

> The study of the phenomenon of violence in township schools is important for research as violence threatens the safe development and mental wellness of learners in township schools. The presence of violence and the fear that violence evokes especially, affects the attendance of learners and their ability to focus effectively while they are at school.

Lewis (1992: 56 cited in Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 89) states that violence in South African schools, particularly in the townships, escalated about 30 years ago when thousands of learners protested to Afrikaans being the medium of instruction. "During these years, the black youth began a full-scale campaign to reject the school system that they saw as a primary agent of their enslavement" (Khosa and Zwane 1995: 17 cited in Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 89).

Black people's educational system governed under the apartheid regime was a fundamental tool utilised to oppress black people which eventually became a contributing factor to violence at school. Donald et al (2002: 236 cited in Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 89) states that:

> The reasons behind political violence are usually related to imbalances and distortions in the power and access to resources of different groups in society, and to basic differences in political viewpoints and goals.

According to De Wet (2007: 255 cited in Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 90) "violent patterns and problem-solving skills are very often transferred from the family to the school system thereby reflecting the interaction and transference of violence from one system to another".

According to the same study, one learner said that:

> Only last week two learners were fighting in the toilets, in fact one was stabbed. I think there is no system in place like, for instance, learners are always left on their own in their classrooms, teachers that are supposed to come to class do not come and in that way its free time and this is what causes lots of problems in class. (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 92)

Learners also asked, "Let there be no free periods at school because that's where the problem starts, some learners take chances when there is no teacher in the classroom." Learners believed that if educators should be more attentive to the classes allocated to them, since most fighting takes place when they are not in their classrooms (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 92). As a result, the violence feeds into a poor culture of teaching and learning at school. "Open grounds or playing fields and toilets are identified as the sites of most of the violence at their school" (Ngqela and Lewis 2012: 92). Many learners avoid these areas and are denied taking full advantage of the schooling experience in terms of holistic development.

Educators argued the effects of school violence on learning to be the following:

- The environment becomes unconducive to learning.
- There is a lack of effective learning and teaching which leads to poor school attendance and eventually leads to a high failure rate.
- Learners become uncontrollable and difficult to manage.
- Wasting time on conflict resolution meetings instead of learning and teaching.
- High rate of absenteeism and dropout.
- Lack of discipline at school in general.
- Non-compliance which leads to non-submission of school tasks or not doing homework.
- School violence leads to poor academic performance which is not on par with the goals and aspirations of the school.

- Learners who are victims of bullying at school, bunk classes and end up dropping out of school.
- Lack of concentration on the part of the learners as they are afraid of the perpetrators.
- Unpleasant atmosphere in the classroom linked to poor results" (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 7).

Educators also noted the effects of school violence on teaching:

- Effective teaching is not taking place when learners are uncontrolled, ill-disciplined and unmanageable.
- Educators become demotivated and their morale beomes very low. They would at times arrive at their classrooms and find it unoccupied as learners had already left school during teaching time.
- The educators find it problematic to complete the syllabus because of poor attendance by learners and the fact that time is wasted on resolving problems emanating from school violence.
- There are no textbooks because the rate of stealing and burglary is very high and, in addition, books and school property are deliberately damaged by disruptive learners which affects teaching negatively.
- The effect of school violence is reflected by the decrepit buildings which have been vandalised - this environment is not conducive to teaching.
- Non-existence of respect of learners towards each other results in infighting which affects teaching - learners are always at loggerheads and the atmosphere in the classroom is filled with tension.
- Educators are at times not at school as they are not only demotivated, but also afraid of being attacked by learners.
- Educators are unable to plan their lessons thoroughly and go to class improvising lessons as a result of never knowing what is going to happen the next day.
- Educators cannot take any conclusive action against bothersome learners because they fear for their own safety.
- School violence affects teaching in a destructive way.
- Teaching and learning is affected because educators feel helpless, demoralised, and disillusioned.
- School violence promotes non-respect respect for seniority of age and position of education officials (Ncontsa and Shumba 2013: 7).

2.12 Role of the school in managing violence

According to Fitzclarence (1995: 22) in various indirect ways, schools model, allow and mould violent approaches and conducts.

More recent work has suggested that rigid educational systems, particularly systems that focus more on maintaining order than engaging students in meaningful ways, reinforce behaviour that chafes at authority (Hamlall 2014: 206).

In the subsequent sections the school's role in promoting and hindering violence through its structures and policies will be reviewed.

Edwards (2008 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 38) argue that some schools are authoritarian in nature and rely on heavy-handed means of controlling learners which eventually increases student alienation and reduces the possibility to constructively address problems such as violence. Harber (2004 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 38) argues that this fosters the culture of violence in learners. It could be said that schools may promote misbehaviour in students in many different ways, for example when they misunderstand learning conditions and require learners to learn information that is not meaningful to them.

> Failure to encourage the development of independent thinking among learners and imposing rigid conditions for learners to meet in order to feel accepted, can also cause immense frustration among learners. Learners felt that promoting a competitive grading system that prohibits success for the majority of learners and erodes their self-concepts, was not conducive to cooperation. They also felt that excessive control over learners and failure to provide an environment in which learners can become autonomous and independent, involved discipline procedures that promoted misbehaviour (Edwards 2008: 10 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 38).

Harber (2004: 36 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 39; Hamlall, 2013) contends that the authoritarian nature of schools is more than a form of violence itself. It often causes violent reactions in schools, and it also helps to sow the seeds of violence in the wider society.

De Wet (2007 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 40) argues that poor infrastructure contributes to learner frustration and violence. According to Mthiyane (2013: 40) overcrowded and large schools situated in urban areas where learners either do not have space or very little space to play on the premises, are contributing factors to school violence. He also argues that, in schools where classes are large, teachers tend not to have sufficient time to attend to and to know all their learners by name and this usually leads to negative consequences such as truancy and bunking of classes among learners. In addition, large schools have large school grounds which are a challenge to patrol, especially during break times. This is the time when learners are bullied, beaten or robbed of their food, money and other possessions, especially in townships schools where generally, teachers (supported by their teacher unions) have consistently refused to do playground duties citing labour issues. This leaves learners exposed to many negative elements. Harber 2004 (cited in Mthiyane 2013: 41) argues:

> South African schools also play a part in reproducing violence through their continued failure to confront issues of racism, sexual harassment and violence which cause

schools not to function effectively or properly, as well as their continued use of corporal punishment as means of disciplining learners despite its illegality.

The UNISA report on school-based violence (2012 cited in Mthiyane 2013: 44) posits that a well-organised, inclusive and well-run school could do much to reduce the occurrences and effect of external violence as learners and teachers would be part of a community with a sense of purpose. The community members would feel some sense of belonging, and of being valued by the school and they would realise that it is worth protecting. According to Mthiyane:

> Such a well-organised school could have a safety and security committee that would ensure that there are proper fences and locks at school. But its main strength would be that loyalty and commitment by the community to the school will reduce internal collaboration with potentially violent external individuals or groups.

2.13 Strategies that reduce the risk of violence among learners at school

Hyman *et al.* (1997: 315) stated that each teacher assumes and conveys to the students the belief that every person has an innate desire to be good, to do good and to be perceived as good. Misbehaviour is treated as a reflection of underlying feelings of frustration and unhappiness caused by rigid rules and regulations and uncaring bureacracies. When the student's behaviour impinges on the rights of others, the student is helped to understand why he or she committed the act. This process may be conducted individually or as part of ongoing group meetings. Hyman *et al.* (1997: 315) stated that, alternatively, schools may provide daily small group meetings to help students to explore their feelings and to solve individual and school problems. Depending on the expertise of the group leaders, these groups could offer various levels of councelling. Councelling is often based on gestalt approaches that encourage members to express their innermost feelings and provide for exercises and experiences that teach members to trust each other and the group leader. Once the basic needs for trust and safety are satisfied, the school can provide for the other needs in the hierarchy that leads towards self-actualisation. This will result in cultivation of the student's innate desire to develop empathy and caring for others and cessation of violent, antisocial behaviour.

Gordon (1991 cited in Hyman *et al.* 1997: 282) argues that teachers can use three ways to demonstrate that they accept students' feelings and behaviour. The first is not to intervene in interpersonal disputes between students, unless they become physical. The object is to convey trust in the students' ability to appropriately express feelings and to solve problems on their own. This should enhance the students' self-esteem. Hyman *et al.* (1997: 282) stated that teachers are sometimes attentive, but passive to student discourse about feelings. Therefore, the students may feel that their feelings have been accepted, but not necessarily understood. Gordon (1991 cited in Hyman *et al.* 1997: 282) advocates the use of active listening because it indicates to the students that their feelings have been both accepted and

understood. Hyman *et al.* (1997: 282) indicated that in any verbal interaction, the teacher needs to give the person their full attention; avoid to jumping to conclusions; and ask for clarification when not understanding.

Flannery *et al.* (2007: 351) stated that interventions to influence characteristics of individual students may be directed at knowledge, skills, attitudes or beliefs, and expectations. They further interpreted the instruction of cognitive-behavioural social competency as the category of instructional interventions seeked to develop students' skills in the following areas:

- recognising circumstances that are likely to put them in trouble;
- handling their urges and ability to think ahead, expecting the outcomes of their acts;
- observing and acknowleging the intent of other students;
- dealing with negative influence from their peers – often referred to as "social competency".

These interventions use cognitive-behavioural methods which are named thus as they use cognitive techniques and as they openly instruct ethics for self-control and recognising antecedents of problematic behaviour. They also give clues to assist learners in recalling and using the techniques modelled in possible scenes, including setting of goals, chances for preparation and exercise of the behaviour in conditions that are social (acting), providing response of learner performance, and promoting self-management and self-control.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter provides the theoretic foundation for the presentation and for analysing the research data which follows in the next chapter. This thesis explores the basic starting points of school violence, which is a challenge in various schools in South Africa. This study is focused on the experiences of learners and educational personnel with varied profiles and, by using interviews as a choice of research method, on investigating the various forms of school violence found amongst learners.

Some contributing factors associated with violence, for example poverty, cultural practices, beliefs and expectations, clearly arise outside the school setting in the same way as promoting stealing other learners' belongings - all of which facilitate violence. Certain types of violence like bullying, labelling and sexual harassment of female learners by male learners might have been learnt or experienced at home or in society outside of school. But this does not necessarily mean that the schools cannot do anything in respect of external violence or that the latter is entirely external and not within the school's domain of responsibility.

A well-coordinated and properly managed school can make a difference in reducing the occurrences and effects of external violence where learners and educators are members of

the society with a sense of purpose - where there is sense of belonging and a belief that this is worth protecting. Therefore, such a well-coordinated school could have a disciplinary committee and a safety and security committee that makes sure that basic safety measures are in place, like strong, secure fences and locks. However, the key asset of this sort of school is devotion and dedication to the school.

The theoretical frame in much of this chapter is cast in a socio-constructivist approach which is guided by the perspective of different researchers on school violence amongst learners. The justification of this selection is so that, through this theory, learners and educators could express "how" school violence occurs, who the perpetrators are, as well as school violence and the impacts of violence among learners at school. The socio-constructivist theory is based on the understanding of Vygotsky (1978) that "knowledge is constructed in a social context where learning occurs through discourse with others". In the context of cognitive and social development, learners are children who should generally be taught with an emphasis on their prior understanding, abilities and philosophies, with chances for response, review and achievement, through contact with others (Bransford, Brown and Cooking 2000). The foundation of this opinion comes from a cognitive psychological perspective (Putman and Borko 2000: 4). Learning environments should be created that are socially conducive to creating independent learners and aiding them to become accountable for their own learning (Bransford, Brown and Cooking 2000). Within this favourable context, the learners would cognitively engage in the construction of knowledge through social processes (Deghaid, Mansour and Alshamrani. 2015: 540).

The key concepts of this thesis are the multiple experiences of school violence amongst learners and its impact on school learners' exposure and violence experience in the school and in the influence of school and community on learner behaviour.

Chapter 3: Research design and Methodology

Introduction

"A research design is the technique which a researcher uses to methodically gather and examine the relevant data necessary to answer the research questions" (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). The aforementioned includes collection of data, sampling, data recording and analysis, with careful consideration of the trustworthiness of the data, ethical issues, the limitations of the planned research and the timelines involved.

This chapter explains the design of the research study. The research methods are described including strategies, instruments, data collection and analysis method, while explaining the stages and processes involved in the study. These methods also include the role of the researcher, as the researcher is an integral part of the research process. This study is located within the interpretive paradigm. A qualitative method of collecting data was employed as it involves a universal way of philosophy about conducting qualitative research.

3.1 The Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is a "general term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological, field, or participant observer research" (Goetz and LeCompte 1984). Furthermore, it highlights the importance of perceiving variables in the natural setting in which they are initiated. The interaction between variables is imperative. Open-ended questions are utilised to gather detailed data that can be recorded and utilised at a later stage. The interviewer plays an integral part in the investigation.

> This differs from quantitative research, which endeavors to gather data by objective approaches to deliver information about associations, comparisons, and forecasts and which tries to eliminate the investigator from the investigation (Goetz and LeCompte 1984).

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), qualitative research is popular, suitable and very effective in many different academic disciplines, particularly in the field of the social sciences. Qualitative research is frequently utilised in investigating policies as it is able to answer or clarify significant questions more efficiently and effectively with reference to particular and sensitive matters, thereby assisting the reseacher to fully understand and incorporate the experiences of people. Qualitative research is concerned with collecting and gathering detailed data. The two common approaches utilised for collecting qualitative data are in-depth interviews and group discussions. The guidance and support of the construction of hypotheses is used through smaller focused samples. (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

According to Creswell (2013: 43) qualitative research refers to "an activity situated to locate the observer in the world". He further states that:

> Qualitative research contains of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos of the self.

"Qualitative research involves an interpretive, natural approach to the world" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011: 3). They further explain that this means that qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, trying to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings that people themselves attribute to them. Qualitative methods include interviews (group or one-on-one) and participant observation (in person or electronic) under its umbrella of approaches (Tracy 2013: 28). Tracy further states that such methods can also include research in an area, a focus group room, an office or a classroom.

Qualitative research starts out with assumptions and the use of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that enlighten the study of research problems by addressing the meaning that individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem (Creswell 2013: 44). He further posits:

> The qualitative researcher uses a developing, improvising approach to obtain the data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study; and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the expressions of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a multifaceted description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature, or a call for change.

According to Creswell (2014: 4) qualitative research is an approach to and an understanding of the meaning that a person or groups assign to a societal or human problem. The process of research involves developing questions and techniques, data truly collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively structured from particular to general themes and the researcher creating interpretations of the meaning of the data. This approach was suitable to this research study as it provided an opportunity for a problem, in this case learner violence, to be investigated in depth within a particular period of time. It also made it possible to probe these issues and to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the various issues that needed to be investigated. According to De Vos (1998) qualitative research may be defined as a method of understanding based on separate ways of enquiry to investigate societal or human tribulations. This aspect of qualitative research was very relevant to the study because it provided the opportunity to explore and understand learner discipline and behaviour problems.

3.2 Methodology

A phenomenological research approach was adopted to facilitate in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviours, attitudes, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, cultures and lifestyles (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Studies of qualitative research usually serve one or more of the following purposes:

- Description – to disclose the nature of certain circumstances, surroundings, procedures, relations, systems, or people.
- Interpretation – to enable the researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon, and/or ascertain the problems that exist inside the phenomenon" (Leedy and Ormrod 2013: 140).

"Phenomenology refers to an individual's perception of the meaning of an incident, as opposed to the event as it exists external to individual" (Leedy and Ormrod 2013: 145). A phenomenological study is a study that tries to comprehend people's perceptions, viewpoints and understandings of a specific situation (Leedy and Ormrod 2013: 145). According to Creswell (2013: 76) a phenomenological study describes several individuals in their real-life experiences of a concept or a phenomenon which they have in common.

Langdridge (2007: 4) refers to phenomenology as a "discipline that aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience". She further describes phenomenology as a "qualitative method that focuses on human experience in itself, a method that is concerned with meaning and the way in which meaning arises from experience".

According to Finlay (2009: 6) phenomenology refers to the study of phenomena in their nature and connotations. He further states that the essence of this theory lies in the manner in which things emerge to people through personal experience or in their awareness of the phenomena, with the phenomenological researcher aiming to assemble and create a detailed narrative of these lived experiences.

Phenomenologists focus on defining how participants experienced a phenomenon that they have in common. For example, sorrow is universally experienced. In this particular study, the focus is on the phenomenon of learner violence.

Cilesiz (2010) stated that "the intention of phenomenological research is to reach the essence of individuals' lived experiences of the phenomenon while discovering and describing the phenomenon". Van Manen (1990: 184) stated that:

> The essence of phenomenology is a universal notion which can be described through a study of the structure that governs the instances or particular manifestation of the

essence of that phenomenon . . . A universal notion or essence may only be intuited or grasped through a study of the particulars or instances as they are encountered in lived experiences.

The basic purpose of phenomenology is to reduce individual experience of a phenomenon to a description of the universal essence – "a grasp of the very nature of the thing" (Van Manen 1990: 177). To this end, qualitative researchers recognise a phenomenon to be an "object" of human experience (Van Manen 1990: 163). This human experience may include any phenomena such as sleeplessness, exclusion, annoyance, sorrow or even something like surgery (Moustakas 1994).

The inquirer then collects data from persons who have experienced the phenomenon and develops a complex explanation of the essence of the experience for all of the individuals. This explanation involves *what* they experienced and *how* they experienced it (Moustakas 1994).

This study aims to understand violence as it has occurred among learners in a school setting (what) and the contributing factors to this violence (how).

Cilesiz (2009: 232) stated that phenomenology as a methodological outline has progressed into a process that seeks reality in individuals' narratives of their lived experiences of the phenomenon. Phenomenology comprises different philosophies which are "transcendental, existential and hermeneutic theories" (Cilesiz 2010: 10). Transcendental philosophy is frequently linked with being able to place oneself external to the experience, as if standing next to oneself, viewing the experience from the outside. Existential philosophy mirrors an essential necessity to concentrate on our existed experience (Langridge 2007: 4). Hermeneutic phenomenology emphasises interpretation, instead of providing mere accurate explanation.

This study utilised the transcendental phenomenological framework developed by Edmud Husserl who established the school of phenomenology (Moustakas 1994: 34). Moustakas's transcendental or psychological phenomenology is focused to a much lesser extent on the interpretation of the researcher and much more on a description of the experience of the participants. According to Creswell (2013: 80) Moustakas focuses on one of Husserl's concepts, namely "epoch (or bracketing), in which investigators set aside their experiences as much as possible, in order to gain a fresh perspective of the phenomenon under examination". Hence, transcendental means "in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time" (Moustakas 1994: 34). He further explains that phenomenological research has methical stages in the analysis of data process and he provides directions for gathering the textural and structural descriptions. He also argues that the reality constructed by phenomenology would be based on what is real or natural, representing our everyday understanding of the phenomena.

This study was suited to phenomenology as it used interviews, both individual and focus group interviews, to investigate the direct experience of violence among learners in one chosen urban primary school and also as it aimed to understand learners' and teachers' perceptions, perspectives and understandings of school violence. Phenomenology can include a rationalised type of data collection by only involving one or numerous interviews with participants (Creswell 2013: 82). "Phenomenological researchers depend almost exclusively on lengthy interviews (perhaps one to two hours in length) with a carefully selected sample of participants" (Leedy and Ormrod 2013: 145). "A typical sample size ranges between 5 to 25 individuals, all of whom have direct experience with the phenomenon being studied" (Creswell 2007; Polkinghorne, 1989: 41). This research study adopted a sample size of 10 individual learners from different grades as well as 10 individual educators teaching different grades in a chosen primary school which fits a phenomenological approach. "The real implementation of a phenomenological study is as much in the hands of the participants as it is in the hands of the researcher" (Leedy and Ormrod 2013: 145).

> The researcher listens closely as participants describe their everyday experiences associated to the phenomenon. The researcher must also be attentive to subtle yet meaningful cues in participants' expressions, pauses, questions and occasional side tracks. The phenomenological interview is very often an unstructured one in which the researcher and participants work together to 'arrive at the heart of the matter' (Tesch 1994: 147).

This approach is utilised in this project as it allowed the use of methods that provided valid and deep understandings of the school practices of keeping discipline and of the data collected, for example, to look beyond the background of learners and perpetrators of school violence in a conflict situation.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

Paradigms are accepted systems of understanding reality, building knowledge, and gathering information about the world. According to Tracy (2013: 38), a researcher's paradigm can vary on the basis of ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), axiology (the values associated with areas of research and theorizing), and methodology (strategies for gathering, collecting and analysing data). According to Guba (1990: 17), paradigms or worldviews refer to a core set of beliefs that guides action. According to Glesne (2006: 6) paradigms refer to:

> . . . frameworks that function as maps or guides for scientific communities, determining important problems or issues for its members to address. Acceptable theories or explanations are defined, and methods and techniques are divised to solve these defined problems.

A paradigm is a model or pattern containing a set of legitimated assumptions and forms a structure for collecting and interpreting data. "It is a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular worldview" (Nieuwenhuis 2010: 69). Tracy (2013: 39) states that there are four major paradigms or worldviews in research methodology: positivist, interpretevist, transformative and pragmatic and each of these have their assumptions and differences (Creswell 2013: 23). For the purpose of this study, more emphasis was placed on the interpretive paradigm as research approach to viewing and analysing data.

3.2.2 Interpretive paradigm

This study adopts the interpretive paradigm which considers a communicating procedure where the researcher is actively involved in gaining information of lived experiences of the external world from the population being studied (Blance Terre and Durheim 1999: 148). In order to understand the experiences of violence among learners in a particular school context, it is necessary to understand the influencing systems (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana 2002: 35). "Interpretive paradigm is the method of seeing both reality and knowledge as constructed and reproduced through communication, interaction and practice" (Tracy 2013: 62). The aim of this study was to understand the causes of school violence among learners by focusing on the perpetrators and victims in conflict situations. The interpretive paradigm emphasises the importance of examining the world from the participant's point of view (Tracy 2013: 41). She stated that from an interpretative point of view, which is also termed constructivist or constructionist, reality is not something out there, which a researcher can clearly explain, describe or translate into a research report.

> Both reality and knowledge are constructed and reproduced through communication, interaction and practice. Knowledge about reality is therefore always mediated through the researcher (Tracy 2013: 40).

Indeed, interpretivists view knowledge as socially constructed through language and interaction, and reality as connected and known through the cultural and ideological categories of society.

According to Thanh and Thanh (2015: 24), there is a tight connection between the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology as one is a methodological approach and the other a means of collecting data. They further stated that researchers who use these methods ". . . often seek experiences, understandings and perceptions of individuals for their data in order to uncover reality, instead of abstract statistics and numbers".

"Interpretivist researchers embrace the 'world of human experience'" (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 36). Furthermore, Cohen and Manion (cited in Creswell 2003; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2011) claim that interpretivist researchers discover reality through participants' views, their own background and experiences. Taking into account views from various scholars, it is

theoretically understood that the interpretive paradigm allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. This study sought to explore the experiences of learners studying at one chosen primary school at Umlazi and also the experiences of the teachers teaching at this selected primary school, with the purpose of uncovering the impacts of school violence among learners and on the school as an institution.

The core belief of the interpretative paradigm is that reality is socially constructed and therefore interpretivism usually seeks to understand a specific context (Willis, 2007: 4). Willis further argues that an interpretivist approach suits education researchers whose purpose it is to investigate a phenomenon in a group of students or a particular institution. He states that "the leading viewpoints of each nation, region or ethnic group are often based in different experiences and perspectives of individuals" (Willis 2007: 110). The interpretive paradigm frequently seeks answers for research by forming and underpinning multiple understandings of the individual's worldview. By extention he argues that the idea of multiple perspectives arises from the belief that external reality is variable. Different people and different groups have different perceptions of the world (Willis 2007: 194). "The acceptance of multiple perspectives in interpretivism often leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the situation" (Morehouse 2011). This study sought to gain the perspectives, views and experiences of learners and teachers, and in doing so, sought to obtain a comprehensive understanding of violent behaviour among learners in a particular setting.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

This study utilised non-probability sampling in order to select the respondents.

> Non-probability sampling involved a collection of sampling techniques that assisted researchers to select units from a population that they were interested in studying. Collectively, these units formed the sample that the researcher studied (Teddie and Tashakkori 2009).

A distinctive characteristc of non-probability sampling techniques is that the samples are selected based on the subjective judgement of the researcher, rather than via random selection which is the cornerstone of probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling fits this study as it was the researcher's view that the most senior educators at this establishment were in the best position to supply rich data that allowed for detailed description during the analysis phase. Furthermore, the researcher found that learners who were directly involved in conflict situations and those that refuted violence were more suited to explain the factors that influence violent versus peaceful resolutions to conflict situations.

Ten educators and ten learners were purposively chosen from one urban primary school in the Umlazi Township. The ten learners that were interviewed were identified from teachers' observations of conflict situations at the school in the classroom and on the playground. The

teachers identified those learners who diffused conflict peacefully and those who fostered violent reactions. The learners were chosen from the senior primary phase and were between 10 to 15 years of age. The ten most senior educators formed the sample of educators for this study. Seniority was determined in accordance with the number of years the educator had been teaching at this school. Four of most senior male educators and six of the most senior female educators were selected.

3.4 The Research Respondents

Table 3.1 below provides a list of the ten learners and ten teachers that were interviewed. All the learners that were interviewed lived in Umlazi township and came to school by foot.

Table 3.1 *Profile of learners interviewed*

Learner	Gender	Description	Grade	Age
Bee	Female	Bee lives with her father who is a policeman. Her mother lives at Tongaat where she is working. Bee has a younger sister in grade 1 at Q Junior Primary school and a younger brother who is still in crèche at Disney World.	7	13
Thandokuhle	Female	Thandokuhle lives with both her parents. She is co-operative, assertive and confident.	5	10
Baya	Male	Baya lives at Umlazi township, U section. He lives with both parents whom he believes are one of a kind because of how they take care of him. Baya is a confident speaker.	7	12
Thandeka	Female	Thandeka lives at Umlazi township, Y section. She lives with her mother. Thandeka is very shy.	7	12
Sisanda	Female	Sisanda lives at Umlazi township, P section. She lives with her parents and her siblings.	6	11
Mpilonhle	Female	Mpilonhle lives at Umlazi township, P section. She lives with her parents, two older sisters and an older brother. One of her sisters is studying at tertiary level, while the other sister is in grade 12 and her brother in grade 9. Mpilonhle is also keen to further her studies at University.	6	11
Brian	Male	Brian lives at Folweni. He lives with his mother and his siblings. He has six sisters. Brian is timid, shy and humble.	7	11
Joy	Female	Joy lives at Umlazi township, Z section. She lives with her mother who is unemployed, her younger sister, plus an extended family with an	7	12

		uncle who is an alcoholic and a heavy smoker. Her mother did not reach grade 12 due to teenage pregnancy and her aunt also did not reach grade 12. Joy is well-mannered and respectful.		
Anele	Female	Anele lives at Umlazi township, Q section. She lives with her grandmother, her aunt and her cousins. She is an orphan.	6	12
Andile	Male	Andile lives at Umlazi township, U section. He lives with his parents and two brothers. Andile is confident and authoritative.	7	12

Below is a brief profile of the educators that were interviewed:

Table 3.2 *Profile of educators interviewed*

Educator	Gender	Description	Subject Specialisation	Teaching Experience (Years)
Mr Wanda	Male	Mr Wanda resides at Folweni tribal authority court and is presently teaching in Intermediate Phase. He is a member of the cultural committee, sports committee, uniform committee and environmental committee. He shows great concern for the safety and security of the learners as he is also a member of safety and security committee. He is a dedicated teacher who conducts morning classes.	Mathematics	6
Mrs Poppy	Female	Mrs Poppy resides at Yellowwood Park suburban area and is presently teaching in Intermediate Phase. She is a member of the environmental committee.	Social Sciences	28
Miss Sindi	Female	Miss Sindi resides at Newlands West suburban area and is presently teaching in Foundation Phase. She is	English	9

		the chairperson of the events committee and the secretary of the examination committee. She shows great concern for nurturing learners' talents as she also conducts the school choir.		
Mrs Degrees	Female	Mrs Degree resides at Montclair suburban area and is presently teaching in Senior Phase. She is a member of the cultural activities committee.	Economic and Management Sciences, Mathematics and Languages	2
Mrs Thandiswa	Female	Mrs Thandiswa resides at Seaview suburban area and is presently teaching in Intermediate Phase. She is the chairperson of the School Development Team (SDT), a member of the cultural activities committee, a site stewart and a member of the sports committee. She shows great concern for physical fitness of learners as she coaches the netball team of the school.	Foundation Phase Subjects	18
Mrs Xola	Female	Mrs Xola resides at Umlazi township, BB section and is presently teaching in Foundation Phase. She is a member of the environmental committee. She shows a great concern for developing learners spiritually.	Foundation Phase Subjects	30
Mr Zondo	Male	Mr Zondo resides at Umlazi township, D section and is presently teaching in Senior Phase. He is a member of the induction committee, secretary of time-table and a teacher representative in the SGB.	Natural Science (NS), Mathematics and English	13
Mrs Busi	Female	Mrs Busi is a Deputy Principal who resides at Isipingo Hills suburban area and she is presently teaching in Senior Phase. She is a member of the School Development Team (SDT), a	English, History and Life Orientation (LO)	27

		member of the admission committee and a member of the events organising committee. She shows great concern for learners' linguistic development as she encourages learners to read novels, magazines and newspapers through organising reading sessions in the morning assembly.		
Mr Freddy	Male	Mr Freddy resides at Umlazi township, BB section and is presently teaching in Senior Phase. He is a member of the sports committee and entertainment committee.	Technology and Natural Science (NS)	8
Mr Tembe	Male	Mr Tembe resides at Umlazi township, W section and is presently teaching in Senior Phase. He is a member of the safety and security committee and examination committee. He shows great concern for academic excellence among learners and assists learners from the community with mathematics over weekends.	Mathematics and Natural Science (NS)	26

3.5 Data Collection Method

3.5.1 Data collection using Individual Interviews

Mason (2002) defined the research interview as "a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation". It is a different data-collection technique that functions by collecting data through direct verbal communication between individuals.

3.5.2 Data collection through Focus Group Interviews

Focus group and individual interviews served as methods utilised to collect data for this study. "A focus group usually consists of six to ten subjects led by a moderator" (Leavy 2014). It is characterised by a style of interviewing which does not direct the outcomes of the conversations, but where the primary concern is to encourage a range of perspectives on the topic of focus for the group. According to Morgan (2013):

Focus groups are a form of group interview, though not in the sense of a backwards and forwards discussion between interviewer and group. Rather, the reliance is on the interaction within the group discussing a topic supplied by the researcher, to yield a collective rather than an individual view. The participants interact with each other rather than the interviewer, so that the views of the participants can emerge and the participants' agenda, rather than that of the researcher, can predominate. It is from the interaction of the group that the data emerges.

"Focus groups are contrived settings, bringing together specifically chosen members of the population, previously unknown to each other, to discuss a particular given theme or topic, where the interaction with the group leads to data and yields results" (Hyden and Bulow 2010). According to Morgan (2013) "focus groups are useful for gathering qualitative data, empowering participants to speak out, and in their own words". In this research study, the inclusion of learners from all different phases in primary school was encouraged as their age groups were different from each other.

Cohen et al. (2011) interpret focus group interviews as useful to triangulate other forms of data generation methods. Some researchers have different views to the number that should constitute a focus group. According to Tracy (2013: 167) the focus group interview refers to a group interview with three to twelve participants, marked by guided group discussion, question and answer techniques, interactive dialogue and other activities. Rule and John (2011), Kelly (2006), Chilisa and Preece (2005) all suggest that focus groups should consist of six to ten people, whereas Hakim (2000) states that a focus group interview should be made up of between four and twelve participants (eight being the optimal). "The number of participants should be enough so that the focus group does not fall flat if some members choose to remain silent" (Babbie and Mouton 2009: 292). The group should not be so big that participation by all is impossible, or so small that it is not possible to cover a large number of issues (Chilisa and Preece 2005: 154). For this study, the focus group consisted of a minimum of six participants and a maximum of ten participants.

According to Mthiyane (2013: 117) focus group interviews rely on the interaction within the group discussing a topic that was provided by the researcher, to produce a collective rather than an individual view. Hence, the participants interact with each other rather than with the interviewer, so that the views of the participants can emerge. In this manner, the participants' agenda, rather than the researchers' agenda can predominate. The advantage of focus group interviews is that they can provide insight that might not otherwise have been available in a straightforward interview. This form of interviewing is also economical timewise, producing a large amount of data in a short period of time.

> In focus group interviews, participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in-depth view not attainable from individual interviews, while unexpected comments and new perspectives can easily be explored within the focus group and can add value to the study (Niewenhuis 2010).

The composition of the group of this study consisted of learners with different interests and cultures, in order to stimulate debate. The questions were similar to the questions used in individual interviews to broaden the data by comparing the responses of respondents when they were on their own, to responses in a group. The discussions were recorded and their collective opinions were compared to the responses of individual interviews.

Focus group interviews for learners, as well as for teachers, were held in the school's staffroom on different dates and times. A focus group interview for learners, consisting of ten participants, was used as starting point. These participants were learners who also participated in individual interviews. The questions were the same as were used in the individual interviews, but excluded the biographical characteristics of respondent's section. Focus group interviews for educators consisted of six educators out of ten expected as two educators were transferred to other schools due to the Departmental programme. Furthermore, one educator was on sick leave and the other one had intended to join the group later as she was busy with school duties as Deputy Principal. Unfortunately, the group discussion ended before she joined the group. Educators who participated in the focus group discussion also participated in individual interviews. Similarly, permission to record the focus group interviews was requested in advance from the respondents. All the conversations were recorded which enabled the researcher to concentrate on the interview process, instead of on writing notes during actual interview.

The focus group for learners was very successful as all the learners were very energetic and supportive towards each other in their discussions. They readily shared their views and experiences and with so much enthusiasm that the focus group discussion lasted over an hour. They requested to be part of the project for the next year, although some of the grade 7 learners would then not be at this school anymore. It was found that learners who seemed shy during individual interviews were very active in discussion groups. Afterwards, some parents communicated their appreciation for allowing their children to be part of this project and for the encouragement and motivation to their children to take education more seriously. They also felt that their children's communication skills developed through this process. One learner even asked for her photo to be put in this thesis.

The group discussion with teachers was also successful, although these participants were not as forthcoming as they were in individual discussions. It is suspected that these particular teachers were apprehensive because they were weary that others in the group may report their criticisms of the manner in which management handled conflict and violence at the school.

Eder and Fingerson (2003) report the value of individual interviews with adolescents, particularly about sensitive matters like relationships, family, physical and behavioural issues. Indeed, they report examples where individual interviews yielded different results from group interviews with the same people about the same topic, where the individuals valued greatly

the opportunity for a one-on-one conversation. The face-to-face interviews do increase the credibility and validity of the study data.

Semi-structured interviews were engaged as the principal plan for data production in this qualitative research study, which included the verbal questioning of respondents (Bogdan and Biklen 1982). Two formal semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the study respondents. Each of these interviews took approximately 50 minutes. The first interview served to provide biographical information and to locate the respondents in the study. The second interview provided data on how teachers were handling or managing violence among learners. The second interview also provided insights into the ethos, climate and school policies regarding learner self-control and how these impacted on learner behaviour. Interviews are conversations with a purpose and, depending on this purpose, interviews should be organised in different ways (Tracy 2013: 138).

> The interview is a discussion that is conducted one-way, provides data for the researcher, is constructed on the researcher's agenda, leads to the researcher's interpretations, and contains 'counter control' elements by the interviewee who could withhold information (Creswell 2013: 173).

Interviews can return a great deal of useful information (Leedy and Ormrod 2013: 153). The researcher can ask questions linked to any of the following:

- facts, for example, biographical information
- people's beliefs and perspectives about the facts
- feelings
- motives
- present and past behaviours
- standard of behaviour – what people think should be done in certain situations
- conscious reasons for actions or feelings, for example why people think that engaging in a particular behaviour is desirable or undesirable.

This study used interviews to explore the firsthand experiences and insight of the participants, in order to attain a thorough and detailed understanding of violence and its causes in a school setting.

Tracy (2013: 132) motivates that qualitative interviews provide opportunities for mutual discovery, understanding, reflection and explanation along a path that is original, adaptive and often energising. She further asserts that "interviews elucidate subjectively lived experiences and viewpoints from the respondents' perspectives".

> Although interviewer and interviewee are, in many ways, conversational partners and may even be (come) friends, the interviewer almost always has more control than the respondent in terms of dialogue direction and topical emphasis (Oakley 1981: 30).

This difference in power also means that the interviewer has an obligation to treat the respondent and the resulting data with ethical care. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005: vii):

Interviewing, on the one hand, is like having 'night-vision goggles', because interviews enable the researcher to stumble upon, and to further explore, multifaceted phenomena that may otherwise be hidden or unseen. However, interviews are as much about rhetorically constructing meaning and mutually creating a story as they are about mining data gems.

Meaning is created between participants rather than being held in the minds of the interviewer or interviewee and is swapped back and forth (Tripp 1983: 32). "Indeed, interviews are not neutral exchanges of questions and answers, but active processes in which we come to know others and ourselves" (Fontana and Frey 2005: 695).

"Interviews may also access information on past events, rare occasions, dastardly deeds, clandestine trysts, disasters, celebrations or buried emotions" (Tracy 2013: 132). For example, this study researched school violence among learners in a primary school, therefore, interviews provided opportunities to ask participants about past or current incidents of school violence among learners, their emotional response and whom they blamed. "Interviews are especially helpful in acquiring information that is left out of formal documents or omitted from sanitised histories, which reflect the power holders' point of view" (Tracy 2013: 133). She further states that interviews are also very valuable for strengthening and complicating other data. In conversing with interviewees, the researcher has the opportunity to bring up observations or hearsays, and to ask interviewees to verify, refute, defend or expand on these. "The more unprompted the interview process, the more likely one is to acquire unprompted, lively and unexpected answers from the interviewees and vice versa" (Tracy 2013: 139). The more organised the interview condition is, the easier the analysis would be in order to achieve advanced organising of the results (Kvale 1996: 129).

Face-to-face interviews have the distinct advantage of enabling the researcher to establish rapport with potential participants, thereby gaining their trust and cooperation. Thus, such interviews yield excellent response rates in survey research (Leedy and Ormrod 2001: 196). They further state that personal interviews also allow the researcher to clarify ambiguous answers and, when appropriate, enable the researscher to seek follow-up information. Telephone interviews are less time-consuming and less expensive (they involve only the cost of long-distance calls), gaining the researcher ready access to virtually anyone on the planet who has a telephone. The response rate is not as high as with a face-to-face interview as occasionally potential participants are busy, annoyed at being bothered, or otherwise not interested in participating. However, the response rate is considerably higher than that of a mailed questionnaire (Leedy and Ormrod 2001: 197). According to Tracy (2013: 160) face-to-face interviews provide the opportunity to create rapport and to collect both verbal and nonverbal data. Consideration of issues regarding access, space, privacy and comfort can help interviews to proceed smoothly.

This study used face-to-face interviews to collect data from the participants. All interviews were conducted in English. One of the learner participants occasionally used his vernacular language, isiZulu. This had to be translated into English when the data was transcribed. The school was used as venue to meet learners, but for educators the school was used sometimes, while at other times meetings were arranged at educators' homes because of their availability. The interviews did not always go according to plan. There were challenges along the way that needed to be addressed. One such occasion where the researcher's initial plans had to be changed in order to accommodate the contextual situation, follows:

I normally did my interviews with learners on a Wednesday afternoon since learners finish at 13h00 and teachers at 14h30. This provided an opportunity to conduct interviews with learners without interfering with instruction time while educators were still on the premises. While conducting interviews with learners one particular Wednesday afternoon, I received calls from educators from the school. They informed me that I had to leave the school premises as the staff cars were not at the school. They told me that a visitor's car was hijacked at school that Tuesday. As a result, teachers did not stay at school after 14h30. This caused me to change my action plan, that is, to interview only one participant per Wednesday in order to finish early while teachers were still at school.

Two learners did not respond to the request to be part of this research study. Therefore, two other learners needed to be approached with the assistance of educators from the school, so as to meet the required maximum of ten learners. One female educator who agreed to participate in the project left this chosen school due to being transferred. Even though she was transferred to another school, we still met and continued with the interviews. Another male educator participated in the individual interviews but not in the focus group interviews as he was also transferred to another school. One female educator signed the consent form to participate in the project, but was always unavailable at the scheduled times to be interviewed. She was eventually also replaced with another educator.

3.6 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data collected; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situations, noting patterns, themes, catagories and regularities. Qualitative data analysis is distinguished by its merging of analysis and interpretation and often by the merging of data collection analysis (Gibbs 2007:3)

This gathering of datat happens in an interactive, back and forth process (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). The results of the analysis also constitute data for further analysis.

The first step following data collection and prior to data analysis, is to process and consolidate qualitative data such as interviews. This requires sorting, processing,

sharpening, focusing, discarding and organising data for coding in order to prepare for data analysis (Miles and Huberman 2013).

The analysis process employed in this study was organised according to the research questions using content analysis. "Content analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases" (Leedy and Ormrod 2012). The material needs to be broken down - each item - into small managable segments to be analysed separately.

The qualitative data analysis transformed data into findings (Marshall and Rossman, 2011: 111). De Vos *et al.* (2005: 338) state that "the data analysis process involved bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data". The researcher begins with a large body of information and must, through inductive reasoning, sort, categorise and gradually reduce it to a small set of abstract, underlying themes (Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 150). De Vos *et al.* (2011: 397) state that the process of data analysis includes building an outline for interactive the essence of what the information reveals. Data collection, recording and analysis are interrelated, concurrent procedures that are developed continuously (Creswell 2007: 150).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011: 461) state that "qualitative data often focuses on smaller numbers of people than quantative data, although the data tends to be detailed and rich". They further state:

> A researcher needs to decide early on whether to present data on an individual case basis, and to then combine key issues emerging across the individual cases, or whether to proceed by working within a largely predetermined analytical frame of issues that crosses the individuals concerned.

The researcher should use the preliminary research questions and the related literature developed earlier in the proposal to provide guidelines for data analysis (Marshall and Rossman 1999: 152). "Voluminous data collected can be overwhelming, therefore analysis of the data should be done systematically so that there is some order in the process" (Mthiyane 2013: 122).

Once the data was generated, it was transcribed immediately and preliminary analysis began. "Transcription involves getting the dialogue or narrative from the devices on which the researcher had recorded it into a document format with a clear researcher-defined column for notes" (Grbich 2013: 20). According to Grbich (2013: 21) preliminary data analysis refers to an ongoing process that is undertaken every time data is collected. She further states that during the preliminary stage of data analysis, data needs to be checked and tracked to see what comes out of it, and in order to identify areas that require follow-up, while actively questioning where the information collected is leading - or should lead - the researcher.

In analysing the data, the transcript was utilised for narrative analysis using the approach adapted by De Vos (2010 from Marshall and Rossman 1999 and Creswell 1998) which states the following:

1. Planning for recording of data: This was done in line with the view of De Vos (2010: 333) where the interviews with the respondents were recorded after obtaining their consent and written permission. This allowed the researcher to pay attention to the interviews and to make notes where it was necessary.

2. Data generation and preliminary analyses: Data analyses in a qualitative study involves a mutual relationship between data generation and data analysis, which means that the data that was generated was also analysed. De Vos (2010: 334) further states that "data collection and analysis improves both the quality of data collected and the quality of analysis".

3. Managing or organising the data so that it is retrievable and manageable to work with: According to Mthiyane (2013: 123) getting organised for analysis begins with an inventory of what a researcher has available for use. In this study it involved transferring voice recordings onto the computer before transcription could begin. Listening to the voice recordings and reading the transcriptions several times created an opportunity to become deeply involved with the data. De Vos (2010: 335) states that planning ahead would assist the researcher to make retrieval for analysis puposes easier. This includes data file folders, index cards and computer files. In this case, separate file folders were created for individual interviews and focus group interviews, for learners as well as educators.

4. Generating categories, themes and patterns: According to Creswell (2009) category generation refers to "taking the qualitative information apart and looking for categories, and themes or dimensions of information". "Interpretation involves making sense of data and lessons learned" (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 116) by analysing and interpreting what the participants said and did.

5. Coding the data: Coding data is the formal presentation of analytical thinking (Marshall and Rossman 1999: 155). This includes generating categories and themes: Colour-coding of notes to keep track of titles, names, dates, description of settings, attendance of events, establishing units of analysis of the data, indicating how these units are similar to and different from each other. Codes may consist of abbreviations of keywords, numbers or coloured dots (De Vos 2010: 336).

The following approach was adopted in analysing the data: Transcripts were carefully read in their entirety. Recurring catagories that emerged from the data were noted. A list of themes was then generated from the broad categories. These themes were then grouped and organised according to their similarity. The list of themes was compared according to the data and codes were allocated. The data was then divided and organised into relevant themes and sub-themes. During the process of developing themes, the data was coded. Special care was taken with regards to the "meaning and insight of the words and acts of the participants in the study" (Marshall and Rossman 1999: 152).

Using this approach, many themes emerged which are discussed in the next chapter.

3.7 Trustworthiness of data

Trustworthiness is of utmost importance in qualitative studies and should always be kept in mind by qualitative researchers (Golafshani 2003: 597; and Niewenhuis 2010: 69). This involves consistency checks and credibility or stakeholder checks. "It is significant for the researcher to check and re-check the consistency of the findings from different, as well as from the same sources" (Yin 2012: 94).

According to Wiersma (2009: 199) validity refers to the trustworthiness of inference drawn from the data. "It involves the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or other sort of account". The validity and reliability of this study depends on the truth value, the transferability and consistency of the study. "The truth value or internal validity and transferability or external validity is the extent to which one's findings match reality" (Merriam 2001: 166).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 135) state that the internal validity seeks to reflect the description of a specific incidence. Issues or sets of data provided by the research, can furthermore be motivated and extended by the data. To some degree this concerns accuracy, which can have practical implications quantitative and qualitative research. They further insist that the findings must describe accurately the phenomenon being researched.

Mthiyane (2013: 125) suggests that "for qualitative research to be credible (in preference to internal validity) and transferable (in preference to external validity or generalisability), it should be dependable (in preference to reliability)". He further states that reliability and validity are essential criteria for quality in quantitative research, whereas in qualitative studies, terms such as credibility, dependability, applicability or transferability, confirmability and consistency are the important issues. In addition:

> . . . credibility in naturalistic inquiry can be attained by the following: prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis and member checking (Lincoln and Guba 1995: 219-301).

Transferability (the extent to which findings can be applied in other context or with other respondents) also forms parts of trustworthiness even though qualitative researchers are not primarily interested in generalisation (Mthiyane 2013: 125). Dependability (that is, if the study were to be repeated with the same or similar respondents in the same context, its findings would be similar) and confirmability (the degree to which the findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not the biases of the researcher) are also other strategies used by qualitative researchers to enhance trustworthiness (Mthiyane 2013: 126).

In this study, the researcher ensured that the data generated through interviews produced credible, dependable and trustworthy findings. The trustworthiness (validity and reliability) of the research was ensured by using a digital recorder to record each and every interview session. This provided an accurate account of the interviews (van Niekerk 2009: 111). Interviews that are audio-recorded can be kept for a certain time and replayed at a later date to facilitate reliability checks.

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993: 338):

> In ethnographic research, internal validity can be addressed in several of the following ways by using low-inference descriptors, multiple researchers, participant researchers, peer examination of data, and by using mechanical means to record, store and retrieve data.

Hammersley (1992: 71) suggests that "the internal validity for qualitative data requires attention to plausibility and credibility". This includes the kinds and amounts of evidence required, such as that, the greater the claim that is being made, the more convincing the evidence has to be to support the claim. There also needs to be clarity on the kinds of claims made from research, for example, the definitional, descriptive and explanatory theories that might be generated from it.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

"Validity is concerned with the soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instrument" (Leedy 1993). "Validity concerns the relationship between theoretical, concept variables or concepts and the empirical, indicator variables or indicators" (Brown et al. 2001: 26). Validity then is a measure of the extent to which the researcher is measuring what he or she thinks is being measured. According to Polit and Hungler (1995: 353) validity refers to "the degree to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring".

Honesty of informants when contributing data is an important contributor to validity. In this study each person who was approached was given opportunities to refuse to participate in the project so as to ensure that the data collection sessions involved only those who were genuinely willing to take part and who were prepared to offer data freely. Participants were encouraged to be frank from the outset of each session, with the researcher aiming to establish a rapport in the opening moments and indicating that there were no right answers to the questions that were asked. Participants could, therefore, contribute ideas and speak from their experiences without fear of losing credibility in the eyes of the researcher. It was made clear to participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point, and that they would not be required to disclose an explanation to the researcher.

In addition to the strategies outlined above, attempts were made to ensure that the most accurate responses were elicited. These included the use of probes to elicit detailed data and

iterative questioning, in which the researcher returned to matters previously raised by an informant in order to extract related data through rephrased questions.

> Reliability relates to the precision and accuracy of the instrument. If used on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, the instrument should yield similar results (Cohen *et al.* 2011).

The researcher used more than one method to gather data by utilising both face-to-face and focus group interviews. The questions used in individual interviews were similar to the questions used in focus groups to broaden the data by comparing the responses of participants when they were on their own, to responses in a group. Group interviews could have led to greater levels of disclosure and participation as participants might have felt less intimidated by the researcher when they had the support of their peers.

3.9 Ethical issues

According to Patton (1990) researchers need to be mindful of ethical issues and consider whether research procedures are likely to cause any physical or emotional harm. In this case, a letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the Department in Education (Appendix I and II). Once the permission was granted, the letter of approval was forwarded to the DUT Research Committee. The letter granting permission was also forwarded to the District Manager at Umlazi District Office and the principal of the selected school. Both were informed that interviews would be conducted with ten selected learners as well as ten selected educators. Prior arrangement and permission were sought with the selected school to interview particular learners and particular teachers, while ensuring that the interviews did not affect the regular functioning of the school. Informed written consent was sought of the interviewees or respondents before the interview began (Chaleunvong, 2009).

"Research participants should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating" (Leedy and Ormrod 2005: 101). "Furthermore, they should be told that, if they agree to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time". The purpose of the interview was explained to the respondents, that is, why they had been selected, the expected duration of the interview and the use of a digital recorder during the interview process (Boyce and Neale 2006: 4). The respondents were requested to sign the information and consent forms (Appendix VII), where they acknowledged that they understood the nature of the project, the procedure that would be utilised and greater purpose of the study. Respondents were assured of the confidential nature of the information gathered during the research process and that their identities and that of their school would remain anonymous (Fisher and Foreit 2002). Respondents were further assured that no information about their participation in the project would be disclosed to their school principal, fellow colleagues or to other learners. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the data obtained and that all the information will be kept

confidential, that names of participants, their school and principal will not be mentioned in this dissertation (Fisher and Foreit 2002).

The respondents were respected to the extent that in the case of one person who signed the consent form but then ignored telephonic calls for a meeting or interview, was not badgered. Field work commensed only once the DUT Research Committee had granted ethical clearance to continue with the study.

The researcher learned about the culture of the respondents to ensure that it was respected during the data collection process (Moser and Kalton 1989: 154). A more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information was created by a friendly and cordial approach so that the respondents felt more comfortable in the conversation situation (Boyce and Neale 2006: 3).

3.10 Challenges during data collection

Only one instrument was used in this study to gather data. The interviews were based on one selected urban primary school at Umlazi Township.

While the principal of this school was not a participant, he did show concern about the nature and practicality of the research. He enquired about the involvement of the School Management Team (SMT) in this project and the expectations of the SMT. Some teachers who were not participants feared that their school might develop a negative reputation if the findings indicated that there was large scale violence among learners. As with other studies, for example Burton (2008: 18), the principal was fearful that he may be perceived as failing to manage his staff, learners and the school effectively. These fears were alleviated by assuring him of the anonymity of the school and by explaining how the school as an institution might benefit from this research.

It was a big challenge for to meet the participants after school, especially teachers as they were scared to stay behind since experiencing the hijacking of a car at the school premises after school hours. To navigate this challenge, those teachers who could not make it at school for interviews, were interviewed at their homes over weekends or during the school vacation, depending on what was most suitable to the participants concerned.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a detailed discussion of how the data in this study was gathered, organised and analysed. This involved individual interviews and focus group interviews. The research methods of the data analysis and interpretation, sampling strategy, ethical issues, were discussed in this chapter.

The next chapter focuses on the analysis of the data collected and the findings of this research study.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and Discussions

Introduction

In this chapter the data is presented and analysed from the transcript of individual interviews and focus group discussions with educators and learners at one urban primary school in Umlazi township. This study examines the specific circumstances that gave rise to violent outcomes. In doing so, the main focus of this chapter identifies the causes of learner violence at this school. In the first instance this chapter looks at the types of learner violence and then turns attention to the causes of learner violence at Phatheka Primary School.

Verbatim quotations are used in the data presentation in order to ensure that the proper context of the responses is maintained and sustained.

The following themes emerged from the interviews with participants at Phatheka (pseudonym) Primary School in Umlazi Township: cultural beliefs and practices; labelling and violence; gender, violence and romance; and family and home influences on learner violence.

4.1 Types of violence at Phatheka Primary School

The findings of this study revealed that violence at this school was mainly interpersonal. "Interpersonal violence refers to direct violence from one person to another in an identifiable situation and is often physical in nature" (Hearn 1998:16; Espelage *et al.* 2013:21). The physical violence at this school took the form of hitting, kicking, punching, slapping and other acts that caused physical pain or injury. Violence in this study is therefore understood to be physical in nature, that is, the infliction of bodily harm on another person (Archer and Browne 1989:11).

The interviews with educators about the type of violence at this school revealed the following:

Mrs Busi:

"The boys like to hit other boys. They mostly punch and kick when fighting. Sometimes they use a weapon".

Miss Sindi:

"They use fists when they fight. Girls also fight. They mostly slap and sometimes bite".

Mr Freddy:

"Sometimes when there is a disagreement, learners use violence on each other. They try to injure the opponent by hitting with their hands and sometimes booting".

Mrs Xola:

"Bullies take other learners' lunchboxes, steal other learners' belongings, but only boys do that. They disobey the rules, but not all of them, for example, the use of vulgar language and fighting. It happens because boys like to fight [kicking each other] even in the classroom over simple things".

Mr Tembe:

"Learners use anything at their disposal when they fight. You could be teaching and someone gets a pen or a pencil because they know that it is a tool and learners aim to inflict pain on each other, so they'll take a pen or pencil or a pair of scissors to hurt each other".

Mr Wanda:

"A learner passed away over the weekend. They were fighting over a hat. He was stabbed to death by his best friend. Both of the boys were 13 years old".

Mrs Thandiswa:

"Once when I entered the class I saw a boy trying to strangle another boy. This is how it is here in this school. They want to hurt each other, sometimes for a stupid reason".

Interviews with learners revealed similar results:

Mpilonhle:

"Sfundo came to me and interfered with me so this time I was very angry because I had enough of his interference so I slapped him".

Bee:

"Boys use their money to play spin. They play spin nowadays. If you lose obviously you get angry because you lose all your money. Then they start fighting. There was a fight at school where one of the boys was carrying a pair of scissors. He almost stabbed another boy".

Thandeka:

"*I had a fight [punched her] with my friend where we were preparing for a play and she was bossy, and did not want to hear my opinions*".

Baya:

"*If there is a learner who wants to hit me, my friends help me by defending me against that learner. We use our fighting skills. We like to use sticks*".

Brian:

"*Boys pushed me over the wall because they wanted my lunch and I refused to give them. We ended up fighting. We used fists. They said 'Uyabhayisa'which means I am mentally disturbed, and also said 'Uyisithithithi' which means I am a nerd, they also said I am stupid that is why the other boys will hit me as well even when I walk the down the street. I set up a fight to prove them wrong after school. We brought our fighting sticks*".

Andile:

"*Learners intimidate each other to prove that they are not scared of one another. There were two boys from Grade 7 who were passing by the playground at school. They took my soccer ball. I tried to struggle for it but they slapped me and I ran away*".

Emerging from the data is the strong emphasis that violence at this school was physical in nature. A common way of resolving conflict among learners was to use interpersonal violence which included kicking, pushing, slapping, biting, pulling and the use of weapons to inflict pain and cause bodily harm and injury. Poipoi *et al.* (2010 cited in Shabalala 2016: 93) argue that more boys and girls at schools reported being victims of physical violence which involved hitting, slapping and pushing. This study revealed similar findings. From the testimonies above most of the violence among learners was interpersonal.

The next section examines the causes of the physical violence among learners.

4.2 Causes of learner violence at Phatheka Primary School

4.2.1 Cultural beliefs and practices – fighting muthi

According to Damba (2011: 1) educators, family and community are becoming more and more concerned and worried about the increasing tendency of children purchasing muthi that they trust makes them unbeatable in a fight. The muthi, Amakhosi, is also believed to create feelings of attraction and familiarity between the wearer and the opposite sex. Damba (2011:1) further reports:

Anxieties over cumulative violence amongst both primary and high school children in Khayelitsha came to the point where 300 residents met at Monwabisi Park to confront the local herbalist at the Khayelitsha train station as he was believed to have sold Amakhosi muthi to learners at the school.

Sangoma Duma Kude Majwarha said, "Amakhosi does everything for you. When you are in a fight they fight for you". (Damba 2011: 1)

In a study by Damba (2011), a learner had the following to say about his belief in fighting muthi:

> When you have this evil spirit you are in charge of everything. It protects me against other evil spirits and gives me power to win fights. When I'm in a fight they help me. When I need to call the spirits I go down on my knees, remove my belt and open my buttons on my shirt and say 'Vuka'.

This study revealed similar findings about the use of muthi and the belief among learners that certain types of muthi provide advantage to the user in conflicts and fights. These teachings of fighting/war muthi have been passed down from the older generations to the current generations through folktales and practices by elders at home. At this particular school it was found that the belief and practices related to muthi was often a trigger to violence among learners. Educators and learners that were interviewed mentioned that many learners got into conflict and violence either to test the effects of muthi or as a mechanism for protection during fights.

Mrs Thandiswa:

"*There is a case where a learner brought traditional medicine to school. A grade six educator, then smelled something rotten when the learner entered the class. When she asked what was rotten, the learners pointed at a certain boy that he was carrying something. When the educator asked him, she found about five small portions of different traditional medicines. The boy mentioned that you must apply these medicines on your fist before fighting. When they fight with another learner, the learner will faint. That's the kind of learners we are dealing with. The boy admitted that he is the one who brought the traditional medicine. He wanted to test it out on his peers. When he was pressed, he told us that he stole it from home. Traditional medicine is made at his home. They mix it and supply it to people who want it. They plant it and sell it to other people to perform witchcrafts. The grandmother is using this boy to prepare traditional medicine. He knew what he brought to school. There was an argument a day before so that's why he brought this traditional medicine. I did not get to hear what the argument was about. I was too shocked and scared to get involved. I don't know what the argument was for but it was not worth fighting over*".

Another educator also shared a similar experience about learners using traditional medicines before fighting.

Mrs Busi:

"*What I've noticed is that the violent behaviour that happens at school have number of causes. You see that nowadays learners are exposed to many different things, especially television. They watch movies, especially the ones from Africa Magic and soapies such as Generations and Isibaya where they broadcast the destructive use of traditional medicine [muthi] and the learner is young. They want to copy what is happening there and practise it at school. We as educators are supposed to warn the parents and advise the parents to monitor their children especially the programmes that they are watching in their spare time because that's where they learn this muthi related violent behaviour. For example, there was a case reported at school concerning a grade 5 learner [boy] who brought muthi to school with the aim of avenging a recent conflict with that other learner. The boy believed that this muthi will cause his opponent to become weak during the fight so that he will appear as a champion amongst his peers*".

Learners also spoke about using traditional medicines to provide courage in a fight, neutralise or weaken their opponent and make them stronger when fighting. Below, an extract is provided from the researcher's individual interviews with learners:

Sisanda:

"*Learners get into fights at school in the classroom or during breaks. One time a boy named Mbuso got medicine from his friend Nduna to apply on his hands so that he can beat Thabo in a fight*".

In focus group interviews learners also mentioned similar occurrences:

Anele: "*There was a boy named Mlindeli who was too old for his grade. He fought with a girl named Kholeka. Sir asked Mlindeli to write down the names of learners who were making noise in class. Mlindeli wrote Kholeka's name down. Then Kholeka got upset and started labeling Mlindeli by calling him with bad names. They began to fight. Kholeka was angry because she said that she had medicines with her that would help her to beat Mlindeli*".

Thandeka: "*Yes, I remember that one. Mlindeli was also scared of the medicine.*"

Mpilonhle: "*You see Kwenza had a pair of scissors in his pocket. When Jabu tried to take the scissors it went back and hurt him. Then she started bleeding through her nose. Jabu quickly collected some of the blood. He said that he would use it for muthi to make Kwenza weak*".

Brian: "*Kwenza tried to get the blood back but he refused.*"

Baya: "*I think Jabu tried to use it on another boy.*"

Joy: **"Two girls got into an argument in class. They swore each other and said they will continue after school. The following day Kholeka came to school wearing a bangle on her wrist covered with a cloth and decorated with few beads. She told her friend Aphiwe that the bangle is for protection against any physical fights to win the fight if someone attacks her".**

Thandeka: *"She did fight and the bangle helped her to win."*

Among the learners in this school muthi played a significant role in triggering fighting. Teachers expressed concern over the increasing incidents where learners were found to have purchased muthi with the conviction that it would make them invincible in fight situations. In certain instances learners used the muthi as a test to see if it made them braver and better fighters. Other studies of school violence revealed similar findings. Damba (2011: 1) reports that primary school youngsters interviewed, said learners used muthi to be unbeatable in physical battles. Some said it also assisted them in receiving favourable attention from the opposite sex, while others reported that burglars used it to escape without getting caught or imprisoned. They described it as ash put into a small bottle worn on a beaded necklace, or brushed into a bangle made from goat skin.

Muthi to the learners is a cultural belief and practice that is passed down the generations. To the young generation it has become a way of life and it is accepted as a norm (Damba 2011: 1). In this study this was confirmed by the testimonies of educators and learners that learners brought fighting muthi to school with the aim of using it against other learners to gain an advantage. There was strong evidence that many learners believed that muthi made them invincible, super powerful and provided them with courage to confront their provokers. This belief in the power of muthi caused learners to readily get into fights and scuffles and other violent confrontations. Learners also provoked other learners into fights with the belief that the muthi will make them win. From the above testimonies it can be concluded that the use and belief in the powers of "fighting muthi" was a major contributor to the increase in violence at Phatheka Primary. We see how social practice interacts with, and is responsive to particular conditions within the community as well as being generated within different structures of social relations as advocated by the social constructivist theory.

4.2.2 We are Zulu – We are warriors

The interviews with teachers and learners revealed that in many situations of conflict and fighting, the boys often used sticks to fight and many of the boys believed that it is their custom and tradition to settle disputes through the art of stick fighting.

Coetzee (2002: 5) states that: "From a very young age, a Zulu boy was expected to watch and look after livestock in the field, exploring his manliness and independence in a world away from parental supervision." Part of this exploration involved fighting with other young boys and herders, defending himself against his peers as a way to establish a position of leadership among the other herders. This was achieved by defeating his peers at fighting with sticks. Coetzee further states that in modern day society ". . . young boys train using switches or

small sticks, and they practice their skills with sticks on trees. Fathers also instruct their little boys in the art by standing on their knees and sparring with the child".

According to Coetzee (2002: 1) fighting can be everyday occurences among Zulu boys and there is no time frame associated with it – it occurs as the situation arises. However, boys use every opportunity to fight, thereby establishing their reputation as stick fighters and to proving their masculinity. The process by which boys became men (including traditional customs like stick fighting and defending oneself and family) often filters to the schooling context (Mngoma 2013).

The following extracts are from the researcher's individual interviews with educators:

Mr Tembe:
"A boy who was in grade seven, had a quarrel with his classmate. Other boys in the class organised for the boys to fight – one on one. They organised a stick fight".

Mrs Thandiswa:

"There was a boy who fought with another at school, he lost the fight then he went home and told his older brothers. The following day, they came back to school. After school, outside the school premises, we saw a crowd. We went there to investigate. The boys who had fought in school were now fighting outside with other people watching. They were using sticks to hit each other".

Boys who witnessed and were involved in fights at school also mentioned the use of sticks in hand-to-hand combat.

Brian:

"The group of boys in grade six were playing with a tennis ball together. The tennis ball was brought by one of those boys at school. While they were playing, one of these boys who was not the owner took the ball and held it. The other boys beat the boy who held the tennis ball. Then the boy ran away. The following day, the boy who held the tennis ball returned with sticks to challenge the boy in a fight. After school he waited for this boy to fight with him. He even organised his elder brothers to be there".

Andile:

"Yes, they fight here. Sometimes they bring sticks. They say it is their way. I don't like the stick fighting. Someone can get hurt. Some children say it is only playing but I did see some people bleeding".

Mpilonhle:

"I saw this one fight. Siyanda and Sandile were set to fight. I think their friends organised it. They both had sticks. It was a revenge battle. I heard the other boys saying that they must fight to settle it once and for all".

Sisanda:

"You see I fought with this other boy. It was arranged after school. Too many people was saying that he is better, stronger and all that. We both knew stick fighting – so we agreed to settle this the Zulu way".

From the interviews above it is seen that the boys at this particular school adapted a repertoire of Zulu rural cultural practices and forms of self-organisation to handle conflict among themselves. This often involved physical violence and confrontation where the boys used sticks to assault their opponents. Many boys at this school used vernacular expressions of stick fighting to reinforce their dominance over other boys - metaphors of manhood that bolstered their position among peers. In some cases, adults adjudicated these confrontations (elder brothers) which indicate that this cultural practice to resolve a dispute was not only accepted by the boys' elders, but encouraged by the presence of older boys. Mngoma (2013: 1) also found in his report that traditional Zulu fighting was often a catalyst that fueled fighting among school boys. Furthermore, Zulu stick fighting provides an opportunity for menfolk to build bravery and ability, to distinguish themselves as skilled warriors, and to earn admiration in the community (Carton and Morrell 2012: 31).

It was also found that in this school many boys were brought to manhood through a process that involved ritual teachings and traditional rites of passage. Carton and Morrell (2012: 31) in their study of teenage Zulu boys in KwaZulu-Natal, found that the conflict among teenage boys emanated from traditional beliefs of manhood. They also found the use of violence to force boys to conform, to be a strong feature in the creation of traditional Zulu manliness. In this study as well, violence often resulted from situations of enforcing traditional Zulu beliefs and practices upon other boys. In interviews, teachers and learners alike provided evidence of this.

Mr Zondo, a well-respected and experienced teacher at the school, had this to say:

"There was a boy in grade five who behaved like a girl. His father used to beat him very hard trying to straighten him. At one time he came here at school and beat him in class with a stick. We had to intervene, we warned him to stop beating the boy because we knew that the boy was what he was and there was no way he could change him. The father had told his other sons to beat him if he behaved girlish".

From the interview with Baya, a musculine Zulu-culture orientated boy:

Baya: *"You see Zulu boys must behave like boys. We get together and fix them if they don't. We are Zulus - We are warriors".*

Interviewer: *"What do you mean by fix them?"*

Baya: *"Well – we get together and warn them – sometimes we beat them. If they fight back, we hit harder".*

This is not a study on how constructions of masculinities intersect with, or impact on adolescent male risk behaviour. Broadly speaking, however, boys are expected to be daring, virile and to constantly showcase bravado and strength. Traditional stereotyping puts enormous pressure on young men and it may pressure them into take part in various risk taking activities to prove their manhood. Adoption of traditional, patriarchal versions of manhood and the variations in boys' discourses and ways of being often lead to violent confrontations among the boys at this school. In fact, a lot of the violence by males against males is a form of boundary policing which serves to determine individual positioning within a hierarchical arrangement of masculinity. As a form of boundary policing for some boys, it was normalised at this school by "fixing them" through the use of violence. The boys configure their masculinity on the basis of general social, cultural and institutional patterns of power and meaning which is in keeping with Connell's (1995) social constructivist theory.

In the next section we see that labelling was a primary contributor to violence among learners. Learners that were teased and labelled often reacted violently.

4.2.3 Labeling and violence

In this school context, labelling among learners centered around three areas: physical appearance, ethnic differences and learners' academic performance. These often served as a trigger to conflict and violence.

(i) *"Umshayengebhakede"*- Beaten with a bucket

In the school context of this study, particular kinds of insults and provocations cannot be correlated with specific forms of violence, but it is significant to note that physical appearance which included variables such as body shape and size, and clothing often provoked violence among learners.

Espelage *et al.* (2015: 2541) interpret hurtful teasing as a type of behaviour that is aimed at demeaning, irritating or annoying the recipient. Since it is upsetting, it is dissimilar from playful joking and is usually accompanied by some degree of social rejection. In extreme cases, teasing may escalate to actual violence.

Hurtful teasing at Phatheka Primary School normally included aggressive verbal messages targeted at any characteristic at the core of a learner's sense of identity. For example, learners who displayed physical characteristics that were different from the other learners, were teased. When these learners were teased, it often provoked some reaction or retaliation. The importance the provocateurs place on appearance was apparent in the words that they used when teasing, for example "*Umshayengebhakede*", a derogatory term used to refer to an odd shaped head or *"Udebe"*, a word used to criticise someone's lips.

Mncube and Harber (2013: 8) found that name calling, ridicule and humiliation often lead to violent confrontations. Learners in this study confirmed that name calling and teasing was a primary cause of fighting and violence:

Bee:

"There is my friend who is a boy. He has a big forehead. In class, they call him 'Umshayengebhakede', which means he was beaten with a bucket and has an odd shaped head. When children call him this name he does not like it and hits them. Sometimes they hit back and a fight starts. Nothing else cause fighting except labelling. There are a lot of learners who are labelled at school. For example, my friend Muhle. She is in my class. She has big lips. There is a strange line in these lips. Learners have bad comments about her lips. Learners called her 'Udebe' which means big strange lips. When they say 'Udebe, Udebe' she gets angry and wants to fight with them.

The focus group interviews with learners provided clear evidence that labelling provoked violence at this school:

Baya: *"They [learners] call them [other learners] with nicknames they do not like, and I do not like it"*.

Thandeka: *"They [some learners] think that they are bigger than their friends. They get into fights through labelling each other"*.

Sisanda: *"Learners call each other with names they do not like. For example, when you are fat they call you with the name that relate to your appearance and even if you are dark in complexion. The one who is picked on goes to fight with the other one"*.

Mpilonhle: *"Yes by teasing them and calling them nasty names. Some learners isolate themselves from labeled learners but most them get into a fight for this"*.

Brian: *"I also agree with Mpilonhle that some learners who are teased isolate themselves. Learners call other learners nicknames because of their appearances. They feel embarrassed"*.

Thandokuhle: *"There is a boy in our class, Siphiwe Xaba. He is dark in complexion. He gets into conflict with other learners because they tease him about his complexion.*

I have seen many of them. Yesterday, Enhle Mofokeng and Ayanda Memela had a fight because Ayanda was busy gossiping about Enhle that she is ugly and fat and has two asses. Enhle confronted Ayanda and that was where the fight began".

Anele: *"Learners label each other based on their performance with school work. Some learners label others as foreigners even though they are not. But learners in these days just tease each other based on one's appearance. If you do the same thing to them they start crying. They tease each other, threaten each other and fight after school outside the school premises. Some of the fights begin in class and continue after school"*.

Joy: *"I have never been in a fight but some learners like to tease and trouble me. They tease me because of the fungus on my hands and my lips are reddish. They said I drink alcohol (Smirnoff). I like to hit those ones to show people that there is nothing wrong with me and that they are wrong"*.

From the above incidents it is clear that learners who were teased and called names often reacted to this labelling by the use of violent force. This discourse, where labelling acted as a provocation to violence, is not confined to Phatheka Primary School. Ercole (2009: 8) and Hilton and Von Hippel (1996: 245) found similar evidence in their studies. Ercole (2009: 8) stated that labels can be applied to anyone, regardless of race, gender and educational level. She found that those at the bottom of the socio-cultural hierarchy in terms of physical appearance, minority grouping, being poor or even physically impaired in some way, were those who were the most at risk for labeling and the associated stigma. According to social learning theory, individuals are taught to act violently (Saltmarsh, Robinson and Davies 2012: 42). They further stated that individuals are taught through their peers, families, popular culture and the media to react in a particular manner to defend integrity and self-esteem. We see from the reactions of the learners who were teased and labelled that that they react violently to dissipate their embarrassment and regain some integrity among their peers. Labelling learners bacause of their nationality also often served as a catalyst to spark aggressive and violent confrontations among learners. The labelling and violent reactions are a result of societal expectation and feeds into the theory of social practice.

(ii) *"Kwerekwere"* - I belong here

Learners highlighted in individual and focus group interviews that insults and teasing based on the country that their peers originally hailed from, often caused fights and scuffles.

Bee:

"There is this boy named Andile Chiva. He is a foreigner. Some learners tease him 'alien'. That was not good at all. Andile Chiva is a rough person but the learners do not fear him. Sometimes he reported the matter to the teacher. Sometimes he stands up in front of the class and say 'I belong here'. Sometimes he goes straight to that person saying these comments and beats him with hands and fists. Other learners isolate Chiva in such a way that they do not want to lend him their exercise books if he was absent from school. Girls also stay away from him. They say they don't join aliens".

Thandeka:

"There is one boy they [learners] keep labeling him in the classroom. His name is Andile. There is a bully called Dumi. He labels Andile every day because his father is a foreigner from Mozambique. He calls Andile with names that Andile does not like. He changed Andile's surname to 'Bhamfohlo', [shapeless figure] and sings about him, looking at him differently like he is not a person to be looked at".

Joy:

"Other forms of labelling are because of xenophobia. Learners get into scuffles and fights because of xenophobia and labeling".

Anele:

"Some learners label others as foreigners even though they are not. This is another problem with learners".

Andile

"Some of my classmates label me as a foreigner, 'Kwerekwere' [a nasty name used by South Africans to call foreigners as a way of labelling or discriminate them]. I get upset and sometimes fight. Mostly I report them to my teacher. The teacher disciplines them".

Sisanda:

"I felt embarrassed by how Ms Cingo addressed me in front of my classmates when I raised my hand and she said she was not referring to me, 'Mnyamana', which referred to my dark complexion. This was hurtful and humiliating for me. I used to perform well in my work at school but now I lost my human dignity because other classmates are also calling me 'Mnyamana'. Now I don't care about my marks, I only want to hit them who hurt me by calling these names".

The educators also provided similar testimonies.

Mr Tembe:

"Something that I have noticed about this xenophobia thing: it happens here in South Africa, once you are very dark in complexion, even though you are from South Africa, they just label you as someone who is not from here because your complexion is much darker than the normal South Africans. I think it comes from the community itself because the learners are from the community. If the community itself is not educated enough to accept each other, to accept even a person who is a foreigner, then the child will grow with that hate for foreigners. This does not come from the school. The school works very hard to make sure that we live in harmony. But when they go back to the community, that is where the problem is because people are not educated well. That is why last time we found out that they were torturing the foreigners, burning their stores, killing them and burning them and the children that live in this community come with that culture of 'I don't like foreigners'. The children want to do the same thing in school. When there is a foreigner sitting next to him or her, that child is definitely going to ill-treat that foreigner because that is what is being done in the community. Our duty as teachers is to teach the learners to avoid or to abstain from racism or segregation or labelling each other".

Learners from other nationalities were not readily welcomed at Phatheka Primary. Foreign learners were often teased and were given derogatory labels. This discriminatory mentality towards foreign learners often emanated from their home environments and filtered through to school. The foreign learners who were victims of the insults and offensive labels in some instances reacted aggressively, attempting to legitimise their presence in South Africa, and in other instances using violence to defend their integrity.

According to Hattingh (2015: 1), xenophobia does not just deprive children of their education and sense of security, but it also affects several of their rights. According to the UN Convention regarding the Rights of the Child, children should be free from discrimination, protected from all forms or violence, and there should be special protection and help for refugee children. All children should have the right to relax and play. Xenophobia disrupts their lives through instability and it also breeds fear and animosity between ethnic groups and minorities. In this study evidence of fear was not found, but the animosity that often led to violent confrontation was very evident.

In his report of xenophobia at a tertiary institution, Hatting (2015: 1) found strong evidence of discrimination and tension between foreign nationals and the locals. He concluded that, if this sort of discrimination could thrive at a tertiary institutions where people have equal access to opportunities, then it is no wonder that antagonism has reached dangerous levels in rural areas and among lower income groups. Hatting's findings parallel the findings of this study in that Phatheka Primary is a situated in a low income community which does not readily accept foreigners. As mentioned earlier, this mentality filters into the school, which triggers violence among the learners.

Other studies of xenophobia, for example Tandwa's report (2016: 1) of a school in Johannesburg, also found that negative perceptions of parents towards foreigners often lead to problems and confrontations among learners at school.

The third form of labelling revolved around learners' performance in school and competition for educators' affirmations. This also led to learners getting into fights with each other.

(iii) Academic Performance and Competition

There was strong evidence from learners' interviews that they competed and labelled each other around issues of classroom practice and academic performance. Learners who performed well academically, were elevated and enjoyed a higher status among their peers. The school policies and practices also rewarded the learners that perform well academically, for example by appointing them as prefects. This served to fuel the tension between the high achievers and the other learners.

Thandokuhle:

"*Some prefects treat learners who are not prefects in a very bad way like telling them they are not prefects because they do not listen in class, calling them stupid names. The other learners get into fights with the prefects because they feel embarrassed*".

Sisanda:

"*Almost every Friday learners have a fight at school. Sometimes they fight for the competition of marks out of jealousy. Sometimes they fight with the prefects*".

Brian:

"*Learners label each other based on their performance with school work. They call the weak ones dummy and moron. This makes them angry and they hit each other*".

Educators played a major role in the manner in which learners treated each other, often initiating the labelling and name calling which would then cause conflict among the learners. This was especially evident in focus group interviews.

Anele: "*I expect educators to treat us all equally and to be polite to every learner. By equally, I mean that even if you do not get high marks, it does not mean that you must be favoured less than other learners. Nobody must be more special than others just because she is clever in the classroom, because each and everyone is trying their best. If their best is not good enough, then learners are treated like nothing. When the teachers do this the learners also join in. This makes me angry*".

Mpilonhle: "*Some learners are treated differently because some teachers favour learners who performed well in their subjects. The underperforming learners are labelled by these favourable learners and it leads to the fights among them*".

Anele: *"Yes, the favouritism is there. This causes problems."*

Joy: *"My mathematics educator, Mrs Apple, loves me more than other learners because I always excel in her subject. My English marks were not good in the third term. My classmate, Phume, teased me about my English marks asking me why I didn't excel because I always excel in Mathematics. I felt angry and pushed her away. She pushed back and we got into a fight"*.

Ercole (2009: 5) in her study stated that the educators' expectations of their learners would inevitably affect the way in which the educators interrelate with them. It follows that this would eventually lead to changes in the learners' behaviour and attitudes. The learners who are repeatedly affirmed by their educators as respectable learners, become inspired to learn and to do well, whereas those who do not receive positive affirmations, more often that not, tend to lose their incentive to do well, eventually causing their academic progress to suffer. Learners also pick up on educators' behaviour patterns by labelling their peers (Ercole 2009: 6). These labels tend to follow the learner throughout his or her academic career, making it problematic, if not impossible, for those labelled as poor learners to ever reach their full academic potential (Harris 1991: 317). The feeling of not belonging as result of the negative label, has been documented extensively in adolescent research to be linked to poor academic performance, as well criminal behaviour (Ercole 2009: 8). Ercole highlights that negative labelling and criticism are often triggers of aggression and non-compliance.

The testimonies from learners above indicate that educators contribute to the labelling of learners which often leads to learners getting into disputes with each other. Many educators agreed that their colleagues treat learners differently according to their performance which leads to labelling, mocking and taunts among learners. Learners often react to this type of heckling with force and aggression.

Mr Freddy:

"I always shout out the marks that my learners obtain in tests as way to motivate them. I also make every learner to draw a line graph of his or her tests from first term to second term. The learners' graphs are kept in their files. Sometimes learners look at one another's files and comment on their performance. Sometimes I refer to a learner's poor performance when disciplining that learner. Their classmates use these comments to tease the learner. This leads to conflict - but I am achieving my objectives".

Mrs Poppy:

"Sometimes the fight is triggered because of marks. When I praise a learner for good marks and call the ones who failed losers or failures, the good ones echo this and this leads to verbal sparring and sometimes physical fights. Learners also fight over the competition of performance in class. If the learner gets higher marks or scores than others, they are more likely to be targeted because of jealousy by other learners, for example, they gossip or pass remarks about that learner with the aim of discouraging that learner's performance in class".

Mr Wanda:

"For example, in the classroom, I had this: the three girls have the same surname but are not blood related. They are all Celes. All three of them are smart and they are among my top five learners. You will find that whenever I'm asking questions they are the ones who will be raising up their hands when there is no one who is giving me an answer. The other learners are becoming more jealous with that like I'm giving my attention to these specific learners whereas I am asking them questions and I don't get answers. The other learners get more jealous. These three learners are at the teasing receiving end of jokes and taunts. They have been in the office quite a few times for fighting. I think it is because of the teasing. Which is just unnecessary".

From the above incidents highlighted by educators and learners in Phatheka Primary School, there is strong evidence that academic performance and competition in this particular school often leads to conflict and violence. Solorzano and Ornelas (2002) found that discriminatory practices evident in the academic setting, especially among school learners, sparks violent confrontations. Learners who perform poorly tend to become disengaged from the schooling process, as they have no means or support to manage their situation or to help them cope with their challenges (Barber and Olsen 2004: 12). It was found in this study that learners who achieve poor results often react with jealousy and animosity towards the high achievers, especially if they are labelled by the high achievers. This labelling often leads to disputes and fights. At Phatheka Primary, in many instances, high achievers are labelled by other learners and vice versa. It is however clear from the evidence above that in both instances the labelling is often a catalyst for violence.

4.3 Gender, violence and romance

Earlier in this chapter, the competition that boys had among each other was discussed, as well as how violence was intertwined with these competitions for bravado and position. It was highlighted that the cultural imperative of stick fighting served as primary means of showmanship and a display of manhood. This section highlights the different strategies that

boys use to gain superiority over girls and how these contests are underpinned by the use of violence.

Mncube and Harber (2013: 12) in their study of school violence stated that there is a need to "teach boys and girls the nature of masculinity and femininity, including alternative non-violent forms of masculinity". They further stated that this means that, in addition to individual life skills, these boys and girls also need to be taught about the broader societal constructions that shape our lives - including gender.

Bhana (2008) found that, in terms of classroom behaviour, boys used their greater body size and strength to bully, control and get rewards by stealing things and that they felt entitled to do so. These findings around gender and violence were confirmed by some of the findings of this study. From the teachers' testimonies below, we see that boys spend a considerable amount of energy establishing masculine hierarchies and that these hierarchies are constantly policed and maintained, often with displays of superiority but, if necessary, by the use of violent force.

Mr Freddy:

"Some boys have a good relationship with the girls and vice versa because there are these friendship groups. Some of the boys believe they cannot associate themselves with the girls. They have to live in their own space and in their own time. If the girls try to invade their space, they bully and often hit these girls".

Mrs Busi:

"There is a violent incident that has happened. Some of the boys were behaving strangely and the grade 5 educator asked why those boys are behaving so badly and one learner [girl] reported that there is somebody who sold dagga to them. After investigation these learners gave us a list of all the learners who go outside and buy dagga which is sold by somebody we don't know. All those learners were called to the principal's office. After school, outside the school premises, the older boys beat the girl that reported the matter and fought with the younger boys from grade 5 who had given us the list of all the learners who go and buy dagga. They were punishing them for giving their names to the principal. The boys said that they cannot have a girl rat them out and get away with it".

Mrs Xola:

"Boys try to express their affection towards some girls. You'll find love letters, cases where they are proposing love to the girls. If the girls reject their advances this often causes tension between the boy and girl and sometimes the boys tries to force the girl to like him. If she is still reluctant then I found that the boy uses violence".

Mr Wanda:

"I feel that girls need more special attention than boys because they are mostly bullied by boys. Just like today, I had one girl in my class and she was crying. When I asked her what is wrong, she told me that one of the boys have just bullied her for no reason. I do not know what really happened - she pushed the boy by mistake and the boy came back to the girl and

started pushing her and hitting her. Since the girl is not as powerful as the boy, she lost the fight and started crying. It was just a mistaken push and the poor girl apologised to him but the boy didn't accept the apology despite us having these classroom rules about fighting in class. There are actually many like the same boy that I'm telling you about. He also bullies other boys. He likes to hit other boys, but unfortunately with other boys, he is always losing, he ends up being the one who cries. Then I think he takes that out on girls because he knows that he can beat the girls".

We see from the teachers' testimonies that the boys used whatever means necessary to maintain their superior status and position over the girls. The boys adopted tough defensive strategies to ward off any threats to their position of control over girls, and to force them to conform to their viewpoints. The bodily stances and verbal and physical control methods of the boys over the girls, in many instances, served to maintain their dominance. In effect, the boys used intimidatory, aggressive and violent means to control learners, especially the girls.

It was also evident from the interviews that romantic relationships with girls often caused boys at Phatheka Primary to get into conflict situations in their attempts to avoid humiliation, and to try to keep their respect intact in a context where masculine performance was at work. The conflict often escalated to physical violence.

Learners, especially the girls, also mentioned that boys use force to obtain and maintain superiority within the school.

Thandokuhle, who is a female learner at the school, had this to say in her individual interview:

"Boys get into trouble in school more than girls because boys like to act tough like they can control us but we do not like that. We all have to behave the same. No one is better than anyone because you are special in your own way".

In a focus group the following emerged:

Joy: *"I had a misunderstanding today with another boy. There is a learner in grade 7, who walked in my class and made some noise. I thought it was the other learner then we began arguing. While we were arguing the learner that really made the noise came in. Then the learner that I was arguing with thought that he is better than me because I made a mistake*

to argue with him about the noise I heard. Now every time I answer my teachers this boy tells them that they must not listen to me because I am always wrong".

Baya: *"More boys get into trouble than girls. The boys want to impress the girls and they undermine other learners which leads them to trouble"*.

Thandeka: *"The boys always get into trouble at school because the boys are always troubling girls then the girls report them to the teachers. These boys pull us and push us around. Most girls ignore them, but those that react get into fights with the boys"*.

Mpilonhle: *"There was a boy, Themba, who fought with a girl because she was laughing with her friends then Themba thought they were laughing at him. Themba hit the girl during break. The girl reported Themba to Mr Wanda"*.

Andile: *"You see, the boys think that they can take stuff from the girls. They just take from girls thinking they have the right because she is a girl and cannot do anything. One incident was when Thami took this girl's cell phone. The girl requested her cellphone from Thami and he refused. He said cell phones are not allowed at school, she would get into trouble, but he kept the phone. When the girl tried to force him, he slapped her and she cried. He still did not give the phone back"*.

From the testimonies of educators and learners it is clear that at Phatheka Primary School, boys are more prone to violence than girls. Many boys also think they have power over girls. Duma (2013: 30) argues that if schools function within societies where male dominance rules supreme, it should not be surprising to find that the perpetrators of violence in these schools are males too. It is unusual to find females being the perpetrators of violence. A study by Morrell (2002: 37) states that the central theme of domination, control, humiliation and mutilation serves as propaganda by which men learn that it is acceptable to abuse women and girls. Ohasko's (1997) argues that many South African learners display aggressive behaviour because of their exposure to extreme high levels of violence and crime, not only in the country in general, but also specifically in their homes. While this study did not investigate where the mentality of male dominance stemmed from, it was very clear that the belief of superiority often led to violence against girls at the school.

In addition to gender, power is a changeable entity that hypothetically adds to our understanding of violence. Jeuken *et al.* (2015: 137) describe "power orientation" as an individual's incentive to control persons and circumstances. Power manifests itself different ways. It can be borne from a need for self-efficacy (personal power); or the need to achieve status within a peer group (interpersonal power); or it could be from entitlement courtesy of legal, procedural, or ideological structures (structural power). In this study there is evidence that a subscription to male power beliefs is related to violence against girls. The use of violence by boys against girls seems to strengthen beliefs in male role dominance. Conceptualising violence in terms of gender and power has been paramount in violence

between spouses and relationship partners, but the present study proposes that gender and power may be significant factors in the broader understanding of peer violence at school level already.

The focus group interviews with educators at Phatheka Primary School provided evidence that gender based violence among learners are rife:

Mrs Poppy: *"Boys are playful, they don't realise how serious some of the things they say to other learners are. There was a case where boys were fighting over a girl. They were involved in an intimate relationship. The girl spoke to the other boy and her boyfriend got jealous. It is where the fight started. The fight was inside the school during break. They used their fists"*.

Mrs Thandiswa: *"In my class (grade 4) I had one incident where I called one male educator because there was a girl and a boy who usually went under the desk and the boy touched the girl in her private part and the girl liked that because she didn't report it. It got to my attention because some of the learners saw them and reported it. So I wouldn't say that it was harassment because the girl didn't report it. Other grade seven learners usually go upstairs and they kiss. Some of the learners were caught with their pants down upstairs. Girls who reported these incidents to educators had conflict with boys and were often victims of violence".*

Mr Wanda: *"Boys often use girls to conceal or hide weapons, cigarettes and other unlawful items for them. The girls are in many cases forced to keep these items. If they don't, the boys use force on them, sometimes hitting them."*

From the above incidents highlighted by educators from Phatheka Primary School, the perpetrators of school violence are often boys and the victims are girls. The gender-based violence is mostly the intimidation of boys over girls which leads to physical violence. Bhana (2008: 401) in a study of school violence, found physical violence to be a striking characteristic of boys' interaction with girls. The boys use their superior status to intimidate and aggress girls. The findings of the current study confirmed Bhana's study in many instances.

4.4 Family and home influence on learner violence - *just kick it and you'll get it right*

Some learners are taught by their role models (parents, relatives, community members) to defend themselves or solve the problem through the use of force and aggression.

In the following extracts it is demonstrated that role models had a great impact on the manner in which learners handled disputes and conflict at school.

Mrs Degrees:

"I had a boy that slapped a girl, this girl cried and came to me. I asked for the reason why she was crying. She told me that the boy slapped her. When I called the boy, he said that she

started undermining him, and she took his book from his desk by force. The boy pulled his book back and slapped her so she could leave his book, so he could get it back. What I know about that boy, he is raised by his father only and I happen to know the story. He was raised by his father from the age of three years alone. In this case this boy was raised by a man. Most African men normally handle problems with a bit of force, especially when it comes to females. That is what I think is happening with this boy. Even though his father is a professional teacher, he is prone to violence. This boy always says, 'just kick it and you'll get it right'. He gets this from his father who he worships".

Miss Sindi:

"The learners look at the behaviour of their extended family members, for example, boys look up to their uncles as their role models. So if the uncle is behaving badly and uses violence to solve problems, the boy will behave in a similar manner as well even at school among other learners and also towards educators. Boys learn it from their homes that males must use violence to fix things".

Mrs Busi:

"The home backgrounds of the learners are not the same. Some are coming from very decent families, some are coming from families where we see that the learner is failing to respect us as educators. He/she is taking the educator as an equal. They just argue with the educator anyhow. One mother said to us that if we punish her child we may find ourselves in danger. This girl also uses the danger threat among her peers. One boy said he smokes dagga because his father also smokes dagga. So you see it is very difficult for us because it the parent who is influencing the child".

Mrs Xola:

"A lot of adults in this community still have memories of the struggle days where they had to fight to solve issues or get noticed. At the moment there are lot of service delivery protests where the community uses violence and often nothing happens to them. The children are conscious of this and also try to use similar tactics in school. They fight when in trouble because their role models are doing this and seem to be winning".

Mr Zondo:

"*Some learners fight because in their neighbourhood, as neighbours they don't get along and when they arrive here at school, sometimes they fight. They use fists when they fight. Some of the learners are from home backgrounds which are not conducive for children. They experience abuse at home and when they come to school they are very temperamental. They are not friendly towards other learners unless they've eaten something. They are very irritable when they have not had their meals*".

Mr Freddy:

"Learners' backgrounds are different because some of them come from affluent families while others come from poor families. Mostly learners who come from poor families are learners who are raised by extended family members. You find that those learners don't have proper guidance. Sometimes they get abused and become abusive among learners. We find all these things in these learners because they are not raised by people who is supposed to raise them. Some of them are raised by their young parents who bore them while they were teenagers. It is very difficult to deal with such learners".

These responses of the educators indicate that violence is learnt through role models provided by the household (parent figures, relatives and siblings) and community members and this learnt behaviour is further strengthened at school. In many cases, for these learners, violence is a method of response to conflict resolution. The role models teach appraisal for the use of violence to settle disputes.

The learner respondents in this study also indicated that role models have considerable influence on the violent behaviour of learners at school.

According to a focus group discussion:

Mpilonhle: *"If a learner comes from a violent family, for example, where the father beats the mother, the learner gets angry and upset. This learner will always be upset and angry towards other learners at school which leads to physical abuse. The friendship group of learners who experienced behaviour from their families is also formed. Other learners express their anger by bullying other learners because of their violent background from their families. He/she hurts the other learners as he/she is also hurt at home".*

Thandokuhle: *"My school experience is that there are many bullies in this school. Most of them are cruel, because the bullies we have in this school are very bad to other learners. They come from families who also bully people. We are also afraid of these people in our neighbourhood".*

Thandeka: *"You see these children that steal and fight in school. I know this one boy who is always stealing and fighting. His brother and father are in jail for stealing bigger things – housebreaking. I think he learns from them. I am not sure about his mother because she does not do anything".*

Bee: *"These fighters and bullies do it because their parents do not punish them".*

Joy: *"I know this boy they call Langa. He is physically abused at home. We see the marks on him. He does not report it because he is afraid. But he does the same thing to other children in school. They also do not report to the teachers because Langa will do worse things. He threatens them like that".*

Andile: *"There is this group that is formed who come from poor homes. I think that the groups are formed by learners who get violated at home. They get angry and pass on the abuse to other learners who are afraid of them. When these learners realise that learners are afraid of them, they steal learners' belongings and take advantage. I think it all starts at home".*

Phatheka Primary is located at the township which is dominated by African (Black) people. Each and every race has its own culture, customs and beliefs in the upbringing of their children. Amos (2013: 1) in her study of African communities states that each and every home has its own rules and customs towards the upbringing of their children. Therefore, a learner's home life and background play a significant role in their lives. The behaviour of the children at school is often a reflection of the teachings of their parents and other role models at home and in the community.

It is clear from the teachers' and learners' interviews that the cycle of violence emanates from the home environment and filters through to school. In many cases the violent behaviour is learned from their role models. This cycle of violence is a fairly simplistic representation of social learning theory which reflects linkages between observations of violence and enactments of aggression and violence by learners at school. While this is not a forum to legitimise or refute social learning theory, the evidence reveals quite clearly that role models that are violent, aggressive and abusive, greatly influence similar behaviour of their proteges at school.

Conclusion

In this chapter the findings from the participants through interviews were presented and discussed in terms of the interview questions. The responses revealed that learners face different challenges relating to violence. This included bullying, physical fights, assault with weapons and general aggressive behaviour. The main causes of the violent behaviour were found to be linked to cultural beliefs and practices, labelling, gender issues, romantic relationships and family and home influences.

Burton and Leoschut (2013: 68) stated that learners participating in school violence are often found to be spending too much time in envoronments where they are exposed to offenders of crime and violent acts. They further stated that ". . . these offenders are encountered in all spheres in which learners operate, including their homes, their peer groups, as well as in the broader community in which they live". This study found similar evidence. Culture and community is inextricably linked to the manner in which learners react and behave in the school setting. It becomes difficult for the school to take sole responsibility for dealing with an issue that clearly has deep societal origins. "Any plans to improve safety and security at schools will inevitable have to extend beyond the school environment itself in order to be successful in the long term" (Burton and Leoschut 2013: 68).

It was also interesting to note that many boys perpetrated violence directed towards girls in order to maintain and sustain their fragile power that they enjoyed exerting at school. While other studies (Hamlall 2013: 255) found that boys were reluctant to use violence on girls because they may be labelled as weak for only having the courage to hit girls, in this study many of the boys readily used force and aggression to dominate girls. It was also clearly evident that many educators triggered violent and aggressive behaviour among learners as they treated some learners with favour and others with disdain. The failure of educators to recognise learners as individuals or to boost their self-esteem, promoted violence among learners.

The social learning theory suggests that children tend to model the attitudes and behaviour of what they see in society and in their homes. The evidence in this study suggests that the learners at Phatheka Primary emulated the behaviour of their parents, relatives and other role models who used threats, intimidation and violence to promote their own ends. Further violence to settle disputes was legitimised when parents failed to punish their children who behaved violently towards other learners.

It is clear that not every incident of school violence can necessarily be pinpointed to one cause, however, there are many factors at play that lead up to these incidents. This chapter has explored these factors at Phatheka Primary. The findings of this study should raise awareness of the causes of school violence for educators, parents and citizens alike to take responsibility for their roles as such to prevent all children from either being a victim or from inflicting violence on another person.

The next chapter explores the complicit role of the school as an agent in shaping the manner in which learners relate to violence and vis à vis shaping learner behaviour.

Chapter 5: Role of the School in Managing Violence

Introduction

This chapter investigates how the school in its policies and administration handled the discipline and control of learners and the strategies that educators used to maintain order and discipline. This supports the argument that these approaches complicitly contributes to a violent mentality among learners.

Geringer and Wo (2016: 133) stated in their study that "schools can actively promote violence even though they are supposed to be peaceful, stable and supportive environments. If schools avoid and discourage empathetic, compassionate, nurturing and affiliate behaviours and do not promote emotional responsibility, but instead, favour heavy handed discipline and control, then they are in some or other way complicit in the production of violence". "To ignore the emotional world of schooling and of students is to contribute to the repressions which recycle and legitimate violence" (Mayworm and Sharkey 2014: 693).

5.1 How the school maintained discipline

In order to control behaviour and maintain discipline, a school has to put many mechanisms in place. Chaplain's study (2016: 1) states that the school's value and expectations should be communicated through the school's behaviour policy. Therefore, a well-designed behaviour policy, operated throughout the school day, provides the framework for what goes on inside classrooms and other areas inside and outside the school grounds. Chaplain further states that the behaviour policy should also provide the fundamental principles for day-to-day classroom management, including how educators should deal with challenging behaviour.

In the current study, Phatheka Primary has implemented many strategies to maintain discipline and control learners. The school is fenced by concrete walls and has one security guard at the main gate. The school uses people from the community as security guards who are not trained or qualified to perform this function. They often use harsh and stringent means to control learners. In many cases these "security guards" have assaulted learners. There are no surveillance cameras monitoring the "hot spots" but the guards apprehend learners who infringe on school rules and they sometimes handcuff learners who resist their authority to take them to the office. As indicated in Chapter Four, some learners smoke dagga at school. They go outside the school premises during school hours to buy it and come back to school. They then face the challenge of evading the security guards. This becomes a game for some learners.

The school has a code of conduct and classroom rules. Learners are given the code of conduct at the beginning of the year to read and to be signed by their parents. The principal is the one

who takes decisions in terms of disciplining learners who misbehave - educators are not involved. Sometimes the principal threatens the learners with disciplining them publicly in the assembly. For example, he calls the learners who are owing school fees or who do not submit reams of papers (for photocopying) "parasites", which implies that they feed off other learners for their own benefit by having copies made with other learners' property. Suspensions and expulsions are common. The school has a system whereby learners who infringed on the school rules are given a hearing which generally results in the minimum punishment of five days' suspension, followed by returning to school with their parent. The school has no pastoral care or counsellors in place to help learners. Punishment is the only form of addressing defiant learners. All stakeholders (principal, educators, security guard, prefects) use harsh forms of disciplining learners.

In individual interviews the educators revealed the following in terms of disciplining learners:

Mr Wanda:

"In this school we use different means to keep learners in check. I personally favour the detention system. Learners don't like to sit after school. But if the offence is severe then detention is too mild. We can't use corporal punishment so we make them do community work or suspend them".

Mrs Thandiswa:

"You see – these learners need to be punished somehow if they are defiant. I feel that the punishment the school uses is too soft. I use more harsher means. I don't hit them, but serious embarrassment and humiliation goes a long way".

Mr Freddy:

"Some schools have counsellors. We don't need them here. I don't think they will make much difference. Punishment is what always works".

Mrs Busi:

"Our prefect system is very effective. The senior learners can have a lot of power to discipline defaulters. If the prefects are too harsh sometimes we look the other way. It works – that is what matters".

"More recent work has suggested that rigid educational systems, particularly systems that focus more on maintaining order than on engaging students in meaningful ways, reinforce behaviour that chafes at authority" (Golann 2015:16). Golann states that schools that place emphasis on order and discipline as a prerequisite to any other school objective, produce learners that defy authority and use similar approaches among the peer hierarchy. We see from the statements above that the school focuses on punishing negative behaviour while

rewarding positive behaviour is virtually absent. This approach may have influenced learners to also react forcefully to peers who behaved negatively towards them and to ignore learners who engaged in harmonious behaviour.

Sprick (2012: 257) appealed to educators to "keep in mind the following concepts: educators must know what learners are motivated to do and what they are not motivated to do". He further stated that educators would first need to work on increasing the learners' motivation to engage in appropriate or desired behaviours or to decrease their motivation to engage in inappropriate or undesired behaviours. He argued that, when trying to increase student motivation to behave appropriately, teachers must use procedures that address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. He also reminded teachers that students' motivation to engage in any behaviour will be relative to the degree to which they value the rewards of that behaviour, as well as their expectations of succeeding at the behaviour.

Phatheka Primary celebrated the sanctioning and punishment of offenders and paid no attention to rewarding good behaviour. Many studies have revealed that this approach complicitly contributes to aggressive behaviour among learners.

The majority of the educators at Phatheka Primary, both male and female, did not publicly subscribe to violent ways of disciplining learners. Although this conclusion was drawn from observations as well as from the interviews with the educators, it needs to be mentioned that some educators who may have subscribed to "softer" types of punishment, may sometimes have "lost it" and become physical with learners.

5.2 How Teachers Maintained Discipline in the Classroom

The educators highlighted the following in individual interviews:

Mrs Degrees:

"*We are trying to have a good discipline system, but we are not really because we have been using what was used on us trying to discipline the learners but we are no longer allowed. So we do not really have the actual tool to discipline learners that can help us to deal with them and that they can respect. Personally, I rough them up at times without using physical hitting*".

Mrs Xola:

"*We don't have full control of learners also because of the rules. We are told not use corporal punishment, but there is nothing in place to help us deal with the learners. We don't have a tool to control learners but we try our best. We can't let them take advantage so we use other means. A small slap now and then works wonders. We control learners by introducing classroom rules, we always read them out in the morning and we also have school rules. I think that keeps them grounded. I think it is not adequate because we don't have something that*

we can say is solid and you know that if you've broken a rule this is what you'll face as a learner. So we cannot discipline them since corporal punishment is banned at school. We find it very difficult. As they [learners] grow older they get frustrated because they are older and they should not be in the primary school in the first place. I think some of them have that courage to talk back to their educators and they think they are old enough. This leads educators to use punishment by force over learners. Like if someone will come in at school dressed in a school uniform and they decide that they are going to wear a hat. We do not wear a hat at school. So I tell them to take it off. Some of them will politely take the hat off and put it in their bags, but some of them will have an attitude. I make them eat the hat and their words".

Mr Tembe:

"I wouldn't say the school has 100% control of learners since nowadays children and parents put rights before discipline. Boys and girls respond to authority very well except the few. I've just put this authority in two folds. Some learners respond well to authority of the school but some - mostly boys – don't respond well to authority. Those boys who are older than others, they tend to tell themselves that they are big guys because they are old and they end up not respecting most, particularly female educators. So we end up as male educators having to discipline those boys. Male educators use their power as men when disciplining boys. We have to grab them and shake them up. They must know who is boss. Sometimes we throw them on the floor. We don't use corporal punishment by hitting them".

The above testimonies from educators revealed that at Phatheka Primary School, educators feel disempowered in their ability to maintain discipline in schools in the absence of corporal punishment. Maphosa and Shumba (2010: 395) in their study argues that "the disempowering of educators has led them to using harsher means of disciplining learners".

While acknowledging that school violence is constituted by a nexus of influences, less attention is paid to the role that educational systems themselves may play. School policies and practices may connive to render violence or what some researchers theorise as "systemic violence" (Robinson, Davies and Saltmarsh, 2012: 184). "Some practices in schools are conducive to violent behaviour, including disciplinary activities and the ways that schools handle a breach of school policy" (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 2). We see from the above testimonies that many educators use aggressive ways to control learners. Research into school violence has shown that harsh forms of discipline and control often lead to learners in turn adopting violent ways to resolving conflict. Skiba and Peterson (2000: 335), Kohn (1996), Todd, DeMitchell and Elyse Hambacher (2016: 3) argue that the adoption of "an attitude of zero tolerance towards learners as a type of discipline policy by teachers, is often not very effective in maintaining learner discipline". They concur:

> . . . this type of punitive approach has not been shown to improve learner behaviour. In fact, it has been linked to increased acts of aggression and bullying – the very

behaviour that schools seek to curtail in the first place (Skiba and Peterson 2000; Kohn 1996).

The educators at Phatheka Primary are struggling to find ways to deal successfully with misbehaving learners. They were extremely stressed and frustrated in their attempts to bring order to their classrooms. The educators often reacted with aggression. It is evident that educators need to adopt a different style of classroom management. The approach of using punishment, anger and intimidation is not effective. If anything, this approach is serving to exacerbate the problem of learner discipline and increase learners' aggression. According to Campbell (2012: 1) 'discipline without anger' is what educators need to successfully manage their classes. This would mean that teachers do not need to become bullies themselves in order to keep order.

Conclusion

Du Plessis and Loock (2007) observed that zero tolerance on the part of educators does not increase school safety, nor does it improve learner discipline in school, but instead it leads to an increase in school violence. They propose that positive disciplinary strategies are required to bring about change, which may entail the use of positive reinforcement, modelling, supportive educator-learner relations, family support and assistance from a range of educational and mental health specialists, like educational psychologists and therapists. These support services were notably absent at Phatheka Primary.

In this chapter it was discussed how Phatheka Primary in its culture and efforts to maintain discipline and order complicitly promoted a violent mentality among the learners. While not all learners and all educators subscribed to this culture, it was evident enough to conclude that to a large extent the school complicitly contributed to violent aggressive behaviour among its learners.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This Chapter concludes this study on the nature and causes of violence among learners within one primary school in the Umlazi township, Durban.

Conforming to the characteristics of a qualitative study, the overall aims were guided by the need to gain a deeper, nuanced and contextualised understanding of the violence among learners at this school.

This chapter begins with a reflection on the research process and then summarises the findings as discussed in the previous chapters.

A discussion about the practical insights gained through this research with regards to violence among learners and a recommendation of ways in which this research can be extended, concludes this chapter.

6.1 Main conclusions of this study

Conclusions drawn from this study are addressed in response to the research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

The first conclusion is that learners from Phatheka Primary School believed that violence is the best way to resolve conflict. They often used violence to defend themselves when they got involved in various fights using different tools, to the extent that fighting became the norm at this school.

The second conclusion is that, although school fights are common and every fight is different, some common causes do exist.

Thirdly, the school complicitly contributed to violence among the learners through the school policies and disciplinary practices of the educators. Each of these conclusions are discussed below.

6.1.1 Violence to resolve conflict

This study found that violence is a daily occurrence among learners. Whenever they get into conflict situations, they fight in the classroom or outside the classroom and the fight sometimes continues outside the school premises. Most learners do not report conflicts to their educators - they want to solve the problem on their own through physical fights. Learners use physical forms of fighting such as fist fighting, slapping, kicking, pushing and

tripping. Sometimes they use tools like a pair of scissors and fighting sticks. Learners also abuse each other verbally when they get into conflict situations. Girls are most commonly the recipients of verbal abuse.

6.1.2 Common causes of violence at Phatheka Primary School

Naive adherence to certain cultural practices was one of the major causes of the violence among learners**.** This study found that many learners believed that certain types of muthi provides advantage to the user in conflicts and fights. The learners who subscribed to this belief would readily get into conflicts and fights with the firm conviction that they are invincible and would have added advantage in a confrontation. Educators and learners that were interviewed mentioned that many learners got into conflict situations either to test the effects of the muthi or because they believed the muthi to be a mechanism of protection during fights.

A large proprotion of the violence of males-against-males was a form of boundary policing which served to determine their position within a hierarchical arrangement of masculinity. The boys at this particular school adapted a repertoire of Zulu rural cultural practices and forms of self-organisation to handle conflict among themselves. Many boys at this school used vernacular expressions of stick fighting to reinforce their dominance over other boys and to serve as metaphors of manhood that bolstered their position among peers. The male learners often resolved their disputes using traditional stick fighting and other physical confrontation involving the use of sticks (in other words, also non-Zulu traditional stick fighting). Many learners mentioned that they were accustomed to resolving conflict by stick fighting which educators and learners mentioned was reflective of their culture and custom of being "a Zulu man".

Labelling often served as a trigger to ignite violence among learners. Learners labelled each other in terms of their physical appearance, their citizenship, as well as their academic performance. In many instances the labelling initiated a reaction that would then lead to physical confrontation.

Phatheka Primary celebrated the academic achievers and denigrated the underperformers in the school. There was strong evidence from learners' interviews that they competed and labelled each other around issues of classroom practice and academic performance. This created tension among the learners which often led to physical confrontation and violence.

Issues of gender relationship also caused violence among the learners. Many boys subscribed to certain hegemonic notions of masculinity which created a mentality where the boys demanded respect and exercised power over girls. Boys often used violence, or the threat of violence, to claim and exercise this power. Romantic relationships with girls often caused boys at Phatheka Primary to get into conflict situations in their attempts to avoid humiliation, to

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prove heterosexuality, or to enjoy a particular status at the school. The boys were prepared to use violence to gain and maintain their masculine status.

This study found that the violent reactions to provocation by a large proportion of learners was learnt through role models provided by family, parents, siblings, relatives and community members, either directly or indirectly, and that this was reinforced at school. The encouragement of learners by role models to defend themselves or to solve the problem through the use of force and aggression, contributed significantly to shaping violent behaviour among learners.

6.1.3 Role of the School in Managing Violence

It was found that Phatheka Primary did not adopt empathetic, compassionate, nurturing and affiliated behaviours in controlling learners, but instead favoured heavy-handed discipline and control.

> To ignore the emotional world of schooling and of students is to contribute to the repressions which recycle and legitimate violence (Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997: 117).

This study has found that the harsh forms of discipline and control exercised at Phatheka Primary led to learners adopting violent ways to resolving conflict. This approach of educators towards learners therefore made the school complicit in perpetuating a culture of violent behaviour. In the struggle to find effective and successful ways of dealing with misbehaving learners, educators in many cases resorted to aggression and harsh modes to control learners. This created an atmosphere of hostility and inimicalness which shaped learners' interactions with their peers. In conflict situations these interactions were often intermingled with violence and force.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

The findings point to the need for an integrated strategy of dealing with school violence, addressing both short-term and longer term change. Immediate measures should be put in place such as situational prevention in the form of searches to prevent unlawful items like weapons and muthi on school premises. It is important for the school to educate learners, educators and parents about the various forms of violence prevalent among learners. The schools should conduct awareness seminars and workshops on the forms of school violence within the school. Learners should be taught to tolerate and accept others through team building exercises and talks by positive role models. In cases where boys are abusing girls, the victims should be encouraged to report their perpetrators to the school authorities. Also, more emphasis should be placed on gender equality and women empowerment through

advocacy and awareness campaigns. Teachers should also be encouraged to use less aggressive forms of discipline and punishment and to encourage learners to be more tolerant and peaceful.

In order to curb learner violence, the school should establish a partnership with all the stakeholders who have shown interest in education, including youth organisations and churches. People around the school, NGO's, the SAPS, community forums, women's organisations, correctional services, social welfare and the Department of Health should be approached with the aim of advising learners against the practice of violence to resolve conflict.

The school and its educators should become active participants and work with the community to enable learners to establish meaningful relationships with each other based on cultural practice and gender equity. Relationships that support and respect each other equally must be encouraged. In line with the South African Constitution, the tendency to undermine and discriminate against each other based on gender perception and socio-economic position needs to be removed. It is only through the combined efforts of school authorities, parents, community leaders and government that school violence can be addressed effectively.

Conclusion

This final chapter has provided an overview of the research process and the main conclusions drawn from the study. The implications of this study and recommendations for interventions, future research and policy were discussed.

This study builds on and adds to existing understandings of conflict and school violence. An important finding of the research in this study is that there are multiple and qualitatively different causes and influences in the enactment of interpersonal violence. It is firmly believed that, with more extensive research in schooling contexts, involving all stakeholders, it would be possible to devise more effective and creative approaches to reduce violence among learners in schools.

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APPENDIX i
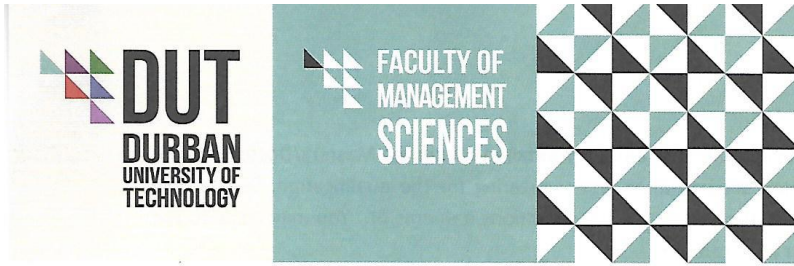
Reference: Proposal Approval: AD Dlungwane, Student number 21450930

Dear Ms AD Dlungwane

MASTERS DEGREE OF TECHNOLOGY: PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

This serves to confirm the approval of your research proposal by the Faculty Research Committee, at its meeting on 17 September 2014, as follows:

1.   Research proposal and provisional dissertation title:

VIOLENCE AMONG LEARNERS WITHIN ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UMLAZI TOWNSHIP, DURBAN

Supervisor: Dr V Hamlall

Co-supervisor: N/A

Please note that any proposed changes in the dissertation title require the approval of your supervisor/s, the Faculty Research Committee, as well as ratification thereof by the Higher Degrees Committee.

2.   Research budget to the amount of **R10 000.00**

Please note that this funding is not a scholarship or bursary and is therefore not paid directly to you, but is controlled by your supervisor. Any proposed changes to use of this funding allocation require the approval of your supervisor and the Faculty Research Committee.

The Institutional Research Committee has stipulated that:

(a) This University retains the ownership of any Intellectual Property (patent, design, etc.) registered in respect of the results of your Masters/Doctors Degree in Technology studies as a result of the award and the provisions of the above Act;

(b) Should you find any of the terms above not acceptable then you are given the option to decline the Research budget award to your project in writing.

May we remind you that in terms of Rule G25(2)(b), if you fail to obtain the Masters/Doctors degree within the maximum time period allowed after first registering for the qualification, Senate may refuse to renew your registration or may impose any conditions it deems fit. You may apply to the Faculty Research Committee for an extension.

Please note that you are required to convert your registration from the informal to the formal course and re-register each year.

Should you experience any problems relating to your research, your supervisor must be informed of the matter as soon as possible. If the difficulties persist, you should then approach your Head of Department and thereafter the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

Please refer to the 2014 General Rule Book concerning the rules relating to postgraduate studies, which include *inter alia* acceptable minimum and maximum timeframes, submission of thesis/dissertations, etc. You are also advised to read the Postgraduate Students' Guide which is available on the DUT website.

Please do not hesitate to contact this office for any assistance. We wish you success in your studies.

Kind regards,

Dr R Balkaran
FRC Chairperson: Faculty of Management Sciences

Cc   Supervisor: Dr V Hamlall

APPENDIX ii: LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT

11 August 2014

The Researcher Officer

Research, Strategy, Policy

Development and ECMIS Directorate

G23 Metropolitan Building

Pietermaritzburg

3200

Mr. S Alwar

CC: Dr. S.P Sishi – H.O.D (Education)

CC: Mr Shandu - Circuit Manager

Sir

ACADEMIC RESEARCH: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN A SCHOOL.

MY PROPOSED RESEARCH TITLE IS:

VIOLENCE AMONG LEARNERS WITHIN ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UMLAZI TOWNSHIP, DURBAN

I am an educator who is currently studying towards a Masters in Technology (MTech) in the faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology (M.L Sultan Campus). My study involves research work that needs to be conducted in a school. In view of the fact that violence among learners poses as a major challenge for teachers, the focus of my study is to investigate the causes and nature thereof, as this a very relevant topic and of great concern to all in the education field. The proposed research will make a contribution in that it will make recommendations   to combat and reduce violence among learners and in doing so improve the teaching and learning environment. My research

study adopts a qualitative research methodology. This qualitative research methodology will employ the use of focus group interviews and individual interviews. Through this study I will access teachers' perspectives and learners' perspectives regarding school violence problems and how these problems are handled by teachers and learners. The interview will not interrupt the functions of the school. The interview with the participants will be conducted after schools hours. The data collection is scheduled for the first week of the first term as not to interfere with the term testing programme.

I humbly seek permission to conduct the above mentioned research study in a Primary school in Ward X in the Umlazi District. The participating school in this ward has been randomly selected and permission will also be attained from the principal of the school before the commencement of any research. In order to provide an analysis of the present situation regarding violence among learners in our schools I intend to conduct interviews with a sample of ten learners and ten teachers to gain their perception and views on violence among learners. The school and teachers who partake in this study will do so voluntarily and confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. I also hereby undertake that the name of the participating school or the teachers will not be mentioned in the subsequent thesis. I will ensure that normal learning and teaching will not disrupted in any way whatsoever whilst conducting this research study.

The information acquired from this research study, will be accessible to the Department of Education, as well as school managers. A copy of the completed thesis will be made available to the Department of Education.

For further information regarding this study, feel free to contact my supervisor. My supervisor is Dr. Vijay Hamlall who is a lecturer at Durban University of Technology, M.L Sultan Campus, whose contact details are as follows:

E-mail : vijayham1@gmail.com

Cell : 0834190441

The reply could be sent to me by e-mail at malazadudu@gmail.com or my supervisor.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Angel Duduzile Dlungwane (Miss)

Student Number: 21450930

Contact No's:

Cell: 073 134 8892

Work: 031 9099400

10 August 2014

The Principal

XXXX Primary School

XXXX Umlazi Township

P.O. UMLAZI

4031

Dear Sir

RESEARCH STUDY ON VIOLENCE AMONG LEARNERS WITHIN ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UMLAZI TOWNSHIP, DURBAN

I have registered for Masters in Technology (MTech) in the faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology (M. L. Sultan).I am conducting research on violence among learners in a primary school in Umlazi. I am being supervised by Dr. Vijay Hamlall, who is a research associate at Durban University of Technology. My supervisor can be contacted on 0834190441or by e-mail : vijayham1@gmail.com. The study I proposed is qualitative in nature, and I will be interviewing 10 educators and 10 learners from different grades to discuss their beliefs and experiences in this regard.

I am requesting permission to conduct this study at your institution. Please find enclosed a brief research proposal detailing the study to be conducted.

FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the status of violence at this school and the contributing factors that lead to violence among learners.

The main focus would be to explore the extent to which this school creates conditions for, or reduced the possibilities of violence between and amongst learners.

I address this focus by investigating and establishing the ways in which the school (policies, teachers, and ethos) influence aggressive and violent behavior. Guided by this focus this study investigates how the school steered the manner in which violence was handled by the learners. Flowing from this, this study will explore how the practice of teachers encouraged or discouraged conflict resolution and violence and the measures that were in place at this school to control learner behavior. What impact did these conditions and practices have on conflict and violence among the learners at this school?I will be happy to furnish any further details or answer any queries or concerns you may have.

Yours faithfully

Miss A. D. Dlungwane (Researcher) 0731348892

Dear Educator

I invite you to take part in a research study as part of a masters thesis at the Durban University of Technology.

Title of the Research Study: Violence among learners within one primary school in Umlazi Township, Durban.

Principal Investigator : Angel Duduzile Dlungwane, Bed Honours

Supervisor: Dr Vijay Hamlall – (Phd)

This study aims to explore the current status of violence at a primary school in Umlazi and the contributing factors that lead to violent behavior among the learners. The problem of violence includes physical conflicts among learners, verbal, abuse, robbery, vandalism, alcohol abuse and possession of weapons. In the past decade each one of these areas has escalated to a level of security that seems difficult to manage. The focus of this study is to explore the extent to which one particular urban school created conditions for, or reduced the possibilities of violence between and among learners.

The data collection method will be formal interviews and focus group interviews. Ten learners and ten educators will be the respondents in this study. The participants will answer interview questions from the researcher. Interviews will be done privately in an unused office or classroom that the participant is comfortable with. The interview will last for 50 minutes. The participant's involvement is purely for academic purpose only, and there is no financial benefit involved.

There will be no risks or discomfort to you as a participant if you agree to take part in this study.The findings of the study will be published locally and internationally. This study attempts to understand why violence occurs at school level and makes recommendations for interventions that can reduce violence in schools.The participant has a choice to participate or not to participate or withdraw at any stage without any penalties. No remuneration will be received by participants. The participants will not cover any costs for the study. The researcher will travel to meet the participant at the agreed comfortable venue. The participants' confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but only as a population member opinion. Participants will be given codes. Data will be stored in a secure storage and be destroyed after five years.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher (073 134 8892), my supervisor (083 419 0441) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Angel Duduzile Dlungwane

APPENDIX v: LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR PARENTS /GUARDIANS

10 August 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: RESEARCH STUDY ON VIOLENCE AMONG LEARNERS WITHIN ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UMLAZI TOWNSHIP, DURBAN

I have registered for Masters in Technology (MTech) in the faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology, M.L Sultan Campus. I am currently conducting a study on violence among learners in a primary school. Your son/daughter has expressed an interest in participating in the study.

This study aims to explore the current status of violence at a primary school in Umlazi and the contributing factors that lead to violent behavior among the learners. The problem of violence includes physical conflicts among learners, verbal, abuse, robbery, vandalism, alcohol abuse and possession of weapons. In the past decade each one of these areas has escalated to a level of security that seems difficult to manage. The focus of this study is to explore the extent to which one particular urban school created conditions for, or reduced the possibilities of violence between and among learners.

The data collection method will be formal interviews and focus group interviews. Ten learners and ten educators will be the respondents in this study. The participants will answer interview questions from the researcher. Interviews will be done privately in an unused office or classroom that the participant is comfortable with. The participant's involvement is purely for academic purpose only, and there is no financial benefit involved.

The research will be conducted in the first term of this year. The study consists of a one focus group and one individual interview which will be conducted after school. The focus group and the individual interview will be approximately 50 minutes in duration, and will be tape recorded for transcription purposes. Information provided by your son/daughter will remain confidential and used only for the purpose of this study.

Pseudonyms will be used to disguise any identifiable information. All participation in the study is voluntary and no adverse effects will result from discontinuing the participation. Should you agree for

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your son/daughter to participate, please could you indicate this on the attached consent form. There will be no risks or discomfort to you as a participant if you agree to take part in this study.

The participant has a choice to participate or not to participate or withdraw at any stage without any penalties.

No remuneration will be received by participants. The participants will not cover any costs for the study. The researcher will travel to meet the participant at the agreed comfortable venue.

The participants' confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but only as a population member opinion. Participants will be given codes. Data will be stored in a secure storage and be destroyed after five years.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher (073 134 8892), my supervisor Dr Vijay Hamlall (083 419 0441) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

At the end of the study a document will be drawn up describing the findings. A copy will be handed to the principal and will be available for you the parent/guardians to read. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding this study.

Thank you for your support in this study.

Yours faithfully
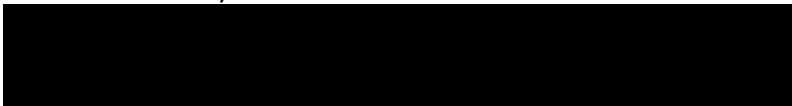
Miss A.D. Dlungwane (Researcher) 073 134 8892

DECLARATION

I_____(full names of participant)

hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I hereby consent/do not consent to an audio recording of the interview. (Please mark your selection with an x).

I understand that I am at liberty from the project at any time, should I wish to do so.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   Date

_____   __/__/____

CONTACT NO.

_____

Dear Learner

I invite you to take part in a research study as part of a masters thesis at the Durban University of Technology.

Title of the Research Study: Violence among learners within one primary school in Umlazi Township, Durban.

Principal Investigator : Angel Duduzile Dlungwane, Bed Honours

Supervisor: Dr Vijay Hamlall – (Phd)

This study aims to explore the current status of violence at a primary school in Umlazi and the contributing factors that lead to violent behavior among the learners. The problem of violence includes physical conflicts among learners, verbal, abuse, robbery, vandalism, alcohol abuse and possession of weapons. In the past decade each one of these areas has escalated to a level of security that seems difficult to manage. The focus of this study is to explore the extent to which one particular urban school created conditions for, or reduced the possibilities of violence between and among learners.

The data collection method will be formal interviews and focus group interviews. Ten learners and ten educators will be the respondents in this study. The participants will answer interview questions from the researcher. Interviews will be done privately in an unused office or classroom that the participant is comfortable with. The interview will last for 50 minutes. The participants' involvement is purely for academic purpose only, and there is no financial benefit involved. There will be no risks or discomfort to you as a participant if you agree to take part in this study.The findings of the study will be published locally and internationally. This study attempts to understand why violence occurs at school level and makes recommendations for interventions that can reduce violence in schools.

The participant has a choice to participate or not to participate or withdraw at any stage without any penalties. No remuneration will be received by participants. The participants will not cover any costs for the study. The researcher will travel to meet the participant at the agreed comfortable venue. The participant's confidentiality is guaranteed as their inputs will not be attributed to them in person, but only as a population member opinion. Participants will be given codes. Data will be stored in a secure storage and be destroyed after five years.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher (073 134 8892), my supervisor (083 419 0441) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

Angel Duduzile Dlungwane

APPENDIX vii

A. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE – FOR LEARNERS

VIOLENCE AMONG LEARNERS WITHIN ONE PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UMLAZI TOWNSHIP, DURBAN

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE

For

Learners

Respondent No_____

SECTION A: Biographical characteristics of Respondent

[1] How old are you?

Probe : What grade are you in?

[2] Where do you live?

[3] Tell me about your family?

[4] What are your hobbies?

[5] Who are you friends with?

[6] Who are your role models?

[7] How do you spend your spare time?

[8] What movies do you like?

[9] Do you play sport?

Probe: What sport do you play? Why do like this sport?

[10] What other activities do you enjoy?

Section B : Perceptions and Experiences of School Violence

[1] Do you like/dislike coming to school?

Probe : What do you like about school? What do you dislike about school?

[2] Which are you favourite teachers? Why?

[3] Do you have friends? Tell me about them ? What do you do during the breaks with your friends? Do they help you if you are in trouble?

Probes : What do you think of the different friendship groups within the school?

I heard about labeling. Tell me about this?

How do the learners treat some boys or girls who are labeled? Why are they labeled?

[4] Have you ever been in a fight or conflict with other learners? Please tell me about the incident.

Probe : How do you react when a learners interfere with you? Why?

Do you feel that learners and/or yourself try to satisfy a particular expectation of you?

How do your parents feel about the manner in which you should react to a dispute at school?

How do your teachers feel about the manner in which you should react to a dispute at school?

How do your friends feel about the manner in which you should react to a dispute at school?

Do male teachers have different views than female teachers?

[5] Do learners get into fight at school in the classroom or during breaks?

[6] What do you think are some of the triggers for fighting?

Probe : Why do you think learners get into scuffles and fights?

[7] Do you obey the school rules?

Probe : What do you think about the school rules? Are they too strict? Do you think that teaches are too hard on learner when they get into trouble? Are the same rules applied to all learners? Are some learners treated differently? Why?

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[8] Do learners in senior classes or junior classes break the rules? Which rules? Tell me about this?

Probe : Do more of the boys or more of the girls get into trouble in school? Why do you think this is the case?

[9] How do senior phase learners treat or take care of junior learners?

[10] Do you miss classes? What about other learners?

[11] How are you performing in school?

Probe : Why do you think this is the case?

[12] How do you feel about the prefects at school? Why?

Probe : In your opinion what ways are learners who are prefects treated differently to learners who are not prefects?

[13] What are your expectations of your educators?

[14] Please recount a situation where you had some difficulty with an educator where you felt unhappy? How did you overcome this?

[15] What changes would you like the school to introduce?

Probe: What ideas do you have to improve on the existing routines and running of the school?

Thank you for your time and valuable input

B. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR LEARNERS

1. Tell me about your school experiences.
   Probes : What are your likes and dislikes about school?
   Tell me about your friends and your friendships groups?
   What is important about having friends?

2. Tell me about your relationship with people in authority at school.
   Probes : How do you feel about the prefects at school? Why?
   What ways are learners who are prefects treated differently to learners who are not prefects?
   What is your relationship with senior learners? Do you respect them? Why?
    What are your expectations of your educators?
   Please recount a situation where you had some difficulty with an educator where you felt unhappy? How did you overcome this?

3. Have you been involved in any conflict or misunderstanding with other learners at your school?
   Tell me about this.

4. Besides you, what about other learners, Did they have conflicts or misunderstanding among themselves?
   Probe : What do you think is the cause of conflict or misunderstanding among learners themselves in your school? What triggers these conflicts?

5. Tell me about the gender relations at school.
   Is there competition among and between boys and girls? How do they handle this competition?
   Probe: Do more boys or girls get into fights?
           How does the school handle fighting among learners?
            What are your views about the way the school handles violent situatiuons?

   Thank you for your time and valuable input

C. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE ONE
For

Educators

Respondent No_____

SECTION A: Biographical characteristics of Respondent

1. How long have you been an educator?
2. Why have you chosen to be an educator?
3. What position do you hold at this school?
4. What do you find to be the most rewarding /enjoyable aspect of your duties as an educator?
5. How did you come to be teaching at this particular school?
   Probe : Have you taught at other schools?
6. What subjects are you teaching?
7. What is your highest qualification?
8. Do you have children of your own?
   Probe : Tell me about them.
9. Do you spend extra time after hours at school?
10. What are some of your other activities outside of school?

Section B : Perceptions and Experiences of School Violence

1. Can you tell me about the culture and climate of this school?
2. Can you describe the socio- economic status of this community?
3. What is the climate outside the school?
4. What are the home backgrounds of the learners?
5. Do you feel that the school has a good discipline system? Why?
6. In your opinion does the school have control of the learners?
7. How do you control your learners?
   Probe : Do you use the same approach to maintain control inside the classroom as well as on the playground?
8. Do you handle girls and boys differently? Why?
9. How do the learners respond to the routine and code of conduct of the school?
10. Which rules are generally obeyed?
11. How do the boys or girls respond to authority?

12. How would you describe the learner's interactions with each other?
13. How would you describe the boys' relationships with girls?
    Probe: Can you describe incidents where learners were violent with each other? What do you think triggered that?

14. Does the school have a policy in place to handle violence among the learners?
15. How does the school (teachers, managers, principal, governing body) handle violent incidents?
16. Can you describe some violent incidents that occurred among learners at this school recently?
    Probe : Do you think that the school handled the incident correctly? In other words did they use the right approach?
    How does the school prevent violence among learners at school?
17. Are certain boys or girls labeled or excluded, or marginalised by other boys or girls?
18. Why do you think this is the case?
19. What would you like to change in the school?
20. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about what we have spoken about?

Thank you for your time and valuable input

D. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATORS

1. What is the culture and climate of this school?
   Probe : Will you regard the climate as peaceful? Why do you have this opinion? Do others agree with this view?
2. Describe the socio- economic status of this community?
   Probe : Is the community affluent?
3. What is the climate outside the school?
4. What are the home backgrounds of the learners?
5. Does the school have a good discipline system?
   Probe : What are the views of the others?
6. Does the school have control of the learners?
7. How do teachers control learners at this school?
   Probe : Do teachers use the same approach to maintain control inside the classroom as well as on the playground?
8. Do teachers handle girls and boys differently? Why?
9. How do the learners respond to the routine and code of conduct of the school?
10. How do the boys or girls respond to teacher authority at this school?
11. Are learners friendly with each other at this school?
12. How would you describe the boys' relationships with girls?
    Probe: Can you describe incidents where learners were violent with each other? What do you think triggered that?
13. Does the school have a policy in place to handle violence among the learners?
14. How does the school (teachers, managers, principal, governing body) handle violent incidents?
    In individual interviews participants described violent incidents. Do you think that the school handles violent incidents correctly? In other words did the school use the right approach? How does the school prevent violence among learners at school?

15. Are certain boys or girls labeled or excluded, or marginalised by other boys or girls?
16. Why do you think this is the case?
17. What would you like to change in the school?
18. Is there anything else that you would like to mention about what we have spoken about?

Thank you for your time and valuable input

Appendix xi

CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Miss Angel Duduzile Dlungwane

about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study.

- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

_____   _____   _____ _____

Full Name of Participant   **Date**   **Time**   **Signature / Right**
Thumbprint

I Angel Duduzile Dlungwane herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Angel Duduzile Dlungwane

10/10/14

Full Name of Researcher   **Date**   **Signature**

_____   _____   _____

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)   **Date**   **Signature**

_____   _____   _____

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date   **Signature**

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

| Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane | Tel: 033 392 1004 | Ref.:2/4/8/335 |

Ms AD Dlungwane

103 Ruslynn

47 Diakonia Avenue

DURBAN

4001

Dear Ms Dlungwane

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"VOILENCE AMONG LEARNERS IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UMLAZI",** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.

2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.

3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.

4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.

5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.

6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 February 2015 to 01 February 2016.

7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.

8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.

9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.

10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education:

Umlazi District

_____

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD

Head of Department: Education

Date: 05 January 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: WWW.kzneducation.gov.za