



**THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS  
REGARDING WEAPONS IN SCHOOLS IN UMGUNGUNDLOVU  
DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master  
of Management Sciences: Public Management at Durban University  
of Technology**

**Thabani Mhlongo**

**Supervisor: Mr. Crispin Hemson**

**Date: July 2017**

## **Declaration**

I, Thabani Mhlongo, declare that:

- i. The research reported in this dissertation/thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- ii. This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- iii. This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other person.
- iv. This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other written sources have been quoted, then:
  - a. Their words have been re-written by the general information attributed to them has been referenced;
  - b. Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.
- v. This dissertation/thesis does not contain text, graphics or tables copied and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, with the source being detailed in the dissertation/thesis and in the References section.

Signature:

## **Dedications**

This research is dedicated to my family and friends who supported me in finalising this dissertation. I will also like to express a special feeling of gratitude to my loving family and friends for the words of encouragements.

## **Acknowledgements**

This research paper was made possible through the help and support from my family, friends including: principals, educators, students, and staff members, all sentient beings. It was whole-heartedly expressed that your advices for my research proved to be a landmark effort towards the success of my project.

I would also like to pay my profound gratitude and deep regard to my supervisor, Mr. Crispin Hemson for his exemplary guidance, valuable feedback and constant encouragement throughout the duration of the project. His valuable suggestions were of immense help throughout my project work. Moreover, his perceptive criticism kept me working to make this project much better.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study explores the perception and experiences of students regarding weapons in schools, in a bid to create a peaceful and conducive learning environment. This study concentrated on four high schools in Umgungundlovu District. Students, educators and principals were asked to participate in this study on a voluntary basis.

The study recognises that existing data related to weapons in South African schools is largely anecdotal. The significance of the study is that it collected data related to the weapons in schools and used data to inform recommendations on ways in which we can make schools safer places to the young people and staff. This was a mixed methods survey; however, the bulk of the findings were drawn from the quantitative data, which was conducted through surveys. The qualitative data was collected in interviews and in focus group discussions.

The data revealed that a high proportion of students have seen weapons in school, which might be an indication that weapons find easy access onto school premises. The results revealed the types of weapons brought to schools. Knives were the weapons most seen at school followed by guns, while some other weapons mentioned were pepper sprays, screwdrivers, pangas and bats. The study showed that in other schools, drugs, alcohol, substance abuse were reported in the sample. Among the contributing factors raised by the respondents on the reasons for the presence of weapons onto schools were the issue of drugs, alcohol, bullying, fights among students, and being involved on gang activities. Some policy recommendations regarding school security measures were proposed on the basis of the findings which were drawn from this study.

As part of the study, it is recommended that the Department of Education ensure that all South African schools implement well-documented discipline policies, a code of conduct and school rules for their school which must clearly indicate seriousness of carrying a weapon in school as well as the consequences of misbehaviour. The policy must have steps to be followed by the principals and or educators where there are elements of misconduct against the students and sanctions to be issued if the student

is found guilty. Other recommendations were made in line with the findings based on the results. Limitations of the study were further pointed out.

<b>Contents</b>	
<b>Declaration</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Dedications</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction and the background of the study</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Research aims, objectives and research questions</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.2.1 Research aims .....	4
1.2.3 Research questions .....	5
<b>1.3 The research problem</b> .....	<b>6</b>
1.3.1 What is violence and what is school violence?.....	7
1.3.2 How does South African violence impact on schools? .....	8
1.3.3 Studies of violence in South African schools.....	9
1.3.4 State policy and law to address violence .....	10
1.3.5 Specific evidence of violence in KwaZulu-Natal schools.....	12
<b>1.4 Research design and data collection methods</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>1.5 Rationale and motivation</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>1.6 Limitations</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>1.6 An overview of the dissertation</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>1.7 Conclusion</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>2.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>2.2 The significance of a literature review</b> .....	<b>18</b>

2.2.1 Defining weapons.....	19
2.2.2 School violence .....	19
2.2.3 Violence in society .....	21
2.2.4 Weapons in South African schools.....	22
2.2.5 Weapons in schools internationally .....	25
2.2.6 The impact of the presence of weapons in schools.....	27
2.2.7 Factors relating to the presence and use of weapons in schools .....	28
<b>2.3 Measures to deal with weapons as well as other forms of school violence in South African schools .....</b>	<b>31</b>
2.3.1 Measures for school safety .....	31
2.3.1.1 Physical security measures.....	32
<b>2.4 Measures to deal with weapons as well as school violence in other countries .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>41</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	41
3.2 Conclusion .....	46
<b>CHAPTER 4.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>47</b>
4.1 Introduction/study area.....	47
4.3 Population size .....	47
4.4 Sample and sampling techniques .....	48
4.4.1 Sampling procedure .....	48
4.5 Data collection instruments.....	49
4.2 Research design .....	50
4.5.1 Questionnaires.....	51
4.5.1.1 Table 1: students questionnaires .....	52

4.5.1.2 Table 2: educators questionnaires .....	52
4.5.2 Interviews .....	53
4.5.3 Focus group discussions.....	53
<b>4.6 Reliability and validity .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>4.7 Ethical considerations .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>4.8 Procedures to maintain confidentiality.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>4.9 Administration of data collection instruments.....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>4.10 Data analysis and presentation .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>4.11 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5. PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>5.2 Relevant method of research and sampling.....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>5.3 Demographic data from the quantitative study.....</b>	<b>60</b>
Figure 1: Gender distribution of students .....	61
Figure 2: Age distribution of students who participated in the survey .....	61
Figure 3: Gender distribution of educators who participated in the study .....	62
<b>5.4 Analysis of coded themes in quantitative data .....</b>	<b>62</b>
5.4.1 Theme 1: Safety at school .....	63
5.4.1.2 Table 2: Existence of School Code of Conduct (students' responses)..	65
5.4.1.3 Table 3: Existence of School Code of Conduct (educators' responses)	65
5.4.2 Theme 2: Weapons in schools .....	66
5.4.2.1 Table 4: Responses in terms of the visibility of weapons at schools (students) .....	66
5.4.2.2 Table 5: Responses in terms of the visibility of weapons at schools (educators).....	67
5.4.2.3 Table 6: Specification/ types of weapon who had seen weapons (students responses).....	68



5.4.2.4 Table 7 Specification/ types of weapon who had seen weapons (educators responses) .....	69
5.4.2.5 Table 8: If yes, how often do you see a weapon? Students .....	70
5.4.2.6 Table 9: If yes, how often do you see a weapon? Educators .....	71
5.4.2.7 Table 10: Responses concerning those who carry weapons (students)	72
5.4.2.8 Table 11 Responses concerning those who carry weapons (educators) .....	73
5.4.2.9 Table 12: Visibility of weapons at school (students responses): .....	74
5.4.2.10 Table 13: Visibility of weapons at school (educators' responses): .....	74
5.4.2.11 Table 14: Context of using weapons (student responses): .....	75
5.4.2.12 Table 15: Context of using weapons (educator's responses):.....	76
I.....	76
5.4.2.13. Table 16: Ownership of weapons (student responses) .....	77
5.4.2.14 Table 17: Use of weapons within school premises (student responses) .....	78
5.4.3 Theme 3: Motives for bringing weapons .....	79
5.4.3.1. Table 18: Motives .....	79
5.4.4 Theme 5: Actions to be taken with regard to the use of weapons at school .....	82
5.4.4.1 Table 20: What is the main action that you think people must take about weapons in school? Students .....	82
5.4.4.2 Table 21: What is the main action that you think people must take about weapons in school? Educators .....	83
5.4.4.3 Table 22: Responses of educators with regard to the rules to be apply in school.....	85
5.4.4.4 Table 23: Students' general comments on the carrying of weapons at school.....	86
5.4.4.5 Table 24: Educators' general comments on the carrying of weapons at school.....	88

<b>5.5 Analysis of qualitative data.....</b>	<b>89</b>
5.5.1 Interviews coding and analysis.....	90
5.5.1.1 Theme 1: Safety at school.....	91
5.5.1.2 Theme 2: Weapons in schools .....	93
5.5.1.3 Theme 3: The reasons for the presence of weapons .....	95
5.5.1.4 Theme 4: Structures to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools.....	98
<b>5.6 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>6 CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY</b> .....	<b>102</b>
<b>6.1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>6.2 Summary of chapters .....</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>6.3 Revisiting research questions and the research findings .....</b>	<b>104</b>
6.3.1 Safety at school.....	105
6.3.2 Weapons in schools .....	106
6.3.3 Motives for bringing weapons .....	107
6.3.4 The reasons for the presence of weapons.....	107
6.3.5 Actions to be taken with regard to the use of weapons at school.....	108
6.3.6 Structures to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools.....	108
<b>6.4 Recommendations.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>6.5 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Appendixes .....</b>	<b>129</b>
Appendix A: Participant letter of information, principal .....	129
Appendix A1: Participant letter of information, student.....	131
Appendix A2: Participant letter of information, educator .....	133
Appendix A3: Participant letter of information, students in focus groups.....	135

Appendix B: Declaration of content form .....	137
Appendix C: Questionnaire schedule, student .....	139
Appendix D: Questionnaire schedule, educators .....	145
Appendix E: Interview schedule, principals .....	151
Appendix F: Focus group interviews schedule, students .....	153
Appendix G: Permission letter to conduct research from the Department of Education-KZN Province .....	155

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 Introduction and the background of the study

School violence represents unacceptable and unethical behaviour within the education sector. Indigenous teachings have taught that schools exist to instil good behavior or morals in a person while preparing him or her to successfully meet the demands of the world. Snodgrass (2003: 25) claims that schools play a fundamental role in ensuring the development of the child; therefore, it is essential to ensure that schools are regarded as a safe environment for learning and growth. Recent research and media coverage in South Africa as well as other international countries has revealed that the carrying of weapons, crime, violence and drugs are widespread in both primary and secondary schools. In South Africa current violent trends inform that there is violence in schools and learners are confirmed to be part of that recognized violence. Van der Aardweg (1987: 174) in his independent study gathered that such violence trends are amongst the following: learner to learner assaults, parent to teacher assaults, teacher to learner assaults, vandalism, rioting and other improper behaviours which have occurred almost weekly in the last few years in the Republic of South Africa as such. This conduct is classified as a major disruption of educational programmes in some South African schools.

According to Zulu, Urbani and Van der Merwe (2004) school violence and learner activism are both not new in South African schools. They further add that “learner activism can be traced from June 1976 when thousands of students took to the streets of Soweto in protest about the imposition of Afrikaans as medium of instruction” (Zulu, Urbani and Van der Merwe 2004: 170). Ward, Van der Merwe and Dewes (2012: 99) further indicate that the school violence and learner activism of 1976 was a protest against apartheid by the learners which elicited security force brutality.

The dawn of democracy in South Africa seem to have observed the cries of 1976 hence the disruption of education and other related factors contributing to school violence in black communities seemed absent (Zulu, Urbani and Van der Merwe 2004: 170). Contrary to what is said by Zulu et al. (2014) current recordings of school violence seem to persist but with a different take than that of 1976 where the struggle was clearly around the language that was different to adapt at school. This then allows me to realize that the issue of school violence has neither disappeared nor decreased in South African schools. On the persistence of violence and implications for change, a paper presented at the Strategies for Nonviolence in Education conference, questioned why levels of violence in the last days of apartheid had not declined with democracy and examined this at both a societal and personal level (Hemson 2013).

In particular the widespread of high levels of violence in South African schools has not decreased; instead it has increased in proportion. Hodges et al. (1999: 94, cited by Nesor et al. 2007) report that 16% of high school learners were involved in a physical fight at school during a period of 30 days, and 11.8% carried a weapon on school property. Nesor et al. (2007) further point out that in 2003 school violence increased in South African schools to such an extent that 16.8% of learners feared travelling to school, 20.9% had been threatened or hurt by someone at school and 32.8% had been verbally abused at school.

The study conducted by Leoschut (2013: 2) further confirms that violence is widespread in South African schools, to such an extent that one in five secondary learners, a total of 22.2%, had experienced violence while at school during the 12 months periods, between August 2011 and August 2012.

According to Van der Aardweg (1987: 17) violence in the community in most cases influences the nature of violence in schools where causes of violence are, *inter alia*, the rising costs for services, overcrowding, non-parental supervision and civil wars especially in African countries. Van der Aardweg further adds that South Africa has been described as a country with high levels of violence. Schools in KZN (KwaZulu-Natal) are becoming highly unstable and unpredictable places where violence and the use and carrying of weapons have become a part of everyday life. Newman (2008)

pointed out that KwaZulu-Natal has the third highest percentage of pupil reporting assault, with 3.8 % of abuse reported in schools.

KZN Department of Education (2012: 1) adds that there had been a number of problems of school violence, drug abuse and other forms of crime. The KZN Department of Education confirms that, among other factors, the increase of school violence was the result of weapons and firearms being brought inside school premises. This has resulted in some learners' lives being taken and others being critically injured. This escalating violence in schools raises a concern since schools are supposed to provide learners with several benefits beyond a formal education, such as opportunities to develop social and cultural competencies that will create a solid foundation for success in adulthood. However, these benefits will not be realised if schools are facing the challenges which have been highlighted above.

School violence is a problem of particular significance in South Africa. The extent of the problem is now a political problem which has even captured the concentration of politicians and political parties. Some students bring weapons to school with the determination to hurt, threaten or kill other students. The report by the National School Safety Center (n.d.) describes how weapons in schools are increasingly used by students and threats too can also be considered as weapons, for example, "if a student threatens another student by saying I will bring a gun and shoot you".

The extent of the phenomenon includes shootings, stabbings and both physical as well as emotional violence which have taken place in both public and private schools (Akiba et al. 2002; Zulu, Urbani and Van der Merwe 2004: 70). A report by the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) (2008) is that only 23% of South African learners said they "felt safe at school". When comparing the situation of violence and safety between South African schools and international schools, research suggests that schools in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden were the safest in the world with approximately 70% of learners saying they felt safe at school (SAIRR 2008). The research is embedded in a specific belief that all schools, be it primary, senior or high, should be safe environments that encourage effective teaching and learning. Squelch (2001: 138) identifies the following features of a safe school:

Presence of physical features such as secure walls, fencing and gates; buildings that are in good state of repair; well-maintained school grounds; good discipline and culture conducive to teaching and learning; professional educator conduct; good governance and management practices; absence of (or low level) of crime and violence.

While violence in schools is a global problem, it is important to understand the different types of violence that occur and its causes, and to diagnose the perceptions from people who are dominantly affected by such violence. It is based on the above mentioned research problem that this research seeks to investigate the perceptions of students attending high schools about the use of dangerous weapons, specifically within four schools in the uMgungundlovu District.

## **1.2 Research aims, objectives and research questions**

### **1.2.1 Research aims**

A report by the South African Human Rights Commission (2006: 16) states that ‘a school is often a mirror image of the community and families it serves, schools therefore cannot address school violence in isolation’. Violence can be defined in different ways and according to Van Wyk (2008) 1.8 million of all pupils in South Africa between grade 3 and grade 12 (15.3% of all students) experienced violence in one or other form while they were in school.

The negative effects of school violence jeopardise youth and have negative effects on our communities and society. Nesor et al. (2007) cited in Senosi (2003: 40) mentioned the risk factors below as among major contributors to the prevalence of school violence:

- Access to firearms and drugs
- Lack of family stability
- Lack of economic opportunity
- Ineffective parenting, and

- Lack of community support

The aim of this study will focus specifically on the first of these factors. It is likely that the use of firearms is related to gang activities (Payet and Shaik 2013), and is part of a pattern in which violence is used to solve disputes and teach lessons.

### **1.2.2 Objectives**

The main objective of the research is to investigate weapon-related violence in schools at UMgungundlovu District in Pietermaritzburg. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

- I. Explore the nature and extent of weapon presence and use in these schools, the causes for these and the effects that weapons have on the lives of students and on the culture of learning and teaching.
- II. Explore the perceptions of how current measures are used to try to deal with this problem and how effective they are.
- III. On the basis of the above objectives, the study will seek to recommend which existing measures could be strengthened and what, if any, new measures can be proposed.

### **1.2.3 Research questions**

The research questions which this study will try to answer are as follows:

- What types of weapons are being carried and used by learners in the four schools selected?
- What is the extent of the problem: what proportions of learners carry weapons and what proportion have used them/ been threatened by/ been assaulted with weapons?
- What motivates learners to carry weapons and what would motivate them to use these weapons?



- What effects do the presence and use of these weapons have on the students, teachers and principals of the school?

Please note that the thesis' design specifically focuses on students/learners as a unit of analysis, but principals and teachers become important in informing the study because they constitute a major part of the school environment and their role directly impact on the lives of the learners. Hence, their input is also central to the study.

### **1.3 The research problem**

South Africa is faced by widespread violence such as interpersonal violence which is a daily reality for many South Africans, especially poorer communities (Fick 2014: 1). As such, crime in South Africa is regarded as a main priority issue for the government (Leoschut and Burton 2012: 1). In addition to that, Parker (2010: 2) maintains that there are various factors contributing to violent crime in South Africa; among those factors are: poverty, unemployment, the vulnerability of young people which is linked to poor child rearing, and inadequate emphasis on other approaches to preventing violent crime.

Fick (2014: 3) claims that South Africans are likely not to engage themselves against another; nevertheless, they channel their violent inclination to people classified as foreigners, and such attacks reflect a culture of violence in the society, which possibly have overflowed in the school premises resulting in the present violence witnessed in schools. Yet despite Fick's assertion, there is evidence that South Africans use great amount of violence against each other and this is mentioned by Business Tech (2015) who said that South Africa have the second highest rate of gun-related deaths in the world at 9.4 deaths per 100,000 people and the finding also revealed that South Africa has 16<sup>th</sup> highest number of guns per 100 people at 12.7.

The preceding statement reveals that there is a connection between violence in society and violence in schools. As pointed out by Business Tech (2015) South Africa ranks among the most violent societies in the world. Basing our understanding on this assertion, we can conclude that one of the reasons why South African schools are violent is because they are part of a violent society.

Violence in South Africa as confirmed by Crime Stats SA (n.d: 1) indicates that about 5900 crimes are reported by the SAPS everyday day. Crime Stats SA also reveals that over 43 people are murdered on average every day in South Africa, nearly 16000 people were murdered in SA in the twelve months between 2011/2012 and KZN province has the highest number of murder cases in South Africa. The Eastern Cape was second and was followed by Gauteng.

Bezuidenhout (2013: 46) describes schools as becoming sites for gun violence and stabbings in which the youth are victims. According to Burton (2008: 1) violence in schools across South Africa has become familiar and is likely to impact negatively on children in a number of ways. Burton further confirms that experience and exposure to violence in any environment at a young age increases the risk for youngsters of later victimisation, as well as of their engaging in anti-social behaviour later in life.

### **1.3.1 What is violence and what is school violence?**

The WHO<sup>i</sup> (n.d) defines “violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”. Ward, Van der Merwe and Dewes (2012: 55) define violence as an “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself another person whichever has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm”.

It is important to note that aggression, violence and violent crimes are intimately associated though they are not the same. The Longmans Dictionary of the English Language (1984: 29) defines aggression as a holistic attack or encroachment, especially when intended to dominate unjustly. Oxford English Dictionary (2004: 1613) understands aggression as i) behaviour involving physical force with intent to hurt, damage or kill and ii) as strength of emotion or of a destructive natural force.

Victory over Violence (n.d.: 1) asserts that school violence is an act of interpersonal violence happening in school communities which can occur in either passive or in physical forms. South African schools are increasingly a playground for violence. Van Jaarsveld (2008: 17) states that schools are no longer known as safe and secure environments where children can go to learn as well as enjoy themselves without fear or feel secure.

School violence is a serious problem faced by many countries; particularly where illegal weapons such as guns and other dangerous items like scissors and sharp items are involved. This is maintained by Kehoe (n.d.: 1) who indicates that school violence is anything that jeopardises a school's educational mission; specific examples of forms of violence can include bringing weapons, stealing, fighting and bringing drugs.

School is the embodiment of the community's educational responsibility and serves increasingly as an agent of socialisation; therefore, violence in schools jeopardises the goals of the institution in terms of the educational system (Collings 2008: 34). Collings further points out that school violence embodies aspects such as vandalism, rioting, assaults from pupil to pupil, parent to teacher assault and other unacceptable conduct which occurs in South Africa.

### **1.3.2 How does South African violence impact on schools?**

The rise of violence in South African schools has led researchers to confirm that schools are swiftly becoming grounds for violence, not only between pupils but also between teachers and pupils (Ncontsha and Shumba 2013: 2). School violence involves a range of acts performed on school premises or outside the school yard such as the sexual assault of pupils by fellow classmates and teachers, bullying, drug abuse, and theft.

The outcome of school violence destabilizes youths and educators' abilities to function in a healthy manner both within and outside the school context (Burton 2008: 2). Burton further maintains that youth who are exposed to violence whether as witness or victims of violence done by either someone they know or stranger, often experience

symptoms of traumatic disorder and depression. They are also at a greater risk of engaging in antisocial, delinquent behaviour and as adults they are more likely to become involved in criminal behaviour.

As highlighted by Zulu, Urbani and Van der Merwe (2004: 170-171) parents send their children to school so that children can secure quality education in a safe environment. They also expect schools to be peaceful working and learning environments in which learners can be educated to become responsible adults.

Youth attending school where violence is common tend to have a cynical world view and are often pessimistic about their own future (Burton 2008). The negative effects of school violence jeopardise the youth and have negative effects on our communities and society.

Ward, Van der Merwe and Dewes (2012 183) state that learners who have been the victims of school violence experience some of the following learning problem:

- Inability to handle class assignments
- High absentee and dropout rates, and
- Being unmotivated to succeed in school and life in general.

### **1.3.3 Studies of violence in South African schools**

Researchers around the world have conducted numerous studies relating to school violence as well as the aspects of the carrying and use of weapons by students. The following are some of the findings from studies pertaining to school violence in South Africa.

- The South African Council of Educators (2011: 3) reported that there is an increasing concern within South Africa that primary and secondary schools have become the sites of widespread violence. There is also evidence on the increasingly serious nature of school violence taking place. This was evidenced in the case of the random killing of 16 year old Jacques Pretorius by Morne Harmse with a samurai sword at a technical high school on the West Rand in 2008.

- Mdletshe (2007: 9), cited by De Wet (2007: 10-11), states that from the total number of 28 educators in one school in KZN, 25 educators from KZN Secondary Schools refused to return to their classrooms stating that they feared for their safety. In addition, in some schools, learners vandalised classrooms and educators' cars while several educators were assaulted by learners.
- Also, in a study conducted by Smith (2007: 1) it is reported that 115 assaults and 111 acts of sexual violence involving firearms are reported to have occurred in South African schools. Learners are becoming more violent as social unrest grows within the diverse population. Smith (2007: 2) states that a racial incident erupted at a school after 50 African pupils, some armed with knives, stormed and attacked Indian pupils and teachers.
- Lastly, the study of Mncube and Harber (2013) acknowledge that learners in South African schools are carrying weapons at school. Furthermore, they mention that there is a variety of violence in schools ranging from gangsterism.

The above mentioned studies raise concerns to society. According to Patel (2013), reporting on the South African National Crime Statistics 2012/2013, crimes were reduced by 4.2% for the first time in at least eight years but there has been an increase in violent crimes, among them murder. Incidents of murder increased by 650 cases (16,259), a 4.2% jump, while attempted murder rates increased by 6.5% (16,363) in the past year.

### **1.3.4 State policy and law to address violence**

Burton (2008: 2) states that 'South African learners are victimised at a rate of 160 learners per 1,000, a figure that is significantly higher than for example in the United State of America, where the lasted statistical data yields a rate of 57 learners per 1,000 who fall victim to comparative forms of school violence'.

Schools in South Africa are guided by the Republic of South Africa Schools Act 84 of 1996, Regulations for Safety Measures Act in Public Schools: Government Gazette as

well as the National Education Policy Act of 1996, which govern the administration of education in South Africa. Also, the South African School Act 84 of 1996, states that:

“i) No one is allowed to carry or store any dangerous object on school premises, and no one can possess, or enter school premises under influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, ii) No one can cause disturbance, behave indirectly or directly harm anyone, iii) if they have a reasonable suspicious that there are drugs or weapons on school premises, a police officer or principal or any delegate may without a warrant, search the premises or any person on the premises for weapons or drugs and seize them”.

Teachers play an important role in reducing school violence as they are regarded as second parents to learners. The Department of Basic Education (2010: 15) adds that schools should be places of learning and equal opportunity for all. The South African National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 points out that it is a fundamental right of every person to be educated as guaranteed in the Constitution. Therefore, for this to be a reality, schools need to be safe places, emotionally, and physically. Also, teachers, parents and schools have the responsibility of reducing violence in schools

According to Writer (2015), there is a perception that private schools are better than the public schools for the reason that more money buys more resources which produce better results in private schools. However, school safety is a concern for both private and public schools. South African policy documents policy (Republic of South Africa 2004: 2) include regulations relating to safety measures in schools. All independent schools are declared drug-free and dangerous object-free zones. According to the regulations no person is allowed to:

- Carry any dangerous object in independent school premises.
- Carry any dangerous object in independent school premises.
- Store any dangerous object in independent school premises, except in officially designated places identified by the principal.
- Possess illegal drugs in independent school premises.
- Enter independent school premises while under the influence of alcohol or an illegal drug.

The high level of violence in KZN contradicts the Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, Chapter 2: Bill of Rights section 29, which states that (1) everyone, has the right:

- To basic education, including adult basic education;
- To further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.
- Section 11 of the Constitution further states that everyone has the right to life.

According to the Department of Education (2010), students should be constantly monitored by their teachers. In case of any improper conduct, a discussion should be held with the student and if needed, the parents should be informed as well.

### **1.3.5 Specific evidence of violence in KwaZulu-Natal schools**

Notwithstanding the presence of the abovementioned legislations and policies addressing school violence, however, there are still discrepancies between what the policy and law state regarding violence relating to weapons in schools. South African schools are concerned with high level of school violence and continue to be unsafe. School violence in KZN schools has reached a crisis proportion where it can no longer be ignored. The KZN Department of Education (2012) reports that four pupils were stabbed at KZN schools and three of them died. The report states that this was a result of the increase in the number of pupils who carry dangerous weapons into the schools.

The KZN Department of Education in conjunction with SAPS in March 2012 conducted a search in Lindelani High School, and Mandlenkosi High School, North of Durban where a knife, screwdriver and a rusty pair of scissors along with eight packets of dagga were found.

In another incident a school pupil was stabbed to death in a fight over a cell phone at a Durban school. This was confirmed by KZN Department of Education which reported that a fellow grade eight student stabbed 15 year old Siphesihle Gwansa at Clairwood Secondary School (Daily News 2012). The fight happened after the school's

assembly when the pupils were moving to their classrooms where a pupil was found outside the school office with a stab wound to the left side of his chest.

The types of incidents reported above indicate an increase of incidents of school stabbing where weapons are the most contributing factors in KZN schools. These numbers of incidents have been covered by media. The rate and rise in such incidents is the major cause of concern for school, teachers, educators and learners.

The study into school violence by Burton and Leoschut (2012) found an alarming increase in school violence; it found that 22.2% of high school pupils had been subjected to some form of violence. The study used a sample of almost 5,939 pupils, 121 principals and 239 teachers. The summary across the country was as follows: 12.2% had been threatened with violence, 6.3% had been assaulted, 4.7% had been sexually assaulted or raped and 4.5% had been robbed at school.

Payet and Shaik (2013) also reported that KZN schools are becoming places for gang activities, where violence is used to solve disputes and teach lessons. These forms of violence in schools should be discouraged because school violence is any behaviour that violates a school's educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardises the intent of the school to be free of aggression against persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions and disorder (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence 2004).

#### **1.4 Research design and data collection methods**

When collecting data using one or more techniques, the techniques may be grouped into two types: quantitative techniques which collect data in the form of numbers and qualitative techniques which collect data in the form of words or pictures (Neuman1997: 30).

The research design that was used in this study used both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. The utilisation of more than one research method was essential because there was a need to gain an understanding of both the extent of the



problem and of the subjective experience of this form of violence in KZN schools. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires and interviews. Face to face interviews were used with the principals from school A-C. Thereafter, ten students from grades 10 to 11 (Schools A-C) participated in the focus group discussions. However, the principal and focus group students from school D requested not to participate in the interview discussions because they were preparing for final examinations.

The research design in this dissertation was intended to enable the researcher to examine the perceptions and experiences of students and educators on matters pertaining to the use of weapons in four high schools in KZN (Pietermaritzburg). Schools were classified alphabetically as high schools A, B, C and D. Two schools were selected from townships and two from the suburbs. The detailed sampling method and the reason behind such selection of the population are dealt with in chapter 4. Data collection was done through the distribution of questionnaires and through conducting interviews in the above selected schools. The data collection is also dealt with in detail in chapter 5.

## **1.5 Rationale and motivation**

The delineation of the background and research problem confirms that indeed, school violence in South Africa is a worrying factor. Therefore, the niche of this particular study was focused at recording school violence relating to weapons from different geographical settings which is urban and rural schools.

As a researcher, I wanted to undertake this study with a view to address the perceived problem of the carrying and use of weapons by students as well as to discover the nature, presence, extent and use of weapons in schools. Furthermore, I wished to identify safety and security challenges in schools, specifically in KwaZulu-Natal Province, and to establish the that weapons have on the lives of students and on the culture of learning and teaching.

## 1.6 Limitations

This study is not dealing with all forms of school violence, but specifically with the perceptions related to the presence and use of weapons. The scope of this study is limited to four schools in KZN, which fall in the Umgungundlovu District rather than all schools within the Province of KZN. Learners, educators and principals were asked to participate in this study on a voluntary basis. The study will have a sample size of a total of 160 participants from the four schools. Therefore, it is not sufficient in size to enable generalization of findings to the entire Province of KZN.

The study will fill a gap in that:

- There is little research information on the extent of weapons presence and use in South Africa
- The study is relevant to the learners, educators, principals, parents and all stakeholders in South Africa who are victims of school violence in KZN.
- This study will also give guidance on structures to be utilised in overcoming the issue of bringing illegal weapons which cause school violence in KZN.
- It will propose security measures which will be designed to keep guns and other weapons out of school.
- It will suggest the role of the broader community in fighting against the use of weapons and school violence in KZN.
- It will explore the role of the KZN Department of Education in fighting against school violence.
- Furthermore the study will fill the gap by promoting strategies that will be directed at schools in order to overcome the issue of school violence and the prevention will focus on the perceptions related to the presence and use of weapons.
- The study will suggest approaches to be used in combating school violence in KZN.

In addition to that, the study is not aiming to propose alternatives to existing policies or any other controlling measures which are in place to combat the use of weapons in schools or other forms of school violence. However, this study will try to provide suggestions that can be rendered as additions to the current measures in order to fight against forms of school violence as well as minimising the use of weapons in schools which could jeopardise the process of learning.

The scope of this study was limited to four schools in KZN, which fall in the Umgungundlovu District, and did not include all schools within the Province KZN Natal. Senior learners, educators and principals were asked to participate in this study on a voluntary basis. The study was a sample size of 107 students and 34 educators from the four schools, three focus groups from three schools, and three principals). Therefore, it was not sufficient in size to enable generalization of findings to the entire province of KZN. School D (focus group students and the principal) withdrew from participating in the interviews stating that they were preparing for their final examinations.

The outcome and result of this study are indicated in chapter 6, which deals with the conclusion, recommendation and contribution of the study.

## **1.6 An overview of the dissertation**

The dissertation will be structured as follows:

- Chapter 1 : Introduction and overview
- Chapter 2 : Literature review
- Chapter 3 : Theoretical framework
- Chapter 4 : Research methodology and research design
- Chapter 5 : Data presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings
- Chapter 6 : Conclusion, recommendations and contribution of this study

## **1.7 Conclusion**

This study is ultimately meant to discourage students from bringing weapons in schools by making suggestions that will, most probably, contribute to creating a safer environment for learners and educators.

This chapter introduces the study by highlighting the background, objectives, preliminary literature review, research design and methodologies. The next chapter will introduce an in-depth literature review exclusively on the issue of weapons in schools both internationally and within South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the study will present a review of literature relevant to the topic, the perceptions and experiences of students regarding weapons in schools in Umgungundlovu District, KwaZulu-Natal. It is within this context that the researcher will investigate and describe the issue related to weapons in schools.

#### **2.2 The significance of a literature review**

According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013: 49) a literature review involves a search and study of current writing on the problem under investigation. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 38-39) further outline that there are also numerous other reasons which make literature research vital:

- Providing the researcher with important factors and background information about the subject study, and
- “If a study on the same topic has been conducted before, a review provides the researcher with information about aspects of the problem which have not been investigated or explained before”.

The main focus of the literature review is to highlight the evidence related to the prevalence of weapons in schools, the incidence of weapon use, and the effects and measures to combat the use of weapons, the literature looks at the issue of weapons in schools and forms in which these issues manifest themselves both internationally and in South Africa. This literature acknowledges some of the factors contributing to weapons in schools, which include gangsterism, substance abuse and bullying.

The literature review also reviews the body of research on guns and other weapons in schools. It seeks to inform recommendations for helping learners or other affected role players at risk, including the interventions that can be rendered in preventing the bringing or use of weapons in schools.

### **2.2.1 Defining weapons**

“Weapon means any object capable of causing death or inflicting serious bodily harm, if it were used for an unlawful purpose” (Dangerous Weapons Act 15 of 2013). Similarly, weapons are defined by the School Safety and Discipline report (2014: 2) as i) instruments that are used to inflict physical or mental harm on another person, and ii) weapon means more than knives and guns.

According to Bowman and Wells (1999: 1) guns are responsible for killing and the killings differ from self-defence and accidents to murders. Bowman and Wells further state that guns are becoming a large problem in American schools and possession of a weapon is unlawful for any person, whether openly or concealed. Any of the following weapons are forbidden on campus or other educational property: guns stun guns, bowie knives, dirks, daggers and slingshots (Research and Evaluation report n.d.:3).

### **2.2.2 School violence**

Scholars in the field of school education such as Van den Aardweg (1988), cited in Zulu et al. (2004:70), define school violence as any behaviour of learners, educators, administrators or non-school persons, attempting to inflict injury on another person or to damage school property. Nevertheless, Burton and Leoschut (2012: 2) state that not all crime is violence and not all violence is criminal, hence acts like bullying which are common in schools but do not constitute a crime are violent in nature and the outcome is substantial harm to the victims.

Leoschut (2013: 2) states that one in 16 participants (6.3%) reported physical assault and this percentage was up by 2% from 4.3% observed in 2008. Leoschut adds that

the term assault referred to students who mentioned incidents where they were attacked or hurt by someone physically using any kind of weapon or their hands.

International research in the studied field of inquiry contends that violence in schools can come from different sources and it could take on many forms and involve different actors. Bullying is one form that may be learned outside the school but perpetuated inside the school. It may not be evident to educators as it emerges within the school or it could be that the school somehow is ignoring it or does not deal with it satisfactorily. According to Horsman (2004: 5) in many instances students who are the perpetrators of violence in school are those who are experiencing violence at home and students who have been violent are only too aware of the way violence can quickly become part of their identity.

According to Benbenishty and Astor (2008) school violence is a global phenomenon. Countries such as Japan and Jordan, Finland, Brazil, Norway, Israel, Malaysia, Columbia, South Africa, USA and Ethiopia are experiencing acts of violence in schools. Benbenishty and Astor further report a tragic incident in Finland where a masked man opened fire in a school killing 10 people and burning some of their bodies before critically shooting himself in the head.

Learner school violence can also include different factors at different times inside the school. For example, learners may bully each other, teachers may bully learners, learners may bully teachers, parents may bully teachers, and principals may bully teachers or be bullied by them. School violence also takes place in different ways and in a wide range of contexts. According to UNICEF (2009) about three quarters of schools in Brazil of the 4 150 that were included in a national survey reported acts of violence. The following were found to be common types of violence among studied schools: (a) the most frequent or common type of violence among learners was physical aggression, which amounted to 66%; and (b) adult aggression towards children and adolescents which came to 28% and (c) derogatory comments which is lowest of the three reported types of violence with a rate of 20%. De Mattos (2009) cited in Netshitangani (2014: 1840) mentioned that when reviewing school failure in Brazil from 1996 to 2006, he discovered that “violence promotes failure but, at the

same time, school failure has been generating violent practices among teachers and learners, resulting in young people being excluded from educational opportunities”.

### **2.2.3 Violence in society**

The long history of violent crime is also confirmed by Ferguson (2010: 9), who points out that in the Biblical book of Genesis Cain, the first son of Adam and Eve, attacked and killed his brother Abel which was motivated by jealousy, suggesting that violent crimes have been with humanity since the beginning of our history.

In relation to violence The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (1993) and Schibiner, Scott and Tzelepis (1993), state that various studies in the United States of America reported that between 9% and 47% of urban adolescent’s experience or witness serious violence. Ndetei et al. (2007: 148) add that Kenyan adolescents compared with South African adolescents, had “...higher rates of witnessing violence (69% versus 58%), physical assault by a family member (27% versus 14%) and sexual assault (18% versus 14%)”.

Ferguson (2010: 130) states that juveniles are involved in 12% of all violent crimes committed in the USA and each year approximately 2.2 million youth are arrested. Ferguson adds that societal concerns about youth violence have led to calls to increase the legal punishments such as lowering the age at which adolescents can be tried as adults in court.

The report from the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (2011) points out nations with the highest homicide rates, where Honduras had the world’s highest murder rate followed by Venezuela, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Swaziland, Saint Kilts and Nevis, South Africa and Colombia. The report also provides the kinds of weapons used in homicides around the world; the proportion of firearms were 41%, sharp objects, 24% and others 35%.The experience of incidents of violence and crimes against children and young people in the United States of America and Britain, is confirmed by Burton (2006: 1-2). Burton also mentions that in the United States, data from the National Victimization Survey, the National Youth Victimization Survey and the



Uniform Crime reports reveals that youth between the ages of 12 and 19 years are twice to three times more likely to be victims of assaults, rape and robbery than older age groups. In addition to that Burton further adds that in the United Kingdom, the British Crime Survey together with a National Youth Survey showed that 35% of youngsters had been physically attacked at school.

According to Mncube and Harber (2013: 2) cited in the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (2009) South Africa is exposed to high levels of violence due to different factors such as these:

- 1) "The normalisation of violence. Violence comes to be seen as a necessary and justified means of resolving conflict, and males believe that coercive sexual behaviour against women is legitimate.
- 2) The reliance on a criminal justice system that is mired in many issues, including inefficiency and corruption.
- 3) A subculture of violence and criminality, ranging from individual criminals who rape or rob to informal groups or more formalised gangs. Those involved in the subculture are engaged in criminal careers and commonly use firearms, with the exception of the Western Cape where knife violence is more prevalent. Credibility within this subculture is related to the readiness to resort to extreme violence.
- 4) The vulnerability of young people linked to inadequate child rearing and poor youth socialisation. As a result of poverty, unstable living arrangements and being brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting, some South African children are exposed to risk factors which enhance the chances that they will become involved in criminality and violence.
- 5) The high levels of inequality, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion and marginalisation". (Mncube and Harber 2013: 2, cited in the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2009).

#### **2.2.4 Weapons in South African schools**

There is limited range of such research endeavours in South Africa relating to weapons in schools; nevertheless, there is specific evidence from other researchers who have conducted research on school violence in South African schools wherein

they mentioned the issue of weapons. The study undertaken by Burton (2008) states that three in ten secondary school learners said they know of a fellow learner who had brought a weapon to school. Burton further indicates that primary and secondary learners confirm that it is easy to get a knife and/or firearm at school. Burton and Leoschut (2013: xii) state that weapons, drugs and alcohol, were easy to get to for many students. They reported that one in seven students reported easy access to alcohol, one in ten reported easy access to drugs, nearly a tenth stated that it would be easy for them to obtain a firearm at school, and one in five students claimed having easy access to knives or other weapons at their school.

Piliso (2000: 16-17) reports that South Africa has the second highest firearms murder rate in the world where weapons such as guns are increasingly finding their way into educational institutions. Accordingly, this will result in schools in South Africa being dramatically affected by gun-related violence.

Also, Burton and Leoschut (2013: 1) maintain that “school violence has undoubtedly predated the school safety literature and initiatives that have emerged over the past ten years”. In South Africa, school violence has become a national concern. Schools are fast becoming sites for gun violence in which youth are victims, offenders, or both (Gun Free South Africa, n.d). A study conducted by Leoschut and Button (2006: 26) reveal that 93.5% of participants mentioned that it was difficult to obtain a firearm in their communities. However, 29.7% of young people in Gauteng, 17.5% in Eastern Cape and 13.8% in Mpumalanga revealed that it was easy for them to obtain firearms in their communities. Leoschut and Button (2006: 27) also add that “other weapons such as knives were easier to access for all participants irrespective of age, province and race”.

However, in a study on the associations between perceptions of school connectedness and adolescent health risk behaviours in South African high school learners, Govender et al. (2013) focus on Indian girls and boys aged between 13 and 17 years old. In terms of violent behaviours, the study indicated that 19.2 % of learners carried weapons to school, 32% of the participants reported being involved in a physical fight.

The study of Mncube and Harber (2013: 49) states that weapons do not cause violence, instead weapons make the possible consequences of violent quarrel or attack more severe. According to the respondents from their survey, weapons are regarded as a problem in South African schools. They (Mncube and Harber 2013) report that one of the participants (a member of an SGB in Mpumalanga) revealed that a learner was stabbed at the back with a knife inside the classroom during the teacher's absence.

Some specific incidents of killings have been taking place in South African schools that have been publicised in the media. A news article published by Enoch (2013: 2) reported that on 20 September 2013, a teenage boy was stabbed to death by his friend; the motive for his death was an argument over a pencil. It further reported that on 22 October 2012, two teenagers aged 18 years from Western Cape stabbed a 19 year old teenager in the face and chest. According to Eyewitness News (2013) a KZN schoolboy was beaten and speared to death by his classmates and on the other incident, a group of students from Pretoria West High school arrived at Hoerskool Langenhoven armed with knives, axes and pangas and "they were looking to settle a score"

Visser (2006: 221) states that guns are only one means of perpetrating violence at schools and physical violence such as the uses of knives and other instruments and or emotional abuse are also forms of school based violence that occur daily.

Schindler (n.d.) indicates that access to weapons is one of the main causes of school violence and many family homes have at least one firearm. Schindler further argues that carrying a weapon into a school is almost too easy. In addition to that, media violence also plays a vital role on the increase of school violence.

According to Gina and White (2014: 62-63) some weapons (such as knives, guns and sharpened weapons) are brought to school premises by learners and certain weapons are brought by intruders. They further state that among the reasons for carrying weapons to school were that some students say it was for self-protection against other learners and educators who punish them.

There are forms of gun violence in schools that are related to gangs, revenge shootings (where sometimes community violence spills over into the school), and related to conflicts that escalate— as when bullying gets out of hand and leads to school shooting (Casella, Potterton and Visser 2006: 217). Casella, Potterton and Visser further highlight the incidents from a Catholic school, where a boy was shot in the leg while in the school toilets and two boys were involved in the shooting.

Gina and White (2014: 63) reveal that the lack of search and seizure operations in school were some of the reasons identified for carrying weapons to school. On their data collection, they further add that one learner from a township high school reported, “...we have never been searched before, and that is why learners come to school with weapons and even drugs, because they know that they will not be searched”. Young learners are the ones commonly found in possession of dangerous weapons and they always claim that they are carrying weapons in order to protect themselves against other learner, teachers and outsiders (Gina and White 2014).

While there are limited studies relating to weapons in South African schools the evidence from the literature is that they constitute a serious problem. The researcher will now look at research on weapons in schools internationally; weapons in schools is a global problem.

### **2.2.5 Weapons in schools internationally**

The majority of published research pertaining to weapon carrying in schools comes from the United State of America. In this section, the researcher will show that weapons in schools have been best explored in longitudinal studies originating in the United States of America (USA) and other countries. According to Pickett et al. (2005: 855), using 120 questions obtained from nationally representative samples of 161082 students in 35 countries, involvement in weapon carrying ranged from 10% to 21% among boys and 2% to 5% among girls.

The study conducted by Sheley and Wright (1998: 1), agrees that gun-related activity was related with drugs, gang activity, crime, whereas criminal behavior was

characterized only to a small number of the respondents. Another study of Sheley and Wright (2000:45) state that gang membership and criminality in the US are related to the carrying of guns and knives.

According to Robers et al. (2013) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), every year some students are threatened or injured with weapons while they are on school premises. The Center also adds that the presence of weapons at school is creating an intimidating and threatening atmosphere, making teaching and learning difficult; there are a number of students who carry a gun and other weapons on school property which is an indicator of the breadth of the problem of weapons at school.

The study conducted by Robers et al. (2012) indicates that in USA from 1993 to 2009, the percentage of students from grade 9 to 12 reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property in 1993 fluctuated between 7% and 9%. Such behaviour violates a school's educational mission or a climate of respect and jeopardises the intent of the school to be free of aggression against people and property (Thaler 2011: 4). Moreover, Robers et al. (2012: 16) state that in 2009, about 27 percent of males carried a weapon anywhere, compared to 7% of females, 8% of students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club, on school property. The report of Robers et al. (2012) further states that students who reported being threatened or injured with a weapon at school were more likely to carry weapons both on school property and elsewhere.

Everyone would like to think of schools as being safe places for children to learn and grow. Hoffman, Allan and Randal (2004) argue that there have been many cases that prove that schools are unsafe. Hoffman, Allan and Randal also point out that the worst school massacre happened in "Bath, Michigan on May 18, 1927 after dynamite was placed in the basement of a school and killed 39 students and injured more and the person who planted the dynamite was a school board member who was upset when he lost his farm partly because of higher taxes which were going towards a new school".

For some students carrying weapons to school is regarded as acceptable. Sheley and Wright (1998: 1), agree that in the United State of America the youth gun problem is

escalating beyond inner cities to suburbs and small towns, those characterised by rather high poverty, crime, unemployment, and high school dropout rates. Sheley and Wright confirm that access to weapons is one of the main causes of school violence while there are also other contributing factors such as the abuse of alcohol, drugs, and gang related activities.

Marshal, McGee and Williams (2011: 425) conducted a study on 1169 secondary students in the Otago region of New Zealand to establish the reasons for carrying weapons to school. They reveal that 17% of interviewed students had carried a weapon in the past year at school, and 24% had carried outside school. "The most common type of weapon was a pocket knife or knife, and the most common reason for carrying it at school was because it was in their bag or on their key ring, and for hunting or self-defence outside school".( Marshal, McGee and Williams 2011)

It is evident that weapons in schools are a country-wide issue where youths are often perpetrators of violence through the issue of weapons. Moreover, weapons in schools internationally are being used and this has been implicated as one of the key factors contributing to school violence.

### **2.2.6 The impact of the presence of weapons in schools**

The literature demonstrates that the presence of weapons has both direct and indirect negative implications for effective schooling. Ward, Van-der Merwe and Dawes (2012) cited in Burton (2008) aver that 'violence carries with risk of both physical and psychological harm, as well as negatively impacting on youth cognitive and social development. The study conducted by Burton and Leoschut (2012) maintains that victims and witnesses experiencing violence in schools create an environment of fear and interfere with the ability to learn.

The SAHRC report (2006) states that the impact of school violence goes beyond the physical harm that arises from violent incidents. Its effects are expressed in a range of defective learner behaviour such as high absentee rates, poor learning performance

and achievement, high truancy rates, high dropout rates, and an increase in suicide rates among learners who are not able to deal with violence and who feel unprotected. According to De Wet (2007: 673) schools experiencing high rates of crime and violence become less effective in educating students and suffer lower levels of student achievement, higher rates of absenteeism, and more dropouts.

### **2.2.7 Factors relating to the presence and use of weapons in schools**

This section looks briefly at issues related to weapon use, such as organised groups and activities, such as gangsterism, bullying and substance abuse, which carry the potential to inflict harm both physical and psychological. According to Burton and Leoschut (12), the use of drugs has an influence on the use of weapons in schools.

Furthermore, a person can be bullied in the absence of weapons but if weapons are used they strengthen and reinforce the bullying activities. In the cases of gangsterism, the nature and organisation of such groups seem to have weapons as central to their activities. Withdrawing or discouraging the use of weapons will contribute towards limiting the extent towards which their activities are capable of causing harm in schools. The abuse of substances can drive people to do anything in order to get money to buy more drugs; if they have weapons they will cause more harm and destruction as compared to a situation where weapons are not involved.

It is important to note that the above mentioned activities will not stop simply because students are discouraged from carrying weapons but they will cut down on the magnitude of violence which they can cause. Briefly below, I will introduce literature on the basic understanding of bullying, gangsterism and substance abuse.

#### **2.2.7.1 Bullying**

Physical or verbal altercations such as pushing, shouting or spreading rumours are considered bullying. Ward, Vander Merwe and Dawes (2012: 179) cited in Townsend et al. (2008) point out that involvement in bullying has been linked with school dropout,

specifically because some are victims of bullying while at school. Children are not born to bully; it is something they learn along the road to adulthood (Sullivan 2006: 15).

Lancaster (2013) reports that market research company Pondering Panda interviewed 2 068 pupils from across South Africa about bullying incidents they had experienced and the results state that 56.8% felt they have been bullied at school and 53.5% were fearful of being physically attacked by a fellow classmate. Lancaster adds that 44.7% of students were aware of classmates who brought guns, knives or other weapons to school, with the majority, 64.57%, believing the weapons were brought to bully other children. Bullying plays a crucial role in the presence of weapons in schools. This is confirmed by Kruger (2013: 1) who states that in an incident in Gauteng, a Grade 11 learner was arrested in Gauteng for using a weapon to kill a fellow learner he accused of bullying him.

Young people carry knives in order to cope or defend themselves in an environment infested by violence or bullying (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) report (2011: 42). The report further established that knives are freely available and it is more difficult to restrict the carrying of knives than the carrying of firearms. Mncube and Harber (2013) confirm that younger students who are more likely to be victims of bullying from their older schoolmates are likely to carry weapons because of fear.

#### **2.2.7.2 Gangsterism**

The problem of gang-related violence in schools is aggravated through weapons being brought onto school premises. Gangs are "... characterised by their specific objectives such as the theft of motor vehicles, robbery, attacking members of the community or other gang members, assault and sexual harassment" (Bezuidenhout and Joubert 2008: 43). A gang is described by Bezuidenhout and Joubert (2008: 71) as a group created or formulated by both young males and females who are loyal to a common purpose for becoming members of gangs in schools.

Gangsterism is also contributing to the presence of weapons in schools. This is also maintained by Kruger (2013: 1) who reveals that 15 year old Khanyisani Mngayi from



Wentworth High School in Durban was stabbed and killed by a fellow learner; one concern of pupils and parents was that the fight was gang-related.

Frank (2006: 16) states that children growing up in gang-infested neighbourhoods tend to construe gangsters as role models or symbols of maturity. Hence, Frank adds that children end up aspiring to be members of a gang; such aspirations could be understood as a noble thing to look forward to.

Mncube and Steinmann (2014: 204) cited in Eliasov and Frank (2000:22) report that a study of 22 schools in Western Cape Province reveals that carrying of weapons, drug abuse, intimidation and gangsterism are particularly widespread.

According to Mncedisi, Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 61) carrying of knives, guns and other weapons is part of daily school life. In South Africa, the Western Cape is regarded as the highest zone for gangsterism. Western Cape Premier, Mrs. Helen Zille, proposed that in order to control gangsterism, the President of South Africa should use the services of the Army in the province which is regarded as a site for gangsterism (Mncedisi, Maphalala and Mabunda 2014: 62).

### **2.2.7.3 Substance abuse**

Ramorola and Joyce (2014: 11) reveal that the abuse of drugs by youths is noticeable in South Africa therefore it may be expected that the abuse of drugs may be one cause of learner violence in South African schools. The problem of substance abuse by students in schools is alarming. A drug is defined by Ekpenyong (2012: 261) as any product other than food or water that affects the way people feel, think and see. It is a substance that, due to its chemical nature, affects physical, mental and emotional functioning. It can enter the body through chewing, inhaling, smoking, drinking, rubbing on the skin, or injection. Ekpenyong adds that drug abuse is the use of drugs for non-medical purposes and refers to the misuse of any psychotropic substances resulting in changes in bodily functions, thus affecting the individual socially, cognitively or physically.

Mncube and Harber (2013) draw a link between drug use and violence in South African schools and report that such incidents have increased rapidly in recent years. Mncube and Harber (2013: 47) state that “surveyed 1 004 eighth and tenth grade learners in 23 rural communities and found that youths who took drugs also took more risks, carried weapons more often, engaged in more fights, and were more likely to be victimised”.

Bullying, the use of drugs and gangsterism cannot be viewed as separate activities. Some youth actually seek drugs in gangs, while some bully other students in groups.

### **2.3 Measures to deal with weapons as well as other forms of school violence in South African schools**

#### **2.3.1 Measures for school safety**

De Wet (2005: 706) states that the South African public is demanding a reduction in school violence; however, some role-players are not listening to the cries for help by the victims. The research will also examine the effectiveness of physical and other measures of security.

According to Prinsloo (2008: 7) a safe school refers to a healthy learning environment at school where learners, educators and or participants are not subject to physical or psychological abuse.

School violence and the presence of weapons in schools create an intimidating environment in schools. According to Van Jaarsveld (2008: 177) students and teachers are likely to demand security and safety at schools after a series of more serious incidents. Security is a fundamental element that should “... be implemented in all schools in order to prevent and reduce school violence” (Van Jaarsveld 2008: 180). Van Jaarsveld adds that some South African schools have effective security systems in place.

### **2.3.1.1 Physical security measures**

This is regarded as part of security wherein the school appoints security guards. Van Jaarsveld, (2008: 181) suggests that there are ranges of physical security measures that can be put into practice and they can be divided into three categories:

- The outside periphery measures which consist of fences, lights, alarms and patrol.
- The inside periphery which consists of fences, security staff, doors, and access control system, and
- Internal physical security measures which consist of windows and door bars, locks, and protective lighting (Van Jaarsveld, 2008: 181).

According to Xaba (2012: 217) maintenance of all the facilities mentioned above should be carried effectively which is the responsibility of the school governing body which must establish the committee for facilities maintenance.

### **2.3.1.2 Measures that promote discipline**

Discipline and punishment in South African schools is regulated by the South African Schools Act as well as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. According to Furlong et al. (2007) measures to deal with weapons as well school-based violence in other international countries include school violence preventions such as warning signs of the problems in schools, ecological perspectives and effective practices for combating school aggression and violence. Ward, Van der Merwe and Dewes (2012: 183-184) state that learners who have been the victims of school violence experience some of the following learning problems: i) Inability to handle class assignments. ii) high absentee and dropout rates. lii) Bullies are more likely than victims and youths not involved in bullying, to be involved in other violent behaviour, for example, fighting, carrying a weapon. iv) Antisocial behaviour for instance, theft and vandalism. v) Risk-taking behaviour, for example, walking alone, being a passenger of a driver who has used substances, smoking and alcohol.

The researcher deems it necessary to include the literature on discipline and punishment in South Africa as these are intended to restrict violence in general and the use of weapons in particular.

The Oxford Dictionary defines discipline as “the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behaviour, using punishment to correct disobedience”: for example “a lack of proper parental and school discipline” whereas punishment is explained by English Dictionary (1999: 262) as “a penalty for crime or misdemeanour; rough treatment; the act of punishing or being punished”.

In South African education, discipline and or punishment is regulated by South African Schools Act as well as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It is imperative for schools to have effective ways of running schools to reduce violence in schools. This is supported by Mncube (2014: 420) who states that basic levels of good management, school effectiveness and teacher professionalism onto schools need to be supported and improved in order to have beneficial effect on combating school violence.

### **2.3.1.3 Corporal punishment**

The measures to combat the presence of weapons must make sense in terms of the commitment to building a sense of common purpose. While corporal punishment seems to be one way of bringing control, in reality it undermines the sense of common purpose. Mncube and Harber (2013) point out that a second form of direct, internal violence perpetrated by schools with regard to students is corporal punishment. They further state that in South African schools, corporal punishment was banned; however, such incidents of corporal punishment were observed on various instances. Corporal punishment is defined as a kind of discipline that entails direct infliction of pain on the physical body (Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga 2014: 2). Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga also add that these forms of punishment could leave learners with bruises and cuts. In some cases they suffer broken bones, knocked out teeth and internal injuries

According to Vally (2005: 4) punishment may fill a short-term goal, but actually interferes with the accomplishment of the long-term goal of self-control. The difference between punishment and discipline is discussed in the following table. Moyo, Khewu and Bayaga in reporting the Du Preez and Roux study 2010 highlight that teachers and parents said they feel that the government has undermined their right to be considered as vital players in the education of children.

However, it must be mentioned that corporal punishment was banned in South Africa in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996:

s.10.Prohibition of corporal punishment, (1) No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner.

(2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault.

The banning of corporal punishment is stated by Vally (2005) who adds that corporal punishment was prohibited by the following legislations:

- The National Education Policy Act (1996) states that “No person shall administer corporal punishment, or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution.” (Vally 2005: 12)
- The South African Schools Act (1996) states that “No person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner, and any person who contravenes this act is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a sentence which could be imposed for assault”.
- The abolition of Corporal Punishment Act (1997) repealed all legislation that authorised the imposition of corporal punishment by courts, including courts convened by traditional leaders.
- The Regulations Promulgated under the Child Care Act (1983 amended 1998) pledges to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical punishment.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned policies, weapons in schools in KZN still prevail.

#### **2.3.1.4 A school code of conduct**

In terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996, schools are required to develop a school code of conduct which upholds the principles of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996. Therefore the South African Schools Act of 1996, s.8. Code of conduct states,” (1) Subject to any applicable provincial law, a governing body of a public school must adopt a code of conduct for the learners after consultation with the learners, parents and educators of the school. (2) A code of conduct referred to in subsection (1) must be aimed at establishing a disciplined and purposeful school environment, dedicated to the improvement and maintenance of the quality of the learning process”.

The above legislation is also maintained by the Department of Education (2010: 15), which suggests that a school code of conduct should:

- Recognise that everybody has the right to education and ensure that the school culture supports this right in such a way that all members of the community take responsibility for their own learning and for ensuring that the environment at school enables others to also enjoy this right (Department of Education 2010: 15).

According to Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 99) the code of conduct is mandatory to ensure that there are appropriate disciplinary processes for disciplining learners and ensure that there are measures to be followed during disciplinary processes.

In light of the above, the Department of Education also states that the school code of conduct should be i) Based on upholding human rights and engaging a culture of responsibility and ii) Be relevant to all members of the school community including teachers, learners and parents. Also, the South African Schools Act of 1996 notes that a representative council of learners should be formulated in school which is in terms of section 11 and it states that “(1) A representative council of learners at the school must be established at every public school enrolling learners in the eighth grade or higher, and such a council is the only recognised and legitimate representative learner body at the school”.

It is vital that school management team, educators and the disciplinary committee ensure that they are responsible for carrying out the prevention measures of the code of conducts in schools (Mestry and Khumalo 2012: 100.). Therefore, it is utmost important for schools to ensure that the school code of conduct for learners clearly states discourages the possession of weapons in order to promote peace in schools.

### **2.3.1.5 School governing bodies (SGBs)**

School governing bodies are set up to make and implement policies of which the rules against violence are part. This section aims to show that there has been some instances taken by school governing bodies to fight the prevalence of violence in schools.

Gina and White (2014: 65) recommended that to effectively manage safety and security in schools, it is of utmost importance that school management teams (SMTs) and SGBs implement existing laws and policies. Gina and White emphasise that implementation of such policies should be monitored by the officials from the school governance unit in the Department of Basic Education. The South African Schools Act gave parents, teachers and high school students the right to form school governing bodies (SGB's) and to make policies around issues such as language, religious instruction, school fees, and a code of conduct for learners.

The South African Schools Act and the Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996 guide all policies made by governing bodies. This means governing bodies must make policies which *inter alia*, i) allow all South African children to enter the schooling system and ii) respect children's rights and promote non-violent ways of solving problems.

#### **2.3.1.5.1 The function of school governing bodies**

Mncube and Harber (2013: 105) report that, it is the responsibility of school management and the SGB to address day to day prevention of violence in schools,

and in their report it was evident that schools are not being managed well and in an appropriate manner to reduce violence. School governing bodies can be mobilised to reduce school violence. The Department of Education (2010) states that the functioning of school governing bodies should among other things: 1) Promote the best interests of the school 2) Adopt a mission statement with the beliefs and values of the school as well as of the Constitution for the school governing body 3) Administer the school property, buildings and grounds.

These functions should not deviate from section 36 of South African Schools Act, which sets out the following:

Responsibility of governing body.(1) A governing body of a public school must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the State in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school to all learners at the school..

Mncube and Harber (2013: 26-27) report that the South African government is mandated to ensuring safety of learners in schools, through the amending Act (Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007) which specifies that:

‘8A. (1) Unless authorised by the principal for legitimate educational purposes, no person may bring a dangerous object or illegal drug onto school premises or have such object or drug in his or her possession on school premises or during any school activity’.

Public schools in South Africa are regulated by the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1196) Regulations for Safety Measures Act in Public Schools: Government Gazette which clearly states that:

“(1) Unless authorised by the principal for legitimate educational purposes, no person may bring a dangerous object or illegal drug onto school premises or have such object or drug in his or her possession on school premises or during any school activity”.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the principal or his or her delegate may, at random, search any group of learners, or the property of a group of learners, for any dangerous object or illegal drug, if affair and reasonable suspicion has been established:



That a dangerous object or an illegal drug may be found on school premises or during a school activity; or (b) that one or more learners on school premises or during a school activity are in possession of dangerous objects or illegal drugs (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996).

## **2.4 Measures to deal with weapons as well as school violence in other countries**

On the introduction of the literature, the researcher reveals that other countries also experienced school shootings where weapons including guns and knives have been discovered on school premises. It is important to outline ways in which other countries apart from South Africa are trying to curb the possession and usage of weapons in school premises

In the study by Sheley and Wright (2000:56) participants were requested to provide measures to reduce violence in schools. Among the proposals furnished by the respondents were that there must be suspensions for weapons violations, code of conduct, locker searches, non-police monitors, conflict resolution programs, revised dress codes and designating schools as gun-free and drug-free zones.

Furlong et al. (2007) propose school violence prevention measures which include warning signs of the problems in schools, ecological perspectives and effective practices for combating school aggression and violence in both the classroom and family. They suggest tools for assessing these ecological indicators. Furlong et al. (2007) suggest that beyond guns, drugs and gangs, the structure of student perceptions of school safety points out that most national surveys have developed an understanding of school violence driven by critical incidents.

The study of Cowan et al. (2013: 2) maintains that the extended corrective measures begin with:

- “Having a proactive principal leadership.
- Deployment of human and financial resources in a manner that best meets the needs of their school and community.
- Providing a team-based framework to facilitate effective coordination of services and interventions.
- Balancing the needs for physical and psychological safety.
- Employing the necessary and appropriately trained school mental health and safety personnel.
- Providing relevant and ongoing professional development for all staff.
- Integrating a continuum of mental health support within a multitiered system of support.
- Engaging families and community providers as meaningful partners.
- Remaining grounded in the mission and purpose of schools: teaching and learning”.

Safe learning environments can be achieved through establishing and implementing the full participation and support of school board members, administrators, parents, students, community members, emergency response personnel, and law enforcement (International Association of Chiefs of Police 1999: 1).

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (1999: 9) further proposes measures to reduce violence in schools such as to suspend and recommend expulsion of students and dismiss or discipline of staff for serious rule violations. Among the serious rule violations are included:

“Possession of a firearm on school property or at school events. The 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act mandates a one-year expulsion for students who bring a firearm to school.”

“Possession or use of a weapon on school grounds or at school events that is capable of inflicting serious bodily harm”

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the literature which deals with violence related to weapons. This was done by looking at weapons in society in general, weapons in schools internationally as well as weapons in South African schools. It further looked at factors relating to the presence and uses of weapons in schools which *inter alia* include gangsterism, substance abuse and bullying.

The chapter also looked at the measures used for school safety, monitoring and safeguarding of schools, human security measures, physical security measures and discipline and code of conduct in the schools. Prinsloo (2005:5) defines a safe school as a school that is free of danger and where there is an absence of possible harm, a place where non-educators, educators and learners may work, teach and learn without fear of ridicule, intimidation, harassment, humiliation, or violence.

This chapter has also discovered that most of the literature available in South Africa on violence in schools does not address weapons in detail. There are of course quite specific mentions of weapons in the work of Burton and Leoschut (2013).

## CHAPTER 3

### 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

Within a broad interest in violence this study specifically concentrates on weapons in schools. According to the literature, a number of violent situations are intimately related to weapons. Brown and Benedict (2004: 373) opine that “student weapon carrying at school and the concomitant fear of victimization may foster a cycle of increased weapon carrying and concerns about safety that could further abate academic achievement and increase violence”. Both these scholars further reveal that nearly 1 in 10 students in Brownsville, Texas had seen other students carrying knives at school, and other students carry guns at school, also, more than 1 in 5 reported being fearful of weapon-associated victimization at school. This show how weapons feed into fear of violence in schools.

Weapons play a central role in violence; out of this reasoning we can come to the assumption that the gravity of violence is likely proportional to the presence of weapons. From this assumption, removing weapons from schools will probably reduce the extremity of violence associated with KZN schools. Once you cut down on violence you inversely increase safety in schools.

This research endeavour was embedded on two theoretical frameworks: the theory of Mncube and Harber (2013) which is the report on the dynamics of violence in South African schools and the theory for safety and successful schools by Cowan et al. (2013). Sekaran (2000) describes a theoretical framework as an imperative model which serves as a guide to the researcher in making rational sense of the relationships among the factors identified in the research problem. In this section the researcher briefly discusses two theories namely the theory used by Mncube and Harber (2013) in their study of the dynamics of violence in South African schools, and the theory for safety and successful schools by Cowan et al. (2013). In line with the researchers

sentiments which alludes that the carrying of weapons such as guns and knives has been rife in South Africa.

The relevance of Mncube and Harber (2013: 105) report as a theoretical framework is that they agree learners attending South African schools are carrying weapons at school and that they extend to mention that there is a variety of violence in schools ranging from gangsterism. They are South African scholars who have accepted that despite the existence of schools policies, violence, physical and sexual abuse, and gang-related activities are still the order of the day in many South African schools. In their writings they mention that violence start outside the school due to the use of illegal drugs which elevate violence. They further affirm that violent behaviour like bullying and sexual harassment may well be learned in families and communities beyond the school. This paper looks specifically at violence related to the use of weapons in schools in order to minimise the use of weapons in schools.

Again, the relevance of Mncube and Harber (2013) report as a theoretical framework is because both these scholars have discovered that:

- The scourge of violence in South African schools, in particular, is a cause for concern. They alluded that daily reports appear in the written and electronic media about high levels of violence, physical and sexual abuse, and gang-related activities in our schools. These scholars mention that carrying of knives, guns and other weapons has become part of daily school life. According to them, these incidents underline the extent of violence and crime experience in our communities, which generally impacts negatively on education and what happens in the schools in the schools particular.
- Additionally, their points of view indicate that schools are supposed to have in place policies and a learner code of conduct to deter violent behaviour. These schools policies and learner code of conduct are meant, among other things, to impede the use of drugs, or any intoxicating substance, the carrying of weapons, or any sharp objects. The use of violent or vulgar language, and also to discourage threats against persons or their property.

- Moreover, Mncube and Harber (2013) report, mention that basis of violence is social rather than genetic or biological, and therefore there are ways and means of reducing human violence.
- They assert that it is scientifically incorrect to say that humans have a 'violent brain'.
- They also mention that violence at schools could be a result of internal and external factors.

It is worth mentioning that the theoretical framework of Mncube and Harber (2013) will have a major influence in Chapter 5 where the researcher is presenting data with specific reference to issues of violence, the visibility of weapons and question how do learners and other school stakeholder define weapons at school as well how they measure their safety at school in order to deal with the issue of weapons in school.

There are ways through which learners can be discouraged from bringing weapons to school. Nevertheless, their approach is to emphasize (Mncube and Harber 2013: 105) that 'a well-organised, inclusive and well-run school can do much to reduce the incidents and impact of external violence because learners and teachers are part of a community with a sense of purpose'. Mncube and Harber relate that one measure through which this can be achieved is by engaging the wider community in which schools are found. Students bring to school the world view in which they are bred. This entails that a holistic approach is needed to tackle the vices that manifest in schools because schools are a microcosm of society. Moreover, Mncube and Harber (2013) focus on the role of the school management (the principal and SGB) in the prevention and reduction of violence in schools.

What makes the study of Mncube and Harber (2013) appropriate as a theoretical framework for this study it that it admits the visibility of violence and the carrying of weapons within schools; as such, it lists ways in which violence can be reduced in schools and safety increased. Apart from generally looking at violence, the theoretical framework of Mncube and Harber (2013:49) also discusses weapons as a significant

element to the problem in South African schools which is relevant and fit to this study. In addition to that, the study is not focusing on violence in generally, but specifically on the role of weapons. Furthermore, the facts that the framework is suggesting ways in which violence can be dealt with inevitably acknowledges the prevalence of violence in South African schools. The similarity between my research and the study by Mncube and Harber (2013) is that the two explore means of reducing violence which inversely increases safety in school.

Another theory which will inform my research was propounded by Cowan et al. (2013). The theory asserts that efforts to improve school climate, safety, and learning are not separate endeavours. They must be designed, funded, and implemented as a comprehensive school-wide approach that facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and builds on a multitiered system of support.

Cowan et al.'s (2013) framework outlines that the best approach to have school safety and positive school environment is not achieved by singular actions; this can be achieved through implementing effective comprehensive and collective efforts necessitating the dedication and commitment of all school staff and relevant community members. Hence, schools require reliable and real approaches to prevent violence and promote learning.

The theory further mentions important practices for creating a safe and successful school which are namely:

- 1) Implementing multitiered systems of support (MTSS) that encompass prevention, wellness promotion, and interventions that increase with intensity based on student need.
  
- 2) Integrating on-going positive climate and safety efforts with crisis prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery to ensure crisis training and plans.

- 3) Considering the context of each school and district and providing services that are most needed, appropriate, and culturally sensitive to a school's unique student populations and learning communities.

The two theories presented in the diagram next page influence the design and the probing of question that seek to gain perception on the presence of weapons in schools.

The theory of Mncube and Harber looks at how the presence of weapons reflects negatively on the wider community undermines the idea of a 'community with a sense of purpose'. This is about division, threat and feelings of lack of safety.

The theory of Mncube and Harber (2013) influences the design and the probing of questions that seek to gain perception of students attending high schools about the use of dangerous weapons within schools with specific reference to uMgungundlovu District. Moreover the theoretical framework is presented to delineate that the gist of understanding the situation diagnostically starts from diagnosing the problem at a greater extent.

It also maintains that the visibility of weapons in schools is not only a South African/ regional problem but a global phenomenon. It also demonstrates how schools can act collectively to reduce the role of weapons.

The theoretical point is that they stress the contribution of effectiveness and inclusion to the reduction of violence. The use of a theoretical framework makes to approach the research in a specific way, for example, the influence of their theory on the data collection is that it focuses on specific questions. The theory frames the way to ask questions, the way to collect data, the way to analyse data and the way to reach conclusions.

The theoretical framework of Mncube and Harber (2013, it further concluded by providing approaches aimed at maintaining a safe learning environment. That is through clear implementation and utilisation of school codes of conduct, rules and alternative forms of punishment can provide order and maximise safety in schools.



Mncube and Harber (2013) as well as Cowan et al. (2013) argue that the perceived output will be the decrease of school violence and the increase or the maximisation of school safety which is an essentially peaceful environment because safety is necessary for the effective work of schools.

In conclusion, the delineated theoretical frameworks used a focus on key relationships that impact on the presence or absence of violence. They emphasise these features of a school: such as the relationship of the school to the broader society and provide corrective measures that may be used by various stakeholders who want to respond effectively if encountered by such a studied problem. In relation to the proceedings of the study, the theoretical framework influenced the development and wording of a data collection instrument. Relevant questions were coined for example: i) what the most effective control measures are with regard to weapons? If this is to happen, is there a way of schools developing a real consensus amongst students and staff around responses to violence? ii) Could the community and the school together identify measures that promote safety and trust? If yes, what kind of measures do you think would be most practical to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools?

A large portion of the literature review also shaped the selection of the relevant literature review. The very same theoretical framework was valued in the data analysis and in ensuring the validity of responses and also shaped recommendations for future research and policy reconsiderations in the alleviation of such a problem in South Africa and elsewhere.

### **3.2 Conclusion**

According to Mncube and Harber (2013), weapons are mentioned as one of the causes of violence. This research is inspired by the theoretical framework of Mncube and Harber (2013) as well as Cowan et al. (2013) which looks at approaches aimed at maintaining a safe learning environment in schools. In this next chapter, the attention of the researcher will shift to research methodology.

## CHAPTER 4

### 4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction/study area

The study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg, the capital city of the Province of Kwa-Zulu Natal. Pietermaritzburg is home to over 600 000 people of diverse cultures. (Msunduzi n.d.)

#### 4.3 Population size

Target population is referred to by Bless and Higson Smith (2000: 85) as the set of elements the research focuses on. The study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg. Schools were classified alphabetically as high school A, B, C and D. The schools in Pietermaritzburg selected consist of urban schools, two situated in the city or low density suburbs, and two peri-urban schools, those situated in high density suburbs. According to statistics the latter have a high prevalence of violence in which weapons are used. Previously the researcher intended to survey grades 9 and 10, but changed to grades 10 to 12. From each of the four schools, senior students which were from grades 10-12, and teachers of these respective grades participated in answering a standardized questionnaire. Individual interviews were done with the principals. This helped to compare the different factors which influence violence with weapons in Pietermaritzburg. Subsequently, principals from school A to C were willing to participate in answering the structured questions; nevertheless, the principal and small groups of students from school D were not willing to participate in answering the standardized questionnaires. Furthermore, a smaller group of students in each school (School A-C) participated in a focus group interview.

Originally the researcher intended to survey grades 10 to 12 using focus group interviews. Instead, in school A, B and C, the researcher surveyed only grades 10 to 11. In D no students participated in focus group interviews. Data was collected by the

use of open and closed ended questionnaires to get information in relation to the presence and use of weapons in schools.

#### **4.4 Sample and sampling techniques**

Kothari (2004) defined a sample design as a definite plan for obtaining a sample from the sampling frame. It refers to the technique or the procedure the researcher would adopt in selecting some sampling unit from which inferences about the population is drawn. Sampling design is determined before any data are collected. Warwick and Lininger (1975) argue that the main factor considered in determining the sample size is the need to keep it manageable enough. This enables the researcher to derive from it detailed data at an affordable cost in terms of time, finances and human resource (Mugenda and Mugenda: 1999). Further, Patton (2002) argues that the sample size depends on what one wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resource.

##### **4.4.1 Sampling procedure**

The sampled population remains a rule of thumb in social research. Sampling refers to the targeted or subset of the population that the researcher has favored to be key and relevant in providing the data that is in line with the research topic or an investigated problem (De Vos et al. 2011). Four schools were selected and sampled purposefully. Educators, school principals and learners were also sampled purposefully. The purpose sampling falls under the non-probability methods. In social research methods the core characteristics of non-probability sampling as mentioned or asserted by De Vos et al. (2011) is that samples are selected based on the subjective judgment of the researcher, it allows the researcher to be selective which simple means that not all or everyone has an equal chance to be selected as it is common with probabilistic methods. About 160 questionnaires were distributed to students from grades 10 to 12, school A -D: each school received 40 (30 students and 10 educators) which mean 160 respondents were expected to answer the questions. Of those issued, 107 questionnaires were returned by the students (out of a possible 120) and 34 by educators, out of a possible 40.

The principal from each school (school A-C) was interviewed and In schools A, B and C ten students from grade 10 to 11 were selected for focus group interviews; however, school D (principal and focus group) decided not to participate in the face to face interview with the principal and focus group interview with ten students from grade 10 to 11 because the principal mentioned that their school was preparing for examinations.

#### **4.5 Data collection instruments**

This section presents the data collection instruments, development of the data collection instruments, validity and reliability of data collection instruments and finally administration of data collection instruments.

The data used came from primary sources. The main data collection instruments which the research used were the questionnaires and interview schedules. Data was collected by use of open- and closed-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires consisted of items to answer the research questions, which had both multiple choice and structured questions. Further, the study used interview schedules to solicit more information from selected students and principals. Thus, the data collection instruments for this study were the questionnaires and interviews.

In developing the questionnaire, closed-and open-ended formats were used. Closed-and open-ended formats were used in all categories of the questionnaires. It is though necessary to combine close responses with the open-ended response.

The study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Pietermaritzburg. The research purposefully chose to select four schools: two urban schools and two peri-urban. From each of the four schools, students from grades 10 to 12 and teachers participated in answering a standardized questionnaire. A smaller group of students from grades 10 and 11 participated in a focus group interview and the questions were developed through the responses collected by means of questionnaires. Data was collected by use of open and closed ended questionnaires to get information in relation to the presence and use of weapons in schools. The open-ended format allows more

spontaneity of response and provides opportunities for self-expression argues Patton (2002).

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), in order for the researcher to gather information directly from the participants, this can be done through the interview which involves direct personal contact with the participant when probing a question and or it can be obtained by means of questionnaires when are completed by the respondent. Individual interviews were done with three principals. The questionnaires for the students and teachers are attached as Appendix C and D. The interview schedule for the principals and for the focus group interviews with students attached as appendix E and F.

The researcher undertook the recruitment process through approaching the principals and students directly and thus used teachers' assistance in getting the collaboration of students. Through the principals and teachers of the four schools, each student received an informed content letter for themselves which was drafted in simple English. Furthermore, members of the focus groups in A and B, but not C, asked that they use isiZulu, while members of the focus group in C used English.

## **4.2 Research design**

Research design relates directly to the answering of a research question (Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole, 2013: 130-131). The purpose of research design is to ensure high internal validity in answering the research question. The study adopted as its design a case study of selected schools. The approach used here involved the collection of data without manipulating the research variables or the respondents in an attempt to determine the nature and extent of use of weapons in schools and to explore the factors influencing students to carry weapons in schools.

The researcher chose this research design since inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (Patton 2002). In this study, variables were investigated without any manipulation or alteration and causal comparative

methodologies were used in exploring the factors which influence the carrying of weapons and ways of discouraging this trend from continuing in South African high schools.

This study was a mixed-methods case study as it was embedded or laid on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. In social science research the utility of both research methodologies is also known or reference as triangulation or triangulated methods. Triangulated methodologies have been recommended by many scholars because it maximizes or it helps the researcher to adequately justify the level of validity as well the reliability of the produced data. (Paulette, 2008)

After having read from Paulette (2008) as quoted above, it was clear that as a researcher there was a need to understand both the extent of the problem and the ways in which the problem is experienced in relation to the study. This also influenced even the sampling of study participants which is going to be discussed as the chapter progresses.

#### **4.5.1 Questionnaires**

According to Sekaran and Bougies (2010: 197), questionnaires are regarded as written set of questions which requires the respondents to records their responses/answers. Questionnaires formed the major source of primary data used in the study. The data collected from this source was best obtained through use of questionnaires constructed by the researcher and approved by the supervisor. The data required for this study were collected through actual visits to the schools. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed to students from grades 10 to 12 as well as educators, in schools A-D. Each school received 40 (30 students and 10 educators), of those issued, 107 questionnaires were returned by the students (out of a possible 120) and 34 by educators, out of a possible 40. The below information revealed a total number of students and educators who completed questionnaires:

**4.5.1.1 Table 1: students questionnaires**

<b>Students</b>		
<b>Schools</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>School A</b>	18	12
<b>School B</b>	14	16
<b>School C</b>	8	15
<b>School D</b>	8	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>59</b>

**4.5.1.2 Table 2: educators questionnaires**

<b>Educators</b>		
<b>Schools</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>School A</b>	2	8
<b>School B</b>	2	8
<b>School C</b>	3	6
<b>School D</b>	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25</b>

#### **4.5.2 Interviews**

Face to face interviews were used with the head teacher/principals from three schools. Sekaran and Bougies (2010: 193) state that face to face interviews allow the researcher to adopt the questions as necessary, clarify doubts and ensure that the responses are properly understood by the respondents which can be done through reaping or rephrasing the questions. The principal of the fourth school (school D) did not participate in answering the structured questions.

#### **4.5.3 Focus group discussions**

In schools A, B and C students were interviewed in focus groups. In each case, there were ten students from grades 10 to 11. This was done to get the first hand information in relation to the violence caused by weapons in schools A, B and C. Students from grades 10-12 in school D were preparing for their final examinations and the principal from school D requested that they not participate.

#### **4.6 Reliability and validity**

Reliability is the degree which research tool produces, stable and constant results and validity refers to how well the research tool measures what it hopes to measure (Sekaran and Bougies, 2010). To ensure that the research was valid and that research findings are reliable and credible, the researcher ensured that the standardized questionnaires were administered by teachers with the help of the researcher. Having defined reliability and validity and its relevance in endorsing the authenticity of the produced research findings, the researcher maximized reliability and the validity of data by designing data collection tools such as survey questionnaires as well through interviews. Three sets of data collection instruments were developed. There was a questionnaire that was self-administered by educators and learners. The wording of the questionnaire for the educators and the learners was the same. The rationale was that the researcher wanted to gather a common understanding and the perceptions of both respondents on the studied topic. Moreover, the researcher wanted to gain a



thorough understanding of how the sample groups understood definitions of weapons and their visibility within school premises.

Lastly, the researcher wanted to measure ambiguity levels in order to filter themes for coding and analyzing. The third data collection was an interview schedule. The research took charge because the preferred interviews were face to face interviews. Various probing techniques were used to motivate school principals to respond in line with posed questions in order to maximize the validity and the reliability of responses. Probing techniques were used to maximize a high level of validity as well as reliability, within the limits set by ethical concerns in social research. It is worth mentioning that the researcher was present at the time of the completion of the questionnaire not to impose on the responses but to provide clarity as and when needed. Secondly, the presence of the researcher was to encourage respondents to complete all questions in the questionnaire. Also, the researcher ensured that the participants in the interviews were put at ease by making them say something about themselves just before the interview. This was done to make them feel free and speak openly. In terms of reliability; the analysis was tested against that of others. This was done by using the analysis of questionnaires to generate findings that was able to test with participants in the focus group interviews.

This was to ensure that there was less likelihood of misunderstanding, and that participants were focusing on the same issue that the researcher focused on. This was done to strengthen both validity and reliability.

The reliability and validity of this study were established through the utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection took place in English. Questionnaires as well as interview schedules were structured in simple English in order to ensure that the participants were able to answer the standardized questionnaires as well as the interviews. However, in focus group interviews (School A and B) it was possible to use both isiZulu and English to aid fuller communication, while members of the focus group in C used English.

Focus group interviews involved students from school A-C. The questions for the focus group interviews were generated from the analysis of the questionnaires. This

provides the opportunity for issues that were not clear to be clarified in a face to face setting and enables the research to access feelings and attitudes that may be difficult to surface in a questionnaire.

#### **4.7 Ethical considerations**

According to Young and Arringo (1999: 106) ethics is the study of what is right and good to do; one can talk about it as a set of rules by which to guide behavior. The researcher ensured that ethical consideration measures were according to the Institutional Research Ethics Committee, thus protecting the rights of the participants through the distribution of the informed content letters (Durban University of Technology Ethics Policy 2013: 2-3). The participants were requested to fill the content letters as well as the declaration forms which were signed by the parents and or guidance in respect of the students' participation as per the ethical approval from DUT.

According to Miller and Brewer (2003: 96) closely aligned to voluntary participation is the principle of informed consent. On ethical as well as methodological grounds encouraging individuals to participate in research requires that clear and accurate information about the research is delivered to them. The researcher ensured that the information given was covering all aspect of the research question such as the research aim. The researcher ensured that the ethical plan remained in accordance with the DUTs ethical review process.

According to Horny (2005: 681) harm is an injury that is cause by a person. Social research should never in any instances cause harm whether physical or mental to the participants. The researcher ensured that there was no act of physical or psychological harm to participants, for example emotional stress, discomfort or embarrassment in any way. I observed the participants' reactions to my questions; they did not exhibit any signs of stress or discomfort during the focus group interviews.

#### **4.8 Procedures to maintain confidentiality**

The participants were advised that sensitive information about them would not be openly published but would be safeguarded. Confidentiality should only be assured if it can be genuinely maintained, it is not enough to state that material will be confidential without taking concrete steps to ensure that this is fact will be the case. On the questionnaires I advised the participants not to put their names. The research did not mention the name of the schools; they were accorded a new name to identify them as coming from schools A to D. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity by giving the participants (focus group students from school A-C) a pseudonym in writing up the data; only the researcher knows who specifically the participants were. The researcher further ensured confidentiality and anonymity by not divulging any information presented by the participants in a form of questionnaires and interviews in a way that can link a participant to the data provided. Consequently, the researcher made sure that no participants got were found to be in trouble as a result of revealing any information to the researcher.

Management of information: the researcher and all concerned treated the information as extremely confidential. The information the participants shared with the researcher was put it in a safe place where no no-one else will have the access but the researcher, who treated that information with respect. During the research period the researcher ensured that the recordings, notes and transcript of all recordings were kept safe in a lockable cabinet where only the researcher has the access to them. After that data will be stored within the DUT archives. After three years all data will be erased and hard copies destroyed.

Focus group discussion were conducted with students from schools A, B and C. In each case, there were ten students from grades 10 to 11. The researcher read the consent form (Appendix A3: participant letter of information, students in focus group) and all participant acknowledged and signed declaration of consent form (Appendix B). Focus group students were given assurance of confidentiality and questions were clarified accordingly to the participants where they were misunderstanding. Note however that focus group members may violate confidentiality despite the commitment they make to the researcher. The need is to point out that one cannot guarantee

confidentiality in a focus group, as there is clear less control over participants who hear what others say than there is over researcher who has to meet ethical requirements.

There was no pressure on the participants, who were encouraged to participate voluntarily. They were informed that should they feel the need to be excused from the process, they were allowed to do so. The questionnaires did not go into any depth with regard to emotions. With regard to incriminating data, in the questionnaires there was question as to whether the respondent had ever brought a weapon to school, and a further question as to why, if the answer had been yes. The safeguards around anonymity (and the number of respondents in each group) will make it not possible for those questions to be linked to any specific respondent.

The research did not involve any questions, stimuli, tasks, investigations or procedures which were experienced by participants as stressful, anxiety producing, noxious, aversive or unpleasant during or after the research procedures as per the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (2013).

#### **4.9 Administration of data collection instruments**

Prior to the collection of data, the researcher ensured that there was an audience with the principals and educators. The researcher explained about the study and gave participants letters of information. They were given consent forms which they completed.

Quantitative and qualitative data was collected from respondents of the four selected high schools in Pietermaritzburg. The data was collected through questionnaires and interview schedules. This was done through the assistance from the principals and teachers who handed the questionnaires to the respondents. The face to face interview with the principals and focus group interviews from school A-C were also done by the researcher through the assistance of the principals. Their responses were transcribed through the utilisation of a professional transcriber.

#### **4.10 Data analysis and presentation**

Data analysis and presentation were used to analyse both quantitatively and qualitatively. A descriptive method was employed and data presented in the form of frequency distribution tables and figures that facilitate description and explanation of the study findings. Responses of the students and educators were coded using code numbers on Excel in order to enable analysis. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005: 214) state that the coding of responses enables the researcher to analyze and make sense of the data that have been collected. The face to face interview with the principals and the data of focus groups were transcribed after interviews. Findings were used to generate recommendations to schools and the KZN Department of Education, in order to minimize the use of weapons in schools and in order to ensure that learners feel safe when they are in schools.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher looked at the research design, population size, sample and sampling techniques. The methods for data collection were discussed which included data collection instruments, development of the research, validity and reliability of the research as well as data analysis and presentation.

Moreover, this chapter looked at data collection instruments which were questionnaires and interviews. The presentation and discussion of findings will be analysed in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5. PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present data collected through the use of questionnaires from four selected schools in Pietermaritzburg. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to 30 students from each school, from schools A to D. Students from grades 10 to 12 were requested to complete questionnaires. In addition, 160 questionnaires were being distributed to students from grades 10 to 12 as well as educators, in schools A-D. Each school received 40 (30 students and 10 educators) which mean 160 respondents were expected to answer the questions. Of those issued, 107 questionnaires were returned by the students (out of a possible 120) and 34 by educators, out of a possible 40.

The data was presented in the order of the questions asked. Then, the researcher further invited students to participate in a focus group interview, one for each school, and also conducted an individual interview with the principal from each school involved. Of four schools, three voluntarily participated in the interviews which were two from the township and one school from an urban area.

Nevertheless, the principal from the fourth school situated in the urban area decided not to respond to the request submitted in writing by the researcher to conduct an interview with the students and principal. A pursuant telephonic call was made with principal where the principal indicated that their school was preparing for the examination and they decided not to participate in the interviews. Therefore, the researcher was left with three schools for the focus groups. Nevertheless, school D ensured that questionnaires were filled and returned to the researcher.

The reader must note that research findings will be presented in two folds. In the first section, tables will be used to present the statistical information from the quantitative element. The second section will set out the qualitative narration and the analysis of interviews.

## **5.2 Relevant method of research and sampling**

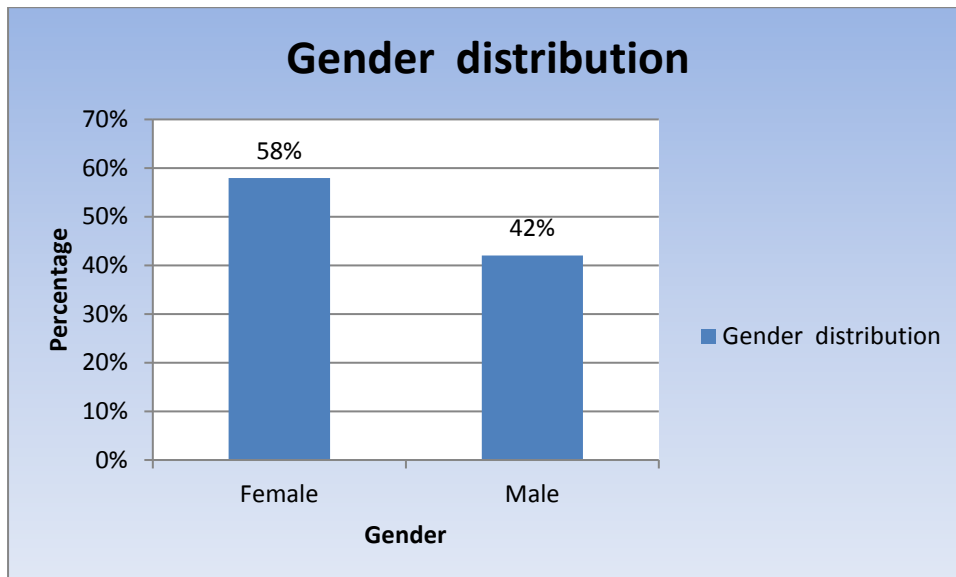
The method of data collection was the survey and the instrument used to collect data was questionnaires. The researcher obtained written permission from the KZN DOE to conduct research in four selected schools in Umgungundlovu district. The researcher made arrangements concerning the interviews and distribution of questionnaires. Questionnaires were hand delivered to principals of the selected schools. The research purposefully selected senior grades (Grade 10-12) as the focus of the research. Random sampling was used in collecting data from these specific grades and the selection of the participants was through the assistance of the principals of the schools participating in the study.

Of 120 learners and 40 educators requested to participate in the study, 107 questionnaires were returned by the students and 34 educators who had been requested to participate in the selection did in fact submit questionnaire responses. Having said that senior grades were selected to participate in the interviews (Grade 10 to 12), however, the ten interviewees for focus group interviews were selected from grades 10-11 only, because the principals from schools A, B and C indicated that grade 12 students were preparing for their final examination. Moreover, the principals from schools A to C were also individually interviewed and principal from school D was not interviewed. I presented first the findings from the quantitative methods and secondly the findings from the qualitative methods, interviews and focus group discussions.

## **5.3 Demographic data from the quantitative study**

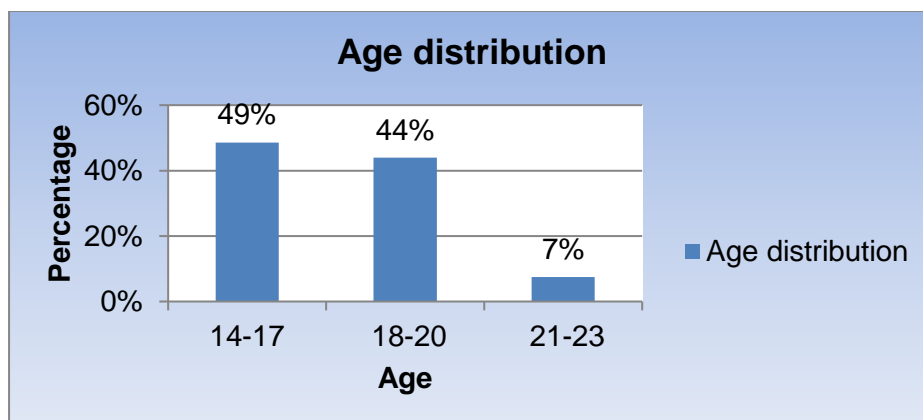
The questionnaires provided data on the gender and age of students and on the gender of educators.

**Figure 1: Gender distribution of students**



According to figure 1, of the participants, 58% were female and 42% male. If there were more boys in the study, possibly this could have influenced the findings – for example, would boys be more or less likely to witness the presence of weapons?.

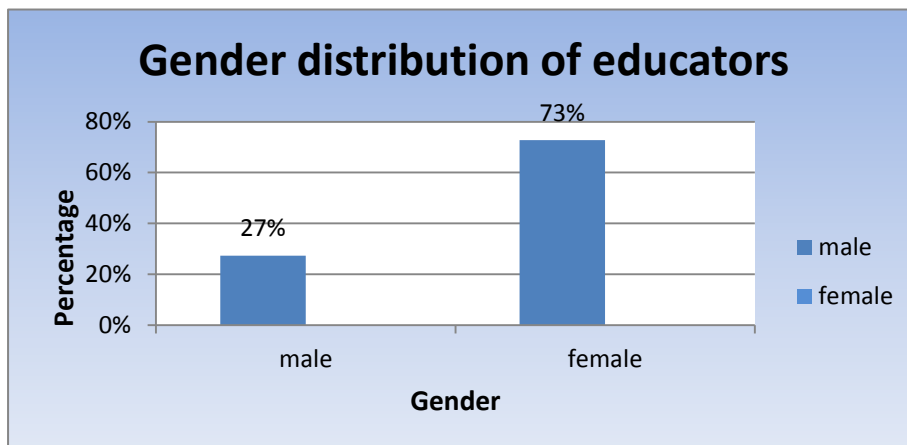
**Figure 2: Age distribution of students who participated in the survey**



The distribution of students who participated in the survey is shown on figure 2 where 49% were students ranging from the age of 14-17, 44% were students between the age of 18-20 and 7% were students from the age of 21-23.



**Figure 3: Gender distribution of educators who participated in the study**



Thirty four educators took part in the survey. The presentation of data for educators shows the educators for all four schools. Altogether they were 34 respondents, 9 males (27%), 24 females (73%).

The data analysis will not distinguish between participants (students and educators) on the basis of gender, age, and grade.

#### **5.4 Analysis of coded themes in quantitative data**

It is imperative to include themes during presentation of data and analysis because themes act as an umbrella construct identified by the researcher before or after the data collection (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell 2005: 211). In total, four schools participated in the survey. Schools A and B are situated in a peri-urban area, and schools C and D situated in urban area schools. Of 141 questionnaires, 107 were returned by students and 34 were returned by educators. Data received from students and educators were analysed on the cognizance that the questionnaires distributed to the mentioned participants were identical.

Some of the themes were established by the researcher when creating questionnaires and others were identified from the students' and educators' responses and questions. They were grouped in the subsequent order:

### **Theme 1: Safety at school**

- Question 2-4 (Students questionnaire, Appendix C) / Question 2-3 (Educators questionnaire, Appendix D)

### **Theme 2: Weapons in schools**

- Question 5-14, Appendix C (Students questionnaire) / Question 4-13, Appendix D (Educators questionnaire)

### **Theme 3: Motives for bringing weapons**

- Question 15, Appendix C (Students questionnaire) / Question 14, Appendix D (Educators questionnaire)

### **Theme 5: Actions to be taken with regard to the use of weapons at school**

- Question 16-18, Appendix C (Students questionnaire) / Question 15-17, Appendix D (Educators questionnaire)

The above is intended to report the themes and the presentation below is intended to provide demographic data on participants (students, educators and principals).

A hundred and twenty (120) learners were requested to participate in the study. Of 120 questionnaires, 107 questionnaires were returned by the students meaning 13 students failed to return the questionnaires. The respondents were sampled from three different grades of which 72% were students from grade 12, 21% were students from grade 11 and 7% were students from grade 10.

#### **5.4.1 Theme 1: Safety at school**

After looking at the demographics of the respondents we then look at the main questions of interest which are discussed as follows.

**5.4.1.1. Table 1: Rating of safety within school premises:**

*How safe do you feel when you are school?* ( Question 2, Appendix C).

Safety	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<b>Very Safe</b>	6	2	2	3	4	4	0	4	<b>25</b>	<b>23%</b>
<b>Safe</b>	5	6	4	2	3	9	3	7	<b>39</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Usually Safe</b>	2	3	2	3	0	3	2	5	<b>20</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Unsafe</b>	3	3	4	4	0	0	3	0	<b>17</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Very Unsafe</b>	0	0	2	4	0	0	0	0	<b>6</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	16	14	14	16	7	16	8	16		
<b>Total</b>	30		30		23		24		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above question was directed only to students. Table 1 above reveals that 59% of students felt either very safe or safe when they are at school. 19% of students felt usually safe at school and 22% of students felt unsafe when they are at school.<sup>90</sup> The findings of this study differ from those of Masitsa (2011) that established that both teachers and learners are not safe in their schools, either during or after school hours. Also, the findings of the study by Maphalala and Mabunda (2014: 66) were that learners and educators felt unsafe when they are within the schools because of easy access to drugs and weapons. Burton and Leoschut (2012) maintain that being a victim and witnessing school violence create an unsafe environment at school. Some

specific incidents of killings where weapons have been used have been taking place in South African schools and have been publicised in the media.

The next question was directed to students and educators where they were asked if there was a code of conduct. **(Question 3, Appendix C and Question 2, Appendix D)**

**5.4.1.2 Table 2: Existence of School Code of Conduct (students' responses)**

School Code	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Yes	16	13	14	16	7	16	8	16	106	99%
No	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
Sub-total	16	14	14	16	7	16	8	16		
Total	30		30		23		24		107	100%

**5.4.1.3 Table 3: Existence of School Code of Conduct (educators' responses)**

School Code	Male	Female	Row Total	%
Yes	9	23	32	97%
No	0	1	1	3%
Total	9	24	33	100%

According to the study conducted by Mestry and Khumalo (2012), the South African Schools Act allows the School Governing bodies (SGBs) to adopt a code of conduct

which seeks to address unruly behaviour in schools which, *inter alia*, includes students carrying dangerous weapons and learners in possession of drugs and alcohol. From Table 2 and 3, 99% of students and 97% of educators agreed that there was a school code of conduct. 3% of educators and 1% of students stated that there was no code of conduct.

Students and educators were asked (**Question 4, Appendix C and question 3, Appendix D**) to state what the codes say about weapons. The respondents (students and educators) stated that weapons were not allowed at school. Other respondents did not only indicate that weapons were not allowed at school, they also highlighted the consequences of bringing weapons such as possible arrest, expulsion, suspension or prosecution. 4% of students and educators answered that it does not say anything about weapons.

#### 5.4.2 Theme 2: Weapons in schools

**Question 5, Appendix C and Question 4, Appendix D** were directed to students and educators respectively.

##### 5.4.2.1 Table 4: Responses in terms of the visibility of weapons at schools (students)

	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Yes	9	9	7	10	5	11	7	12	<b>70</b>	<b>65%</b>
No	7	5	7	6	2	5	1	4	<b>37</b>	<b>35%</b>
Sub-total	16	14	14	16	7	16	8	16		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>

**5.4.2.2 Table 5: Responses in terms of the visibility of weapons at schools (educators)**

	Male	Female	Row Total	%
<b>Yes</b>	7	14	21	<b>64%</b>
<b>No</b>	2	10	12	<b>36%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

The responses indicate that 65% of students and 64% of educators reported seeing a weapon at school. The fact that some but not all respondents see weapons could simply be because they are generally concealed. The high proportion of students who have seen weapons in school might be an indication that weapons find easy access onto school premises. The fact is that even when you take the greater number of females into account, in reality, more females than males report weapons. It seems that girls are just as likely as boys to report weapons; also it might be that, there is a hidden element of boys not wanting to reveal the presence of weapons.

According to the study by Thurnherr et al. (2008) the carrying of weapons among youth is regarded as a common type of violence in American high schools, where 18% of students carry weapons. The high percentage of students revealing that they have seen weapons at school results in fear among the students within South African schools (Burton and Leoschut, 2012:35). They further maintain that one in ten (11.9%) learners claimed that there was an area at school where they usually felt fearful. This is consistent with the study of De Voe et al. (2003:12) which states that every year; some students are threatened or injured with weapons while they are on school premises. De Voe et al. (2003:34) also add that the presence of weapons at school is creating an intimidating and threatening atmosphere, making teaching and learning difficult. This study also reveals that weapons are prevalent in schools.

The next question to both students and educators (**Question 6, Appendix C and Question 5, Appendix D**) asked what kind of weapons they saw. Their responses are shown on tables 6 and 7 below:

**5.4.2.3 Table 6: Specification/ types of weapon who had seen weapons (students responses)**

Type of Weapon seen	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	% of students who saw this specific weapons
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<b>Knife</b>	3	6	3	6	3	10	3	7	<b>41</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>Gun</b>	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	<b>5</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Knife and Gun</b>	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	<b>9</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Other</b>	2	2	3	4	2	0	0	2	<b>15</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 above shows that 70 students had seen weapons.

#### 5.4.2.4 Table 7 Specification/ types of weapon who had seen weapons (educators responses)

The following table reveal the percentages within the group of 20 educators who had seen weapons.

What Weapon	Male	Female	Row Total	%
Knife	5	9	14	70%
Gun	0	1	1	5%
Knife and Gun	1	2	3	15%
Other Weapons	1	1	2	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

A study by Jacobs (2014: 10) indicates that weapons that are most frequently reported as used in school violence were knives and other sharp objects (42.4%). This study also confirms a high percentage (59%) of students who reported seeing knives, but a further 13% reported that they saw knives and guns together, thus 72% of those who saw weapons (50% of all learner respondents) have seen knives. Guns were identified separately by 7%, but 13% reported that they have seen both knives and guns (thus 20% have seen guns at school, or 14% of all learner respondents).

Other weapons, such as pepper spray, screwdriver, panga, bats, etc. were seen by a further 21% (15% of all learner respondents).

Also 70% of the educators who reported seeing a weapon reported that they have seen knives at school (85% in all as 15% had seen a knife and gun together, or 60% of all educator respondents), 5% of educators indicated that they have seen a gun at



school, 15% of educators mentioned that they have seen knives and guns, 10% of educators saw a brick (one educator) and baton (one educator).

The majority of respondents from all four schools used in this study stated that weapons are in schools. This is alarming. Further, it is evident, comparing the students' and educators' results, that they have similar experiences of witnessing weapons in schools.

The following question asked students and educators how often they see weapons at school (**Question 7, Appendix C and Question 6, Appendix D**). The respondents were asked to choose from: daily, weekly, monthly, several times a year and maybe once a year. Table 8 and 9 below provide the responses received from students and educators respectively.

**5.4.2.5 Table 8: If yes, how often do you see a weapon? Students**

How often	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<b>Daily</b>	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>3</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Weekly</b>	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	<b>6</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Monthly</b>	2	1	2	2	0	1	3	0	<b>11</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Several times a year</b>	2	3	4	7	1	4	2	4	<b>27</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Maybe once a year</b>	1	4	1	0	4	6	1	6	<b>23</b>	<b>33%</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>19</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

**5.4.2.6 Table 9: If yes, how often do you see a weapon? Educators**

How Often	Male	Female	Row Total	%
Daily	0	0	0	0
Weekly	0	0	0	0
Monthly	0	0	0	0
Several times a year	3	4	7	37%
Maybe once a year	4	8	12	63%
Total	7	12	19	100%

39% of those students who had reported that they had seen a weapon reported that they have seen a weapon at school several times a year, 33% of these students who had reported that they had seen a weapon reported that they have seen a weapon maybe once a year, 16% reported that they have seen a weapon monthly, 9% of learners reported that they have seen a weapon weekly and 4% of students reported that they have seen a weapon daily. From this evidence, one may probably conclude that weapons are finding easy access to the school premises, but not so easy that they can be seen daily because students might be hiding them.

The same question was put to educators, of whom 37% who had reported that they had seen a weapon stated they have seen a weapon several times a year and 63% of educators stated that they saw a weapon maybe once a year. The responses provided by educators point out that no educators saw weapons frequently.

The questionnaire then asked respondents to this question (70 students and 21 educators) to provide a fuller explanation if they wished. The answers from the students were that some saw a weapon in instances where there were fights between students, others indicated that they saw some students bringing weapons during a

strike at school; others mentioned that they mostly saw a weapon in school where the aim was to scare or bully other learners. Those educators who, when requested to provide fuller explanation, did provide an explanation, all stated that students bring weapons to school for self-protection.

This means that in these schools, students are carrying weapons to school even though the law clearly prohibits it. This demands attention from all the stakeholders in South Africa in an attempt to discourage the bringing of weapons to school.

Thereafter the same respondents (students and educators) who provided their responses captured on table 4-8 were asked who had the weapons (**Question 8, Appendix C, and Question 7, Appendix D**). The respondents were encouraged not to mention the name of the person, but to state, for instance, whether it was a student, a teacher, a parent, and so on. Tables 10 and 11 provide their responses.

#### 5.4.2.7 Table 10: Responses concerning those who carry weapons (students)

If yes, who had the weapon?

Who had the weapon	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<b>Student</b>	8	8	3	8	5	10	7	12	<b>61</b>	<b>88%</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Parent</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Gangsters</b>	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Irrelevant response</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Non respondents</b>	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	8	9	6	10	5	11	7	12		

<b>Total</b>	17	16	16	19	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>
--------------	----	----	----	----	-----------	-------------

#### 5.4.2.8 Table 11 Responses concerning those who carry weapons (educators)

If yes, who had the weapon?

<b>Who had Weapon</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Row Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Student</b>	7	13	<b>20</b>	<b>95%</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Parent</b>	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Gangsters</b>		1	<b>0</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>

On table 10 and 11, 2 respondents who reported witnessing a weapon did not indicate who had the weapons; it is shown that 88% of students and 95% of educators reported that it was students who brought weapons to school. The next most frequently reported bearer of weapons was gangsters, reported by 6% of students and 5% of educators. The literature review in Chapter 2 indicated that it is relatively easy for learners to access weapons. According to Burton and Leoschut (2012: 48) around 24.1% of learners claimed to know people at school who had brought weapons, like firearms or knives, to school. This significantly enhances the risks of violence related to weapons in schools.

The following questions (**Question 9, Appendix C and Question 8, Appendix D**) were asked to those students and educators who indicated that they had seen a weapon, to indicate whether they have seen a weapon being used. Their responses are captured on table 12 and 13 below.

**5.4.2.9 Table 12: Visibility of weapons at school (students responses):**

Have you ever seen a weapon being used at school?

Seen weapon use	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Yes	6	4	6	6	2	1	3	4	32	46%
No	3	5	1	4	3	10	4	8	38	54%
Sub-total	9	9	7	10	5	11	7	12		
Total	18		17		16		19		70	100%

**5.4.2.10 Table 13: Visibility of weapons at school (educators' responses):**

Have you ever seen a weapon being used at school?

Seen weapon use	Male	Female	Row Total	%
Yes	1	7	8	38%
No	6	7	13	62%
Total	7	14	21	100%

About 54% of students have never seen a weapon being used and 46% of students have seen a weapon being used at school. Of 21 educators, 38% stated that they have seen a weapon being used at school and 62% indicated that they have never seen a weapon being used at school. This finding is consistent with the studies of Van

Jaarsveld (2008: 177) and Enoch (2013: 2) who report examples of stabbings that left a number of students dead.

A follow up question was probed to students and educators (**Question 10 Appendix C and Question 9, Appendix D**) to the respondents who answered “yes” (**Question 9, Appendix C and Question 8, Appendix D**) to describe the situation in which the weapon was used. Their responses were captured on table 14 and 15 below:

**5.4.2.11 Table 14: Context of using weapons (student responses):**

If yes, describe the situation or situations in which the weapon was used?

Situation used	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Weapon used during a fight	5	3	3	6	2	1	2	2	24	75%
Weapon used for self-protection against bullies	1	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	5	16%
Weapon used for a school project	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	9%

<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

**5.4.2.12 Table 15: Context of using weapons (educator’s responses):**

If yes, describe the situation or situations in which the weapon was used.

<b>Seen Weapon in use</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Row Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Weapon used during a fight</b>	1	7	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>

Use of weapons during fighting on school premises was most frequently witnessed by the scholars in this study. Fighting is one of the problems present in schools and Hodges et al. (1999: 94) cited by Nesor et al. (2007) highlighted that 16% of high school learners were involved in a physical fight at school during a period of 30 days, and 11.8% carried a weapon on school property. Also our literature review highlights the prevalence of weapons in schools and the incidents of weapon use.

The data revealed that of the students who reported seeing weapons being used, 75% reported that they saw a weapon being used during a fight, 10% of students said weapons were used for self-protection against bullies, and 9% of students maintained that weapons were used during a school project. However, according to the definition used in this study, the use of scissors only in a school project cannot be categorised as ‘use of a weapon, unless the scissor is used to harm or hurt someone.’

According to educators responses on table 16, 100% of educators who witnessed the use of a weapons, all confirmed that the situation in which the weapon was used was during a fight.

Thereafter the researcher asked the respondents who provided their answers yes on these questions (**Question 9, Appendix C** and **Question 8, Appendix D**) to describe their feeling when they saw a weapon being used. This was **Question 11, Appendix C: Students** and **Question 10, Appendix D: Educators**.

This study confirms that students in the questionnaires frequently used terms such as ‘scared’ (41%) and ‘shocked’ (22%). A small number focused on the feelings of lack of safety; 13% specifically stated they were unsafe and 3% stated they were both scared and unsafe.

Similarly, the responses of educators in the questionnaires frequently used terms such as “scared” (50%) and “shocked” (12.5%). A small number focused on the feelings of lack of safety (12.5% were both scared and unsafe and 12.5% were “disappointed”). The term suggests a very limited reaction, but is often used with a more intense meaning than usual in English

**Question 12, Appendix C (Students) and Question 11, Appendix D (Educators)** states: Have you ever yourself brought a weapon to school?

**5.4.2.13. Table 16: Ownership of weapons (student responses)**

Have you yourself ever brought a weapon to school?

Brought Own Weapon	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Yes	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	7	7%
No	15	13	10	16	7	16	8	15	100	93%
Sub-total	16	14	14	16	7	16	8	16		
Total	30		30		23		24		107	100%



**Table 16** above reports that the great majority of students (93%) asserted that they had never brought a weapon at school. However, 7% of students had brought weapons to school. That means seven students of the total sample. Two of these were female.

**Question 11, Appendix D** was also asked to educators: Have you ever brought a weapon to school? For this particular question there was only one educator who answered 'yes' and the rest of the educators stated 'no'.

**Question 13, Appendix C** was directed to students and **Question 12, Appendix D** directed to educators and they were asked if they ever used a weapon at school.

#### 5.4.2.14 Table 17: Use of weapons within school premises (student responses)

Have you yourself ever used a weapon at school?

Used Weapon	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<b>YES</b>	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>NO</b>	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	<b>3</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 17 revealed that 43% of students had never used a weapon at school and suddenly 57% of students have used a weapon but only 7% brought a weapon as mentioned above on table 17. This mean that of the seven who acknowledged that they brought a weapon to school, four stated that they had used one.

The responses of educators (**Question 12, Appendix D**) were not captured on the table as per the responses received from the students because all educators stated that they had never used weapons at schools.

**Question 14, Appendix C (students) and question 13, Appendix D (educators)** was a follow up question to establish how they used weapons, and why. On how they used it only 3 students responded and of 3 students, 2 used it for self-defence while the other student said it was it was for school project. (**Question 14, Appendix C**). Educators' responses were not captured on this particular question because they answered "no" to the previous question.

### 5.4.3 Theme 3: Motives for bringing weapons

The next question the students were asked was "why do you think someone would bring a weapon to school?" (**Question 15, Appendix C: Students and Question 14, Appendix D**)

5.4.3.1. Table 18: Motives for students, they think someone would bring a weapon to school

Reason for Weapons	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Use it for self-defence when feeling unsafe	7	7	11	12	6	5	6	9	63	59%
Using it when having a	2	3	0	1	0	6	0	0	12	11%

<b>misunderstanding with fellow student and to have popularity</b>											
<b>Bullying other students</b>	4	1	2	3	0	4	0	1	15	14%	
<b>Protection and intimidating other students</b>	3	2	1	0	1	0	2	6	15	14%	
<b>Due to peer pressure</b>	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1%	
<b>For school project</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%	
<b>Sub-total</b>	16	14	14	16	7	16	8	16			
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>		<b>30</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>107</b>	<b>100%</b>	

5.4.3.2. Table 19: Motives for educators, they think someone would bring a weapon to school

<b>Reason for Weapons</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>

<b>For self-defence against bullies</b>	5	11	<b>16</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>For popularity and to show-off</b>	0	3	<b>3</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>For bullying others</b>	3	5	<b>8</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>For protection and intimidating others</b>	1	1	<b>2</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>

As indicated on table 18 and 19, 59% of students mentioned that weapons were used for self-defence against bullies, only 11% of students stated that weapons were brought to school for popularity/show-off to other students. The purposes reported by 14% of students was that weapons were brought to bully other students, also another 14% of students mentioned that weapons were brought by students for their own protection and intimidating other students. Lastly, 1% said it was due to peer pressure and another 1% stated that the weapons were brought to perform school projects. The literature review acknowledges factors contributing to weapons in schools which include gangsterism, substance abuse and bullying. The responses provided by educators did not contradict with the responses from students because 55% of educators mentioned that someone would bring a weapon to school for self-defence against bullies, 20% of educators said for popularity, 28% said it is for bullying others, 7% of educators stated that it is for intimidation purposes.

#### 5.4.4 Theme 5: Actions to be taken with regard to the use of weapons at school

**Question 16, Appendix C and Question 15, Appendix D** was asked to students and educators who participated in the survey in an attempt to determine the main action that people must take about weapons in school.

##### 5.4.4.1 Table 20: What is the main action that you think people must take about weapons in school? Students

The responses was grouped because the responses of the participaant were more similar.

Action To Take	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
To have security officers that will check learners when entering into school premises and/or conduct random searching.	5	8	7	10	1	4	1	5	41	40%
Report to the Head of school	5	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	20	20%
There must be consequence management	3	3	2	1	4	8	4	7	32	31%

penalties such as suspension or being expelled										
Irrelevant response to the question such as that students bring weapons to bully, scare others, there are no weapons and weapons must be taken seriously	2	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	9	9%
Sub-total	15	13	12	16	7	16	8	15		
Total	28		28		23		23		102	100%

5.4.4.2 Table 21: What is the main action that you think people must take about weapons in school? Educators

Action To Take	Male	Female	Row Total	%
Security guards and checkpoints at the gate and or conduct random searching	0	7	7	26%

<b>Report weapons to the principal</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>There must consequences if caught with weapons such as suspension and expulsion</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

Burton (2008: 18) states that weapons, drugs and alcohol gain access to school as a result of the homes and communities in which students spend the rest of their time. It is of utmost importance to discourage bringing of weapons to school which ultimately enhances safe school environment. Burton also indicates that the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the community play an imperative role in eliminating easy access to illegal alcohol, and drugs in schools. Of 107 questionnaires returned by the students, 102 students completed this question (table 20). The data revealed that the highest proportion (40%) for students said random search in schools and installing security points will discourage the bringing of weapons in school and the process will reduce violence related to weapons. This study was based on intervening to discourage bringing weapons to school in a bid to create safe schools. Some of the responses provided by respondents are consistent with Cowan et al. (2013), in proposing approaches which assist in creating safe schools. The finding indicates that existing security measures are not stopping the presence of weapons at school.

The data also mentioned that the majority of students and educators confirmed that their schools do not conduct weapon searches. Probably this is another security measure that can assist in the prevention of violence in schools where weapons are being used. Furthermore, conforming to the results of the study, intervention program for security measure may be implemented more often to raise awareness and discourage the bringing of weapons to school.

According to De Wet (2005: 706) the South African public is demanding a reduction in school violence; however, some role-players are not listening to the cries for help by the victims and measures that promote discipline. Discipline and punishment in South African schools is regulated by the South African Schools Act as well as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

**Question 17, Appendix C** was asked to students, whereas **Question 16, Appendix D** was posed to educators to determine rules or rules that should be applied to the use of weapons in school.

**Reponses of students with regard to the rules to be applied in school.**

Twenty two students from school A responded to the question and from school B, nineteen responses were provided by students. The most common response from school A and B was that the school rules should state clearly that weapons are not allowed at school, and strengthen security guards in schools. The next most common responses dealt with consequences for carrying weapons such as the expulsion of learners and calling the police. One student from school A said there must be no rules to be applied in school.

School C: twenty two students replied to the question and three students (2 females and 1 male student) and school D: Twenty two students responded to the question. They shared the same sentiments. The most common response was that the school rules should clearly mention the consequences for carrying or bringing weapons at school such as facing legal action, suspension, expulsion. The next common responses dealt with the school rules, which, it was said, should state clearly that weapons are not allowed at school.

**5.4.4.3 Table 22: Reponses of educators with regard to the rules to be apply in school**

<b>What rules should apply</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Row Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>No weapons</b>	9	17	<b>26</b>	<b>93%</b>



<b>Legal action</b>	0	2	2	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

The majority of students were in support of a rule that clearly bans weapons at school. Also, scholars mentioned that legal actions must be taken into consideration for students bringing weapons in schools; one student maintains that there must be no rules and other students state that educators must be allowed to bring weapons in school. Based on the responses provided by students, one might argue that schools should have weapon searches as a security measure to act as a deterrent.

From the educators' perspectives, 93% mentioned that the rules should clearly state that weapon should not be allowed in school. In contrast, 7% of educators maintain that legal action must be instituted against the people who bring or use weapons in schools.

**Question 18, Appendix C and Question 17, Appendix D: Educators** were coded because the researcher wanted to obtain any other comments from the students who participated on the survey from school A to D. Their responses are captured on the below table 23 and 24.

**5.4.4.4 Table 23: Students' general comments on the carrying of weapons at school**

Students comments	School A		School B		School C		School D		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
<b>Police to do random</b>	6	3	0	3	1	2	0	1	16	44%

searching at school and increase the number of security guards										
Government to prioritise the issue of no weapons within school premises	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6%
No weapons should be allowed in school	1	0	2	2	0	0	2	6	13	36%
Respect code of conduct	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8%
There must be sanctions/ consequences for bring weapons	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	6%
Sub-total	11	4	3	5	1	2	2	8		
Total	15		8		3		10		36	100%

**5.4.4.5 Table 24: Educators' general comments on the carrying of weapons at school**

<b>Another comments</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Gender not specified</b>	<b>Row Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>There must be South African Police Service to do random searching at school to ensure there are no weapons</b>	0	2	1	3	30%
<b>There must be good family support</b>	1	1	0	2	20%
<b>Involvement of parents, teachers, SMT and Community to combat bringing of weapons to school</b>	0	2		2	20%
<b>There must be sanctions/ consequences for bring weapons</b>	0	3	0	3	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the students, 80% indicated that there must be police to do random searching at schools and the number of security guards must be increased, furthermore no weapons should be allowed in school. 12% of students stated that government should prioritise the issue of weapons in schools and there must be sanctions/ consequences against those who bring weapons to school. According to the KZN Circular No. 32 of 2012, “principals must invite police and role players such as SGB Chairperson, mayors and Member of Parliament to conduct school safety awareness campaigns to encourage learners to strive for quality education”.

Reporting on the responses provided by the educators, 60% mentioned that police should be invited to raid students in order to discourage the bringing of weapons to school and schools must consider having more security guards at the gate. Also 20% of educators stated that the government should prioritise the issue of weapons in schools because they have a negative impact on the school results through the involvement of parents, teachers, SMT and community. 30% of educators maintain that people who bring weapons must face consequences, such as expulsion, suspension and arrest/ prosecution and lastly, 20% of educators cited poor family structures such as “lack of good parenting in today’s youth is affecting the schools, Parents are not raising their kids properly, some of them have lost their parents and some learn violence from others and have a perception that violence is the solution to any form they face in life”.

## **5.5 Analysis of qualitative data**

The research present first the findings from the quantitative methods and secondly the findings from the qualitative methods: the interviews and focus group discussions. The content of this paper segment will only cover findings from focus groups as well as that of individual interviews. Interviews were also scheduled with each of the four principals and four focus groups from each school A to D. However, only three principal interviews (individual interviews) and three focus group interviews were conducted because school D decided not to participate and the principal stated that he was very committed, also adding that his school was preparing for the final examination. The students that participated in the interviews were from the senior grades namely grade

10 and 11. Focus group interviews with students and face to face interviews with the principals from schools A-C were done on different times, venues and dates in all these schools.

From the responses obtained from the interviewees, the principal from school A mentioned that he has 33 years in the teaching profession as well as 17 years as the principal and added that there are 40 staff including the non-educators under his control. The principal from school B specified that he has been teaching for 22 years including his services as a principal. He also mentioned that there are 15 educators at his school. Additionally, he stated that they are expecting new appointees in 2016 due to the Post Provisioning Norm (PPN); consequently, he said “two posts are vacant and will be filled through PPN”. The principal also highlighted that the role of PPN is to allocate educators in schools according to the number of learners.

The principal from school C indicated that in 2016 he will be serving 30 years of service of service in the teaching profession and mentioned that he was appointed as the principal in 2008, which amounts to eight years as the principal. He added that there are 30 academic staff and non-educator staff.

### **5.5.1 Interviews coding and analysis**

The researcher conducted interviews as the second instrument of data collection. Interviews attempted to capture the perspectives of participants’ thought utilising open and closed questions.

Moreover, interviews (face to face interviews with the principals and focus group interviews with the students) consisted of the gathering of data through face to face interaction as well as through verbal communication between the researcher and the interviewees.

Some of the themes were established by the researcher when creating interviews and others were identified from the students’ and principals responses and questions were grouped in the subsequent order:

### **Theme 1: Safety at school**

- Question 2, 9 and 11 (Interviews with the principals)

### **Theme 2: Weapons in schools**

- Question 3 and 4, Appendix E (Interviews with the principals)
- Question 2,3, 6 and 7, Appendix F (Focus group interviews)

### **Theme 3: The reasons for the presence of weapons**

- Question 5, 6 and 10, Appendix E (Interviews with the principals)
- Question 4 and 5, Appendix F (Focus group interviews)

### **Theme 4: Structures to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools**

- Question 7, 8 and 12, Appendix E (Principals interviews)
- Question 8 and 10, Appendix F (Focus group interviews)

The above is intended to report the themes and the presentation below is intended to provide responses from principals and focus group students.

#### **5.5.1.1 Theme 1: Safety at school**

The principals from school A to C were asked to comment on the degree of safety of staff in their school and on the role of teachers in ensuring that learners are safe at school (Question 11, Appendix E). The principal from school A emphasized that with regard to the issue of safety of staff and learners, safety from outsiders is not a problem. The only problem they have is within the school because certain learners who consume illegal substances become unruly bullies who disrespect the educators and other related staff.

The principal from school B revealed that school safety is vested in security officials employed by the school and the role of educators is to educate. When they see that the safety of students is threatened they made school leadership aware of that. He added that the Safety Officer is also involved in ensuring safety of students and added that if something requires the intervention of the police, they exercise that option.

The principal from school C (which is situated in an urban area) said there is no threat or danger in his school.

Question 2, Appendix E, was posed to principals (How was the school code of conduct in the school drafted? What steps are taken to ensure that learners are aware and understand the code of conduct? Does that code specify anything about weapons?) and according to the responses provided by the principals (school A to C) in the interviews, they also concurred with the responses provided by students and educators who participated in answering structured questionnaires and who wrote “weapons are not allowed in school premises”. Of the three principals, the principal from school A further stated that there is a board inside the school which clearly specifies that weapons, drugs and other illegal items are not allowed in the school premises. The principal also maintained that the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) are mandated to adopt a code of conduct in their schools.

Question 9, Appendix E was asked to three principals to find out what disciplinary methods are used in their schools, and to indicate if these are covered in the code of conduct. They were also asked whether discipline in their schools achieves the goal of ensuring safety and security of staff and students. The three respondents replied that the disciplinary methods are guided by a code of conduct, adding that if a student is found in possession of weapon, they are automatically suspended and the weapon is taken away. The principal from school A that said if the weapon was used to threaten somebody, the SGB is informed accordingly. Depending on the severity of the matter, the student might be suspended pending a tribunal or be given expulsion if the matter is serious. Expulsion requires action by the Department of Education. Alternatively the student could be referred to another school depending on the level of the offence and depending on the safety of other learners.

The principal from school C further indicated that procedurally, the weapon is put inside a bag which must be sealed and must be rendered to the police if it is a

dangerous weapon. The respondent also stated that they inform the parents of students found in possession of weapons, then suspension follows; an appropriate sanction is issued as punishment if the student is found guilty.

The literature review reported that the code of conduct is mandatory to ensure that there are appropriate disciplinary processes for disciplining learners and to ensure that there are measures to be followed during disciplinary processes.

### **5.5.1.2 Theme 2: Weapons in schools**

Students from focus groups 1-3 were asked if they have seen weapons at school and the places they were most likely to see weapons (Question 6, Appendix F). In contrast with the 70% of questionnaire responses that indicated that they had seen weapons, all respondents revealed that they have seen weapons such as knives, guns and forks. At one school, each of the learners in focus group 1 said “they found weapons in the toilet”. And at another school said it was at the “Ghetto” and “China” land and “China city” which they regarded as smoking areas used by students. In focus group 3, one student said she saw a weapon during Hospitality Studies where students were using scissors for school projects. However, a potential weapon being used for a school project cannot be categorised as a weapon because its use was clearly not intended to be as a weapon.

Regardless of the differences of how scholars perceived the problem of having weapons at schools as acknowledged by the information collected by the surveys, it was clear that there was definitely a problem at these schools. It would seem that the presence of weapons is a potential threat. Literature further revealed that other countries which experience easy access to weapons in schools also experience safety and security challenges in schools.

Moreover, Question 4, Appendix E was directed to principals: Have you ever discovered weapons such as knives and guns in your school? If yes, what steps do you take to prevent the entry of weapons into your school? All three (3) principals



revealed that they have discovered weapons such as guns and knives in their schools and said the steps taken to prevent the entry of weapons into school was to call a student to a disciplinary hearing and to take necessary sanctions; parents were invited when the hearings were conducted to make sure that the tribunal was fair to all parties involved.

Thus, responses from principals and focus groups in three schools confirmed that weapons are there in schools.

Question 2, Appendix F: Have you ever experienced violence, in which weapons were used? If YES, can you describe what happened? And how often did such events happen? Of three (3) focus group students, focus group students from school C answered “no” and focus group students from school A and B respectively answered “yes”. Focus group student from school A revealed that last year (2014) when the students were demonstrating/ striking, they experienced violence in which weapons were used. One learner further indicated there was a fight between male students and the outsiders in 2014 which resulted in the use of guns and knives and some students were hit with stones when attending their classes, while others were forced to leave their classrooms. Also, one respondent said there was a fight between male students in 2015 and one of the students was stabbed. Focus group student from school B said in the second term of 2015, one student wanted to hit another student with “isiqwayi” which is called a knobkerrie; however, the principal managed to get hold of the knobkerrie.

This directly contradicts what was reported earlier on Question 7, Appendix F). All respondents answered “they never saw a weapon in their school”. However, on this particular question, they reported seeing weapons being used in a fight, whereas they had previously stated that they had never seen weapons at school. Interestingly, in the questionnaire responses, no-one mentioned stones and knobkerrie as weapons. This emerged only during the focus group interviews. The above responses are an indication that weapons are brought to school for different uses and purposes. The findings from the interviewees revealed that there is easy access to them.

Focus group students from school A to C respectively were asked about the impact relating to the use of weapons on themselves or others (Question 3, Appendix F). The respondents stated that they feel unsafe, scared and feared for their lives. Seeing an

act of violence with a weapon is clearly traumatic, and in that sense those who did were victims even if they had not suffered physical harm.

### **5.5.1.3 Theme 3: The reasons for the presence of weapons**

**Question 5, Appendix E** was asked to three principals to ascertain the factors that they think motivate students to bring weapons in school. According to the majority of interviewees their responses were that students bring weapons in school for their protection or because of fights among students. Of three principal, two principals (Schools A and B) specifically stated that majority of students who carry weapons are students who are involved in drugs and are also part of gangs. The other principal also mentioned that some students carry weapons because they feel threatened on their way to school or they have enemies in the areas they live in. The principal from school C further added that he had heard male students say that they are using weapons for their protection on their way home because they face a no-go zone where there are “Tsotsi’s” who are a threat to them, so they said they need to carry a knife for protection.

Moreover, in the focus group with students the researcher further posed **Question 4, Appendix F** to students: What do they think causes students or others to make use of weapons? All respondents shared similar sentiments mentioning that students use weapons for self-protection. Of three focus groups students, one student from focus group B revealed that other students use weapons just to show-off and see themselves as “*igongo*” which can be translated as “bully” in English. One learner further mentioned that in their school some of the male students are gamblers and stated some instances that “if one of the gamblers failed to pay back the winner a fight would break out”. One respondent from focus group B stated that “they normally don’t report these incidents because they fear that the reported student will wait for you after school at the gate to cause a fight with you”. Focus group students from the third school added that other students carry weapons to “look cool” and or “due to peer pressure”.

Interestingly, these findings are consistent with those reported in the literature. The finding of the study of Swart and Bredekamp (2009: 416) was that the effects of bullying have negative impacts to such an extent that they contribute to feelings such as hurt, irritation, embarrassment and/or fear. This might cause students to bring weapons to school for self-defence against bullies. However, in some instances, there are students who bring weapons to intimidate other students.

Thereafter, three (3) principals were asked to indicate whether there is a connection between violence related to weapons and issues like drugs and alcohol, bullying and gang activities (**Question 6, Appendix E**) and all respondents answered “yes”. Of three (3) principals, one (1) principal stated that bullying was more related to drugs; adding that “there are rare incidents where bullies use weapons to bully other students, unless students are involved in a fight on certain issues, particularly the male students of which they carry weapons to protect themselves of which those fights are mainly outside the school premises”.

The principal from another school specifically mentioned that alcohol is one factor, because when people are drunk they cause more trouble, they only think of a weapon as a way of protecting them. He said on gangs their school is lucky in that they do not have a culture of gangs in their school. What they do have is the incident of two male students having a fight and one male student said “my brother and his friend will get you after school.” Another principal responded by reporting that one or two bullies had been brought into school disciplinary processes because they said “they are going to get even this afternoon”.

Afterward, students in the focus groups were asked if there was a connection between violence related to weapons and issues like drugs and alcohol, bullying and gang activities (**Question 5, Appendix F**). All respondents agreed that there was a connection between the aforesaid factors. Of three focus groups, students from one school revealed that students are using drugs and this affected their mind and behaviour. Furthermore, they said that students from junior grades are mostly victims of bullying; for instance taking their monies and as a result of that they tend to bring a weapon for self-protection.

Students from another school corroborated that there are students who are victims of bullying in their school because there was a male student who bullies other learners by demanding that they write mathematics on behalf of him and further demands money of other students.

The responses revealed that there were connections between violence related to weapons and issues like drugs and alcohol, bullying and gang activities. According to Burton (2008) on the National School Violence Study involving 12,794 learners from primary and secondary schools, 264 school principals and 521 educators, about 15.3% of students (both in primary and secondary schools) have experienced some form of violence while at school and among the concerns raised by both principals and learners indicated the easy access to alcohol, drugs and weapons within the school.

**Question 10, Appendix E** was posed to three principals to indicate the most recent action taken against bullying, and what form that action took. The principal from school A said, "If there is an element of assault then the parent is called in and the students are suspended for a maximum of five days depending on the level of bullying".

The principal from school B stated that they encounter bullying almost weekly if not monthly. He also said it is not easy to maintain it even though they apply their policies which are against bullying but encounter problems when students are outside the school premises. The principal from school C mentioned that in October 2015 four grade 12 male students bullied two grade 8 students and they took the matter seriously. Parents were called in and the students were expelled from the hostel/ students' residence.

The findings of this study are that bullying takes place in some schools in different forms and this result in having victims of bullying. The study further reveals that schools are instituting disciplinary actions against students who misconduct themselves by bullying other learners. One reason for having a weapon is the intention of reducing violence by providing self-defence. It is not a very successful approach as it still leads to the use of weapons. What it means is that the desire for justice may itself fuel violence.

#### **5.5.1.4 Theme 4: Structures to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools**

Moreover, the three principals were asked: What are the most effective control measures with regard to weapons? If this is to happen, is there a way of school developing a real consensus amongst students and staff around responses to violence (Question 7, Appendix E)? The three principals responded that curbing or controlling weapons in schools can be achieved through inviting SAPS to do random searching which is recommended by the KZN Department of Education, confiscating weapons and conducting disciplinary hearings when students are found in possession of weapons. Of the three principals, the principal from school B further added that schools should involve community leaders such as the Councillor. The principal from school A mentioned that the police are not called regularly to conduct random researching because the schedule of the police is always full but they do come if they are invited. They also come unannounced to do random searching. He also emphasised that if someone is caught with a weapon and they are over 18 years, that person gets a fair trial in terms of justice, not in terms of school disciplinary procedures.

The researcher then asked three principals the following question (**Question 8, Appendix E**): **Could the community and the school together identify measures that promote safety and trust? If yes, what kind of measures do you think would be most practical to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools?** The responses provided by the participants were different; one principal stated that “in the township schools, certain structures in the community from the political level, using a youth and educational desk and Ward Councillors can be vital through talking to the learners and also ensure that when there are community meetings, they talk about the responsibility of the parent at school, mainly, to attend the meetings because parents don’t attend school meetings when they are called”. One other principal stated that “if the community can play their part, it will be easy for the school to curb presence of weapons”. The third principal said “there must be more security”, adding that “security measures like Security Officers are a reality because their visible policing presence is very important”.

The findings indicate that some schools have experienced a number of incidents on school premises. The literature (see. 2.4 to 2.5) addresses measures to deal with

weapons as well as other forms of school violence in schools, and actions that should be taken to ensure that both learners and educators are safe.

**Question 12, Appendix E** was directed to the principals to ascertain if there are staff trained to handle violence or manage conflict in their schools. All respondents replied that there are officials trained by the Department of Education to handle violence or manage conflict when it arises. Workshops for this are conducted every year.

Students were requested to confirm if it is true incidents of insecurity are increasing in schools; if true how they would effectively deal with the lack of security in schools (**Question 8, Appendix F**). All respondents answered “that is true” and further proposed effective ways to deal with insecurity in schools. This is substantiated by the view of the participants that a lack of security and subsequent loss of access contribute to weapons in school. For instance in one school they mentioned that “in their school they will close “opotsho”, which means unauthorised gates in English, so that outsiders or students won’t find easy access to the school. They added that they will appoint more security officers to safeguard the school whose responsibility will be to check all students when entering and leaving school. Also, students in another focus group specifically said the school must hire more than one security officer in school. The third focus group from another school pointed out that students must be searched when entering school premises. Furthermore, they mentioned that each school must install a metal detector and request the government to hire more security officers to do searching.

Focus group students from schools A to C were asked if there were any action they could take to prevent the use of weapons at school; if so what are those actions (**Question 10, Appendix F**). Focus group A, one student stated that “they will provide tight security in the school and if there is conflict in the school, it should be minimised to the lowest level and be resolved amicably”. Moreover, one respondent said they will engage the Councillor if the problem escalates, furthermore, if the problem is not resolved at that level, they will engage the KZN Department of Education to promote safety in the school. The second focus group students stated that there are challenges

at their school because if you report a student who is in possession of a weapon, the principal normally called the student who reported the incident to testify as witness. “Therefore, the principal does not ensure that students who report the incident become anonymous”. The focus group students from the third school corroborated that educators are not capable to resolve their concerns if they report the incident to them so they are prepared to call their older brothers.

The KZN Department of Education Circular No. 12 of 2012 encourages educators to ensure that contact numbers of essential role-players, for instance police, are displayed in the classroom and further encourage principals to hold assemblies with a view to reinforce the provision of Regulations for Safety Measures at Public School in order to have drug-free and dangerous object-free zones.

Principals must ensure that they put up warning signs depicting items that must not be brought into the schools. This is further supported by the Education Labour Relation Council (2003) which states that warning signs must indicate that trespassers will be prosecuted or legal action will be taken.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This research study used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data about the perceptions and experiences of students regarding weapons in schools in uMgungundlovu district, KZN. The study also revealed that a high proportion of students have seen weapons in school, which might be an indication that weapons find easy access onto school premises. The questionnaires revealed types of weapons seen at school such as guns, knives, pepper spray, screwdriver, panga, bats and bricks. Moreover, although in the questionnaire responses no-one mentioned stones and knobkerrie as weapons, these were reported during the focus group interviews.

Findings from quantitative data revealed discrepancies that the majority of students stated that they felt safe or very safe. There is also evidence that other students felt unsafe in school; however, the existence of weapons is an indication that not all students are safe in school. However, both the quantitative and qualitative data identifies commonalities. The study found that there is easy access to weapon in

schools; this was provided by student and educator. The principals also affirmed that they had discovered weapons in their schools. One focus group students further revealed that the majority of people found in possession of weapons were students followed, in small numbers, by gangsters. There was a contradiction if students say that they feel safe because it was evident that school environments are not safe if there was easy access to weapons in schools.

Both quantitative data and qualitative data further revealed that weapons were brought to school by others for among other reasons, bullying other students, for self-defence when feeling unsafe, popularity and protection and intimidating other students. The issue of drugs, alcohol, bullying, fights among students, and being involved on gang activities, self-protection and peer pressure were among the reasons for the presence of weapons in both the quantitative and qualitative data. On the issue of actions to be taken with regard to the use of weapons at school as well as structures to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools, (40%) of students and 26% of educators said random searches in schools should be conducted. The principals and focus group students proposed the inviting of the South African Police Service (SAPS) to conduct random searching, installing metal detectors as well as to provide more security guards.

The findings of this chapter revealed that weapons are a challenge in some of the KZN schools which create an environment which is not safe, despite the assertion by students and educators that they feel safe. Data collected through questionnaires and interviews were analysed. In chapter 6 of this study, the researcher draws conclusions, recommendations and makes contributions of this study.



## CHAPTER 6

### 6 CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

#### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 captured the presentation and the analysis the data, chapter 6 proceeds with the presentation of conclusion and recommendations arising from the study, and will be making scholarly contributions for further research.

As a recap the study was embedded in a mixed methods approach, using qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data collection consisted of questionnaires, while qualitative data collection consisted of interviews and focus group discussions. This study was focused on the perceptions and experiences of students regarding the use of weapons at four schools in the uMgungundlovu district, Pietermaritzburg, KZN.

#### 6.2 Summary of chapters

The research project presented:

Chapter 1 presented the Introduction and background, research aims, objectives and research questions, preliminary literature review, the definitions of violence and school violence, the impact of South African violence in schools, studies of violence in South African schools, state policy and law to address violence, specific evidence of violence in KZN schools, research design and data collection methods, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 1 also covered a elucidation of a clear problem statement which was confirmed by many preliminary studies in the area that the research focused on. The background to the problem was also discussed as global phenomena hence the study was conducted to study on the perceptions and experiences of students regarding the use of weapons at four schools in uMgungundlovu district: Pietermaritzburg- KZN.

Chapter 2 reviewed literature relevant to the topic, weapons in schools and discussed among others: weapons in schools, the impact of the presence of weapons in schools, factors relating to the presence and use of weapons in schools and measures to deal with weapons as well as other forms of school violence in South African schools.

Chapter 3 set out the theoretical framework which was utilised in the data analysis, in ensuring the validity of responses and also in shaping recommendations for future research and policy reconsiderations in the improvement of such a problem in South Africa and other countries.

Chapter 4 revealed research design and methodology which identified methods of data analysis and how data was collected and discussed. Furthermore, among other things deliberated were issues of: research design, population size, sample and sampling techniques, delimitations and limitations, reliability and validity, ethical considerations and administration of data collection instruments. Because of a limitation was mentioned in chapter 1, further research is recommended which will be based on a different research methodology or paradigm in order to gauge in depth the degree of safety as confirmed by respondents during the data collection.

Chapter 5 dealt with data analysis and presentation; first, data was collected through the use of questionnaires in four selected schools in Pietermaritzburg. Moreover, students were invited to participate in a focus group interview, one for each school, as well as individual interview with the principals from four schools. On this chapter, the researcher further provided detailed analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. This started with coding the responses of the students and educators to generate a set of themes. It is worth mentioning that amongst questions that were set for the scholarly gathering of data, not a single question was not answered by the sample population, being students, educators and school principals.

In Chapter 6, I intend to discuss conclusion, recommendations on how schools could combat the use of weapons in schools and provide contribution of this study.

### **6.3 Revisiting research questions and the research findings**

The main objective of the research was to investigate weapon-related violence in schools at UMgungundlovu district in Pietermaritzburg. This research study was therefore conducted with students, educators and principals in an attempt to answer these questions.

#### **The following were the objectives addressed:**

The following objectives were shaped or influenced by the research problem, literature view as well as well by the theoretical framework.

- Explore the nature, extent, causes and effects that weapons have on the lives of students and on the culture of learning and teaching.
- Explore how current measures are used, in the learner's experience, to try to deal with this problem and how effective are they.
- On the basis of the above objectives, the study will seek to recommend which existing measures could be strengthened and what, if any, new measures can be proposed.
- Explore the nature, extent, causes and effects that weapons have on the lives of students and on the culture of learning and teaching.

#### **The research questions addressed:**

The research questions which this study addressed were as follows:

- What types of weapons are being carried and used by learners in the four schools selected?
- What is the extent of the problem: what proportions of learners carry weapons and what proportion have used them/ been threatened by/ been assaulted with weapons?
- What motivates learners to carry weapons and what would motivate them to use these weapons?

- What effects do the presence and use of these weapons have on the students, teachers and principals of the school?

Several findings emanated from this research study which are presented as follows:

### **6.3.1 Safety at school**

In Chapter 2 (literature review), De Wet (2005: 706) states that the South African public is demanding a reduction in school violence and in order to promote culture of safety in school. Mestry and Khumalo (2012: 100) indicate that the management team, educators and the disciplinary committee must ensure that they are responsible for carrying out the prevention measures of the code of conducts in schools.

Findings of the study include that the majority of students stated that they felt safe or very safe. There is also evidence that other students felt unsafe in school; however, and the existence of weapons is an indication that not all students are safe in school. In particular, students who were alleged to be on illegal substances such as drugs were found to become unruly and to bully other students as well as disrespect the educators.

Another important issue mentioned on the study was that all schools who participated in the survey have a code of conduct in place which clearly states that weapons are not allowed at school. The findings were also that there are corrective measures which are instituted by the principals against the students who are found in possession of weapons, where sanctions such as suspension, expulsion are issued and prosecutions which are handled by a court of law depending on the seriousness of the matter. It is utmost important that schools ensure that rules are clearly understood by students, educators, staff and parents, and be openly discussed. The code of conduct must be written in a language that will be clearly be understood by everyone.

### 6.3.2 Weapons in schools

This study has found that there is easy access to weapon in schools; this was provided by student and educator responses on Table 6 (chapter 5). It became evident that school environments are not safe, but also there is a contradiction here if students say that they feel safe. Students from focus groups 1-3 were asked if they ever saw any student carrying a weapon in their school and whether they reported it; if so, to whom, and how was that dealt with? (Question 7, Appendix F). All respondents answered “they never saw a weapon in their school”. It must be noted that 70 student respondents (65%) reported seeing a weapon at school. Not one of the focus group interviews had a respondent who reported seeing a weapon. However, there are contradictions on the responses provided by focus group students in school A.

Furthermore, the responses in questionnaires revealed that many students and educators have seen a weapon being used. It emerged from analysis of the focus group interviews that students were not being fully open about the issue. The principals also affirmed that they had discovered weapons in their schools. The results revealed the types of weapons brought to schools. Knives were the weapons most seen at school followed by guns, while some other weapons mentioned were pepper spray, screwdriver, panga, and bats. The extent of what was mentioned by respondents reveal that there is poor implementation of the School Safety Act and of school codes of conduct which typically state no person may bring a dangerous object or illegal drug onto school premises or have such object or drug in his or her possession on school premises or during any school activity.

The study further provided that the majority of people found in possession of weapons were students followed, in small numbers, by gangsters. Among the places in which they most likely to see weapons were toilets, “china land/city” (mentioned by one of the focus groups). This means that there are places at school of which they are most feared by the students. It was discovered from the participants (students and educators) that some see weapons several times a year. The principals also gave their views on what contributed to the presence of weapons in schools were drugs, the place where their learners live, and the people in the community who carry weapons.

According to the focus group discussion, students normally don't report people who are in possession of weapons due to fear or a judgement that the matter was not serious and did not warrant to be reported.

### **6.3.3 Motives for bringing weapons**

The responses in both the questionnaires and interviews revealed that weapons were brought to school by others for various reasons, which were:

- Using it when having a misunderstanding with fellow student
- Using it for popularity
- Using it for self-defence when feeling unsafe
- Bullying other students
- Protection and intimidating other students
- Due to peer pressure.

### **6.3.4 The reasons for the presence of weapons**

The study showed that in some schools, drugs, alcohol, substance abuse were reported in the sample. The literature review showed that these were rife in schools both in SA and in other parts of the world. Principals shared different sentiments with regards to the factors that they think motivate students to bring weapons in school. Among the contributing factors raised by the principals were the issue of drugs, alcohol, bullying, fights among students, and being involved on gang activities.

In addition to the above focus group students who participated in the survey further revealed that other students carry weapons for self-protection on their way home, to "look cool" and or "due to peer pressure".

Another difficulty principals experience is the existence of bullying. The principals report that bullying in their school takes different forms. They mentioned that as a corrective measure decisive actions are taken against bullies where they are called to a disciplinary hearing and if found guilty they are given appropriate sanctions.

The participants mentioned that weapons were as part of the cause of violence among other causes. Because the first objective was not satisfied during the data collection, the validity of the responses in relation to the following question was difficult to ascertain:

- Types of weapons being carried and used in the four schools selected.

### **6.3.5 Actions to be taken with regard to the use of weapons at school**

Despite the existence of security measure in school; however, these security measures are not stopping the presence of weapons at school. This was mentioned by both educators and students. They proposed that school must have security officers that will check learners when entering into school premises and/or conduct random searching. Based on the responses mentioned by the respondents, it was evident that two schools do not conduct weapon searches.

The respondents all agree that weapons are not allowed on school premises. The highest proportion (40%) of students and 26% of educators said random searches in schools should be conducted. Furthermore, 31% of students and 44% of educators reported that there must be management penalties such as suspension or being expelled.

### **6.3.6 Structures to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools**

The principals proposed that inviting South African Police Service (SAPS) to conduct random searching would be an effective measure to curb the easy access of weapons in schools.

On the issue that that incident of insecurity are increasing in schools principals revealed that outsiders find easy access to school premises due to unauthorised gates (gates that no-one knows about). The principals and focus group students also mentioned that schools must provide more security guards and focus group students further added that there must be metal detectors that must be installed by the schools.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

In relation to further research regarding weapons in schools I encourage further researches to still focus on the objective and the question mentioned above because I feel that learners were not comfortable to respond.

In relation to what needs to be strengthened by schools, I wish to recommend the following:

- Schools should be encouraged to form partnerships with the community in a bid to minimise the problem of weapons into schools. It is imperative to note that creating a safe school is a community function; hence schools cannot successfully achieve this goal without the support of the community.
- The implementation of South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 and the school codes of conduct must be reviewed. There must be a monitoring and evaluation framework covering every requirement of the SASA of 1996 which must be developed by the National Department of Education and be disseminated to all the provincial Department of Education in order to check implementations and techniques of the policy which will be able to indicate if the policy is effective or ineffective.
- The National Department of Education in conjunction with the Provincial Department of Education in all provinces and all national schools must ensure



that the school code of conduct are not only drafted in English, instead the code of conduct must be translated to other languages for instance in IsiZulu and IsiXhosa as well as considering other official languages in order to ensure that students have a clear understanding of the code of conduct.

- The Department of Education should ensure that all South African schools implement well-documented discipline policies, a code of conduct and school rules for their school which must clearly indicate seriousness of carrying a weapon in school as well as the consequences of misbehaviour. The policy must have steps to be followed by the principals and or educators where there are elements of misconduct against the students and sanctions to be issued if the student is found guilty.

Safety in schools is a requirement schools; therefore schools must encourage students to submit their input on the steps can be taken to make them feel safe in order to learn, and play without fear of being hurt emotionally or physically. The Life Orientation module in all secondary schools must include a section on safety where students should be encouraged to report issue of weapons, bullying, drugs, illegal substance, gang activities, and unwanted materials which must be reported to a trusted educator, adult/ and or head of school.

- Department of Education should provide training for educators and principals on the early identification of potential violence within a school.

It is imperative that schools that experience violence related to the use of weapons appoint an active safety and security committee that monitors violence, recommends violence prevention measures; and oversees its implementation. The role of the committee would need to advise on the necessity for and the appropriateness and consequences of any searches for drugs and weapons among students.

- Another way in which school safety and security can be assured by schools is through developing a strategic plan for random search and seizure and drug testing at schools. The strategic plan must be monitored by the head of school and ensure that random search where SAPS must be invited to monthly or bi-monthly search. In addition to that, the head of school must ensure that a task team consisting of the community leaders, SGB member/s, and educators is developed in all South African schools and they must be mandated to report all the random search and seizure and drug testing at schools and assist the SAPS when conducting random searches.
- The Department of Education should ensure that all schools are properly fenced and have tight security.
- The National Department of Education should motivate for the allocation of funds from National/Provincial Treasure budget for schools which are in need to install security measures such as alarm systems, CCTV cameras and metal detectors to eliminate the entry or easy access of weapons, drugs, illegal substance and alcohol into schools. The cost of these measures should be determined by the Department of Education.
- All schools must ensure that there are clear and visible board inside the school which should clearly state in a language understood by everyone that weapons, drugs and other illegal items are not allowed in the school premises. The Department of Education must be committed in ensuring that these boards are monitored in all schools.
- Educators and principals must be trained thoroughly by the Department of Education on how to handle or manage discipline in their schools.

- It is utmost important that all stakeholders should join forces in in order to curb easy access or weapons and other unwanted materials in school to create a safe environment for everyone.
- Schools must be encouraged to regularly invite parents into schools to discuss behaviour of their children and or any other concerns.
- The Department of Education should ensure that there is no corporal punishment, instead ensuring that there are processes for developing clearer communication between teachers, learners and parents on issues of discipline.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This study was conducted in four selected secondary schools within the Province of KZN, UMgundludlovu District- Pietermaritzburg. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. Figures as well as tables were used by the researcher when presenting data.

The study revealed that most students in the survey had witnessed the presence of weapons in school, that knives, guns and other weapons had been seen and on occasion used, and that the effect was anxiety and fear amongst students and teachers.

It is worth noting that the presence and use of weapons in South African schools is alarming and can no longer be ignored; hence it creates an environment which causes students, educators, principals and other stakeholders to feel scared and create an unsafe environment for everyone.

It is evident that collaboration by students, educators, principals, parents, government departments and other stakeholders is fundamental in order to discourage uses of weapon in schools.

## REFERENCES

Akiba, M., LeTendre, G.K. Baker, D.P. and Goesling, B. 2002. Student victimisation: National and school system effects on school violence in 37 Nations. *American Educational Research Journal*. 39(4): 829–853.

Alpaslan, A. H. 2010. *Social research: A step-by-step guide on how to conduct your fourth year research project and write the research report*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

American School Health Association, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Dance, Association for the Advancement of Health Education and Society for Public Health Education 1989. *The National Adolescent Student Health Survey*. A report on the Health of America's Youth, Oakland, CA: Third Party.

Available:

<http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/viewFile/3904/3821> (Accessed on 04 November 2014).

Benbenishty, R. and Astor, R.A. 2008. School violence in an international context: a call for global collaboration in research and prevention, paper presented at *the IV World Conference: violence at school*, June 2008, Lisbon, Portugal, pp. 59-80. Available: <http://www.ijvs.org/files/Revue-07/04.-Benbenishty-ljvs-7.pdf> (Accessed on 04 June 2015).

Bezuidenhout, C. and Joubert, S. 2008. *Child and youth misbehaviour in South Africa: A holistic approach*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Bezuidenhout, C. 2013. *Child and youth misbehaviour in South Africa: A holistic approach*. 3<sup>rd</sup>ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C. and Sithole, S.L. 2013. *Fundamental of social research methods, an African perspective*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.

Bowman, C., and Wells, R. 1999. Weapons and violence in schools. *Edge ethics of development in a global environment*, Available: [https://www.stanford.edu/class/e297/poverty\\_prejudice/gandcolor/weapons.htm](https://www.stanford.edu/class/e297/poverty_prejudice/gandcolor/weapons.htm) (Accessed on 07 March 2015).

Burton, P. 2008a. *Merchants, skollies and stone: Experiences of school violence in South Africa*. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town.

Burton, P. 2008b. Dealing with school violence in South Africa. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, *CJCP Issue Paper No.4*, Cape Town.

Burton, P. 2008c. Learning to fear, fearing to learn. Measuring the extent of school violence. *SA Crime Quarterly*, 75(26): 15-20.

Burton, P. and Leoschut, L. 2012a. *School violence in South Africa: National school violence study*. Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, CJCP Monograph series, No. 12. Cape Town.

Burton, P. and Leoschut, L. 2012b. *National school violence survey*. Cape Town: Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Cape Town.

Business Tech. n.d. South Africa is the second worst country in the world for gun deaths. Business Tech (online), June 22. Available: <http://businesstech.co.za/news/government/91284/south-africa-is-the-second-worst-country-for-gun-deaths-in-the-world/> (Accessed 20 January 2016).

Casella, R., Potterton, M. and Visser, F.P. 2006. Guns in schools: a closer look at accidental shootings: review; commentary. *South African Psychiatry Review*, 9(4):2 16-219.

Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence. 2004. *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*. Boulder, Colorado: Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado. Available at <http://www.colorado.edu/scpv/blueprints>. (Accessed 12 June 2015).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1993. Violence-related attitudes and behaviours of high school students- New York City, 1992. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly report*, 42(40): 773-777.

Collings, S.J. 2008. Temporal trends in the nature and scope of reported cases of child sexual abuse in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Child Abuse Research in South Africa*, 9 (1):11-14.

*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. 2004. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cowan, K. C., Vaillancourt, K. Rossen, E. and Pollitt, K. 2013. *A framework for safe and successful schools*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Crime Stats SA. n.d. *Crime stats simplified*. (Online). Available: <http://www.crimestatssa.com/didyouknow.php> (Accessed 08 July 2014).

Daily News. 2012. Pupil killed over cellphone. *IOL news/Daily news*, 20 March, Available: <http://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/pupil-killed-over-cell-phone-1.1260765>. (Accessed 20 May 2015)

De Mattos, MI. 2009. Violence in schools: issues of culture and human formation, A paper presented at the Congress of 2009 of LASA (Latin American Studies Association) in Rio de Janeiro, from 11 to 14 June 2009. Available: <http://www.pdfio.com/k-1240279.html> (Accessed 07 June 2015).

Department of Basic Education. 2010. *Building a culture of responsibility and humanity in our schools: A guide for teachers*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.

Department of Education. 2004. *Regulations relating to safety measures at independent schools (No. 975 of 2004)*, Government Gazette. No. 26663, 20 August, Available:

<http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=GoOMeR1XtDs%3D&tabid=193&mid=485> (Accessed 12 March 2015).

De Voe, J.F., Peter, K. Kaufman, P. Ruddy, S.A. Miller, A.K. Planty, M. Snyder, T.D. and Rand, M.R. 2003. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2003*. NCES 2004–004/NCJ 201257. U.S. Departments of Education and Justice. Washington DC: NCES, Available: <http://nces.ed.gov> (Accessed 20 June 2014).

De Vos, AS., Delport, C.S.L., Fouche, C.B. and Strydom, H. 2011. *Research at grass roots for the social sciences and human services professions*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Pretoria: Van Schaik.

De Wet, C. 2005. The voices of victims and witnesses of school bullying. *KOERS, Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, 70(4): 705-725.

De Wet, C. 2007. School violence in Lesotho: the perceptions, experiences and observations of group of learners. *South African Journal of Education*, 27: 673-689.

De Wet, NC. 2007. Free State educators' perceptions and observations of learner-on-learner and educator-on-learner school violence. *Education as Change*, 11(1): 59–85.

Education Labour Relations Council. 2003. *Policy handbook for educators*. Johannesburg: Education Labour Relations Council.

Ekpenyong, S.N. 2012. Drug abuse in Nigerian Schools: a study of selected Secondary Institutions in Bayelsa State South-South Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 5 (3): 260-268, Available: [http://www.ij sre.com/Vol.,%205\\_3\\_-Ekpenyong.pdf](http://www.ij sre.com/Vol.,%205_3_-Ekpenyong.pdf) (Accessed 17 June 2015).

Eliasov, N. and Frank C. 2000. *Crime and violence in schools in transition: A survey of crime and violence in twenty schools in the Cape Metropole and beyond*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

*English Dictionary*. 1999. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Haddock.

Enoch, B. 2013. Video: inside SA's violent classrooms. eNCA, September 20. Available: <https://www.enca.com/south-africa/look-back-sas-violent-classrooms> (Accessed 21 August 2015).

Ferguson, C.J. 2010. *Violent crime, clinical and social implications*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fick, A. 2014. *South Africa: A history of violence* (Online). Available: <http://www.enca.com/opinion/south-africa-history-violence> (Accessed 07 July 2014).

Frank, C. 2006. Abuse of a different kind: Adults using children to commit crime. *SA Crime Quarterly*, 16: 13-18.

Furlong, M., Morrison, G. Skiba, R. and Cornell, D. 2007. Issues in School Violence research. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 19(2): 159-160.

Gina, J. and White, T. 2014. Managing safety and security in rural and township schools: case studies from KwaZulu-Natal, *Southern African Journal of Criminology*, 27 (2): 56-68.

Govender, K., Naicker, S. N., Meyer-Weitz, A., Fanner, J., Naidoo, A., and Penfold, W. L. 2013. Associations between perceptions of school connectedness and adolescent health risk behaviors in South African high school learners. *Journal of School Health*, 83(1): 614-622.

Gun Free South Africa. n.d. *Making your school a firearm free zone: Draft for use in Department of Education and SAPS pilot*. Johannesburg: Gun Free SA.



Hemson, C. 2013. The persistence of violence and implications for change, paper presented at the Strategies for Nonviolence in Education in Education Conference, 1-3 July, Durban, Available: <http://www.icon.org.za/current/wp=content/uploads/2013/07/Hemson.pdf> (Accessed 01 February 2014).

Hodges, E., Boivin M. Vitaro, K. and Bukowski, W. 1999. The power of friendship, protection against an escalating cycle of peer victimisation. *Development Psychology*, 35 (1): 94-101.

Hoffman, A.M., and Randal, W. (2004). *Teen Violence: A global view*. Westport: Greenwood, Available; <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/book-reviews/13818973/teen-violence-global-book> (Accessed 17 January 2014).

Hornby, A.S. 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary*. London: Oxford University Press.

Horsman, J. 2004. The impact of violence on learning for youth: what can we do? *Parkdale Project, Spiral Community Resource Group*. Toronto, Ontario. Canada.

Institution Research Ethics Committee. 2013. *Durban University of Technology Ethics Policy*. Durban, South Africa: Durban University of Technology.

International Association of Chiefs of Police. 1999. *Guide for Preventing and Responding to School Violence*. Washington: Washington. Available: [http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/links/ohs\\_respondingtoschoolviolenceguide.pdf](http://www.publicsafety.ohio.gov/links/ohs_respondingtoschoolviolenceguide.pdf) (Accessed 15 January 2016).

Jacobs, L. 2014. Framing of school violence in the South African printed media- (mis)information to the public. *South African Journal of Education*. 34(1); 1-16, Available: <http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje/article/view/697/407> (Accessed 02 August 2015).

Kaplan, G. 2013. KZN pupil speared to death. *Eyewitness News* (Online), 30 October: Available: <http://ewn.co.za/2013/10/30/KZN-pupil-speared-to-death-at-school> (Accessed 12 January 2016).

Kehoe, J. n.d. *What is the definition of school violence?* (Online) Available: [http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_5752066\\_definition-school-violence.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5752066_definition-school-violence.html) (Accessed 07 July 2014).

Kothari, C.R. 2004. *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*, 2<sup>nd</sup>ed., Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd.

Kruger, R. 2013. *SA Schools still battling with bullying*. The Skills portal. Available: <http://www.skillsportal.co.za/page/education/schools/1632639-SA-schools-still-battling-with-bullying> (Accessed 04 July 2015).

KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. 2012. *Measures to counter violence, drugs abuse, and other forms of crimes in public schools, (KZN circular No. 32 of 2012)*, Pietermaritzburg: KZN Education.

Lancaster, K. 2013. SA pupils terrified of school bullies. *IOL news*, 28 January. Available: <http://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/family/kids/sa-pupils-terrified-of-school-bullies-1459765> (Accessed 10 December 2015).

Leoschut, L. 2013. *Research bulletin: Snapshot results of the 2012 National School Violence Study*, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, no 5, Cape Town, South Africa: CJCP Publications, Available: <http://www.cjcp.org.za/cjcp-research-bulletins.html> (Accessed 28 August 2015).

Leoschut, L. and Burton, P. 2006. How rich the rewards? Results of the 2005 National Youth Victimization study, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention, Monograph series, No 1, Cape Town.

*Longmans Dictionary of the English Language*. 1984. 1<sup>st</sup>ed, Harlow Essex, England.

Maphalala, M.C., and Mabunda, P.L. 2014. Gangsterism: Internal and External Factors Associated with school violence in selected Western Cape High Schools, *International Journal of Criminal Justice Science*, 5 (1): 61-70, Available: <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSSA/JSSA-05-0-000-14-Web/JSSA-05-1-000-14-Abst-PDF/JSSA-05-1-061-14-027-Maphalala-M-C/JSSA-05-1-061-14-027-Maphalala-M-C-Tt.pdf> (Accessed 15 August 2015).

Marshal, L. McGee, R. and Williams, S. 2011. Why do New Zealand high school students carry weapons?, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 44(3): 425-439. Available: <http://G:/Australian%20&%20New%20Zealand%20Journal%20of%20Criminology-2011-Marsh-425-39.pdf> (Accessed 10 January 2016).

Masitsa, M.G. 2011. Exploring safety in township secondary schools in the Free State province, *South African Journal of Education*, 31: 163-174, Available: <http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje/article/view/477/245> (Accessed 29 July 2014).

Massachusetts Department of Education. 2014. School Safety and Discipline Report Instruments version 2, Available: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/guides/ssdr.pdf> (Accessed 14 November 2014).

Mestry, R. and Khumalo, J. 2012. Governing bodies and learner discipline: managing rural schools in South Africa through a code of conduct, *South African Journal of Education*, 32: 97-110, Available: <http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje/article/view/402/286> (Accessed 29 July 2015).

Miller, R.L. and Brewer, J.D. 2003. *The A-Z of social research*. New York: Sage.

Mncube, V. 2014. Preventing violence in South African schools: control and punish or more effective school management? *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5 (3): 416-421.

Mncube, V. and Harber C. 2013. *The dynamics of violence in South African schools: Report*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Moyo, G., Khewu, N.P.D. and Bayaga, A. 2014. Disciplinary practices in schools and principles of alternatives to corporal punishment strategies, *South African Journal of Education*, 34 (1): 1-14.

Msunduzi Municipality. n.d. Available: <http://www.msunduzi.gov.za/site/home> (Accessed 12 October 2014).

Mugenda, M.O. and Mugenda, A.G. 1999. *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: ACTS Press.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2001. *Youth risk behavior surveillance*. Washington, United State of America. (Online) Available: <http://www.cdk.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss510491.htm> (Accessed 14 July 2014).

National School Safety Center. n.d. *School violence, weapons, crime and bullying*. Available: <http://www.nssc1.org/> (Accessed 17 April 2014).

Ncontsha, V.N. and Shumba, A. 2013. The nature, causes and effects of school violence in South African high schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 33 (3): 1-15.

Ndetei\*, D.M., Ongecha-Owuor, F.A. Khasakhala, L. Mutiso, V. Odhiambo, G. and Kokonya, D.A. 2007. Traumatic experiences of Kenyan secondary school students. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 19(2): 147-155.

Neser, J., Prinsloo, J. Ladoko, A. and Ovens, M. 2007. An exploration of certain psychosocial dimension of peer victimisation in public schools. Pretoria, South Africa: The Institution for Criminological Sciences (ICS), UNISA.

Netshitangani, T. 2014a. Fighting the scourge: Violence and curriculum delivery in urban South African schools. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20):1658-1667.

Netshitangani, T. 2014b. The unprofessional conduct of educators in South African secondary schools and the escalation of violence. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(20): 1840-1864 Available:<http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/download/3925/3841> (Accessed on 04 November 2015).

Neuman, L. 1997. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Newman, L. 2008. *School violence rife in KZN*, IOL News, 21 August, p. 1, Available:<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/school-violence-rife-in-kzn-1.413274> (Accessed 23 May 2015).

Pickett, W., Craig, W., Harel, Y., Cunningham, J., Simpson, K., Molcho, M., Mazur, J., Dostaler, S., Overpeck, M.D. and Currie, C.E. 2005. Cross-national study of fighting and weapon carrying as determinants of adolescent injury. *Pediatrics* (Online), 116 (6): e855-863, Available:[www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2005-0607](http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2005-0607) (Accessed 12 June 2015).

Parker, F. 2010. *Why South Africa is so violent* (online). Available: <http://mg.co.za/article/2010-11-09-why-south-africa-is-so-violent> (Accessed 07 July 2015).

Patel, K.2013. Daily Maverick. South Africa Crime Statistics: *Sunny with a chance of murder* (Online) Available: <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-09-20-sa-crime-statistics-sunny-with-a-chance-of-murder> (Accessed 14 November 2014).

Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* 3rd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Paulette, M.R. 2008. *Triangulation in the sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*, Lisa Given ed: Sage Publications.

Payet, C. and Shaik, N. 2013.KZN school violence shocker. *IOL News* (Online), 13 October. Available:<http://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/kzn-school-violence-shocker-1.1591152> (Accessed 14 December 2014).

Piliso, S. 2000. War against guns: a new scheme aims to rid schools of the deadly curse of firearms. *Drum Magazine*, 93(419):16-17.

Prinsloo, I.J. 2005. How safe are South African schools? *South African Journal of Education*, 25(1): 5–10.

Ramorola, M. Z. and Joyce T.M. 2014. The links between school violence and drug usage in schools: external or internal factor? *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology* (Online), 5(1): 11-18. Available:<http://www.krepublishers.com/02-Journals/JSSA/JSSA-05-0-000-14-Web/JSSA-05-1-000-14-Abst-PDF/JSSA-05-1-011-14-021-Ramorola-M-Z/JSSA-05-1-011-14-021-Ramorola-M-Z-Tt.pdf> (Accessed 10 December 2015).

Republic of South Africa 1996. *National Education Policy Act (No 27 of 1996)*. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa 1996b. *The South African Schools Act (No 84 of 1996)*. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. 1996a. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. 1997. *Abolition of Corporal Punishment Act No. 33 of 1997*. *Government Gazette No. 18256*, Available: <http://www.info.gov.za/view/downloadFileAction?id=70779> (Accessed 05 September 2014).

Republic of South Africa. 2001. *South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) Regulations for safety measures Act in Public Schools*. Government Gazette number 22754: 12 October.

Republic of South Africa. 2008. *Child Justice Act, Regulations to child justice*. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa. 2013. *The Dangerous Weapons Act (No 15 of 2013)*. Pretoria, South Africa: Government Printer.

Research and Evaluation Report. n.d. *Reportable criminal offenses*. Available: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/research/discipline/offenses/> (Accessed 30 July 2014).

Robers, S., Zhang, J., Truman, J. and Snyder, T.D. 2012. *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2011(NCES 2012-002/NCJ 236021)*, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington DC: NCES, Available: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013036.pdf> (Accessed 14 June 2014).

Schindler L. n.d. Causes of school violence, *Life* 123, Available:<http://www.life123.com/parenting/young-children/child-discipline/causes-of-school-violence.shtml> (Accessed 22 May 2015).

Sekaran, U. 2000. *Research methods for business*. New York: John Wiley and Son, Inc.

Sekaran, U., and Bougies, R. 2010. *Research methods for business: a skill building approach*, 5th ed, Chichester, United Kingdom: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Senoti, N. 2003. Violence in South African Schools. *Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa*, 10 (4): 40-48.

Sheley, J.F. and Wright, J.D. 1998. *High school youths, weapons, and violence: A national survey*. Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Dept. of Justice. Washington, DC: NCJRS Available: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/172857.pdf> (Accessed 12 March 2014).

Smith E. 2007. School violence: Tough problems demand smart answers. *Child Abuse Research in South Africa*, 8 (2): 53-59.

Snodgrass, L. 2003. The role of conflict management in educational transformation. *Annual Journal of South African Association of Women Graduates*, 23 (3):25-28.

South African Council of Educators. 2011. *School-based violence report: An overview of school-based violence in South Africa*. Centurion, South Africa: SACE.

South African Human Rights Commission. 2006. *Report on the public hearing on school-based violence*. Braamfontein: SAHRC. [http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Reports/SBV%20Report\\_Intro.pdf](http://www.sahrc.org.za/home/21/files/Reports/SBV%20Report_Intro.pdf) (Accessed 10 February 2015).



South African Institute of Race Relations. 2008. *South African schools most dangerous in the world*. (Online) Available: <http://www.saiir.org.za/press>. (Accessed 02 January 2015).

Squelch, J. 2001. Do school governing bodies have a duty to create safe schools? *Perspectives in Education*, 19:137–149.

Sullivan, K. (2006). *Bullying: How to spot it, how to stop it: A guide for parents and teachers*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. London: Rodale International.

Swart, E and Bredekamp, J.2009. Non-physical bullying: exploring the perspective of grade 5 girls. *South African Journal of Education*, 29:405-425. Available: <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/saje/v29n3/a08v29n3.pdf> (Accessed 10 August 2015).

Thaler, K. 2011. *Weapons, violence and the perpetrator-victim nexus in South Africa. Microcon research working paper No. 51. A micro level analysis of violence conflict*. Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, Brighton. Available: [http://www.microconflict.eu/publications/RWP51\\_KT.pdf](http://www.microconflict.eu/publications/RWP51_KT.pdf) (Accessed 16 May 2015).

Thurnherr, J., Mitchaud, P.A. Berchtold, A. Akre, C. and Suris, J.C. 2008. Youths carrying a weapon or using a weapon in a fight: What makes the difference? *Health Education Research*, 24 (2): 270-279, Available: <http://her.oxfordjournals.org/content/24/2/270.full.pdf+html?sid=855fb17f-9682-4c50-b4bc-e6d9b388e703> (Accessed 12 October 2015).

Townsend, M. 2014. Gangs draw up list of girls to rape as proxy attack on rivals, *The Guardian*, Available: <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/19/gangs-rape-lists-sex-assault>. (Accessed 29 July 2014).

UNICEF. 2009. *Child friendly school programming: Global Evaluation Report*. New York, UNICEF, Evaluation Office.

United Nations on Drugs and Crime. 2011. *Global study on homicide*. Vienna: UNODC, Available: [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data\\_andanalysis/statistics/Homicide/Globa\\_study\\_on\\_homicide\\_2011\\_web.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data_andanalysis/statistics/Homicide/Globa_study_on_homicide_2011_web.pdf)

(Accessed 04 June 2014).

Vally, S. 2005. *Corporal punishment and bullying: The rights of learners for learners, parents and educators*. (Online) Available: <http://www.erp.org.za/pdf/punishment-boolet-web.pdf> (Accessed 26 October 2014).

Van den Aardweg, E.M. 1987. Possible causes of school violence. *South African Journal of Education*, 7:174-181.

Van den Aardweg, E.M. and Van den Aardweg, E.D. 1988. *Dictionary of educational psychology*. Arcadia, Pretoria, South Africa: E and E Enterprises.

Van Jaarsveld, L. 2008. Violence in schools: A security problem? *Acta criminologica*, 40 (2): 175-188.

Van Niekerk, A.S.L. 1998. *Dwelms: Wat jy en jou kind moet weet. (Drugs): What you and your child should know*. Mmabatho, South Africa: Peoples Press and Publication.

Van Wyk, J. 2008. *Study on violence in South African schools shocks*, *Education Library News Blog*, South Africa: University of Pretoria. Available: <http://www.edulibpretoria.wordpress.com/2008/04/30/study-on-violence-in-South-African-schools-shocks> (Accessed 01 December 2014).

Victory over Violence. n.d. *School violence*. (Online) Available: <http://www.vov.com/issues/preventing-school-violence> (Accessed 08 July 2015).

Visser, F.P. 2006. Guns in schools: a closer look at accidental shootings. *South African Psychiatry review, An African Neuroscience Journal*, 9 (4) 221.

Ward, C.L., Van der Merwe, A. and Dewes A. 2012. *Youth violence: Sources and solutions in South Africa*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Claremont, South Africa: UCT Press.

Warwick, D.P. and Lininger, C.A.S. 1975. *The sample survey: Theory and practice*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. New York: Mcgraw-Hill.

World Health Organisation (WHO) .n.d. *Violence Prevention alliance* (Online). Available: <http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/> (Accessed 23 May 2015).

Writer, S., 2015. Private vs public schools: is it worth the money? *Business Tech* (online), January 19. Available: <http://businesstech.co.za/news/general/77443/private-vs-public-schools-is-it-worth-the-money/> (Accessed 20 January 2016).

Xaba, M.I. 2011. A qualitative analysis of facilities maintenance- a school governance function in South Africa, *South African Journal of Education*, 32: 215-226, Available:<http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje/article/view/479/239> (Accessed 29 July 2015).

Young, T.R. and Arringo, B.A. 1999. *The dictionary of critical social sciences*. New York: Sage.

Zulu, B.M., Urbani, G. and Van der Merwe, A. 2004. Violence as an impediment to a culture of teaching and learning in some South African schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 24 (2): 170-175.

## Appendixes



### Appendix A: Participant letter of information, principal

PO Box 31114  
Imbali,  
Pietermaritzburg  
3219

**Title of the Research Study:** The use of weapons by students in schools in the UMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Thabani Mhlongo, B-Tech Degree, Public Management

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Mr Crispin Hemson, MEd

Dear Principal \_\_\_\_\_,

I am conducting a research project on the use of weapons in schools in Umgungundlovu District: Pietermaritzburg- KwaZulu Natal. The purpose of this research projects to investigate the experience and perception of students regarding the use and carrying of weapons in schools in this district. The aim of the study is discourage the carrying and use of weapons in schools in a bid to create a peaceful and conducive learning environment.

This study will contribute to the approach taken at national and provincial levels in encouraging a culture of teaching and learning. It will involve participants who are students, teachers and principals.

I am kindly requesting you to participate in this study. Your participation and contribution will be highly valued. Participation will take the form of personal interviews for the principals. The duration of these interviews will range from 25 to 35 minutes. It may be that I would ask also that you participate in a group discussion with other participants also.

You are assured that all information gathered in the course of the study will be used for the purpose of this study only. The schools used in this research will not be identified in any publication. Hence, your anonymity will be assured. Should you wish to withdraw from the study/research, you are free to do so at any time, and are under no obligation to give reasons for that.

My contact phone numbers are 033 260 4108 (office), and 073 615 0664 (cellphone). I can be reached by email on Thabani.mhlongo@kznworks.gov.za. Any questions or concerns regarding the research can be directed to Mr. Crispin Hemson, International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON), Durban University of Technology, on 031 373 5499 or 082 926 5333.

Please could you please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your willingness to participate in the research.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Student name: Thabani Mhlongo

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Durban University of Technology

Supervisor / Promoter: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix A1: Participant letter of information, student**

PO Box 31114  
Imbali,  
Pietermaritzburg  
3219

**Title of the Research Study:** The use of weapons by students in schools in the UMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Thabani Mhlongo, B-Tech Degree, Public Management

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Mr Crispin Hemson, MEd.

Dear learner \_\_\_\_\_,

I am conducting a research project on the use of weapons in schools in Umgungundlovu District: Pietermaritzburg- KwaZulu Natal. The purpose of this research project is to investigate the experience and perception of students regarding the use and carrying of weapons in schools in this district. The aim of the study is discourage the carrying and use of weapons in schools in a bid to create a peaceful and conducive learning environment.

This study will contribute to the approach taken at national and provincial levels in encouraging a culture of teaching and learning. It will involve participants who are students, teachers and principals.

I am kindly requesting you to participate in this study. Your participation and contribution will be highly valued. Participation will take the form of filling in a

questionnaire It may be that I would ask also that you participate in a group discussion with other participants also.

You are assured that all information gathered in the course of the study will be used for the purpose of this study only. The schools used in this research will not be identified in any publication. Hence, your anonymity will be assured. Should you wish to withdraw from the study/research, you are free to do so at any time, and are under no obligation to give reasons for that.

My contact phone numbers are 033 260 4108 (office), and 073 615 0664 (cellphone). I can be reached by email on Thabani.mhlongo@kznworks.gov.za. Any questions or concerns regarding the research can be directed to Mr. Crispin Hemson, International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON), Durban University of Technology, on 031 373 5499 or 082 926 5333.

May you please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your willingness to participate in the research.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Student name: Thabani Mhlongo

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Durban University of Technology

Supervisor / Promoter: Mr. Crispin Hemson

Contact Details: 031 373 5499 or 082 926 5333



**Appendix A2: Participant letter of information, educator**

PO Box 31114  
Imbali,  
Pietermaritzburg  
3219

**Title of the Research Study:** The use of weapons by students in schools in the UMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Thabani Mhlongo, B-Tech Degree, Public Management

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Mr Crispin Hemson, MEd

Dear Educator\_\_\_\_\_,

I am conducting a research project on the use of weapons in schools in Umgungundlovu District: Pietermaritzburg- KwaZulu Natal. The purpose of this research project is to investigate the experience and perception of students regarding the use and carrying of weapons in schools in this district. The aim of the study is discourage the carrying and use of weapons in schools in a bid to create a peaceful and conducive learning environment.

This study will contribute to the approach taken at national and provincial levels in encouraging a culture of teaching and learning. It will involve participants who are students, teachers and principals.

I am kindly requesting you to participate in this study. Your participation and contribution will be highly valued. Participation will take the form of focus group



interviews for leaners and personal interviews for the principals. The duration of these interviews will range from 25 to 35 minutes. It may be that I would ask also that you participate in a group discussion with other participants also.

You are assured that all information gathered in the course of the study will be used for the purpose of this study only. The schools used in this research will not be identified in any publication. Hence, your anonymity will be assured. Should you wish to withdraw from the study/research, you are free to do so at any time, and are under no obligation to give reasons for that.

My contact phone numbers are 033 260 4108 (office), and 073 615 0664 (cellphone). I can be reached by email on Thabani.mhlongo@kznworks.gov.za. Any questions or concerns regarding the research can be directed to Mr. Crispin Hemson, International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON), Durban University of Technology, on 031 373 5499 or 082 926 5333.

May you please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your willingness to participate in the research.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Student name: Thabani Mhlongo

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Durban University of Technology

Supervisor / Promoter: Mr. Crispin Hemson

Contact Details: 031 373 5499 or 082 926 5333



**Appendix A3: Participant letter of information, students in focus groups**

PO Box 31114  
Imbali,  
Pietermaritzburg  
3219

**Title of the Research Study:** The use of weapons by students in schools in the UMgungundlovu district, KwaZulu-Natal

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Thabani Mhlongo, B-Tech Degree, Public Management

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Mr Crispin Hemson, MEd

Dear Learner

I am conducting a research project on the use of weapons in schools in Umgungundlovu District: Pietermaritzburg- KwaZulu Natal. The purpose of this research project is to investigate the experience and perception of students regarding the use and carrying of weapons in schools in this district. The aim of the study is discourage the carrying and use of weapons in schools in a bid to create a peaceful and conducive learning environment.

This study will contribute to the approach taken at national and provincial levels in encouraging a culture of teaching and learning. It will involve participants who are students, teachers and principals.

I am kindly requesting you to participate in this study. Your participation and contribution will be highly valued. Participation will take the form of focus group

interviews for learners and personal interviews for the principals. It may be that I would ask also that you participate in a group discussion with other participants also.

You are assured that all information gathered in the course of the study will be used for the purpose of this study only. The schools used in this research will not be identified in any publication. Hence, your anonymity will be assured. Should you wish to withdraw from the study/research, you are free to do so at any time, and are under no obligation to give reasons for that.

My contact phone numbers are 033 260 4108 (office), and 073 615 0664 (cellphone). I can be reached by email on Thabani.mhlongo@kznworks.gov.za. Any questions or concerns regarding the research can be directed to Mr. Crispin Hemson, International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON), Durban University of Technology, on 031 373 5499 or 082 926 5333.

May you please fill in and sign the attached declaration letter indicating your willingness to participate in the research.

I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Student name: Thabani Mhlongo

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Durban University of Technology

Supervisor / Promoter: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Declaration of content form

### THE USE OF WEAPONS BY STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS IN THE UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT, KWAZULU-NATAL

Statement of Agreement to participate in the research study

I hereby \_\_\_\_\_ confirm my willingness to participate in this research. I have been informed by the researcher (name of the researcher) \_\_\_\_\_ about the nature, benefits and risks of this study. Research Ethics Clearance Number:

\_\_\_\_\_

I understand the content of the letter that describes the nature, purpose and aim of the study.

I have received, read and understand the participant letter of information with regards to this 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 understand that the school involved will not be identified. I undertake to protect the security of other respondents by not divulging information provided by them in any group interview.

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.

I am aware that I will not be getting any payment for taking part in this study.

I have been given the contact details of the researcher.

<b>Full name of the participant</b>	
<b>Signature of the participant</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Full Name of Legal Guardian (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Full name of the witness (if applicable)</b>	
<b>Signature of the witness</b>	
<b>Date</b>	

**Confirmation from the researcher that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study**

<b>Full name of the researcher</b>	
<b>Signature of the researcher</b>	
<b>Date</b>	



**Appendix C: Questionnaire schedule, student**

1. Can please give the grade you are doing, your age and your gender.

<b>Grade</b>	
<b>Age</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Boy Girl (circle the right one)</b>

2 How safe do you feel when you are school? **(Tick the right one)**

Very safe	Safe	Usually safe	Unsafe	Very unsafe

3 Is there a code of conduct at your school?

Yes	
No	

4 What does it say about weapons?

---



---



---



---

5 Have you ever seen a weapon at school?

Yes	
No	

6 If yes, what weapon or weapons did you see?

---

---

---

---

7 If yes, how often do you see a weapon?

*Daily          Weekly          monthly          several times a year*  
*Maybe once a year (please circle)*

Give a fuller explanation if you wish

---

---

---

8 If yes, who had the weapon? Here, we do not need to know the name of the person, but whether it was a student, a teacher, a parent, and so on.

---

---

---

---

9 Have you ever seen a weapon being used at school?

Yes	
No	



10 If yes, describe the situation or situations in which the weapon was used?

---

---

---

---

11 If yes, what were your feelings when you saw a weapon being used?

---

---

---

---

12 Have you yourself ever brought a weapon at school?

Yes	
No	

13 Did you ever use a weapon at school/

Yes	
No	

14 If yes, how did you use it, and why?

---

---

---

---

15 Why do you think someone would bring a weapon to school?

---

---

---

---

16 What is the main action that you think people must take about weapons in school?

---

---

---

---

17 What rule or rules should apply to the use of weapons at school?

---

---

---

---

18 Any other comments

---

---

---

---





**Appendix D: Questionnaire schedule, educators**

1. Please state your gender and grade you teaching

<p><b>Gender:</b></p> <p><b>Grade teaching:</b></p>
--

2 Is there a code of conduct at your school?

---

---

---

---

---

---

3 What does it say about weapons?

---

---

---

---

---

---

4 Have you ever seen a weapon at school?

Yes	
No	

5 If yes, what weapon or weapons did you see?

---

---

---

---

---

---

6 If yes, how often do you see a weapon?

*Daily Weekly monthly several times a year*

*Maybe once a year (please circle)*

Give a fuller explanation if you wish

---

---

---

---

---

7 If yes, who had the weapon? Here, we do not need to know the name of the person, but whether it was a student, a teacher, a parent, and so on.

---

---

---

---

---

8 Have you ever seen a weapon being used at school?

Yes	
No	

9 if yes, describe the situation or situations in which the weapon was used?

---

---

---

---

---

10 If yes, what were your feelings when you saw a weapon being used?

---

---

---

---

---

---

11 Have you yourself ever brought a weapon at school?

Yes	
No	

12 Did you ever use a weapon at school/

Yes	
No	

13 If yes, how did you use it, and why?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

14 Why do you think someone would bring a weapon to school?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

15 What is the main action that you think people must take about weapons in school?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

16 What rule or rules should apply to the use of weapons at school?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



17 Any other comments

---

---

---

---

---

---



### **Appendix E: Interview schedule, principals**

1. Kindly give your total number of years in the teaching profession including years in service as principal and how many teachers including other staff are there in your school?
2. How was the school code of conduct in the school drafted? What steps are taken to ensure that learners are aware and understand the code of conduct? Does that code specify anything about weapons?
3. From the questionnaire responses it seems that students see weapons more than the educators. In your mind what is the reason for that?
4. Have you ever discovered weapons such as knife and guns in your school? If yes, what steps do you take to prevent the entry of weapons into your school?
5. What factors do you think motivate students bringing weapons in the school?

6. In your mind, is there a connection between violence related to weapons and issues like drugs and alcohol, bullying and gang activities?
7. What the most effective control measures are with regard to weapons? If this is to happen, is there a way of school developing a real consensus amongst students and staff around responses to violence?
8. Could the community and the school together identify measures that promote safety and trust? If yes, what kinds of measures do you think would be most practical to curb the presence and use of weapons in schools?
9. What disciplinary methods do you use in your school and is it covered in your code of conduct? And does discipline in your school achieve the goal of ensuring safety and security of staff and students?
10. When last action was taken against bullying, and what form that action took?
11. Can you comment on the degree of safety of staff in your school and what is the role of teachers in ensuring that learners are safe in your school?
12. Do any staff members have training to enable them to handle violence or to manage conflict in your school?



#### **Appendix F: Focus group interviews schedule, students**

1. According to the responses from the questionnaires most students and teachers feel safe at school, is it a true reflection of your feelings about safety? If not what are your feelings about safety?
2. Have you ever experienced violence, in which weapons were used? If YES, can you describe what happened? And how often did such events happen?
3. What impact has the use of weapons had on you and on others?
4. What do you think causes students or others to make use of weapons?
5. In your mind, is there a connection between violence related to weapons and issues like drugs and alcohol, bullying and gang activities?

6. Where have you seen weapons at school? Which places in school are where you are most likely to see weapons?
  
7. If you ever saw any student carrying a weapon in your school, did you report it? If so, to whom, and how was that dealt with?
  
8. Is it true that that incidents of insecurity are increasing in schools? If true how would you effectively deal with insecurity in schools?
  
9. What more do you think your school could do to prevent students bringing in weapons and using them?
  
10. Is there any action **you** could take to prevent the use of weapons at school? If so, what?

**Appendix G: Permission letter to conduct research from the Department of Education-KZN Province**



Mr TM Mhlongo  
PO Box 3114  
Unit – J  
IMBALI  
3219


Dear Mr Mhlongo

**PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: “**THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS REGARDING WEAPONS IN SCHOOLS IN UMGUNGUNDLOVU DISTRICT: PIETERMARITZBURG-KWAZULU-NATAL**”, 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 April 2015 to 30 April 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.

UMgungundlovu District

  
**Nkosingathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**  
**Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 13 April 2015**

**KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance  
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 **beyond the call of duty**  
EMAIL ADDRESS: [kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za) / [Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za)  
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: [www.kzneducation.gov.za](http://www.kzneducation.gov.za)