

**Gender violence at Blessed High School: views from learners, teachers and parents at
Ugu District in KwaZulu-Natal**

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**A research study submitted as the full dissertation component in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Master of Education Degree in the School of Education,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.**

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September 2015

Supervisor's Statement

As the candidate's supervisor, I agree / do not agree to the submission of this dissertation



Signed í ..

Name Professor Deevia Bhana

Date September 2015

Declaration

I, Lungile Penelope Ngcobo declare that:

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandfather, Mbalekelwa Joshua Ngcobo. Thank you Fuze for the love and the discipline you instilled in me at a very young age. I know you are proud of your first grandchild Mapholoba where ever you are.

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List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
DoE	Department of Education
DoH	Department of Health
EFA	Education for All
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LRC	Learner Representative Council
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
NSVS	National School Violence Study
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASA	South African Schools
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
TLO	Teacher Liaison Officer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USDP	Ugu District Strategic Plan

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Abstract

Based on a qualitative study at a school in Imfume, Ugu district in KwaZulu-Natal, this dissertation explores the views of learners in Grade 8, teachers and parents in relation to gender violence. Gender relational theory was used as a lens to explore the views of participants in order to investigate how relations of power are manifested. The semi-structured individual interviews and focus group discussions were instrumental within the study with the aim of generating relevant and rich data from the participants. Purposive sampling was used in order to identify relevant participants for the study.

The findings from the study reveal that gender violence is shaped by family backgrounds and cultural beliefs. Boys are perpetrators and girls are victims of violence. In some cases boys are also subjected to violence from older boys and girl-on-girl violence is also prevalent. Teachers' views, attitudes and beliefs played a significant role in normalisation and perpetration of violence in school. Patriarchal and cultural beliefs were evident in the construction of gender identity within the community which further leads to normalisation of gender violence. The findings from the study clearly state that there is a relationship between gender violence occurring at home and the violent behaviour displayed by learners at school which sometimes is a result of the normalization and tolerance of violence by parents at home. The study further states that teachers cannot deal with gender violence alone in schools but a collaborative effort is vital from all relevant stakeholders especially parental body as they are perceived to be the primary educators.

The study recommends interventions to create awareness and a safe environment in and around schools with regards to gender violence. This should be done with the purpose to address the gendered and cultural justification for gender violence at school, at home and within the community.

Keywords: rurality, schools, gender violence, cultural beliefs, learners' and teachers' and parents' perceptions

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction and background to the study

The study investigated learners' teachers' and parents' perceptions of gender violence in a rural school. It was conducted at Blessed High School in the Ugu District in KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher has been employed by the Department of Education as a Youth and Gender Development practitioner in this district for almost a decade and thus has insight into the social practices within the area in terms of gender violence.

The United Nations cites violence in schools as a major social concern (United Nations, 2006), because it undermines the benefits of education, and in some cases causes poor health and a range of psychological traumas among victims (ibid). The World Report on Violence against Children identified the different forms of violence perpetrated at schools, including corporal punishment, sexual violence, gang violence, bullying and conflict situations (Pinheiro, 2006). Violence is defined in terms of a cycle which involves abuse of an individual through physical, sexual, and/or verbal forms of violence manifested at the social and structural levels of a community (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). Various factors influence these different forms of violence in schools, including individual learners' personal understanding of violence, their family or home background and the external environment of the school.

This study employs Connell's (2011) relational gender theory as a lens through which to explore the learners, teachers and parents' perceptions of gender violence. Relational theory regards gender as multi-dimensional, simultaneously incorporating different kinds of relations. These include power as a dimension of gender, and affective and symbolic dimensions. The structure of gender relations changes depending on different circumstances. Therefore, being a woman or a man is not a fixed state; rather it is a condition that is actively under construction (Connell, 2002). Men and women construct themselves as masculine and feminine. Such constructions are common in rural communities in South Africa where religious and cultural patriarchal beliefs are prevalent.

While men benefit from the unequal gender order, they do not benefit equally (Connell, 2002). Gender power relations exist amongst men, especially in relation to homosexuals. Several factors shape how masculinity is constructed by men, including ethnicity, economic status, culture, social context, sexual orientation and educational level. Gender is interpreted as something one does recurrently in interaction with others (Connell, 1995). Power relations also contribute to the negotiation of gender which further contributes to the structuring of societies. Therefore, patriarchal beliefs reproduce the broader societal structure of power relations and inequality.

The study investigated parents' learners' and teachers' perceptions of gender violence in a rural community. Parents are the key role players in the fight against gender violence. UNESCO (2007) states that teachers cannot win the fight against violence on their own. All stakeholders should be involved, especially parents. The South African Schools Violence Survey (2007) found a strong correlation between learners' experience of corporal punishment both at their home and at the school premises. The survey revealed that 57% of parents who administer corporal punishment smack their children and 33% beat them. The World report on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006) noted that culture has influenced the social structure in communities. Culture shapes how parents respond to violence and also shapes social relations amongst learners and staff members in schools. The Report also found that alongside other cruel forms of punishment, corporal punishment has been widely favoured by parents. This explains the multiple dimensions of violence and the links between school violence and violence outside of school, such as family violence and in the society as a whole. Learners who witness violence at home are likely to be involved in school violence.

Although gender violence is universal, its magnitude is not the same across the world. Morrell (1998) & Bhana (2005) note that gender violence in the school context has been identified as a major problem in African countries that calls for urgent action. Gender violence is of universal concern in South Africa. Violence against women in South African townships is exacerbated by the social and economic conditions in such areas that are the legacy of apartheid (Bhana, 2005). According to Meier (2002), gender violence is inseparably linked to social ills such as poverty. Poverty results in young women engaging

in sexually exploitative relationships with teachers or well-off men. These men are sometimes guilty of gender violence. Jewkes (2000) provides examples of female learners being threatened by teachers if they fail to comply with their sexual demands. In the out of school context, some young women date older men (‘sugar daddies’) in order to meet their needs and stay in school (Hunter, 2002; Jewkes and Abrahams, 2002).

Gender and cultural values shape gender violence at school. Bhana (2005) argues that these contextual aspects are vital in understanding gender violence amongst learners. Leach (2002) points out those learners learn to tolerate high levels of violence, especially sexual harassment from teachers. This behaviour reproduces male dominance and demonstrates the power imbalances that exist between the male perpetrators and the female victims of gender violence (Bhana, 2005). However, girls are not just victims. Morojele (2011) observes that they exercise agency to position themselves in complex ways to navigate and even challenge gender violence in a manner that disrupts the conventional and dominant discourses that often portray females as victims of such violence.

According to UNESCO (2013), teachers’ views, attitudes and beliefs in relation to violence play a hugely significant role in the process of the normalisation and perpetuation of violence within schools. Curbing violence in schools will remain a challenge until such time as those in authority stand up against any form of violence in and around schools.

Sexual abuse and the harassment of girls by teachers and some learners is widespread in South African schools. While teachers should play an active part in preventing gender violence amongst learners, this is unfortunately not always the case. Indeed, some teachers perpetrate gender violence during their interaction with learners. Adolescent school girls in South Africa thus not only fear violence from their peers, but from their teachers as well (South African Human Rights Commission, 2006). According to Human Rights Watch (2001), some teachers abuse their authority to take advantage of girls’ vulnerability and negotiate sexual relationships with learners. Sexual harassment, unwelcome touching, and sexualised joking are common behaviours among teachers (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

While teachers have seemingly a key role to play in curbing violence at schools, they cannot do it alone. Mncube & Harberø (2013) study on the dynamics of school violence

notes that South Africa is referred to as the rape capital of the world. A South African pilot survey found that 47% of female educators had been exposed to physical assault, perpetrated by their intimate partners, while 25% of male educators disclosed that they had physically assaulted their partners (Mncube and Harber, 2013). While schools are using Life Skills as a subject to promote awareness of violence and sexual harassment by peers and teachers in schools (Bhana,2012), much remains to be done. Teachers have their own issues and personal experiences of violence that they have not dealt with; this renders them less capable of managing violence in schools (Bhana, de Lange and Mitchell, 2009).

Mirembe *et al.* (2001) study in Malawi found that learners do not report sexual harassment perpetrated by male teachers in school because it is normalised. This is a major problem because such abuse limits their schooling opportunities and hence their chances of success at school and throughout their lives. Schools become unsafe places and girls' chances of success are comprised.

Apart from the physical harm caused by abuse and harassment, Human Rights Watch (2001) notes the psychological and emotional effects. Girls worry about unwanted pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and being deprived of their dignity. A learner's opinion (voice) has been defined as having "a legitimate perspective and opinion with the intention of being present and taking part in educational policies and practises" (Cook-Sather, 2006: 4). Learner involvement is vital in dealing with violence in schools. The National Youth Victimization Study (2005) conducted in South Africa found that 51.4% of the participants had been spanked or caned at school despite the fact that corporal punishment was abolished in schools in 1996 (Morrell, 2001). Human Rights Watch (2001) reported that 37.7% of rape survivors stated the perpetrator was a teacher or principal. Hence, this study investigates learners' views on gender violence at school.

Masculinity is implicated in the quest for power and the enactment of violence. Kesling (2005) observes that masculinity is associated with strength and authority and that men and boys often construct their masculinity on the basis of power, increasing the risk and likelihood of boys engaging in gender related violence at school.

According to the study on Child Abuse & Neglect by Liang, Fisher & Lombard (2007), the statistics reveal that 36,3% of learners were involved in problems related to bullying; 8.2% reported being bullies, while 19.3% were victims of bullying and 8.7% reported themselves as perpetrators of bullying. Any form of school violence, including sexual harassment, abuse, intimidation, victimisation, corporal punishment and bullying is a serious problem in terms of school safety and gender equality.

Prinsloo (2006) notes that girls have the right to equal opportunities, treatment, self-dignity, freedom and security in school. The literature highlights the importance of involving learners, teachers and parents in dealing with violence in and around schools. This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the role that these stakeholders can play in the struggle against violence in schools.

The Ugu District was selected for this study because the researcher has been employed by the Department of Education as a Youth and Gender Development practitioner in this area for almost a decade and has become aware of the social practices within this area relating to gender violence, and the extent of corporal punishment and other forms of violence in schools. There is also widespread gender related violence in the external environment. Violence in the community affects teaching and learning in schools as learners bring their differences and fights to school. Some forms of violence against girls and homosexuals have been normalised. Gays and lesbians are not willing to reveal their sexual preferences due to the fear of being victimised. Forms of violence such as domestic violence are largely unreported.

The views of learners, teachers and parents will provide a wider range of perspectives on the nature of gender violence in school. It is hoped that this study will shed light on gender violence and how it is constructed in schools in order to find solutions.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions were:

1. What are learners, teachers and parents' views on gender violence?
2. How do learners, teachers and parents account for gender violence at Blessed High School?
3. How can learners, teachers and parents contribute to dealing with violence in and around school?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study's objectives were to:

1. Understand the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence.
2. Explore learners, teachers and parents' accounts of gender violence.
3. Investigate the role of learners, teachers and parents in dealing with violence in and around school.

1.4 Overview of the Research Design

A qualitative research design was used for this study that investigated teachers, learners and parents' understanding of the nature and form of gender violence at the school under study. According to Maree (2012), qualitative research is often based in real world settings. Working at a rural school with teachers, learners and parents provided a real setting to understand gender violence. Interviews were conducted to gather data. Whilst other methods, including quantitative methods could have yielded important information, the intention was to understand the real life experiences of the participants close up.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study uses Connell's Gender Relational theory as a theoretical framework. Gender relational theory views gender as a complicated phenomenon, which includes different kinds of relationships. In this study, the participants' views are explored by assessing

gender violence based on the different relations that exist in their social settings. In this study, participants, particularly learners give their interpretation of their experiences and reality of gender violence and power dynamics that are created on their daily social interactions in schools and in the community.

1.6 Location of the Study

This study was conducted at Blessed High School in the Umkomazi Ward in Ugu District. The school is located at Imfume 45km from Scottburgh the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. Imfume is a rural area which is led by the Thoyana Tribal Authority. This area is serviced by Ugu Municipality under Vulamehlo District. Due to the high unemployment rate in the area, people migrate to the cities in search of employment. During the apartheid era, the area was directly affected by political disputes between the African National Congress (ANC) and their political rival, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The KwaZulu government was led by the IFP and the Ugu Local Municipality was also under the leadership of this party. Since the ANC was banned, many of its members were in exile during the apartheid era. The IFP held a great deal of political power in KwaZulu Natal. The violence in Imfume where Blessed High is located was the result of contestation for leadership positions. Certain areas were no-go zones where members of the opposing party were not welcome and faced violent repercussions. Since the 1994 democratic elections, the area has been free of political violence and there is more tolerance between the ANC and IFP.

1.7 Sampling

According to Niewenhuis (2007), sampling is defined as a series of actions to select the study participants. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study. Cohen *et al.* (2007) note that purposive sampling involves handpicking the cases to be used in the sample. The researcher handpicked participants belonging to the groups identified for the study, that is, learners, parents and teachers, depending on their willingness to participate. In selecting the parents, the researcher relied on information from learners and some teachers.

1.8 Data collection and analysis

The empirical data for the study was gathered by means of interviews where the researcher probed the participants' responses to gender violence. The researcher's ability to use her skills to ask questions, probe and listen carefully to the participants resulted in the collection of rich data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Two types of interviews were used, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions.

A focus group consists of selected individuals that come together to discuss a given topic (Cohen *et al.* 2011). The discussion can be held in an informal or formal environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Focus groups produce group responses and not an individual perspective because the participants are required to interact with other group members during the interview (Cohen *et al.* 2011). The interviewer requires skills such as being flexible, objective, empathetic, persuasive, a good listener (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 72).

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The data was coded to develop meaning and the meanings that emerged were then categorized into themes.

1.9 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is structured as follows:

1.9.1 Chapter One: Introduction to the study

This chapter presented an introduction and overview of the study. Gender violence was briefly discussed. The study's objectives and research questions were presented, as well as an overview of the research methodology that was employed to achieve the objectives and answer the research questions. The chapter ended with an outline of the structure of the dissertation.

1.9.2 Chapter Two: Literature review

The chapter reviews the scholarly literature relevant to this study, focusing on gender violence. Gender relational theory used as a theoretical lens to explore teachers' and learners' and parents' views on gender violence is also discussed. Within this theory, a social constructivist approach was used to understand these views. This chapter also engages with

patterns of gender violence and learners and teachers' experiences of gender violence in South African schools. Parents' contribution to violence is examined alongside learners' experiences and voices on gender violence. The role of representative councils of learners in schools, and the impact of gender violence in schools are also reviewed.

1.9.3 Chapter Three: Research design and methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology, sampling, data collection methods and data analysis employed for this study. The context of the school and the community is also presented. The challenges encountered by the researcher and the ethical considerations taken into account in conducting this study are also discussed.

1.9.4 Chapter Four: Data analysis and interpretation

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected by means of interviews with learners, teachers and parents. Six themes emerged: girls and the fear of men and boys in and out of school; girl-on-girl violence; corporal punishment; gender violence and the school neighbourhood; girls and sexual violence; and finally, dealing with violence in school. Informed by gender relational theory, these themes provide insight into gender violence as well as an understanding of the use of violence in gender power relations.

1.9.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendations

The conclusions are based on the analysis of the data presented in Chapter Four. The study's objectives and research questions were presented and the research design employed was briefly discussed. The chapter ends by making recommendations aimed at the department and relevant stakeholders, as well as recommendations for further study.

The following chapter reviews the literature on gender violence in school, at home and in the community.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study investigated learners' views on gender violence within and around schools. Although school violence is a global issue (United Nations, 2006), experiences of school violence within one's surroundings requires local research and intervention. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2011) states that the complexity of gender violence in schools creates the need to adopt a collaborative approach that includes, amongst others, teachers, parents and learners.

This chapter begins by discussing relational gender theory, which is used as a theoretical lens to explore the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence. The literature review focuses on patterns of gender violence; teachers and learners' experiences of gender violence in South African schools; how parents contribute to violence in schools; learners' experiences of and voices on gender violence; the role played by the representative council of learners in school; and the impact of gender violence in schools. The study adopts a qualitative research paradigm, which explores the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence within one school in Ugu District.

2.2 Gender Relational Theory

Connell's (2011) gender relational theory is used as a lens to explore the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence, in relation to their daily interactions. Gender relational theory views gender as a complex phenomenon, which includes various kinds of relationships. In this study, the participants' views are explored by assessing gender violence based on the different relations that exist in their social context. These relations include power as an aspect of gender, emotions and performance (Connell, 2002). Gender relations are different in different social conditions. According to the gender relational theory, being a woman or a man is not a stable state; it is constructed under certain circumstances and is changeable (Connell, 2002). Men and women create themselves as

masculine and feminine. Men gain power from the unequal gender practices that exist in families, schools, churches and the community at large (Connell, 2002). However, not all men gain equal power. This is confirmed by gender power relations amongst men, and towards homosexual men.

Socio-economic status, academic achievements, race and sexual orientation mould the construction of masculinity (Connell, 1995). According to Connell (1995), gender is negotiated through power relations, which affect every day social interactions and may lead to violence. Violence is defined as the actions directed to a person or people using physical force with an aim of hurting or causing damage (Garcia-Moreno, 2006). These social interactions reproduce the broader structures of power and inequality in society. In this study, learners' teachers' and parents' views on gender violence were drawn from their daily interactions. For example, teachers' views on the violence they witness every day and making perpetrators 'invisible' by turning a blind eye or normalising gender violence in school were explored. The study also examined how learners interpret the reality of gender violence and the power dynamics that exist in their daily interactions in their schools, families and the community.

2.2.1 The Social Constructionist Approach

The social constructionist approach was appropriate in investigating the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence in schools as it enabled the researcher to acknowledge and value the participants' point of view. This approach acknowledges that one's personality is socially constructed, which simply means that it depends on one's interaction with others (Burr, 1998). Daily associations with other people (Meyer, Shanahan and Laugksch, 2007) mainly mould one's character. Furthermore, language plays a pivotal role in the manner in which people relate to one another and this is where power manifests itself. Power dynamics that are socially constructed exist within relationships, which form part of who we are as people. Power relations are, in turn, influenced by cultural beliefs and patriarchal practices within communities (Burr, 1998). Families play a leading role in moulding children's behaviour, beliefs and values, which in turn, socialise them into behaving in a gendered-stereotyped manner (Witt, 1997), where girls are

expected to nurture and boys to display unemotional behaviour. Moreover, the violent behaviours and power struggles that boys express are normally imitations of the behaviour exhibited by adult men in their environment (Corey, 2005). These social constructions of masculinity subject boys to school violence, as perpetrators or as victims. Boys' violence is constructed as victory or heroic masculinity, which often results in injury or death (South African Council of Educators, 2011).

2.3 Global Patterns of Gender Violence

According to the United Nations World Report on Violence against Children, many countries are affected by violence irrespective of their economic status (United Nations, 2006). Girls and women, homosexuals, lesbians and bisexuals, are the most common targets. Schools in many countries are not safe, with gender violence of serious concern (UNESCO, 2014). According to Lombard (2012), young people's experiences of violence influence how they interpret gender and construct gender violence in the future. During the UN Summit of world leaders in 2000, the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted and the Education for All (EFA) campaign was launched (Easterly, 2009). The achievement of these objectives is very much dependant on gender equality and the right to education (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012).

In countries such as Switzerland, both boys and girls have been found to contribute to physical violence as perpetrators or victims (SACE, 2011). However, generally, male learners are perceived to be the main perpetrators, while girls' behaviour has gone unnoticed. Scholars note that there is a level of tolerance of certain forms of violence; young people interpret real violence as physical violence amongst men and construct other forms of violence as being unreal (Lombard, 2012). Moreover, relational aggression amongst girls has led to constructed femininities, which involve deliberate social exclusion, gossiping about others, and harming others by destroying their relationships with other people (Crothers *et al.* 2005). Bhana and Pillay's (2011) study on the construction of femininities revealed that girls participated in acts of violence by making fun of others, being involved in physical violence, or embarrassing and disparaging other girls.

Gender violence occurs in all societies and has no boundaries in terms of ethnicity, geography, cultural identity, or social and financial status (UNESCO, 2014). Gender violence affects everyone, including children in schools where gender-violence occurs. Such violence may be between females or male-to-female violence. This further illustrates that gender is a social construction that is interchangeable and has a variety of aspects (UNESCO, 2014). Gender violence takes different forms, which include emotional and psychological abuse. It should be noted that gender violence sites or settings are not limited to schools. Homes and societies are also spaces where gender identities and gender relations are displayed, based on patriarchal beliefs and practices. Sexual violence and homophobic violence cannot be separated from bullying (UNESCO, 2014). Moreover, bullying forms part of gender violence.

2.4 Gender Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa

Learners in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially girls, still experience gender violence (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012). In Ghana, for example, approximately 6% of schoolgirls reported being forced into sexual activities with their teachers, in return for better grades (UN Secretary's General World Report, 2006). The report further indicates that about 77 million children are out of the school system in Africa. In some provinces in Cameroon, 97% of learners reported having been punished using corporal punishment. In many African countries, including Sierra Leone, different forms of violence like corporal punishment and sexual violence have been socially constructed as an accepted and tolerated practise within the school regime (Plan Sierra Leone, 2011). While parents in Sierra Leone support the notion of stopping school violence, they accept the use of corporal punishment in schools, as they believe that this will promote discipline.

According to Dunne (2007), learners in Ghana and Botswana are subjected to different forms of violence, as part of 'normal practice' in schools. Corporal punishment is legal in these countries, but under specific conditions. For example, male teachers are not allowed to cane girl learners. In Ghana, learners cannot be subjected to corporal punishment due to underperformance. However, teachers ignore these restrictions.

Leach, Fiscian, Kadzamire, Lemani & Mchakanjaø (2003) research at urban schools in Malawi revealed a high prevalence of violence in schools, which is mainly entrenched in gender relations. Learners are not only subjected to severe corporal punishment, but are sexually harassed (for example, by being touched on their breasts by boys) and suffer verbal abuse. The study further found that indecent behaviour by teachers during school hours was due to substance abuse (alcohol). Moreover, girls in Malawi are also abused by their male schoolmates, and are threatened with physical violence and verbal abuse if they do not comply with sexual propositions. Likewise, this study concluded that schools contain unsafe spaces that render learners vulnerable to various forms of violence. These include the toilets and playgrounds, where girls are exposed to extreme verbal and physical abuse.

The literature notes that being admitted to school is not the sole right to education; it should include being in a safe school environment, accessing relevant curriculum material and opportunities for future endeavours (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012). Furthermore, achieving a balance in the number of boys and girls accessing education will not necessarily ensure gender equality; it is vital to understand the gender and power dynamics that play out in the school setting. According to Dunne (2007), gender relations manifest in Ghana and Botswana schools, boys occupy verbal and physical spaces in classrooms, subjecting girls to threats and humiliation (by criticizing and being aggressive towards them). Moreover, girls who have returned to school as both teenage mothers and underperformers have experienced extreme forms of gender violence by their male counterparts.

Despite policies that promote gender equality, girls have been deprived of education, which is evident in the under-enrolment of girls in some schools (UNESCO, 2012). Researchers have now started to address the issue of learners that are deprived of education, issues around gender relations and the power dynamics that are played out in schools (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012).

Leach, Dunne, and Salviø (2014) study in Sub-Saharan Africa noted that teachers allow boys physical dominance over girls in class. For example, boys are allocated more high profile tasks, making them feel superior to girls. Furthermore, homophobic attitudes are promoted. Lesbian and gay learners are subjected to physical assault, dehumanising verbal intimidation, sexual assault and public ridicule.

2.5 Gender Violence in South Africa

Research findings and media reports point to a significant increase in gender based violence which occurs in the majority of South African schools. A report in the daily newspaper, dated 13 November (2014), stated that about 20 learners have died due to school related violence in KwaZulu-Natal alone. These alarming statistics prompted the former Member of the Executive Council (MEC) Senzo Mchunu, to recruit 300 security guards for schools (however, many are still without security guards). This seems to have been to no avail as a number of violent incidents followed it. For example, gang violence led to a learner, Nkosingiphile Ngcamu being stabbed to death outside the Umlulama High School premises in Hopewell. In 2012, 19-year old Mpendulo Mzulwini, a learner at Egagasini High School, was also stabbed to death at school. In 2013, mobile phone footage circulated on social networks showed an 18-year old learner from Sizimisele High School being pierced with sharp objects on the school grounds. In 2014, five learners were stabbed and one was gravely injured at KwaMancane High School.

Parkes & Heslop (2011) argue that gender discrimination subjects most girls to violence and abuse. This global challenge occurs within different social settings (Bhana, 2013a; Merry, 2009). According to Burton (2008a), learners experience violence at home, in their neighbourhoods and at school, but learners are reluctant to report violence to the authorities. Burton (2008a) further asserts that this occurs in South Africa, where various crimes are ignored and not reported for different reasons, which may include the dysfunctional police and a lack of trust in the police. This study thus investigates the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence in and around school.

2.6 Educational Attainment and Gender Violence in Schools

When schools normalize gender violence, it tends to disrupt the school environment, resulting in poor educational accomplishment (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2000). According to Morrell (2002), school tolerance of different forms of gender violence results in more learners dropping out, and poor school attendance, as both victims and perpetrators are affected. Some learners are deprived of schooling due to sexual abuse, which leads to pregnancy, despite the law (Human Rights Watch, 2001) prohibiting teachers from conducting sexual relationships with learners.

2.7 Learner Experiences of Gender Violence in South Africa

Many South African learners have experienced violence in school and at home due to caregiver criminal conduct and poor family values (Ward, 2007). Children raised in violent families tend to imitate such behaviour. Gender violence in schools originates in gender inequalities that are influenced by various attitudes and cultural beliefs (Bhana, 2005). This is often related to gender regimes within the school culture that contribute to the production and re-enforcement of gender identities (Mac an Ghail, 1994). Violence in South Africa has directly influenced learners in a negative manner as well as their families and society at large (Burton, 2008a). The National School Violence Study (NSVS) of South Africa conducted by the "South African Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention" (2007/2008), found that between 2007 and 2008, 2.3% of learners had been subjected to sexual assault on school premises; 4.6% were mugged at school, 5.8% were attacked, 12.8% were subjected to intimidation while at school, and 36% had their belongings stolen at school. Schools continue to be spaces of power dynamics and gender roles, where girls are disciplined differently from boys using corporal punishment, despite this practise being banned in South Africa. The NSVS further revealed that 20.5% of learners had been physically rebuked and subjected to other forms of violence at home, and 22% had experienced physical abuse and other forms of violence at school. Institutional practice denotes a difference in treatment, re-enforcing tolerance of violence. According to Morrell, Epstein, Bhana Moletsane & Unterhalter (2009), violence can be understood from a gendered perspective which requires one to acknowledge the challenges of education in the past. These contextual issues are vital in understanding school-related gender violence

amongst learners (Bhana, 2005). Leach (2002) points out that learners are socialised at school to tolerate high levels of violence, especially, sexual harassment by teachers. Such harassment has thus been inculcated to form part of their adolescent behaviour (Fineran & Bennett, 1999).

Learners experience gender violence in schools at different contexts, as well as in different situations. Some of the girls that participated in Bhana's (2011) study indicated that their intimate partners (boyfriends) were perpetrators of rape and violence. It should be noted that what constitutes violence in one school or community may not apply to another school or community. Examples of gender violence experienced by learners include bullying, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, assault, name-calling, fighting, gang violence, emotional violence, and physical violence, to name but a few. Merry (2009) relates power and violence to the social and cultural magnitudes attached to them. She describes violence as hitting and wounding, assaulting, bullying, threatening, humiliating, raping and murdering. This is a clear display of the poor social power that exists amongst girls, even though it is covertly expressed.

Boys are often regarded as the main perpetrators of violence (Anderson, 2009; Bhana, 2005). However, a study by Bhana (2011) revealed that girls are also perpetrators of violence by being active participants in acts of verbal abuse and mortifying other girls. Her study revealed that girls use violence as a means to negotiate, create and define their femininities. Moreover, Leach, Dunne and Salvi (2014) argue that girls are associated with gangs and crime. Learners also violently abuse their peers, as do teachers.

Learners experience sexual harassment, corporal punishment, assault and abuse at school. Burton (2008a) noted that 5.8% of learners in South Africa had experienced assault, 4.6% robbery and 2.3% rape and sexual assault. Girls and women experience sexual harassment more than boys and men (Prinsloo, 2006). From 1999 to 2004, 30% of female learners in South African schools experienced sexual harassment (Prinsloo, 2006). Furthermore, Hunter (2002) as well as Jewkes and Abrahams (2002) note that teenage girls carry financial burdens that cause them to date older men for financial and material gain. Female

learners experience different corporal punishment from male learners (Humphrey, 2008). For example, teachers beat girl learners on the hand whereas boys are sometimes beaten on their face (Arnstein, 2009). Race and socio-economic status seem to play a role in determining the possibility of being disciplined (Arnstein, 2009). For example, white male learners in private schools experience less corporal punishment than black male learners in rural schools and black girls in rural schools are more exposed to corporal punishment than white girls at private schools. Girl learners who challenge sexual advances by their male teachers are often intimidated or exposed to corporal punishment, whereas male learners perceived by teachers as competing for girls' attention are physically punished (Humphrey, 2008).

Schools remain sites of violence where learners are subjected to verbal abuse and bullying (Leach, Dunne & Salvi, 2014). Furthermore, girls have to perform unpaid labour such as cleaning, washing and serving tea under the authority of their teachers.

2.8 An overview of the forms of gender violence

According to Parkes & Heslop (2011), while much gender-related research has been undertaken in recent years and various campaigns have been launched to create awareness of the multiple forms of violence experienced by girls and boys around the world, it is difficult to translate gender-related policies into practice. The main reason is the lack of clarity amongst those expected to implement policies on what constitutes violence. Dunne *et al.* (2006) has categorised gender violence into two broad forms, namely, 'implicit' and 'explicit' forms of violence.

Implicit forms of violence refer to daily structures and practices in schools and around the school community that reinforce gender differences and may be directly violent or indirectly encourage violence. For instance, in some Sub-Saharan African countries, corporal punishment is used in schools to make boys stronger and tougher; this indirectly enforces female submission to boys (Dunne and Leach, 2005). On the other hand, explicit forms of gender violence relate to visible sexualised encounters manifested by boys and, to some extent, girls (Bhana, 2009b; Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Meyer, 2008). These two

forms of violence apply to gender violence perpetrated by learners against other learners, by teachers against learners and by learners against teachers and are also seen in the community and in learners' homes in the form of domestic violence. Dunne *et al.* (2006) argue that implicit forms of gender violence are difficult to identify because they have been internalised and are considered normal and thus form part of the social relations in an institutional structure.

2.9 Understanding gender violence in schools

Besides the home environment, schools serve as an important socialising mechanism for learners, mainly due to the fact that children spend most of their time in school (Burton, 2008). According to Reilly (2014), education is not limited to the curriculum, learning opportunities, learning outcomes, teaching and teachers' expertise, but also depends on the circumstances under which learning takes place; the presence or absence of gender violence could be used to define and understand such circumstances. This implies that effective learning and teaching require an environment that is safe and free from violence. Leach (2003) adds that apart from knowledge on how to gain employment and academic knowledge, schools have a responsibility to encourage learners to be socially responsible towards others and above all to respect one another's values and identity. Gender violence in schools undermines some of the benefits of education, such as academic learning and psychological empowerment (Peguero, 2011). For this reason, schools have the potential to bring about change in society by disclosing and discouraging acts of gender violence (Leach *et al.* 2014).

However, studies have shown that instead, schools replicate the social settings in which they are situated and thus perpetuate deeply-rooted gender roles and power dynamics (Bhana, 2012a; Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Reilly, 2014; Swain, 2005). Bhana (2013) asserts that schools are the main sites in the making of the gender relations and inequalities that are seen in the broader society while Swain (2005) submits that schools are hierarchical and are responsible for creating and maintaining relationships of domination and subordination. Furthermore, Francis and Mills (2012) associate schooling with violence and

point to the extremely damaging effects it has on children and even teachers in and around schools.

Although it is evident that there is a high rate of gender violence in schools, most of the literature in this regard tends to lay the blame on boys by presenting them as perpetrators of violence against girls (Bhana, 2012a; Brown, Chesney-Lind & Stein, 2007; Eisenbraun, 2007; Parkes & Heslop, 2011). Hunt's (2007) study on student violence against teachers in Australian schools indicated that male students were the most common perpetrators of school-related gender violence. While male and female teachers reported acts of violence by male students, female teachers were most affected. Haber (2004) attributes continuous violence in schools to the school authorities' failure to intervene, either because of a lack of control or because these acts are considered normal; they therefore become guilty of 'violence by omission'. This is of great concern, because children are supposed to be safe and protected whilst receiving an education (Leach *et al.* 2014). Violence by omission is also visible in community structures and in learners' homes. In light of the substantial literature and reports on school violence, it is surprising that most studies do not recognise that gender is pivotal in understanding such violence (Bhana, 2013).

The literature reveals that levels of gender violence in schools differ greatly across societies. For example, in Canada, while research has shown that gender violence in schools is not a new social problem, there is evidence that it is increasing and is therefore cause for concern (Leoschut, 2008; Meyer, 2008). The situation is similar in the USA where gender differences and social inequalities are evident in schools both in and outside classrooms from preschool to college level. Regrettably, this is reinforced by teachers that perceive boys as very active, quarrelsome and capable of expressing anger, leading to them condoning violence in school, especially on the part of boys against girls. For instance, when a boy is aggressive towards a girl, nothing is done. This encourages the notions that these boys already subscribe to about male dominance and superiority (Kimmel, 2004). Cobbett and Warrington (2013) and Dunne *et al.* (2006: 19) submit that 'continuing gender violence in schools is due to the fact that teachers and the school authorities fail to acknowledge its existence'. This is not because these acts of violence go unnoticed but

because such behaviours are often regarded as part of growing up and in some instances have been normalised or internalised by the school authorities. Schools remain sites where the inequality that begins at home, with boys and girls being socialised into particular roles, is reinforced by teachers as they themselves are perpetrators and victims of gender violence (Bhana, deLange and Mitchell, 2009; Bhana and Pillay, 2011; Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez, 1997).

A safe school environment is required for a smooth learning process. Dunne and Ananga (2013) posit that a safe learning environment leads to quality learning. Studies have found that hostile learning environments that are plagued by violence impact significantly on students in that they are more likely to be absent from school, which negatively impacts on the school results (Dunne and Ananga, 2013). For example, in Sierra Leone, gender violence is described as a severe and persistent problem that requires immediate action (Reilly, 2014). The foundation for such behaviour is gender inequality in this society. Gender violence in schools is manifested through different media such as mobile phones (Allen, 2013), corporal punishment, appropriation of space, silencing girls that attempt to respond to questions posed by the teacher, provoking girls, extortion and public ridicule and stealing girls' and/or younger boys' possessions (Dunne *et al.* 2006).

A review of the South African literature reveals that increased levels of violence in schools have transformed them into sites where children learn to fear and distrust and develop distorted perceptions of their identity (Bhana, 2013; Burton, 2008a). Human Rights Watch (2001) and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) (2010) highlight gender violence as the chief obstacle that prevents South African girls from attending school as they encounter one form or other of violence on a daily basis. Therefore, schools are not the safe shelters for learners that they are supposed to be (Pinheiro, 2006).

2.10 Gender violence in schools: some explanatory factors

A combination of factors is used to explain gender violence in South Africa. This includes poverty, gender ideologies and cultural practices which encourage dominant and subordinate gender relations as well as exposing teenage women to the risk of disease

(Bhana, 2014a). According to Harber (2004), social structures and cultural practices that form part of everyday life play a significant role in the manifestation of violence. In contemporary South Africa, culture and gender customs are characterised by inequality which leads to violence (Reilly, 2014). In the same vein, Bhana (2012a) states that gender violence is a combination of political, cultural and economic power which mingles with male power. This is more prevalent in rural and semi-urban areas where cultural norms and customs guide and underpin social interactions. These customs celebrate male power over women, thereby normalising the unacceptable conduct perpetrated by men and boys towards women and girls within the school context. For example, even though rape and abuse are highly unacceptable, they are still considered suitable for men and boys, while victims are stigmatised and therefore fail to report this abuse and the perpetrator gets off scot-free (Morojele, 2009). According to Bhana (2012a), South Africa has amongst the highest rates of rape and sexual violence in the world; she attributes this to the social and cultural background of most girls that makes them vulnerable to various forms of violence, especially rape and other common forms of sexual violence. The literature also notes that these forms of gender violence in society and to some extent in the school context, expose children to HIV, especially in a context of poverty and academic competition (Bhana, 2009a; Haber, 2004). The following section examines some of the factors that explain gender violence in schools.

In the first place, gender violence in schools can be attributed to gender violence in the neighbourhood which spills over into school spaces, especially in secondary schools (SACE, 2011). When children are exposed to environments that are fraught with crime, it is likely that they will act in a similar manner (Mayer & Furlong, 2010).

The use of corporal punishment is unfortunately a major manifestation of gender violence in most schools. According to Humphreys (2008), corporal punishment is used intentionally by the school authorities to discipline learners. The gendered dimension of corporal punishment cannot be ignored as it is of the utmost importance in the fight against this practice. In Sub-Saharan Africa countries, the justification for the use of corporal punishment at schools is that it makes boys tough, thus promoting female submission (Dunne & Leach, 2005) to boys and their teachers. Dunne & Leach (2005) point to the

gendered nature of corporal punishment. Most corporal punishment is administered by male teachers against male students that are considered more disobedient than female students.

Sexual harassment is a common manifestation of violence against girls in and around schools by mostly male perpetrators. However, most acts of sexual harassment are overlooked and reframed as bullying by male peers (Brown *et al.* 2007). Like other kinds of violence, sexual harassment is not limited to physical behaviour but includes touching, words, looks and gestures directed at girls (Morojele, 2009). Girls are more likely to be harassed at school than boys. Harassment creates a sense of fear; research shows that high school girls are scared of school due to harassment (Morojele, 2009). Research carried out at a Caribbean school found that girls were more vulnerable to sexual harassment than boys (Cobbett & Warrington, 2013) and that the perpetrators were usually boys and male teachers. According to Morojele (2009), sexual harassment is a very common aspect of the lives of girls in schools as they are often subjected to boys calling them demeaning names. Unfortunately, some of these acts of sexual harassment have been normalised and internalised even by girls themselves, as they consider it a normal adolescent rite of passage (Hlavka, 2014).

Haber (2004) highlights that sexual violence in schools is mainly perpetrated by male teachers against girls and in some instances, by female teachers against boys. Haber (2004) adds that although they may be consensual, all sexual relationships between a teacher and a student are overtly abusive. In Haber's (2004) view, there is always a hidden power relationship that influences the consensual act. Francis & Mills (2012) lament that teachers who are mandated to enforce the law are themselves perpetrators of gender violence in schools. Parkes & Heslop (2011) submit that in a context of poverty and academic competition, teachers sexually abuse girls in exchange for goods and higher grades and sometimes as a form of punishment if their sexual desires are not satisfied. Sexual violence by teachers continues to increase in South African schools (Centre for Applied Legal Studies, 2014). Unfortunately, these teachers often go unpunished or receive very mild punishment. The most severe punishment for a teacher that is proven guilty of sexual harassment is a transfer to another school (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

According to Bhana (2014a), men and women resist, challenge and accommodate the notion of sexuality prevalent in social structures. These social structures are complex. Religion as an institutional structure also exposes homosexual learners to various forms of homophobic violence in schools (Bhana, 2012b; Msibi, 2012). Bhana's (2012b) study of South African schools concluded that these schools were extremely homophobic and that this was in large part due to learners' and teachers' religious convictions pertaining to sexual orientation. One of the respondents, a teacher, said that, 'our country is very much driven by religion' in different churches they don't accept it just like the Roman Catholic Church it is not acceptable' (Bhana, 2012b: 313). The study further explains that some religious convictions trigger or maybe condone homophobic violence occurrences executed by teachers or learners who might be believers of that particular religious denomination. By preaching intolerance of gays and lesbians, religion thus makes a significant contribution in setting the parameters that guide learners' rights, actions, and their experiences in school. Thus, Bhana argues that religion presents dual possibilities in impacting homophobic violence in schools: on the one hand, it can curb it through the 'philosophy of love and care for humanity', while, on the other, it can exacerbate it by denouncing it outright. The possibility that is more likely depends on the church's philosophy and the preacher's views.

Patriarchy as a social construction is another major factor that contributes to the prevalence of gender violence in and around schools. The key characteristic of a patriarchal society is hegemonic masculinity which activates and normalises men's domination of women (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Therefore, the patriarchal nature of South African society, in tandem with severe gender inequality, promotes violence (Jewkes & Morrell, 2012) and influences learners' behaviour in schools. Boys exert power over girls (Bhana, 2012a) as a result of the patriarchal nature of the society where men use their power against women to establish dominance. Patriarchal ideologies are embedded in cultural norms. The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (2014) attributes the high level of sexual violence in South Africa to gender inequality due to the patriarchal nature of the society which encourages male domination of females. Young adolescent boys in schools replicate the power-seeking and

violent habits of adult males (South African Council for Educators (SACE), 2011). Hence teachers have been found to contribute to gender socialisation amongst learners by allocating domestic roles such as cleaning to girl learners. Therefore, patriarchy and cultural understandings of gender and power, together with other factors, justify and normalise gender violence in South African schools (Bhana *et al.* 2009).

Another major factor that contributes to gender violence in schools is the culture of the peer group. According to Swain (2006a: 54), 'peer group life plays a vital role in the lives of children at school and usually reflects what happens in the broader society and at home. At household level, children are socialised to the culture of male domination of women (McCarry, 2010). This greatly impacts the ways in which learners behave at school. Boys are under constant pressure to behave according to group norms that uphold hegemonic forms of masculinities whilst girls are expected to conform to constructions of femininity. Boys seek to gain popularity through their physical strength, but above all, they make use of their physicality and athleticism to achieve status (McCarry, 2010; Swain, 2005). Some children use the peer group as a strategy to stay safe amidst the violence in and around schools by moving in groups to prevent violent encounters, while most boys use peer group as a defence and attack mechanism to achieve social status, especially on the playground where bravery, strength and hand fighting skills are celebrated (Parkes, 2007b).

Finally, graffiti has been identified as a major contributor to violence in schools (Crews, Crews & Turner, 2008; Johnson, Burke & Gielen, 2011; Stein, 2005). A study conducted in Baltimore City high schools used concept mapping to establish the link between features of the school environment and the possibility of violence. Gang graffiti was rated highly in terms of its impact on levels of violence, and moderately for its cessation (Johnson *et al.* 2011). It should be noted that the graffiti itself is not violent; rather, it is the hatred that is represented in such writings that provokes and promotes violence. Hence, some authors use the term, hate-related graffiti (Crews *et al.* 2008). While different forms of violence occur in schools in social and physical spaces, Stein (2005) identifies sexual harassment as a more recurrent outcome of graffiti-related violence.

2.11 The Importance of Learners' Voices on Gender Violence

A learner's opinion (voice) is defined as "having a justifiable perspective on an issue, with the purpose of being present and taking part in educational policies and practices" (Cook-Sather, 2006: 23). In dealing with violence in schools, learners' contributions are vital. This promotes the notion that "there is nothing about learners without their direct involvement". An approach that does not involve learner and researcher co-participation "could find the data deficient of integrity and learner's voice" (Malewski, 2005: 25). Learner participation in developing and implementing programmes is important for the sustainability, effectiveness and ownership of initiatives that aim to eradicate gender violence.

Girls that participated in Parkes *et al.* (2013) study stated that they did not feel safe at school as boy learners "steal a look" at their private parts and feel their breasts when they are in the toilet. Jackson (2011) notes that the authorities' normalisation of violence in schools has been a serious challenge in addressing violence amongst learners. Allowing learners a voice in the issues that concern them is paramount (Leach, 2002; Pinheiro, 2006). Learners need to be active agents for effective programmes and policies pertaining to gender violence. The literature notes that crime occurs in South Africa due to different reasons; therefore, young people need to be advised and supported to initiate platforms and projects that enable them to express themselves and voice their opinions on issues that directly or indirectly affect them in different situations (Burton, 2008a). Hence, this study explores learners' views on gender violence and existing policies and programmes.

2.12 Teachers and Gender Violence

This study explores the views of teachers, learners and parents on gender violence in school. Violence in school is often perpetrated by teachers in the form of corporal punishment (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013). The policy does not provide teachers with clear alternative means of discipline (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). This has led to the continuation of physical violence in schools in the form of corporal punishment, which has created tensions and misunderstanding amongst teachers, learners, parents and those in authority. Some teachers find it difficult to discipline their learners without resorting to

corporal punishment. As a result, they continue to use it as a form of punishment. Other teachers are better able to cope and comply with the ban on this form of discipline (Department of Education, 2000). Teachers' views, attitudes and cultural beliefs contribute to the normalisation of various violent practices in schools in most parts of the world (UNESCO, 2013).

Teachers are sometimes also guilty of sexual harassment, bullying, and verbal abuse. According to Prinsloo (2006), 56 South African teachers were charged with statutory rape between 1999 and the year 2000. In 2002, the (SACE, 2011) removed educators found to be involved in sexual relationships with learners from the pay roll (Panday, Makiwane, Ranchod & Letsoala, 2009).

In South African schools, violence is used by men to assert power (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). All violence is gendered (Bhana, 2005). Power is imposed on young girls and female teachers in many ways, including sexual harassment, rape, assault and intimidation (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). According to de Lange, Mitchell & Bhana (2012), female teachers and girls are often victims of sexual harassment perpetrated by male teachers and boys in and around schools. Forty seven per cent of the female teachers that participated in Mncube and Harberø (2013) study reported being victims of physical abuse.

Despite the fact that it is against the law, sexual relationships still do exist between teachers and learners (SACE, 2011). Dunne, Humphrey & Leach (2006) cite examples of male teachers engaging in sexual relationships with female learners. Some teachers go as far as rape, resulting in the learner being too afraid to return to school and thus being deprived of her right to education (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). Teachers indirectly contribute to making the classroom a general space for violence by leaving learners unattended (NSVS, 2007/2008). Furthermore, school playgrounds continue to be sites of violence, implying the need to monitor these spaces at all times.

Teachers also experience violence while at school. Burton (2008b) found that 2.4% of learners had sexually attacked teachers and some verbally abused and physically assaulted teachers. Teachers and principals conclude that this is the result of substance abuse among

learners. A teacher from Umsilinga Primary school expressed her fears after a 17-year old learner died from a gunshot wound to the neck. She added that the lack of proper discipline and respect in schools meant that they needed security guards (*Daily News*, 2014). Finally, homosexual teachers are reluctant to disclose their sexual orientation at schools for fear of being judged or exposed to gender violence (Leach, Dunne, & Salvi, 2014).

2.12.1 Creating Safe South African Schools

A safe school is defined as an environment that is free from danger, where teachers can teach, learners can learn and support staff can function without fear, harm, intimidation or violence (Prinsloo, 2006). According to the Human Rights Commission (2006), violence in South African schools is of national concern as it disrupts teaching and learning, as teachers are forced to focus on dealing with violence. Despite the fact that the Department of Education has designed several interventions to address violence in schools, it is still rife (Harber & Muthukrishna, 2000; Prinsloo, 2008). The high prevalence of gang-related violence in metropolitan schools and easy access to weapons highlights the severity of the problem.

The former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor in South Africa noted in a statement issued on 23 October 2006 that school authorities and parents have the authority and an obligation to use available policies to deal with the high prevalence of violence in schools. Pandor (2006) also states that schools should work closely with local police, especially during extracurricular activities. Police should be available to ensure safety; people who are visiting the school premises can be granted or refused permission to enter the school by those in authority, excluding members of the police force and Department of Education officials that are on duty. Moreover, schools should display visible signs indicating that they are drug and weapon free sites.

UNESCO (2011) has suggested guidelines to assist teachers to curb violence at schools. While these might not be the remedy required to remove all traces of violence in and around schools, they could be the first step in a journey towards the creation of violence free schools. The suggestions include a collaborative approach to deal with violence,

involving parents, learners, healthcare workers and members of the police, as teachers cannot act unilaterally. Schools could also educate learners on human rights as part of the curriculum. Furthermore, schools should ensure that teachers use legal forms of discipline that are embedded in their code of conduct. Schools should consider offering educational programmes such as a peace programme to promote conflict resolution, school-based counselling programmes, and gender education programmes that address the patriarchal practices that are sometimes normalised in institutions. All schools have a responsibility to put policies into practice in order to address school violence. Teachers should act as role models.

Besides the Department of Education, other stakeholders have thrown their weight behind the struggle against violence at schools. For example, the SACE has put forward several recommendations to promote safety in schools (SACE, 2011). These include conducting research to explore teachers' perspectives and their personal experiences of dealing with violence; and Employee Assistance Programmes that support teachers in different aspects of their lives. It is also recommended that support systems should be introduced to assist victims of violence and other learners when they report incidents of violence. Teachers and learners should endorse a code of conduct in line with current policy and legislation. A collaborative approach should be adopted to deal with school violence. Stakeholders should include school governing bodies (SGBs), Learner Representative Councils (LRCs), School Management Teams (SMTs), and other stakeholders in the surrounding community (Burton, 2007). Finally, the SACE recommends running educational programmes on conflict resolution and alternative forms of discipline.

2.13 Parents, Gender Violence and Schooling

This study explores parents', learners' and teachers' views on gender violence. Parents are key role players in the fight against gender violence. UNESCO (2007) states that teachers cannot win this fight on their own; it requires a collaborative effort on the part of all stakeholders especially parents. In the United States of America it was found that parents who are emotionally disconnected from their children are likely to display violent behaviour towards them (Dahlberg, 1998). The South African Schools Violence Survey

(2007) established that there is a clear relationship between physical punishment at home and at school. The survey highlighted that 57% of parents slap their children. According to the World Report on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006), past traditions influence social arrangements in terms of gender roles. Women and men are expected to perform certain roles. These structures and tendencies influence family and school relations. The report further argues that physical harm and various forms of harsh or demeaning punishment have been widely accepted and tolerated by parents. This explains the magnitude of violence, and the connection between school violence and violence outside of school, such as in the family and society as a whole. Learners who have been exposed to or witnessed acts of violence at home are at risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of different forms of violence (Dahlberg, 1998). According to Rampele *et al.* (2000), society believes that men should provide financially for their families. When they are unable to do so, men turn to addictive substances, and are violent towards their intimate partners.

Kesling (2005) observes that cultural discourses of masculinity associate manhood with control and being in charge. Boys replicate the violent characteristics of adults in their families and communities, which display the power of being in control. This increases their risk of becoming involved in school and gang violence.

Parents need to set up mutually respectful communication lines at home and there should be collaboration between home and school (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2004). The legislation provides for parental involvement in running the school. The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 states that schools have a responsibility to acknowledge the diversity of South African families by adopting different mechanisms to promote effective home-school communication, as some learners are in the care of their grandparents and extended family members (Van Wyk, 1996). Furthermore, schools have an obligation to communicate with parents with regard to their right to access information concerning their children. This study investigates the views of parents on gender violence in school. According to Dunne, Leach & Sledge (2012) successful education requires effective parent-teacher associations (PTAs). However; Schulz (2011) highlights the need to also involve learners.

2.13.1 Parental involvement in school safety

Parents play a vital role in ensuring that schools are safe sites for teaching and learning. Hence, they form part of the 'school family'. Section 24, of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states that every person has the right to a safe environment. Boshoff (2000) notes that SGBs are responsible for the creation of a conducive environment for learning and teaching at school. They are required to develop safety and security, and disciplinary policies for their school. Section 8 (1) of the South African Schools Act states that SGBs are expected to set up meetings with learners, teachers and parents, and adopt a code of conduct for learners, which addresses issues like bullying and drug abuse in schools. This study examines the views of parents on their role in dealing with issues of gender violence within the school setting. On the other hand, parents expect schools to take care of their children and ensure their safety (Squelch, 2001).

2.14 Impact of Gender Violence

According to Burton (2008), gender violence has severe consequences for learners. It affects their social well-being, particularly their development to adulthood. Gender violence also causes physical and mental harm (Burton, 2008a), which may cause the young person to engage in unlawful and aggressive behaviour in the future (Farrington and Welsh, 2007).

All forms of gender violence have negative effects on victims, and the society at large (UNESCO, 2011). These consequences may include physical harm to the recipient, poor school performance, low self-esteem, sexually-transmitted infections, unwanted teenage pregnancies and dropping out of school. At a more extreme level, violence such as bullying could result in chronic depression, suicide, excessive absenteeism and retaliation (Boyle, 2005; Cohn & Canter, 2003).

2.15 Conclusion

Curbing violence in schools requires a collaborative effort on the part of learners, teachers and parents through the implementation of relevant policies and legislation. Patriarchal daily practices influence the normalisation of violent behaviour in schools. Until such time

that communities are made aware of these issues and deal with them effectively, violence will continue to plague South Africa's schools. Burton (2008a) notes that there is a close connection between passive learners, learners who are victims of violence and learners who are perpetrators of violence. This calls for schools to initiate and implement structured projects and programmes of extra-curricular activities to prevent learners from participating in gang violence and other criminal activities. These activities should be accessible to all learners throughout the formal school year, and should be the product of a working relationship with different non-profit organizations and key stakeholders in communities. The following chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study adopted a qualitative research approach to investigate the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence at Blessed High School in the Scottburgh circuit in Ugu District, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews followed by focus group discussions. The researcher's aim was to understand the participants' views and their accounts of gender violence in and around their school. The participants' role in dealing with violence was also of interest. The objective was to understand the knowledge and social realities around gender violence and power as constructed by learners, teachers and parents. This chapter discusses the qualitative approach adopted, the social constructivism paradigm that informed the study, the research site, accessing the research site, the sampling techniques used to select the participants, data collection and trustworthiness.

3.2 The Qualitative Approach

This study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of learners', teachers' and parents' perspectives of gender violence in and around Blessed High School. A qualitative approach was adopted to achieve this objective (the details of the research objective are stated in Chapter One, Section Three). According to Denzin & Lincoln (2008: 251), "qualitative research places emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not scientifically examined or measured in terms of quantity, intensity, amount, or frequency". This aspect of qualitative research makes it different from quantitative research and forms a reliable justification for the study to use a qualitative research approach rather than a quantitative research approach. Also, Creswell (2008: 82) states that "qualitative research is defined as an enquiry process of understanding social relationships by focusing on their meanings and interpretations". Thus, qualitative research differs from quantitative research, where the researcher separates him/herself by remaining aloof from the phenomenon under study. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the researcher

was interested in understanding the participants' views of gender violence. Such views as required by the research objectives could not be conveniently achieved through a quantitative research approach. The data collection instruments (interviews and focus group discussion) used for the study provided an in-depth perspective of these views, as would be required in a qualitative research. In contrast, the quantitative research approach (questionnaires and surveys) is not interested in depth of meaning, but generalization. The qualitative approach helped the researcher to understand the phenomenon of gender violence in the participants' natural setting as well as how they make meaning of such violence in and around their school.

Denzin & Lincoln (2008) regard the relationship between the researcher and the context under study as an intimate one; the researcher seeks answers to research questions that emphasize how people create their social experiences and subsequently give meaning to them. Therefore, in a qualitative study, the researcher cannot remain invisible. Rather, she/he is part of the process and assists participants to reflect on their experiences, which may lead to new insights about their conditions and environment. Besides being a staff member at the DoE, that routine visit to the area of study was for research purposes and the change of my role was made known to the key members of the community and in some cases through the use of informed consent letters (Appendices A, B, C and D).

3.3 The Research Paradigm of the Study

This study is located within the social-constructivism paradigm. The social constructivist paradigm posits that the human world is different from the physical world and hence people's reality is socially constructed (Patton, 2005). From a social constructivist perspective, human perception is not real in the absolute sense as with other physical entities but is constructed and shaped by culture and linguistic gestures of societies. Thus, what a society considered as 'knowledge' is always negotiated within cultures, social settings and relationships with other people (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 125). Constructivists are interested in the multiplicity of realities constructed by people within a social setting and the implications of these constructions for their lives. Social constructivism was thus an appropriate theoretical framework for this study that aimed to

understand the various views (realities) on gender violence held by learners, teachers and parents in and around Blessed High School.

“Social construction is therefore, constructing knowledge about reality and not constructing reality itself” (Patton, 2005: 202). Human beings do not have direct access to a particular, unchangeable and fully knowable social reality and as such their interpretation of the same reality is bound to be subjective and will perhaps depends on the factors that affects the lives of the individual, such as cultural and religious factors. Furthermore, people’s realities are contextually embedded and their views on an issue such as gender violence are socially constructed and again influenced by cultural and/or religious reasons. From a social constructivist perspective, truth is the result of consensus within a given context; in this case, Blessed High School’s internal and external environment understanding of truth could be consensual on the bases of cultural and religious influences.

It was expected that different participants would have different experiences and perceptions of gender violence, all of which are real and deserve attention. The researcher sought to understand these different experiences through focus group discussions and interviews¹ that exposed their different views (multiple realities). The researcher’s task was to understand the construct of gender violence that occurs in and around Blessed High School from multiple perspectives and not to pronounce judgment on whose view is more real or true than another. Patton (2005) concludes that the social constructivist theory is ontologically (the nature of truth) relativist, epistemologically (the nature of knowledge) subjective and methodologically hermeneutic and dialectic with the main emphasis being the nature of socially constructed reality.

One of the prominent ways in which social constructivism occurs is through the use of language. Knowledge is constructed through language and particular versions of events are produced. Patton (2005) explains that this is because discovering the true nature of reality is

¹ Focus group discussions and interviews are not the only instruments used for data collection in understanding social construction. Other instruments such as observation and to some extent document analysis can be used depending on the nature of the study. In quantitative study also, instruments such as open-ended questionnaire and surveys could be used as well.

not the real purpose of language, but rather to communicate the social construction of the members (mainly the views of the dominant members) of the group using language. Thus, in the social constructionist paradigm, it is important for a researcher to be highly critical and spontaneous in understanding the language as she/he is perceived to be the co-producer of information (King & Horrocks, 2010).

The notion of deconstruction within social constructivism aims to expose the assumptions embedded in language by critically exploring the ideological interests of the dominant group or class in a society (Patton, 2005). Social constructivists assume that language serves the interests of those in power. Therefore, deconstruction begins by giving a voice to the socially disenfranchised through examining popular cultural text or language that reproduce stereotypes. Such stereotypes embed power relations and gender violence in and around the school environment. Thus, deconstruction is a core analytical tool of social constructivists (Patton, 2005). An awareness of how gender violence has been constructed will serve as a starting point to deconstruct the construction of gender violence in and around Blessed High School.

3.4 The Research Site and the Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Blessed High School. The school is situated in the predominantly black area of Imfume. Imfume is a densely populated area that is situated approximately 221 meters above sea level about 42 kilometres from the city of Durban.

Map with Imfume denoted by a red indicator

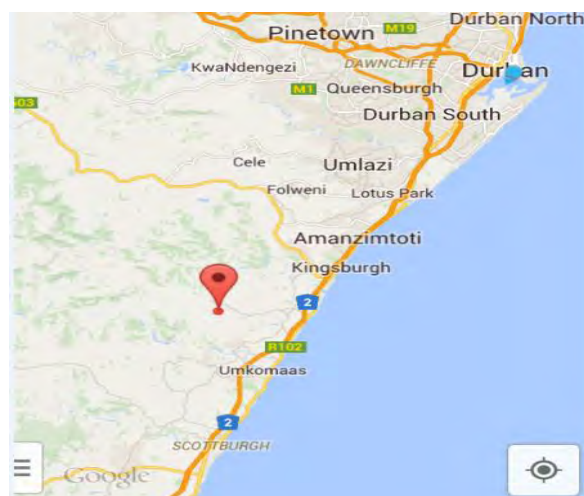


Figure 3.1 Map of the South Coast where Imfume is situated

Imfume falls under Vulamehlo Municipality within the Ugu District. Ugu District Municipality has 91 wards located in six local municipalities: Eziqoleni, Umuziwabantu, Hibiscus Coast, Umdoni and Vulamehlo. In terms of the municipal demarcation, the Ugu District is located in Ward 3. The district is notorious for its high rate of youth unemployment, with many youth turning to criminal activities. Most households in the area are headed by single parents (usually mothers), because the men are working in the cities. Some households are child-headed, either due to the loss of both parents to HIV/AIDS or because the parents are working elsewhere. Children in such households are at risk of dropping out of school. Most inhabitants speak isiZulu and subscribe to conservative Zulu cultural practices that lean heavily towards patriarchy. Young women are encouraged to take part in cultural practices such as *ukuhlolwakwezintombi* (virginity testing) as evidence of their morality and womanhood. Both Shembe and Christian views of religion are dominant in the area.

Sanitation comprises of mainly pit toilets. Most households consist of two or more mud huts or Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses. The RDP was adopted by the ANC government with the aim of addressing the backlogs created by the apartheid regime. Low-cost houses were built for previously disadvantaged communities. Households are a few metres apart. Most households have a plot where they grow vegetables, mainly for domestic consumption. There is no running water; the community fetches water from communal standpipes, which sometimes run dry, especially during winter. When this occurs, the municipality provides water from the river via tankers. Imfume is under the local leadership of the ANC-led administration.

In 2011, the poverty rate in Ugu District Municipality was estimated at 44.8%. The district has the largest youthful population within the municipality. Youth aged 15-19 make up approximately 45% of the total population (Ugu District Strategic Plan [USDP]), 2012-2016). Girls in this age group are at higher risk of HIV infection than boys of the same age, as they are exposed to older men who use their financial resources to woo them and thus make them more vulnerable to infection. According to the USDP(2012-2016), the HIV

prevalence rate in the district in 2010/2011 was 41.1%. While the focus of this study is not HIV/AIDS, the prevalence rate is taken as an indicator of gender violence and power relations in Ugu District.

Vulamehlo Municipality is predominately rural with a lack of services. The traditional areas stretch from the south-west to the north east of the region. Economic activities are limited and commercial agriculture is the main activity. The municipality does not have a direct connection with any national road but it is linked to the N2 by the P188. The N2 bypasses Vulamehlo through coastal towns such as Umkomazi, Scottburgh and south to Pennington. Most of the roads have not been maintained and this hinders access to and out of the areas and makes travel time-consuming. Service delivery is generally poor.

Blessed High School is located in an area that falls under the traditional leadership of the Toyane Tribal Authority. The school has several buildings; four blocks of classrooms (three are shown in Figure 3.2), two mobile classrooms, a mobile kitchen for the school nutrition programme, an old kitchen, a tuck shop, and three blocks of pit toilets. Figure 3.2 shows the classroom blocks where learners attend classes and the lawn on which the learners assemble every morning. Learners are mostly separated according to their respective grades in both the classrooms and at assembly, without taking gender related considerations into account. This could increase the risk of gender violence occurring within the school premises.

Classroom blocks at Blessed High School



Figure 3.2: The main classroom blocks

The school has a staff enrolment of 19 headed by a female principal. The male deputy principal is responsible for administrative duties and related responsibilities. There are three heads of department, one administrative clerk, and one male general assistant who is paid by the SGB. The school has 11 teachers and one security officer. In 2014, 453 learners were enrolled at Blessed High School, made up of 245 boys and 208 girls. The school is properly fenced and the gate is controlled by the general assistant who also cleans the school.

During the data collection process, some of the participants who had earlier indicated that they would participate in the study were nowhere to be found at the scheduled time of the interview or focus group discussion, even though they had been at school that morning. I was told by the other participants that they had gone home, without permission, although the gate was locked and was only opened after school hours. I was shown the route they used to go home (Figure 3.3).

The hole in the fence (Figure 3.3) is believed to have been made by learners. It is used to enter the school when learners are late and to exit where they want to abscond from school.

It is also used by local gangs to enter the school premises. The hole in the fence has escalated the rate of gender violence in and around the school. It has also made it difficult for the school authorities to effectively discipline learners. There is only one security guard and he cannot be at the gate and the fence at the same time.

The hole in the fence



Figure 3.3: The hole in the school fence

Figure 3.3 shows that the grass leading to the hole in the fence has been trodden so often that a footpath has been carved out.

With respect to utilities, Blessed High School has access to prepaid electricity, but there is no running water; hence they use water tanks and pit latrines. The lack of proper sanitation also has the potential to provoke gender violence within the school premises. Figure 3.4 shows the pit toilets at Blessed High School.

Pit toilets



Figure 3.4: Pit toilets

Blessed High School has been selected to participate in the Department of Education's G-curricular services in the Ugu District which offers the following programmes;

- A youth and gender development programme, which addresses social issues that affect youth and capacity building projects that deal with gender equality within the Department.
- An arts and culture programme that promotes cultural diversity in terms of race and ethnicity.
- A sports programme that promotes schools' participation in different sports codes and indigenous sports codes.

The sports fields at Blessed High School are well resourced. There is a netball playground and a soccer playground. Although these playgrounds are often used for recreational activities, they could also serve as sites for gender violent activities, some of which could result from the euphoria commonly associated with sporting activities. Figure 3.5 shows a sports field at the school.

The sports field



Figure 3.5: The sports field

Blessed High School has a feeding scheme that is made available to schools categorised as section 20 schools. The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) is mandated by the South African Constitution of 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) that asserts the right of all to access good quality food, the International Children's Rights Charter, and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's NSNP policy of 2011. Learners from Grades R to 12 in public schools falling under quintiles 1, 2, and 3 benefit from the programme. The scheme is managed by the Department of Education as part of the Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa initiated by the government in 2002. Different departments collaborate to respond to learners' nutritional needs, including the Departments of Health (DoH), Land Affairs and Agriculture. The objective is to improve children's learning capacity, deal with hunger and address micro-nutrition deficiencies (NSNP, 2002). The initiation of this programme has to some extent contributed to violent gender activities. Gender power relations are visibly displayed during serving times, when pushing and jumping the queue are witnessed.

The majority of learners at Blessed High School come from low-income households and most walk long distances to and from home; this exposes them to gender violence. The

interviews were conducted during the exam period. Some of the participants indicated that they would not be able to come to school for interviews if the school was closed because the NSNP would also stop. I had to provide food when interviews took place outside of school hours.

The school has adopted different policies that aim to ensure that it functions effectively. These include adherence to the Public Finance Management Act, an admission policy, code of conduct for learners and employees, curriculum policies and assessment policies. Unfortunately, the school does not have a policy on gender violence despite the high prevalence of school based violence in South Africa (SACE, 2011). During one of the interviews, the researcher asked a member of the school management team for statistics on reported cases of gender violence. The response was that such cases are not documented.

3.5 Accessing the Research Site

The decision on where to conduct a study is very important for successful research (Maxwell, 2005). Among other reasons, the researcher chose Blessed High School due to the cordial relationship she had with the school authorities and teachers. The researcher is employed by the DOE in Ugu District under curricular services responsible for the implementation of the youth and gender programmes in the district. Blessed High is one of the schools she works with. It was therefore convenient for the researcher to conduct the study at this school. Prior to commencing the study, a parent reported a case of corporal punishment at the school in violation of the prohibition of such punishment (South African Schools Act of 1996). I referred the case to the relevant official who deals with cases of misconduct so that my role as researcher would not be confused with my position within the Department of Education. There have been shocking reports of violence in this area; for example, the head of a woman was found in a household owned by a traditional healer in the area (*News 24*, 23 August 2014).

I was granted permission to access the school and conduct the study by district management and school management. The fact that the researcher has the same name as a member of the

SMT made the process of obtaining permission easier. However, no protocol was bridged in the process of gaining access to the participants.

3.6 Sampling

Sampling is defined as a series of actions to select the participants in a study (Niewenhuis, 2007). According to Cohen *et al.* (2007: 148), four factors should be considered when deciding on a sample: the size of the sample; the sampling strategy to be used; representativeness and parameters of the sample; and access to the sample.

The size of the sample is usually determined by the purpose of the study and the characteristics of the population under investigation. However, it must be representative of the population with the essential characteristics of that population included. It is also important to consider the feasibility and practicability of access to the sample (Cohen *et al.* 2007). All these considerations were taken into account and the feasibility and practicability of the study were confirmed, although there were some minor challenges.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants to answer the research questions. Cohen *et al.* (2007: 150) state that "in purposive sampling, which is a feature of qualitative research, the researcher hand-picks cases to be included in the sample, on the basis of their judgment of the characteristic being sought". This enabled in-depth, qualitative data to be generated on the participants' views on gender violence (Teddlie and Yu, 2007). "Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand and gain insight from the participant's views and therefore must select a relevant sample which most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009: 140). In most cases, "purposive sampling is used in order to gain access to people who have an in-depth knowledge about particular issues" (Cohen *et al.* 2007: 149). The participants comprised of 30 learners (made up of 15 boys and 15 girls), who are part of the Youth and Gender Programmes within the school. The programme organises debates, human rights programmes, and youth and language festivals to address issues relating to education, equality and legal rights. Some of the learners that participated were members of the

Representative Council of Learners (RCL), while others were identified by the Life Skills educator.

Five teachers were also purposively selected: the Youth and Gender Co-ordinator, the Teacher Liaison Officer (TLO) responsible for the RCL, two members of the management team and a Life Skills educator. Two parents were selected using snowball sampling (Browne & Hamilton & Giachritsis, 2005). They were accessed through the principal. Snowball sampling is used when access to a participant is challenging and referral is used to identify the required number of participants. This is also called the chain-referral method (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The Youth and Gender Co-ordinator assisted the researcher to identify relevant participants and teachers. The teacher identified learners and these learners referred the researcher to other learners. The selection of the participants was also guided by their understanding of gender violence in and around Blessed High School. Thus, a total of 37 participants took part in the study.

3.7 Data Collection

In qualitative research, the researcher can use a variety of techniques to collect data. These include field notes, interviews, telling one's personal story, observation, document analysis and audio/video recordings (Maxwell, 2005). According to Niewenhuis (2007), qualitative data collection instruments demand a certain level of social communication between the researcher and participants. For instance, during a semi-structured interview or focus group discussion, the researcher aims to make meaning of the participant's reality through their social interactions. The researcher thus engages with the participant's environment during data collection.

For the purpose of this the study, the researcher conducted both face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions to gather data. Niewenhuis (2007) defines an interview as a process that enables the researcher to determine and understand participant's beliefs and views through a two-way interaction process between the interviewee and the researcher.

The individual face-to-face interviews were semi-structured. According to Morse and Richards (2002), semi-structured interviews enable a researcher to pre-plan and allow participants to express themselves freely; the researcher's task is to ensure that the participants understand the questions asked and respond to them. This approach is very effective "when the researcher knows enough about the study topic to frame the discussion in advance" (Morse and Richards, 2002: 97).

Storytelling can be a useful tool to create a reciprocal relationship between the researcher and study participants (Stake, 2010). During the course of the study, I began telling my life story to encourage the participants to relax, create trust and make them open up to me. I recounted the domestic violence that took place in my family and how my father used to abuse alcohol and physically assault my mother which led to their bitter divorce when I was just 11 years old; this was one of the reasons I chose to do gender studies. Alcohol abuse facilitates violence at home and at school (Burton, 2008a). By sharing my experience of gender violence with the participants, I was able to break down power relations and they felt comfortable sharing their stories with me. Furthermore, as a DoE official, I had a good relationship with the teachers. My involvement in the employee assistance programme also increased their confidence in me and the teachers were comfortable about sharing their views on gender violence.

All the interviews were conducted in isiZulu which all the participants were fluent in and which is spoken by the majority of people in Ugu District. The interviews were transcribed and then translated into English by the researcher (Scollen & Scollen, 1995). Validity (further discussed in Section 3.9) is, however, affected through the translation of the interview questions. This is because research has shown that even if the transcriber translates the interviewees' words accurately, their actual meaning may be unclear. This is because the receiver makes sense of meaning through their understanding and interpretation of words and non-verbal communication such as gestures, eye-contact, and / or facial expressions (Scollen and Scollen, 1995). This, Baynham (1995) points out, is when words are taken out of context they will lose their meaning. Therefore, continuous checking with

the participants took place to confirm meaning and correct interpretation of thoughts, and ideas.

During the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions, probing was used to obtain more in-depth information. According to Merriam (2009), probing is used to follow-up on a question that has already been asked in order to obtain more detail. With semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, it is difficult to plan probing questions ahead of time because they are dependent on how the participant responds to the questions. Probing takes different forms, such as silence, sounds, single words and complete sentences, depending on the nature of the interview or the interaction between the researcher and the participants.

King & Horrocks (2010) point to the importance of researchers being aware of contextual factors during interviews. These go beyond the spoken word and include non-verbal communication and paralinguistic aspects such as volume, pitch, voice intonation and the use of non-linguistic expressions such as laughter, sighs and pauses. However, the researcher has to be clear on when and how to include paralinguistic features in the transcript. Merriam (2009) emphasizes the importance of the interviewer remaining neutral during the interview. The purpose is to ascertain participants' knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation and the level of the participants' ethical beliefs or values. Therefore, researchers should refrain from arguing or debating with participants or expressing their personal views.

3.7.1 Face-to-Face Interviews

Interviews were the main source of data for this study. According to Mason (2002), interviews involve an exchange of dialogue between the researcher and study participants whereby meanings and understandings are created. Individual interviews were appropriate due to the personal and sensitive nature of gender violence. They also enabled the researcher to gather individual, personal interpretations and answers. The participants were free to explain their views on constructions of gender violence and how power relations

contribute to such violence in and around Blessed High School. Each interview took approximately an hour.

3.7.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions allow for the collection of information from a group of people (Foster 2010). Most focus groups involve 6-12 participants (Foster 2010). For the purpose of this study, learners were involved in focus group discussions and they were divided into five groups of six members each. Two groups consisted of only boys, while another two were made up of only girls. The last group comprised both boys and girls. Mason (2002) notes that focus group discussions are a way of stimulating interaction. The researcher guides and facilitates discussion amongst the participants on particular topics so as to understand how situational interactions between them take place. The construction of gender violence and issues relating to power and masculinity were vividly revealed during these discussions. Morse & Richards (2002) state that it is "the role of the researcher to take care of the quality of data obtained, ensuring that the conversation is balanced between the members that dialogue stays more or less on the topic and does not get stuck on one point for too long". Furthermore, in a focus group discussion, participants listen to other participants' responses and "make additional comments beyond their own initial responses" (Morse & Richards, 2002: 195). This encourages others to speak out about their experiences. Patton (2005) states that the "objective is thus to get high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the light of others". All the participants were asked to introduce themselves and share their views on gender violence. The discussion was recorded with the participants' permission. They were given letters of consent to sign and parents were asked to sign on behalf of their children who were minors. Kruger (1994) notes that tape recorders are vital for focus group discussions. I also made field notes after the group discussions to facilitate data analysis. Although most participants were reluctant to speak at the beginning of the focus group discussions, as they progressed, they relaxed and shared their experiences.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected was organised and coded. Kruger (1994) views coding as a crucial step, because it changes data into meaningful information. Thus, great care should be taken when coding. The coded data was categorised into groups of similar meanings. The transcripts were then analysed using thematic content analysis. In thematic content analysis, themes are identified once the data is reduced to contextual form and then elaborated on the basis of systematic scrutiny (Kruger, 1994). The literature was used to support the interpreted data.

Cohen *et al.* (2007: 215) state that, "the purpose of data analysis is to make sense of data from the perspective of the participants' understanding". During data analysis, the researcher looks for evidence to support their arguments as well as the frequency of its occurrence. Morse and Richards (2002: 79) suggest that "analysis is to compare sections of data to the pieces of a puzzle that fit together to give a holistic and rich description of the research problem". I listened attentively to the interviews and wrote them down verbatim. While Cohen *et al.* (2007) advocate for the use of "direct conversations", this was not easy because the majority of the interviews were conducted in isiZulu and had to be translated to English. As a result, I constantly made reference to my field notes to ensure accuracy. The transcripts were handed to the participants to check and make changes where necessary. Merriam (2009) notes that in qualitative research the researcher can expand his or her own understanding through non-verbal as well as verbal communication. This helps the researcher to process the information, and make clarifications and summaries. This process ensured that the analysis was accurate.

3.9 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

The data generated by qualitative research must be verified for credibility. The validity of the research depends on how accurately participants' realities have been captured and represented by the researcher in the inferences drawn from the data. It is, therefore, essential to engage the participants in assessing the accuracy of the researcher's

interpretation (Creswell and Miller, 2000). Validity was achieved by member checking. The participants must verify that the information represents their realities. The un-translated data was read to the participants, for their verification. Although Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest that a focus group should be reconvened to review the researcher's findings and ensure that his/her interpretations correctly reflect their realities, it was difficult to reconvene all the learners. Nevertheless, some of the participants were able to examine the researcher's findings.

In addition to member checking, the researcher's reflexivity was also an essential element in ensuing validity and credibility. Reflexivity ensures that the representations of participants' realities are free from researcher bias and are not influenced by the researcher's beliefs and assumptions. Thus, a researcher must report 'personal beliefs, values and biasness that may shape their inquiry' at the beginning of the research process (Creswell & Miller, 2000: 127). The researcher's own story of gender violence served as reliable evidence that she had experience of the focus of the study and that this experience was parallel to that of the participants. Therefore, readers would be able to understand the researcher's position in the study.

The methods used for this study were face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The use of two data collection methods provided clarification and enhanced theoretical understanding.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher adhered to ethical principles throughout the study, especially during data collection. According to King & Horrocks (2010), ethics refers to the morality of human conduct; this is based on the choices made and the accountability of the researcher throughout the research process.

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (HSS/014M See Appendix 1). The interview schedule was prepared and was submitted to my supervisor before the fieldwork commenced. All the participants were

assured of their anonymity and that all the information they provided would remain confidential. Anonymity and privacy were strictly adhered to throughout the study and pseudonyms were assigned to all the participants. Cohen *et al.* (2007: 290) argue that the essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should not in any way reveal their identity.

All the participants voluntarily signed informed consent forms that contained information on the overall purpose of the study, and the researcher's identity. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the principal, the parents of participants under the age of 18 and the participants themselves. The participants were also informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. Informed consent ensured that the rights of participants were not in any way infringed by the researcher.

3.11 Limitations of the study

Since most of the data was collected in isiZulu, in some cases, the translated version was not verbatim. However, the researcher made every endeavour to reflect the participants' words as accurately as possible. Time constraints were another challenge, as the researcher had to ensure that the participants did not lose out on teaching and learning. Most of the interviews were held during break time or after school as it was examination time and the researcher transported some participants to their homes after the interview. The researcher acknowledges that the findings of this study only reflect the participants' views on gender violence within and around Blessed High School at the time of the study and therefore cannot be generalized to other areas. However, the findings could be applicable to other areas with similar characteristics.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design and methodology employed for this study. It examined the qualitative approach adopted and the social-constructivist theory that was used as a lens to help the researcher answer the research questions. The research site was described. Data was collected by means of face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The ethical considerations taken into account in conducting this study were

discussed and the study's limitations were highlighted. The following chapter presents analyses and interprets the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets the data collected for this study from the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence in school. The study participants included learners, teachers and parents, all of whose voices are important in understanding gender violence in schools. Data was collected by means of individual semi-structured interviews with teachers and parents and focus group discussions with learners, both of which were audio recorded and transcribed.

In South African schools, violence is seen as a means to negotiate and manipulate power in ways that perpetuate girls and female teachers' victimhood. Both male teachers and boys are guilty of sexual, verbal and physical abuse (Mncube & Harber, 2013; de Lange, Mitchell and Bhana, 2012). However, Bhana (2011; 2008a) notes that girls also engage in violence at school and organise themselves into school gangs (Leach, Dunne & Salvi, 2014). Teachers are also involved, particularly through the use of corporal punishment (Ncontsa & Shumba, 2013).

The study's findings on learners, teachers and parents' perceptions of gender violence in and around Blessed High School are analysed and discussed under the following six themes:

- **Girls and the fear of men and boys in and out of school**
- **Girl-on-girl violence**
- **Corporal punishment**
- **Gender violence and the school's neighbourhood**
- **Girls and sexual violence**
- **Dealing with gender and sexual violence in schools**

Connellø (2002) gender relational theory (discussed in Chapter Two) informs the discussion, providing insight on and understanding of how violence reflects gender power relations that entrench inequality.

4.2 Girls and the Fear of Boys and Men in and out of School

School spaces are seen as unsafe places (McCarry, 2010). In most cases, gender violence is a means by which boys appropriate, maintain and control power, positioning themselves as more powerful and demanding agreement and subordination from girls (Renold, 2004). Young men and men are frequently perceived as the main contributors to the violence that occurs in school spaces, with women and girls as victims (Mills, 2001). In the focus group discussions with learners, learners asserted that the school is an unsafe space, highlighting girlsø fear of men and boys.

Girls' fear in School

Researcher: *Do you feel safe at school and on your way from home to school?*

Zamani: *Mam, we do not feel safe here at school, too many boys fight here.*

Zamani suggests that girls are not safe at school due to violence amongst boys. The ways boys enact violence shows that they perceive themselves as having unbridled power. Morrell, Bhana and Hamlall (2012) observe that boys are not scared of teachers and that violence prevails regardless of the presence of teachers.

Zithobile: *Mam, boys bully us and call us names, and they are nasty and cruel sometimes, they, all they... do is fight. Sometimes some boys will demand to copy your homework if they haven't done theirs.*

Zithobileø statement suggests that violence against girls takes the form of bullying, name calling and cruelty towards girls as well as fighting. It is of interest to unpack what fighting among boys means to girls. Boysø use of violence is constructed as victory or heroic masculinity, which often results in physical harm (Langa, 2009). They use physical spaces in school to dominate girls through threats, humiliation and aggression (Bhana, 2012). Violence at school includes being bullied for money and cell phones and pick pocketing. Gender violence is common in South African schools, transforming them into spaces of fear and mistrust (Burton, 2008a). Gender violence is also intricately linked to

historical circumstances (Bhana, 2005). Poverty is rife in Umkomazi Ward where Blessed High School is located and violence is associated with power relations between the genders that are underlined by hegemonic masculinity. Boys reproduce the gender relations that they witness in their community that are dictated by traditions of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity and accentuated by poverty. This plays out in their assertion of power over girls and other boys in school in order to gain access to material possessions:

***Thabisa:** Some boys mam, 'bayasikhuthuza' (they pickpocket us) demanding money, cell phones, they make us fear. During break time, we are scared of these boys. These boys sometimes try to touch our private parts or our breasts as girls.*

Gendered violence is deeply situated within sexuality and male sexual entitlement:

***Zodwa:** Some of these boys worry us by demand friendship from us. The boys fence around you as a girl and if you do not speak gently to them, they shove you and use foul languages... they fight over girls and tell us they are going to protect us as girls from other boys if we love them. Sometimes you get scared of these boys mam; they can hurt you (a boy laughing).*

***Researcher:** Explain how can they hurt you these boys? What is it that they can do to you?*

***Zodwa:** These boys mam, are very dangerous, some of them are friends to community gangs who carry dangerous weapons and some these boys themselves do carry such weapons at school.*

***Researcher:** Have you seen such weapons, these boys carry at school?*

***Zodwa:** Yes mam, one day the police officers came to school to talk to learners about crime and to search for weapons and drugs, some boys were found carrying knives and other sharp objects in their pockets and in their school bags.*

The intersection between boys' conception and construction of their own gender identities (McCarry, 2010) and the understandings of what it means to be a boy within the social order which informs, shapes, defines and reinforces boys' social life at school is deeply connected with power. Gender arrangements in schools tend to mould learners' practical knowledge and their personalities, out of which common femininities and masculinities are constructed and reconstructed. Boys dominate other boys and girls (Epstein, Kehily, Macan Ghail & Redman, 2001).

Fear of boys out of school, and fear of boys in school

Zamani: Sometimes boys from the community come to the school and cause trouble for other boys and girls...

Researcher: So tell me who are these boys? Are they in your school too?

Thabisa: Some of these boys are from school and some of them are from the community, they are gangs. Some are boys that have dropped out from our school and joined the community gangs.

Researcher: How do boys from the community access or enter the school? Because I see that the school is fenced?

Esethu: The fence behind the boys' toilet has been cut off 'inopotsho' (it has a hole) that's how these 'ohaqa' (gangs) enter the school premises, and even some learners from school sometimes they leave early before time using 'upotsho' (holes) on the school fence. That is not the only hole on the fence 'bakhonaabanye' (there are more of these holes).

Researcher: Zamani you said these boys come school to cause trouble. What did you mean by that statement? Or maybe what is it that these boys do that makes you say they cause trouble?

Zamani: When these boys come into school, they carry guns and knives. They sometimes demand money from learners, either boys or girls, they don't care.

Researcher: What happens when you don't give them what they want or maybe if you report them to school authorities?

Listening to Zamani's narrative, it reveals that the daily interactions between the boys and girls with the gangs usually leads to violence as these gangs enter into the school illegally and bring different weapons to school to intimidate the learners. Zamani further explains that the gang members sometimes demand money from the learners regardless of their gender.

Zamani: Mam, we as learners we don't normally reports these gangs as we are afraid that after school they will catch us on our way back from school to home. At the same time we usually give in to their demands as they can injure you seriously and some of these gangs are friends to some of the boys from school as a result it's

easy for these gangs to have information about what learners have as their possessions.

Researcher: *Can you share an incidence of violence that you had witnessed happening here at school?*

Esethu: *Last semester during break time three boys from the community forcefully took another boys cell phone when he tried to take it back from them they threatened him with a knife.*

Researcher: *So, did this boy report this incidence to teachers or maybe did he get his cell phone back ?*

Thabisa: *Beginning of this year mam, one boy in my class was worrying one of the girls in our class, after a week during break time, this girl had told her brother of what was happening to her. His brother came to school and attempted to beat up this boy and he showed him his knife.*

Esethu: *No mam, that boy did not get his cell phone back and he did not report this incident to teachers because he was afraid as learners are not supposed to carry cell phones to school as it is against the school rules.*

Walking to and from school: the fear of violence

Researcher: *On your way from home to school, do you also feel safe?*

Zodwa: *Mam, we don't... feel safe walking from home to school alone...anything can happen to us.*

Researcher: *Anything like what?*

Zodwa: *Someone can approach you and demand money or a cell phone from you and if you refuse, you can be assaulted. These people sometimes carry dangerous weapons like knives, sharp objects even guns. As girls we are even scared of older men from the community as they also approach girls and boys demanding money and their possessions and if they refuse also get attacked. These men demand to have sexual relationships with school girls and some of these men we hear rumours about them that they have been in jail for different crimes e.g., pick pocketing and rape*

Researcher: *Have you witnessed or heard of any incidence of violence happening to one of the learners from your school or maybe any other person you know from your community?*

Zodwa: *Yes, I have heard that one boy from school was attacked by some boys on his way to school because they demanded money from him and he refused then they kicked him repeatedly until he gave them what they wanted. Some learners wear expensive shoes at school and wear expensive watches, one boy was approached by group of boys after school not far from the school gate, on his way home, they then demanded his shoes and a Nike school bag and they threw his school books on the ground.*

Thabisa: *No one feels safe on her way to and from school... so as girls from the same area we walk as groups or walk with the boys from our neighbourhood to school and back. Even within school premises when boys that don't attend school enter the school premises; as girls we are not safe. These boys belong to local gangs from the community sometimes they will touch girls' breast or even demand to have relationships with the girls. Sometimes girls if they see gangs within school premise prefer not to go outside the classroom during break time to avoid being provoked by these boys.*

Researcher: *What happens if a girl refuses?*

Thabisa: *Normally they start to threaten to hit you or maybe show her any dangerous weapon they are carrying at the time. Sometimes will hold her hand tightly demanding to talk to her against her will.*

Researcher: *Do learners report such violent incidences to school authorities or maybe to their class teachers or else to their parents?*

Zodwa: *Not always. Some learners are scared to report these incidences to their teachers and to their parents because they might be attacked after school on their way back home. Not all the learners stay with their parents because their parents work in urban areas only come home during month end or on weekends.*

Researcher: *Why are they scared and what happens to cases that have been reported?*

Thabisa: Learners are scared to report because of different reasons, for example, they are worried if gangs come back for them after reporting and they stab them or injure them in whatever way. Other learners don't report because sometimes nothing really happens to perpetrators after reporting to school authorities as gangs disappear and it's not easy to track them down and even if you can report the school authorities don't do anything to them.

This section also highlights the fear of boys. The girls note that they are not safe when boys from the neighbourhood enter the school premises without permission, but also with little intervention to stop them. Girls are also afraid of boys and men when they walk to and from school.

A recent article in the *New Age* (4 June, 2015) reported that a 32-year-old female university student was raped on her way to university at around 9.40 am on 21 May 2015. It was reported that she was walking through a residential area when an unknown man threatened her with a knife, pushed her to the ground, ripped off her clothes and began to rape her. This highlights women and girls' vulnerability in communities.

When girls talk about their fear of men and boys inside and outside schools, they note that not all boys are bad; they walk home with some boys for protection. This suggests that not all boys are violent. Anderson's (2009) study found that some boys enact alternative masculinities through behaviours that counter dominance and subjugation - the pervasive and harmful ways of doing masculinities at school. Morrell (2002) also suggests that not all boys do violence and that the defining line is how boys engage the construction of their masculinity. Hamlall & Morrell (2012) noted that some boys use peaceful methods rather than violence to resolve issues that arise in their interactions and negotiation of relationships. The fact that some of the study participants reported that they walk to and from school with boys for protection illustrates such alternative masculinities.

However, the boys' company does not prevent girls from being afraid:

***Zithobile:** But mam, sometimes it doesn't help because older men also try to cause trouble and the boys we walk with from school to home are also scared..., but its better when you are with other learners than walking alone as a girl because we are also scared of being raped ...*

This shows that while girls fear men and are scared of being raped, younger school-boys are also afraid of older men. This illustrates how male power operates. Bhana (2009) observed that sexual violence against girls and women by men is widespread in South Africa, which increases the risk of HIV and AIDS. Every year, almost 20 000 rapes of women under the age of 18 years are reported to the police.

***Thabisa:** ...eish mam, it's true we don't feel safe on our way to school. Mam, we as girls, boys from the community sometimes they want to stop you and talk to you as a girl or just touch your breast or your bums and even insult you when you resist them and refuse to stop and listen to what they wants to say to you.*

These narratives of violence are highly gendered and sexualised. Unwanted touching as well as insults if girls resist are common experiences as girls walk to and from school. Violence is embedded within male power, domination and hegemonic power plays against girls. Gender imbalances in the broader society give rise to sexual violence which puts girls at risk of being victims of such offences (Bhana, 2015). The use of *whoonga*, a home-made drug that is made of cannabis and other substances that interfere with the state of mind in certain communities also contributes to girls' vulnerability to sexual violence.

4.3 Girl-on-Girl Violence

Unsafe school spaces and a culture of violence in and around the school were also revealed as being induced by girls. Boys and girls in the focus group discussions talked about girls at school who fight and girls who join the boys' gangs and sometimes hurt and fight other girls as well as boys.

***Researcher:** Do girls also engage in these fights?*

Thabisa: *Amongst us girls it is common that other girls will write false rumours about another girl or gossip about other girls...These false rumours maybe written behind toilet doors or maybe on schools walls and be written on the class desks, even be spread through social networks, then fights will begin.*

Zithobile: *And mam, some girls also fight other girls, saying they steal their boyfriends...and they start threatening those girls they suspect to be dating their boyfriends.*

Researcher: *Beside spreading rumours about other girls, what exactly happens during girl-to-girl violence?*

Thabisa: *Normally girls belong to cliques, when one of them has problem with another girl at school the clique that the girl belongs to will gang up against the other girl. Sometimes these girls will wait for the other girl outside the school premises after school hours and beat up the girl. Such behaviour also takes place within school spaces and sometimes when girls fight, they may make use of social networks e.g. WhatsApp, mixit and Face book etc, where one receives insults in a form of name-calling.*

Bhana (2008) notes girls' complicity in violence in school. It is important to understand how girls engage in violence induced by gossip and fights with other girls over boyfriends. Bhana & Pillay (2011) state that girls in schools are sometimes directly involved in violent practices; they engage in physical violence to protect their sexual territory. Girl-on-girl violence plays out in school spaces like toilets and classrooms in the form of punching, kicking, forceful removal of other girls from the line and verbal violence like name calling and teasing. In the contest for power, space and social rewards at school, girls perpetrate aggression against other girls as well as boys (Bhana, 2008; Bright, 2005; Worrall, 2004).

Xolani: *Yes mam, even us boys some girls fight us and bully small boys.*

Researcher: *Please Xolani tell us more about that.*

Xolani: *As boys, we normally don't talk about girls bullying us as boys but it's something that is happening. Older girls say silly things to us, for example: Asking*

you whether you are man enough or do you like them. They even send you around to buy or bring water for them and some of these girls are friends to some of the gang members who illegally enter the school or older boys that sometimes cause trouble at school.

Researcher: *Zithobile, you said some girls fight other girls, do you report them when they fight?*

Zithobile: *Like some Grade 9 girls, last term they fought with my friend Penny; four girls approached her in the toilet pushed her down and started beating her and they also wanted to tear her uniform. Other girls ran and reported them to the teacher. Those girls kicked her and ran away. My friend Penny was scared to come to school until her stepmother took her to the principal's office and she was promised safety.*

Researcher: *What happened to those girls? Were they punished or they got away without being disciplined?*

Zithobile: *I am not sure what happened to those girls but they were called into the Principal's office and they were instructed to come back with their parents but unfortunately I don't have the full details of what actually happened to them with regards to disciplinary procedures.*

Thabisa: *Mam, some girls gossip and spread rumours about other girls. The other girls end up being threatened and insulted in the social networks like WhatsApp, face book and mixit and sometimes they fight each other. Some girls sometimes end up not coming to school due to fear of such violence.*

Researcher: *Who actually sends these rumours or messages?*

Thabisa: *It's not easy to find out but as a girl you just assume that maybe is the girl you have had a fight with and sometimes when two girls get involved in a fight, the other girls friends can gang up against the other girl who was fighting with their friend. They might start to make mockery out of her in front of other learners or spread false rumours about her and if she had a boyfriend they might start to make moves on her boyfriend trying to steal him from her. Sometimes girls just fight over boys and its ends up being serious a case and another girl from Grade 9 ended up not coming to school anymore because of the fight she had with another girl and her clique.*

Allen (2013: 3) explores the various ways in which technology is used by the youth; the use of cell phones tends to construct various sexual meanings at school. Social networks have increased the level of violence and the violation of girls. Sexting and other forms of imaging gender power and domination amongst girls and between boys and girls is another way doing gender violence in school and extending such violence beyond the school. Girls' active agency (Bhana, 2008) in the use of violence in and around school is evident in the voices of the participants:

Zamani: *Those girls that fight in Grade 9 ...they are gangs and sometimes they walk and follow the rough boys. Thabisa told us that one of the girls fought with the boys from the community and she is the same girl that kicked her in the ribs hard and threatened to smash her face, if she ever steals her friend's boyfriend again.*

Esethu: *Girls also harass us as boys demanding to talk to us or try to touch us in a sexual way (general laughter).*

Researcher: *Do you report this Esethu?*

Esethu: *Mam, you can't report. When you report to the teachers they laugh at you ... and sometimes you are ashamed and it becomes ridicule and boys will jeer at you ..., so mam, sometimes we show them we are boys and we tell friends and we team with friends and ruffle the girls so they don't touch you again.*

Researcher: *What does that mean, how do you 'ruffle' the girls, tell me Esethu?*

Esethu: *Sometimes we tease and we make fun of the girl's clothes, her bum or say how ugly she is or her underwear is dirty and sometimes we even fake a story about her with other boys..., (boys laughing).Some boys also touch roughly or hit them on the way back from school. Boys make girls cry and be scared of messing with anyone of one of them in future.*

Bhana (2008) argues that, like men and boys, girls are active in the use of violence and are not mere recipients of violence. Boy-on-girl, girl-on-boy, girl-on-girl and boy-on-boy violence provides insight into how school spaces are sites of gender power (Bhana, 2008a; 2008b; Jewkes & Morrell, 2010; Bhana, 2013b) and how it intersects with gender violence in the communities where learners live. The learners were quick to make connections between violence in school and violence in the community, particularly in terms of gender.

In the interviews with parents, the learners' narratives of their experience at school and in the community were corroborated.

Researcher: *Has your child reported to you any form of violence happening at school or on their way to school and what did you do about?*

Mama Mazondi: *Yes, my older son who is in Grade 8 here at Blessed High School has shared with me that older boys at school steal their lunch boxes or forcefully take their pocket money during break time and when they ask them about it they threaten to beat them up.*

Researcher: *Do they report such incidences to their teachers and what happens?*

Mama Mazondi: *Sometimes they do report and sometimes they don't report because nothing really happens to the perpetrators or they just deny everything and those that witnessed them stealing will be scared to come forward and testify.*

Researcher: *What did you do as a parent when your child reported such incidence of violence they are experiencing school?*

Mama Mazondi: *To be honest nothing I did about it .*

Researcher: *Can you provide me with a reason why you didn't do anything about it.*

Mama MaZondi: *The reason I didn't report was that ,the same incidence once occurred before while my son was in primary school and I went to school to report to the school authorities, the teachers said nothing much they can do about the gangs that are outside the school premises beside reporting such cases to the police. So when the almost same incidence occurred I was reluctant to go to school and report .I really felt it was a waste of time.*

Researcher: *Is this the only violence your child has reported? What about violence on the way from school to home or from home to school?*

Mama MaZondi: *He has reported that there's always a group of boys at the shops... playing cards and smoking. This gang of boys also worry girls demanding to talk to them. These boys forcefully take money from learners when they pass by and call them names and some of these boys smoke drugs like dagga and woonga. Now girls go in groups or prefer to go together with boys from their neighbourhood to school. Even boys are scared of these gangs.*

Sis Thembi: *My daughter has reported to me incidences of sexual harassment that girls experience, when they walk on the corridors and pass a group of boys, they start to make silly comments about their breast or girls' 'backside', that some of the boys even attempt to touch her breast. These girls are not safe in their school and on the way to school because of verbal abuse and sexual harassment from boys and men in...the community. Even going to the toilet it's not safe girls try to accompany each other, when they go to the toilet as gangs enter the school anytime through the holes on the fence behind the toilets.*

Researcher: *What do you do as a parent when your child reports such incidences of violence?*

Sis Thembi: *I have not done anything so far. But fathers as parents tend to be angry and violent when they hear of these incidences happening to their children especially to their daughters. But, I know some parents do go to school when there have been a reported case of violence that involves a learner. My neighbour was once called into school when her son was involved in a fight with another boy but I don't have details of what actually happened to that case.*

Researcher: *Can you provide a reason for not doing anything?*

Sis Thembi: *These incidences of violence in school and in the community have become normal such that you hear of different reports happening in and around schools. In my culture a boy child is supposed to be brave be able to protect and defend himself, so therefore being involved in violent activities such as fights has become normal for boys. This is believed to be training for a boy to become real man in future who will be able to protect and defend his family.*

Listening to the parents' narratives, it is clear that parents are discouraged from reporting different incidences of violence that happen to their children during their journey to and from school because nothing is being done by the school authorities when such cases are reported. The voices from other parents explain that violence has been normalised in the community, so much so that violence is not reported at all. Parents have been culturally socialised to believe that a boy child has to be brave and be able to defend himself.

Asked whether they think that learners who experience violence at home or in the community can become violent at school, the parents responded as follows:

Mama MaZondi: *I think yes, they do even though boys they also get scared because gangs are dangerous as they carry knives and they have been involved in different criminal activities like stealing and gang violence in the community. Yes maybe 'hhayangazi' (I don't know), but I think it is possible that a learner who has experienced violence at home may also be violent at school. I remember after my late brother's sons became disrespectful and violent at home, I then started receiving reports about them being involved in several fights at school which had never happened before when they were in primary school. So I can say yes.*

Mrs Mabhida: *...in some families you find that there are fights between parents, which maybe verbal which may involve exchange of words or maybe physical assault. Sometimes we see our neighbours fighting or even fights between siblings. Some of these parents use alcohol and substance abuse. Children see this and they try to imitate these behaviours at home and it may be the way he, they try to imitate such behaviour at school as well if not cautioned.*

Sis Thembi: *Yes, I think it's possible for a child who has witnessed violence at home to display such violent behaviour at school towards other learners and even to teachers themselves. When I grew up we were beaten up at home and at school and I thought it was the only way to deal with a child. As a result when I had my own child I did the same thing until I realise that my child was always angry and was always involved in fights with other children at school and in the neighbourhood.*

Researcher: *So you are saying learners who experience corporal punishment at home are likely to be involved in violent activities at school?*

Sis Thembi: *Yes, in most cases such learners are the ones that are involved in fights and even criminal activities. For most of these children violence has become normal way of dealing with issues as it happens all around them almost every day.*

The teachers that were interviewed also said that learners that suffered violence at the hands of their parents were more likely to exhibit violent behaviour at school:

Researcher: *How do you know that parents are perpetrators of violence?*

Mrs Zuma (Teacher): *When there are cases of violence, sometimes learners who are perpetrators of violence, are instructed to bring their parents to school. During the discussions or during the disciplinary hearing of such cases, other parents do display violent behaviour towards their children or towards the teachers and that's where sometimes we discover where the learner copies such behaviour. Sometimes other parents immediately want to resort to corporal punishment on their child even before the end of the discussion, even in our presence where learners are supposed to be safe here in school...*

Researcher: *What do you do as teachers when parents want to resort to corporal punishment?*

Mrs Zuma: *The challenge with regards to corporal punishment, some teachers still believe that the use of corporal punishment is still the effective method of instilling discipline to learners. So, to respond to your question, I can say the reaction of teachers with regards to corporal punishment depends on what the teacher believes. But at the same time there are still those teachers who abide by the law who are against the use of corporal punishment in South Africa as it was banned. These parents do try to explain to parents that the use of corporal punishment is prohibited and that the schools have been provided with the alternative methods of discipline.*

Researcher: *What do you say as a teacher, about the continued use of corporal punishment by teachers*

Mrs Zuma: *I feel the continued use of corporal punishment by some teachers is wrong as it is against the law .*

Researcher: *Yes that is true Mrs Zuma use of corporal punishment was banned in South Africa in 1996 therefore the continued use of such means of violence is regarded as a criminal offence by law.*

Research shows that school violence and violence within communities reproduce and replicate each other (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; UNICEF, 2010; Harber, 2001). The narratives of the parents and teachers suggest that violence in the family and the community is transferred to the school, making children agents in the cultural transmission of violence.

It should be noted that not all learners engage in violence. Children tend to observe; copy and imitate acts of violence to which they are exposed in the broader community. In this way, violence at school is produced and sustained (SACE, 2011). Rural communities like the Imfume community have been associated with violent cultures that originated in the political violence of the apartheid era. Post-apartheid, violence remains a pervasive way of negotiating power and relationships. It is used as a tool of exclusion, dominance and interdiction and is equally used as a tool of resistance in communities (Ward, 2007; Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe, & Van der Walt, 2004).

4.4 Corporal Punishment

Parents, learners and teachers had contrasting views on the use of corporal punishment and its relation to violence in schools. Corporal punishment is defined as the deliberate use or infliction of physical force on another human being with the purpose of causing pain (Harber & Mncube, 2013).

Teachers

In an individual interview with a teacher, the following conversation took place:

Teacher: ...because the department (of Education) took away corporal punishment, we as teachers do not have any authority over these learners. They behave anyhow.

Researcher: So, are you saying the fact that the Department of Education removed corporal punishment contributed to violence in schools? But, you know that the use of corporal punishment is against the law in South Africa?

Teacher: Yes, but learners have tend to disrespect teachers not obey the school rules and be rude towards authorities because they know that as a teacher you cannot do anything about them. They know that you won't hit them as the law protects them. As a result, learners deliberately ignore their school work and become irresponsible in different ways.

Researcher: Are there instances where a teacher goes out of his or her way and hits? I mean, do teachers hit sometimes, maybe to earn respect from these learners?

Teacher: *No, we are not allowed to hit the learners, if there's is any misbehaviour by a learner it is initially reported to the class teacher, then further taken to the grade coordinator before it is reported to the school management. Parents are then invited to the school but if for any reason they don't come, the case may end up not being resolved. If it happens that parents do come to school for a hearing, some of them will indicate that even themselves as parents need assistance because the behaviour of his or her child has got out of hand as she /he can't instil discipline anymore the child has become stubborn and violent the situation is becoming worse. Some of the parents even indicate that they suspect that the child is taking drugs because of the strange behaviour they have witnessed displayed by their child at home. But, I must say some teachers still resort to use corporal punishment as they still find it difficult for them to use forms of discipline even though it is illegal.*

Researcher: *Why do teachers resort to continue to use corporal punishment as it was banned in South Africa while there are alternative forms of discipline that can be used instead of corporal punishment?*

Teacher: *Teachers have highlighted that they have not been thoroughly trained on the alternative forms of discipline and those teachers that have been trained have indicated that it is not practically easy for teachers to implement these forms of discipline but we as teachers we are aware of these alternative forms of discipline.*

Teachers have indicated that they are aware it is a criminal offence to continue using corporal punishment. They acknowledged that they know of alternative measures of discipline but they find it difficult to put it into practise, although the school management has put some of these alternative measures of discipline into practise, for example involving parents in cases that involve their children at school. However, some teachers note that sometimes they do not receive enough support from parents, as some parents do not come to school when requested by the school authorities. This leaves teachers with too much to do, these cases of violence remain unresolved, and perpetrators end up not being disciplined and victims not supported.

Researcher: *Can you explain or maybe give an example of what do they mean if they say it is not practically easy to implement the alternative forms of discipline?*

Teacher: Just to highlight one example let us look at detention as one form of an alternative discipline, as teachers will feel unsafe staying behind after school supervising those learners on detention as the school is without a security guard. While other staff members and other learners would be gone and you will be left alone with the few learners on detention, gangs or criminals may come into school to school to rob you.

Researcher: Why do say the school doesn't have a security guard because when I came into this school one man opened the gate for me wasn't that person a security guard?

Teacher: No, that man is not the security guard but he is actually the cleaner at the school but through his generosity he further helps at the gate and other extra duties that are beyond his job description.

Researcher: Tell why the school doesn't have its own security guard?

Teacher: I am not sure whether it's doesn't qualifies as per the department's requirement or maybe there are other underlying factors I am not certain?

Researcher: What normally happens to teachers who continue to conduct corporal punishment to learners are when they are reported to authorities?

Teacher: Some teachers have been suspended but it is not common, most of these teachers get away with it. As a result those teachers that have not been caught and those that do not use corporal punishment are tempted to continue using it or start using it as they see that nothing is seriously done to perpetrators by authorities to discipline such teachers. Other teachers who have conducted corporal punishment and end up injuring learners resorted into paying for doctors' fees and pay parents before the case reaches the hands of the authorities but other teachers have been charged regardless of this gesture.

Researcher: How are the parents' attitudes towards the continuous use of corporal punishment and towards teachers who have continued using it?

Teacher: Parents attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment are not the same .Some parents still want the school to continue to use corporal punishment as they feel that it is only effective method of instilling discipline and they were also subjected to it in their school days. But, other parents do feel that the use of

corporal punishment should stop in schools as there has several media reports on several injuries to learners due to the continuous use of illegal use of corporal punishment by teachers.

Burton (2008b) notes that corporal punishment and other violent means of punishment are still prevalent in some South African schools, despite being banned. Some teachers said that they find it difficult to use other forms of discipline. While there is no proof of a direct relationship between improved academic performance and the use of corporal punishment, there is clear proof that corporal punishment may have negative effects such as permanent injury and even death (Harber & Mncube, 2013).

The views expressed by learners in the focus group discussions contradicted those of the teachers:

Learners

The learners stated that corporal punishment is used by teachers in different scenarios and instances. They also revealed their support for its proper use. On the other hand, some regarded the use of corporal punishment as a form of violence, particularly against female learners in order to coerce them into relationships with teachers.

Researcher: *Have you witnessed any form of violence here at school? What exactly happened?*

Zithobile: *...even teachers they beat us so badly for different reasons and I feel that is also violence, why can't they speak to us or maybe discipline us in other ways?*

Researcher: *Why do teachers beat you? And how do they do that?*

Xolani: *Teachers, they beat you up for coming late, maybe for not doing our homework, making noise in class and other learners will leave school early and not attend all the classes use 'upotsho' (the hole) on the school wire fence, to abscond, then the next day they will also be beaten up by a teacher with a stick or maybe by a leather belt...*

Zodwa: *But mam, I don't think teachers are wrong by conducting corporal punishment because they are helping us to comply with the school rules so that we will pass...*

Researcher: *So you are saying it is acceptable to be beaten?*

Zodwa: Yes, as long as it does not injure you, maybe one or two strikes but five is not acceptable...I don't really see anything wrong because even our parents at home do beat up and my mother told me that even themselves during their school days they were also beaten up to maintain discipline at school and it worked.

Zithobile: No it's not acceptable to use corporal punishment, it sometimes happens here in school, students usually get three or five strikes from the teachers and they sometimes get injured mam...

Researcher: Where do you usually get the strikes, I mean are you beaten on your hands, body, where?

Esethu: On the hands, bums or at the back.

Researcher: What do teachers use to beat up the learners?

Esethu: Eish... with a cane or pipe, they even use 'Malizwele'

Researcher: What is "Malizwele"?

Xolani: Malizwele is a stick that is very sore and doesn't break when you use it to hit a person, and that is used on us as learners. This name Malizwele is local name of this stick used by learners.

Researcher: Who are actually the recipients of corporal punishment amongst learners?

Zodwa: It's those students who are well known to be naughty, those that are troublesome and not observant, noisy in class, and do not adhere to the school rules....But, not all the teachers use corporal punishment at school very few of them.

Researcher: What are other students saying about corporal punishment?

Thabisa: Some learners say it is good that some teachers still use corporal punishment, because it keeps order in school as some students do not attend classes as expected, do as they please, so it keeps learners in order. But, can you imagine how much chaos and ill-discipline would be displayed by learners at school if some teachers did not use corporal punishment? Some learners would not attend classes for days and those that learners that are perpetrators of violence at school would not be scared of anyone; that means they will get away with their undesirable behaviour.

Esethu: *They see nothing wrong because mam, at home they experience corporal punishment so for some of them it is normal to be beaten up even at school.*

Zithobile: *But, corporal punishment is against the law in South Africa, teachers are not supposed to be beating up learners and it is violence towards us as learners by teachers because sometimes you are beaten for no serious reason. Other girls will tell you that in some cases when the male teacher is interested in you as a girl and you don't agree he will always look for a reason to use corporal punishment on you for little things. We need to report teachers who continue to beat us up to the Department of Education authorities. I have seen on media that in other areas of the Province some teachers have lost their jobs for injuring learners.*

This narrative shows that some learners have different views on the continued use of corporal punishment as a means of discipline. For example, some learners seem to justify their teachers' behaviour as they interpret such behaviour as a gesture of love and support. However, other learners such as Zithobile, are strongly against the use of corporal punishment. They seem to be aware of their rights and interpret such form of behaviour as a form of violence towards learners.

Researcher: *So do all teachers use corporal punishment or is it a selected few?*

Xolani: *No, it is the selected few teachers that use corporal punishment and they are feared by learners. The other teachers even call those feared teachers to come and hit learners on their behalf. I also feel that corporal punishment is violence against us as learners because we are defenceless.*

Zithobile: *I do not like corporal punishment because some teachers hit and injure learners without any remorse. They do not show any empathy. Our teacher once hit my classmate just before she was about to start writing an exam and injured her and when the student brought the injury to the attention of the teacher, the teacher said she was trying to evade writing the exam because she was scared of exams, though it was obvious that her hand was swollen.*

Researcher: *Did you see that the hand of the learner was swollen?*

Xolani: *Yes, I saw it with my eyes and other learners saw it too.*

Zodwa: *Mam, the story went round the school and parents became involved.*

Researcher : *How was the situation resolved?*

Xolani: It was not resolved because that student ended up failing the maths exam because she could not write properly because her hand was swollen and painful. I don't know, but her parents came to see the principal. Some of us are scared of these teachers all the time, they even make you bunk classes and feel unsafe to be in school because of them.

Despite corporal punishment being banned in South African schools, the learners' accounts show that it is still the preferred form of discipline amongst some teachers. The learners differed in their views on the use of corporal punishment, with some regarding it as an act of love and care to correct undesirable behaviour while others felt that it is an act of brutality and violence. Frankenberg *et al.* (2010) notes that in some situations corporal punishment is the preferred form of discipline and is interpreted as beating with care and love. However, Teeka-Bhattarai (2006) observes that in countries like Nepal, the frequent use of corporal punishment has been directly linked to increasing dropout rates amongst learners.

Parents

Some of the parents that were interviewed felt that corporal punishment is a tool to enforce compliance both at home and in school. This suggests that they approve of teachers using it to exert their authority and control over learners.

Researcher: *Has your child reported to you any form of violence happening at school...?*

Mama MaZondi: *Yes, my older son who is Grade 8... sometimes they get to be punished using corporal punishment by teachers.*

Mrs Mabhida: *Yes, there are cases of corporal punishment happening in their school but I am not against corporal punishment because we were also raised by a stick. But, I must say that it is not acceptable when corporal punishment becomes too much.*

Researcher: *What do you mean when you say corporal punishment is too much?*

Mrs Mabhida: *...when a teacher uses a stick on a child for more than three strokes on the hand or all over the body or slaps the learner on the face, it is unacceptable. I personally as a parent I'm not against corporal punishment in school because I feel*

it is a corrective measure if it is executed correctly with love... we still use it at homes as parents to our children but ...when it is done too much learners end up being unacceptable ... Other teachers would go to an extent of letting other learners execute corporal punishment to other learners on their behalf and that is entirely unacceptable and I feel that teacher that needs to be expelled from her job.

The learners' teachers' and parents' views on safety in and around school attest to the multiple dimensions of meanings and interpretations of violence within the school and the community and their inter-relatedness. Some parents still prefer corporal punishment as a means of exerting discipline in schools (Harber & Mncube, 2013). It is clear that violence in schools (Burton & Leoschut, 2013) is a reflection of the violence that happens at home and in the community (Ward, 2007). The participants shared a common understanding of violence as a demonstration of the power of the strong over the weak (Leach, 2006; UNICEF, 2010; Sundaram, 2013). Violence is further understood as an instrument to negotiate identity; what it means to position oneself as a boy or as a girl, and how such constructs inform and underlying interactions and relationships within school spaces and beyond (Leach and Humphreys, 2007; Burton, 2008), and equally, as an instrument of intimidation, victimisation and resistance. It is manifest in the assertion of power and authority to coerce and dominate and in resistance to this control and dominance, for instance, the use of corporal punishment by teachers (Sommer, Likindikoki & Kaaya, 2013). Implied in the findings is an understanding of violence explicated in power relations (Connell, 2002).

4.5 Gender Violence and the School's Neighbourhood

The violence seen in and around schools is connected to gender relations (Bhana, 2013). The ways in which gender is implicated in the conditions and practices that lead to violence in the day-to-day relationships and interactions of learners in and around school have been extensively researched (Bhana, 2009; Dunne, Humphreys and Leach, 2006; Morrell, 2002; Frankenberg *et al.* (2010). It is clear that gender violence in schools imitates the violence that is practised in the neighbourhoods where schools are located (Burton and Leoschut, 2013; Morrell, 2008; Dunne, 2007). Certain cultural practices reinforce a gender-based

hierarchy and power relations, making women and children vulnerable (Leach, Slade and Dunne, 2012). Male dominance and the appropriation of a gendered personality that gives men authority over women as a means of maintaining a gender regime are prevalent in some societies (Leach, Slade & Dunne, 2012). In South Africa, a rural community like Imfume, where this research was carried out, are immersed in cultural practices that promote men's status over that of women, and gender violence is contextualised within the cultural practice of male hegemony and patriarchy (Bhana, 2013b). The narratives of the learners, teachers and parents that participated in this study on their understanding of gender violence provide clear evidence on the tendency to view gender violence within the cultural claims of gender as viewed from hegemonic power relations (Connell, 2002).

The interviews with parents revealed that their views of what constitutes gender violence and its manifestation in school and in the neighbourhood is complex and rooted in cultural practices.

Researcher: *What is your understanding of gender violence?*

Mama MaZondi: *When I talk of violence I think of drugs like 'whoonga', 'dagga', other substances our children take and start to steal from their own families and stealing from neighbours. After taking these drugs these children will also engage into street fights which normally end up leading to community violence involving many people. At home, I am staying with my two young sons and two of my late brother's sons. The eldest is 17 years old and the younger one is 16 yearsold. Since my brother died they have been under my guardianship... These children have stolen my electrical appliances, money and my building material. When I reported the matter to the police they were held for few days and they were released, then they came back home and they started to be violent with me.*

Researcher: *What is it that they did to you, when they began to be violent you?*

Mama MaZondi: *'Hhayibo! Babengithukangezinhlab' (they were swearing at me), using vulgar language which I feel it was violence towards me. Sometimes they will come home drunk and they would attempt to be physically violent towards me, until I decided to call a family meeting.*

Researcher: *Did their behaviour change after the family meeting?*

Mama Mazondi: *They tried to behave for a short while but, they began stealing again but now it became worse they were now 'osikhothen' (thugs). These boys started to do crime in the community, there were several reports about them being part of criminal activities like forcefully taking money from children who are sent to shops or who are from school. They will try to stop schoolchildren on their way to school demanding money from them ...*

Researcher: *Why they were swearing at you?*

Mama Mazondi: *One evening a group of people from the community came to my house looking for one of the boys claiming that he has stolen some items from one of the houses in the neighbourhood and they wanted me to tell them where he was. Unfortunately, I had no idea of his whereabouts at the time but I told them that he had also stolen from me. Those people stated very clearly that when they find him they will beat him up until he gives back what he has stolen from them. I must say I was worried I begged them to at least call the police so that he would be arrested. After these people had left the boy came in and I started questioning him these people who here claiming that he had stolen from them. He didn't deny anything or give me answers but instead he started swearing at me saying that I am ganging with other people accusing him of stealing.*

Researcher: *How did you end up resolving the matter?*

Mama Mazondi: *The boy attempted to be violent towards me and the people that came earlier for their stolen goods came back and I had already phoned the police to come and arrest him. When these people came into the house they took him out to the street and started beating him demanding him to show them where has he taken their goods to. While they were beating him up the police came, they stopped them, and he was arrested immediately.*

This conversation shows that these participants understand gender violence as the things that boys do to undermine the authority of a woman. There is clear evidence that gender violence in schools mirrors the violence practised in the neighbourhoods where schools are located (Burton & Leoschut, 2013; Morrell, 2008; Dunne, 2007). Mama Mazondi's suggestion that the boys under her guardianship resorted to violent behaviour towards her and other community members after the death of their father perhaps has cultural

connotations. Because she feels that she has no power to control the boys, she first reported them to the police and then called a family meeting. This reflects notions within communities that gender violence is the result of men assuming power over women or the less powerful, as the responses from other parents suggest.

Researcher: *What is your understanding of gender violence?*

Sis Thembi: *Girls not safe... on their way to school because they are also victims of verbal abuse and sexual harassment from boys and men in the community.*

Mrs Mabhida: *Gender violence eh, eh, I think are the fights we see around us everyday maybe in our own homes or maybe I should, say crime towards women, children and towards 'Izitabane' (homosexuals) within our community. Such violence extends to school...*

Researcher: *Can you say such violence can also be directed to boys?*

Mrs Mabhida: *Mmm, yes. Maybe, but I'm not sure.*

Researcher: *Ok, you have mentioned earlier such violence is happening in our homes, what exactly happens?*

Mrs Mabhida: *In some families you find that there are fights between parents, which maybe verbal which may involve exchange of words or maybe physical assaults. Sometimes we see our neighbours fighting or even fights between siblings. Other fights start as a minor issue between two individuals and end up involving their family members and maybe spread out to other people which ends up to be serious community violence which may lead to serious injuries and death.*

Harber & Mncube (2013) study found that being raised by parents who lack proper parenting skills or being raised in an unstable family may expose a child to the risk of being involved in violence at school or in the future. Parents' acceptance of domestic violence and corporal punishment as a corrective measure condones such behaviour in schools (UNESCO, 2014). Furthermore, the high prevalence of external violence and criminal activities in communities often has a negative effect on the daily operations of schools (Harber & Mncube, 2013). This includes gangs whose members are involved in drugs and crime and have easy access to dangerous weapons. These practices may easily extend to

schools, where learners can access drugs and weapons (LeRoux & Mokhele, 2011; Harber, 2011).

In the Focus Group discussions with learners, a more nuanced view of gender violence was revealed. Learners tended to have a broader view of violence and to relate it to how power is negotiated in interactions and activities among boys and girls that extend to school spaces and the neighbourhood. Their view of gender violence touched more on aggression and aggressive behaviour than on understanding themselves as gendered beings. However, when probed further, learners' self-construct of their identity can be recognized in their views on what is permissible for boys and for girls.

***Researcher:** What do you understand by gender violence?*

VIOLENCE IS SAID TO BE PHYSICAL AND NAME CALLING

***Zodwa:** I think gender violence is when a girl and a boy physically fight at each other or maybe shout at each other using strong language like vulgar or maybe calling each other names...*

***Xolani:** Gender violence is when person demands to take what belongs to you without your permission or maybe another learner steals from you, your pen or lunch box...*

***Researcher:** So you say according to your understanding gender violence happens between girls and boys?*

***Zamani:** Not always, sometimes boys from the community come into the school and cause trouble for other boys... So I think gender violence happens between boys or between girls when they fight over a boy.*

FIGHTING BETWEEN BOYS OR BETWEEN GIRLS OVER A BOY OR A GIRL

***Zithobile:** Mam, but boys also fight over girls... last year another boy had a knife wanting to poke another boy because he had written a letter to his girlfriend. Boys*

also harass girls, wanting to talk to them or try to touch us in a sexual way, maybe on your breast or maybe on your bums and that to us as girls is interpreted as gender violence. These maybe boys from school or boys from the community like gangs.

Researcher: *Are there any incidences of sexual violence that happen in or around your school that you hear of or you have witnessed?*

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Zodwa: *Not really, but when we were still in primary school, we heard that one girl from high school left school early because she was not feeling well, and she was nearly raped by two boys...and sometimes victims of sexual violence don't want to talk about it and maybe those who were once at risk of sexual assault don't talk about it we end up hearing rumours which might not be the true reflection of what really happened sometimes.*

Human Rights Watch (2001) reported that a 16-year-old girl at a Durban school for learners living with disabilities was raped by a teacher at school. She reported the incident to the school principal but no action was taken by the school until the parents intervened.

Researcher: *Ok, others tell me more...*

Xolani: *As boys sometimes we carry scissors or maybe any sharp instruments to defend ourselves in case anything happens as it is not safe especially by the taxi rank, where boys who don't attend school normally gather to smoke or play cards. When you happen to pass by them, they sometimes stop you demand money or pass silly remarks to provoke you. Sometimes these boys will provoke you while you are walking with girls and you also don't want to look like a coward in front of girls from your school because they will end up laughing at you and spreading what happened to the whole school. So, therefore, as a boy end up being involved in a fight not intentionally but you want to protect your dignity as a boy and be more of a hero which may boost your ego as a man.*

Xolani's account of boys carrying weapons to protect themselves and Zamani's statement that he will run away when trouble starts are typical of the culturally permeated narratives

of gender which portray boys' violence as an acceptable means of defence. It also portrays their views of being superior but discourages girls from engaging in violence, conforming to constructs of girls as a weak or inferior and vulnerable category (UNESCO, 2014).

DEFENDING ONESELF AGAINST VIOLENCE REPRODUCES VIOLENCE; USE OF SCISSORS AND SHARP INSTRUMENTS

Some boys have resorted to carrying different weapons to school in order to defend themselves from the gangs in the community and those that come to school. Even though these learners know that it is against the school rules to carry these weapons, they stated that they find themselves defenceless without these weapons.

Esethu: Last year mam, here at school two boys from different 'zigodi' (different villages) fought over a girl and one boy was beaten up seriously, the next day the one boy that was beaten up the previous day came with other boys from his village to school to attack the other boy. There was so much violence which ended up spreading out to the community ...

Zithobile: As a result mam, the girl that these boys were fighting for never came back to school and us as girls we were also affected because we belong to the same villages as those boys who were fighting, we were also scared to come to school. There were also threats from the boys that no girl should date or be seen talking to any boy from the other village, it was said she was going to be in trouble herself...

Zamani: I will be honest 'mina' (I) mam, even girls from my village, they know I always tell them that when serious trouble starts 'ngiyodlaphansi' (I will run away)... gangs carry ... scissors... guns and knives and they can poke you to death.

Researcher: So you say Zamani as a boy you sometimes tell the girls you walk with from school to home that when serious violence starts you will run and leave them behind?

Zamani: Yes mam, sometimes people die here when violence occurs. Gangs carry knives they can poke you to death as much as I would like to protect the girls against these thugs but it's too dangerous and risky for me because sometimes we are approached by older boys and even older men who are capable of doing anything to you if you stand on their way (Girls laughing).

Learners understand gender violence as not only boy-on-girl or boy-on-boy violence, but as girl-on-girl or girl-on-boy violence. The general understanding amongst the learners in the focus group discussions reflects the notion of violence as the demonstration of the power of the strong over the weak (Leach, 2006; UNICEF, 2010; Sundaram 2013). The gender relations practised in the society and at home that are rooted in patriarchal social behaviours influence how learners behave at school (UNESCO, 2014).

However, Bhana (2008a) notes that girls also have agency and that girl on girl violence occurs in schools. She adds that the use of violence by girls in school is visible in their negotiations and engagement with boys and other girls. The aim is to gain recognition and win friendships; it is also a means of obtaining social and material rewards (Bhana, 2008a). For instance, girls actively seek to maintain dignity, power and acceptance amongst other girls and acceptance amongst boys (Bhana, 2008). In the focus group discussions, learners encountered incidents where girls were involved in violence:

Researcher: *Have you witnessed any form of violence here at school? What exactly happened?*

Thabisa: *As Grade 8 learners when we arrived at high school, girls from senior grades normally tease us, ridicule and demand us to do things for them like buying them fruits and sometimes spread false rumours about you.*

Researcher: *Do you think that is gender violence Thabisa?*

Thabisa: *Yes mam, I think because they also hurt us by what they say to us ...*

Zodwa: *Mam, like one beautiful girl from our class was constantly bullied by a clique of older girls from Grade 10 because there were rumours that one boy from Grade 11 who is dating one of the girls from the clique was talking to this Grade 8 beautiful girl. One day during break time one of the girls from the clique forcefully tried to take this girl's instrument box but she resisted and the other girl from the clique tried to attack the Grade 8 girl but the girl took out the small mirror from her pocket and poked the other girl on her arm...*

Thabisa: *Also mam, amongst us girls ...other girls will write false rumours about another girl or gossip about other girls even though this is not taken as real*

violence but this can lead to serious consequences as other girls end up being threatened and insulted through social networks like WhatsApp, Facebook and mixit. Some girls sometimes end up not coming to school...

Researcher: You say this is not regarded as real violence? Why?

Zodwa: ...physical fighting ,like pushing ,attacking with weapons and uninvited touching by boys or older men is regarded as real violence and when gangs come to school to cause trouble by picking up on girls ...these are also regarded as real violence.

Esethu: One day a young female teacher was conducting morning assembly. Some older boys at the back were busy talking, making some noise. When they were reprimanded, they continued, saying that nothing will be done to them and even in our class other learners provoke the teacher by talking during the lesson or by not doing their homework and sometimes talking back to the teacher when they are reprimanded.

Researcher: What does the teacher do when such behaviour occurs?

Thabisa: Sometime our teacher reports to other male teachers and they will like come to strike them with 'Malizwele' (a stick that is very sore and doesn't break when used to hit a person) ... and the teacher strikes these boys hard.

The learners' construction of female teachers' hesitation to punish unruly learners by means of corporal punishment and instead refer them to male teachers for punishment as a form of gender violence is interesting. This contrasts with teachers' views on gender violence. The teachers related gender violence in school to the violence that happens outside the school and contextualised it in broader social issues. Their understanding revealed how multifaceted and problematic this issue is:

Researcher: What is your understanding of gender violence?

Ms Ramaphosa: It is an action that is done by person to another person which makes one feels uncomfortable and it's normally happens between females and males genders where a stronger gender gains at the time.

Mr Mbethe: Gender violence can be defined as an intentional violation of another person's rights ... can be emotional, physical, financial or even verbal. This can be a teacher to a learner or learner to a learner or teacher to a teacher in school

context... as teachers we have a problem with this abuse because it affects teaching and learning without being easily noticed.

Mr Mkhize: *Gender violence is unwelcome behaviour towards another person which maybe verbal, non-verbal, physical, social and even sexual, which may cause harm to another person.*

Teachers themselves have been affected as victims and perpetrators of gender violence. A survey conducted by Mncube & Harber (2013) found that female teachers' tolerance of patriarchal social tendencies in their daily lives result in them being reluctant to confront gender violence in schools.

Some of the teachers that were interviewed linked their understanding of gender violence in school to violence in the neighbourhood.

Researcher: *Do you receive reports of gender violence in school?*

Mrs Zuma: *Sometimes you receive reports of girls who want to hit other girls because she claims that they are having intimate relationship with her boyfriend and it becomes a big thing and parents end up getting involved.*

Mr Mbethe: *For an example girls will come in reporting about other girls gossiping about them ,yah ... sometimes there cases of physical violence and use of weapons that even involve outside gangs from the community yes ... real violence ...*

As with the other groups of participants, the teachers generally regarded gender violence as an act against girls. All the participants constructed gender violence in relation to the gendered understanding of man-woman, boy-girl categories. This is consciously or unconsciously linked to the power dimensions of gender relations (Connell 2011) and the hierarchical positioning of male and female in the broader social order in South African communities where men are positioned as more powerful and women as powerless, subjugated and prone to victimisation. However, some teachers acknowledged that men and boys could be victims of gender violence and that women and girls could be active agents in such violence:

Ms Ramaphosa: Boys are normally perpetrators of violence. I say this based on the reports we receive as teachers... girls are also sometimes perpetrators but not as often as boys. Even male teachers are sometimes perpetrators of violence...

Researcher: So you say violence is not only limited to learners but also teachers are also involved in violence happening in the school? Can you explain what exactly happens?

Ms Ramaphosa: Yes, through my experience as a female teacher who is in management, when you supervise a male teacher, sometimes he would not want to take instructions from you and sometimes be rude towards you. For an example there will be work that needs to be submitted to you as a Head of Department, the male teacher will not submit on time and don't even bother himself to give you a valid reason for not complying and when he is questioned about it, he becomes very defensive and be verbally abusive towards you. This tendency is not a once of incident but it usually happens and nothing is really done to correct it and it compromises us as women in management positions.

In an interview with a male teacher, I asked:

Researcher: Do we see any violence happening when a male teacher is supervised by a female teacher?

His response was different from those of the other teachers:

Mr Mbethe: No, we have not experienced that kind of violence because last year we had a female principal and there were no problems; we respected her as our principal. Maybe there are incidences that have happened here at school but I have not heard of any so far.

Researcher: ...but have there been instances where for instance a male teacher or learner suffers gender violence from female teachers?

Mr Mbethe: You see, these things don't just happen. I mean male teachers are always assertive and they hold sway here at school. But, all I can say is that some female teachers or school heads do try flex muscles to stamp their authority particularly as leaders in school..., yea, sometimes they can be abusive and try to intimidate you by using strong impolite words, especially if it is to humiliate us

teachers and show she is in charge. These things, if you look at Zulu culture, you can say it is gender directed and made to cause the man harm, humiliations and emotional pain are not for men; it can be violent gendered act ...

This response suggests that female teachers in leadership roles do not assert authority over the male teachers under them for fear of violence. When I probed further on issues of female leadership and control in the school and their intersection with gender relations and the positioning of gender and violence, some female teachers revealed they tended to use violence to negotiate power and resist male dominance and control.

The inter-play of cultural traditions and how male and female teachers define what amounts to and what accounts for gender violence in school is interesting. In the focus group discussion, one of the female teachers was forthright in her assertion that gender violence by male teachers against female teachers is culturally induced.

***Mrs Zuma:** Violence by male teachers is influenced by their background, I am saying this. One day in the staff-room one male teacher said to a female teacher, 'Remember you are a woman you cannot be talking to me like that I am a man.' So, because of culture men turn to see themselves as having power over women. That particular female teacher did not take that very well and she was assertive enough to stand up for herself and tell the male teacher that she is entitled to her opinion like any other human being regardless of gender.*

However, as the conversation progressed, a male teacher drew a link with Zulu culture to explain what accounts for gender violence and male learners' disrespectful behaviour towards female teachers in school.

***Researcher:** So do we see any link between violence and culture by looking at the violence that happens around us in the neighbourhood?*

***Mr Mkhize:** Yes, I think there is a link because in Zulu culture, people are socialized to believe that males have more power than females. For an example at home and in the community around here, a man has a final word in decision making. This turns to make boys to disrespect girls sometimes... here at school, years back, a boy who was from a very powerful family... was very disrespectful towards teachers but his behaviour was worse towards female teachers...*

Researcher: *So why do you think this boy was not very disrespectful towards male teachers?*

Mr Mkhize: *He knew that he was not going to get away with such behaviour, but for us, we're men, we will hit him. Normally boy learners do not misbehave in the presence of male teachers because they are scared of them.*

Researcher: *Why boy learners are scared of male teachers?*

Mr Mkhize: *They know that we are capable of beating them up without them talking back to us.*

Kimmel (2004) observes that boys' behaviour at school that undermines girls and women is often overlooked by teachers on the grounds that 'boys will be boys'. Thus, boys' attitudes towards girls in school spaces are seen as cultural and inherited (Connell, 1995). However, McCarry (2010) argues that such an approach encourages normative gender roles for boys that feed on cycles of continual usurpation of power, maintaining a culture of violence among boys.

Asked what constitutes gender violence in school and in the neighbourhood, all the groups of participants recognised that violence against those considered as showing deviant sexualities like gays and lesbians is a form of gender violence. A teacher expressed this as follows:

Researcher: *What is your understanding of gender violence?*

Mr Modise: *When someone says or does something that is uncomfortable to you verbally or by actions. Sometimes gays and lesbians are victims of gender violence here at school, in the community and even at home. When you talk about gender violence, gender does not matter, it can be the same sex or different sex it is still gender violence.*

A learner, Thabisa, felt that gender violence is:

1 When boys attack or challenge other boys that are said to be gays or lesbians, sometimes even some teachers will pass some negative remarks to these learners...and nothing is being done to correct such behaviour by teachers but is taken as a joke people just laugh.

As the focus group conversation continued, I probed further.

Researcher: *What sort of remarks do teachers make about gay learners?*

Esethu: *They calling them 'Izitabane' or 'ongqingili' (Zulu name used to refer to gays and lesbians). I think it is gender violence...Sometimes teachers become judgemental towards gay learners stating that they are not natural and they will rot in hell this behaviour is against the Christianity values and our culture as Zulus.*

Zodwa: *Mam, I think also when older learners ... forcefully demand them to go and buy something for them like fruits from the aunties during break time and I also take that as an act of violence...*

Boys have been observed to use provocation and conflict as a means of asserting dominant masculinities in school (Hamlall & Morrell, 2012). In asserting their self-construct as *õboysõ*, they tend to ward off those they consider as *õotherõ*, appropriating masculinity to themselves in ways that manifest power relations (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). Gays are considered as *õotherõ*. They portray what Anderson (2009) refers to as an alternative masculinity which is a form of subordinate masculinity. Swain (2006) and Connell (2002) recognise subordinate masculinity as a category that is vulnerable to violence. In South African schools, violence against homosexuals is rife and it seems that school management has not fulfilled its role of ensuring the safety and rights of every learner at school (Bhana, 2014). Heterosexual supremacy and dominance reign supreme in South African townships and schools regardless of legislation that protects the rights of lesbians, gays, transgender and bisexuals (LGTB) (Msibi, 2012). Embedded in cultural and patriarchal tendencies; this acts as a barrier to the creation of a safe environment for all. According to Bhana (2014), South African teachers have not been proactive and vocal on issues of sexuality despite official directives to address these issues, which promote intolerance and homophobic violence.

4.6 Girls and Sexual Violence

The issue of girls' rights has been the subject of debate, particularly in terms of the violence that happens in and around schools (Bhana, 2012). The historical trajectory of apartheid has

been recognised as a factor in developing a culture of violence against girls (Bhana, 2005). Girls are vulnerable due to exploitative sexual relationships, particularly with teachers (Jewkes, 2000), and also confront social problems that affect their schooling experiences (Meier, 2002; Hunter, 2002 and Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). The learner participants discussed girls' vulnerability to gender violence:

Zodwa: ...when we were still in primary school, we heard that one girl from high school left school early because she was not feeling well, and she was nearly raped by two boys but she shouted as they were trying to remove her underwear and she was heard by a local woman working in the fields and she saved her from those boys... Not only school girls are vulnerable to sexual violence even female adults like our teachers cannot walk alone in the fields or on deserted areas as they may also stand a risk of being sexually assaulted as we always see and hear on television about woman who have victims of sexual violence.

The teachers also indicated that girls are at risk of gender violence in and around school:

Mr Mkhize: Girls have reported that boys try to touch them on their breast or demand to talk to them without their will, or even stalked them on the way to girls' toilet. This behaviour has been discouraged by the school but we still hear of such cases now and then.

Researcher: This careless touching, how do girls and the school see it, do girls feel a sense of violation of their rights?

Mr Mkhize: Girls are aware that they are in some ways not very safe around some boys and men, and they feel a sense of shame sometimes to disclose exactly what transpired if and when they are confronted by these gangs of boys. But, we frown at such touching and making jest of girls' body here in our school.

Researcher: What is the school doing to prevent such incidences or when such incidences have been reported?

Mr Mkhize: The school has been active in ensuring that security is tight by ensuring that teachers do random walks around boys' and girls' toilets and girls have been advised not to walk alone to and from school as they are mostly vulnerable to sexual assault. Local South African police officers have been invited by the school to give talks to learners on safety tips, self-defence tips, and the

Department of Education from Youth and Gender development officials have been invited also to give talks on sexual harassment, dangers of substance abuse and human trafficking.

Researcher: *Tell me more about the learner who lost her phone, what happened?*

Mr Mkhize: *An outsider managed to get in the school, took out a knife and forcefully took the learner's cell phone and ran away with it. The poor girl was worried because she complained that she has some private images on that phone but she was reluctant to report to the teachers because she knew that it was against the school policy to carry a cell phone as a learner at school.*

Researcher: *Did she say what kind of images they were? And, how did the school authorities find out about this incident?*

Mr Mkhize: *No, she said it was pictures of her and her friends on the beach wearing, bikini or shorts. This incident happened in full view of other learners, then some learners reported to teachers and she was called into the office to give details of what actually happened but the matter was reported to the police for further investigation and to try and come up with strategies on how to prevent such an incident to happening in the future.*

Mr Mkhize: *But, then she has complained of nasty messages that keep sending to her friends' numbers that she stored in the phone saying to tell her how sexy her body looks and she is very embarrassed and upset the time of the incident, then you see we can't do anything about this as we have reported to SAPS (South African Police Services) and nothing was done thus far.*

Researcher: *So do you think girls are particularly victims of gender violence in the way that this particular girl is targeted?*

Mr Mkhize: *Yes, the gangs and boys sexually harass girls and bully them. Sometimes they are targeted, and sometimes boys are under the influence of drugs and alcohol when they harass the girls. Even at schools more girls are the ones who report more cases of gender violence and as a school we are aware that there those girls who do not come up to report.*

The teachers confirmed that girls are vulnerable to sexual violence from learners and teachers in schools. Human Rights Watch (2001: 53) noted that girls are subjected to sexual

violence at the hands of their male school-mates and teachers on the school grounds, in passages and in the classroom. Girls reported having been kissed against their will, touched on their breasts and having their skirts lifted up and being touched underneath them. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch (2001:42) found that 37% of learners had been victims of rape and that teachers and school managers were among the offenders. The SACE noted in 2008 that girls are continuously exposed to the risk of being sexually assaulted on their way to and from school and that 27 complaints of misconduct had been laid against teachers. UNESCO (2014) states that while teachers have a professional obligation to act as parents (*loco parentis*) in the best interests of learners they are rarely charged with misconduct if found to be involved in a sexual relationship with a learner but are instead protected and transferred to other institutions.

The learners also revealed their views on virtual bullying and violence directed against girls by girls and by boys in the focus group discussions:

***Thabisa:** Amongst girls, it is common that other girls will write false rumours about other...girls end up being threatened of being raped by boys and insulted through social networks like WhatsApp, Facebook and mixit...by other girls. Some false rumours are written behind toilet doors or on school walls especially on toilet walls.*

***Researcher:** What are the main causes of this violence amongst girls?*

The learners regarded male teachers' use of corporal punishment and their financial status as ways of intimidating female learners to befriend them. In some communities, parents encourage their daughters to date or marry a man who is working for government (UNESCO, 2014). Silanesu (2012) found that girls with mental disabilities risk being subjected to sexual violence at school. The frequent occurrence of violence in society at large are the main cause of instability in schools where learners have been sexually assaulted, killed and left disabled (UNICEF, 2001).

***Zithobile:** Other girls will tell you that in some cases when the male teacher is interested in you as a girl and you don't agree he will administer corporal*

punishment on you for little things and sometimes offer you money or promise you good marks.

According to Human Rights Watch (2001), a deputy principal from a school in KwaZulu-Natal was suspended for having sexual relationships with three female learners at his school simultaneously. Some teachers show support and sympathy towards girl learners from poor family backgrounds in return for sexual favours and some parents condone such behaviour in order to gain financial security.

4.7 Dealing with Gender and Sexual Violence in Schools

The conversations with teachers and learners showed clearly that they view gender violence in and out of school in the context of the broader society. This informed their views on how to deal with violence in school. The teachers emphasised the need for all stakeholders to work together:

Researcher: *In your opinion what can schools and communities do in addressing issues of violence?*

Ms Ramaphosa: *We as teachers should talk to learners about what is it that is going on in their lives because sometimes violence has got to do with the learners' background. Some children with good backgrounds do not behave the same as children with bad backgrounds with regards to violence in school. Some children do not have parents so they find themselves trying to make it on their own. Some of them live with their grandparents. These children at a very early age learn to protect themselves from violence as they are vulnerable because of not having parents that can defend them from perpetrators of violence.*

Researcher: *What else can we do to stop violence?*

Ms Ramaphosa: *We should give a learner moral lessons and guide them because you find that sometimes the child is not guided at home and if the child is taught good manners it reduces violence. We as teachers also need to show our learners love because some of them are not given any love from home. Maybe as parents we*

need to learn to negotiate with our children instead of fighting with them and be role models, show them that violence has no place in our society .

Mr Mbethe: *All schools should have security guards and be fenced properly. There should also be strong rules that protect teachers themselves from violence that occur in schools, because learners sometimes misbehave or disrespects teachers because they know they will not be beaten because of the laws that prevents the use of corporal punishment.*

Researcher: *How is the school working with the community and other stakeholders to try and deal with violence?*

Mr Mbethe: *We work with the SAPS a lot, the police work very hard to try and stop violence. They come to the school to monitor and advise learners on dangers of carrying dangerous weapons to school. The School Governing Body works very close with the school in ensuring that the school is a safe environment for teachers and learners.*

Researcher: *Have you worked with the community members in dealing with violence?*

Ms Ramaphosa: *We have not worked with the community; they have not shown interest in helping us with regards to violence. In this community you find people watching street fights amongst young people and sometimes no one even tries to stop them or call the police or but they just stand there and watch the fight even adults.*

Researcher: *And what about working with parents?*

Mr Mbethe: *The parents are not doing much to help with violence because they do not even show up to school meetings; some parents don't even show interest in their children's school work. Sometimes parents are called in to come to school and have discussions with subjects teachers regarding their children's school performance some parents don't even show up for appointments without reporting.*

South African schools are sites where men use violence as a means to assert power (Jewkes& Morrell, 2010). Bhana (2005) argues that all violence is gendered. As the findings of this study show, gender violence in schools replicates power manipulation in gender relations among boys, between boys and girls and amongst girls, in the form of

sexual harassment, rape, assaults and intimidation (Jewkes & Morrell, 2010). According to de Lange, Mitchell & Bhana (2012), female teachers and girls are often victims of sexual harassment by male teachers and boys in and around schools. Teachers' views on, and male teachers' use of corporal punishment suggest an authority regime in school that rests on gender power relations and negotiations that are heavily influenced by male dominance and hegemony hidden in normalised and 'acceptable' school practices. Putting an end to gender violence in and around schools therefore calls for an approach that is not only based on an understanding of the dynamics of the gender power relations that obtain in school and outside school in neighbourhoods and communities, but equally important, co-constructive and collaborative strategies to deal with the problem. This requires co-operation among all stakeholders, including SGBs, LRCs, SMTs and other stakeholders in the community (Burton, 2007). Educational programmes on conflict resolution and alternative disciplinary measures would also go a long way in addressing this issue.

4.8 Conclusion

Connell (2002) notes that despite contextual dissimilarities, gender violence in schools has the same causes whose origins lie in official and casual practices in schools that lead to the construction and prevalence of inequality that eventually induces gender violence. Miedzian (2002) maintains that boys have been the centre on educational research on gender violence in Africa, thus downplaying the role that girls play in such violence. As a result, the complexity of gender violence in schools and the social circumstances in which such violence emerges are not addressed.

Mills (2001) & Sundaram (2013) note that research shows that power and control are at the centre of violence. This study found that learners, parents and teachers' understanding of gender violence in and around school is intricately connected to culture and violence in the broader community. What may be considered violence in certain circumstances might not be considered such in other circumstances. In this regard, the causes of gender violence are a contested subject (Sundaram, 2013). The cultural and social aspects attached to violence endow it with power and significance (Merry, 2009) which to a large extent defines and

configures the gender power relations (Connell, 2009) that obtain in the social order of a given context.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study explored parents' learners' and teachers' views on gender violence at schools. This chapter presents the study's conclusions and recommendations. It is divided into three sections. The first section presents a summary of the findings at Blessed High School in the predominantly black community of Imfume. The views of the participants were considered vital in exploring gender violence at the school. Section Two summarises the study and Section Three offers recommendations on steps that could be taken to address gender violence in schools, and recommendations for further study.

5.2 Major findings

The summary of the findings is organised in line with the study's objectives outlined in chapter one. The views of each group of participants are clustered.

5.2.1 Views and roles played by learners with respect to gender violence

Violence amongst boys created a problem of safety at school for girls and also some boys. This is perpetuated by the notion of masculinity and the fact that boys tend to demonstrate masculine tendencies through violence not only directed at girls but also amongst themselves in order to establish heroic masculinity and the construction of gender identity. Some of the girls who are members of gangs adopted similar behaviour. These girls were violent towards other girls but also some boys.

Gender related violence moulds learners' views of themselves and their personality in terms of what is feminine and masculine. Identity construction in the form of masculine hegemony and feminine subordination was reflected in the power used by boys to dominate other boys and girls. Girls expressed concern about their safety on their way to and from school. These girls felt that violence at school was no different, if not the same, from the violence they experience from the community. However, not all the boys subscribed to

prevailing gender power relations; some of the girls relied on the protection of male friends on their way to and from school. Therefore, the power relationships were fluid depending on the circumstances and not directly based on the gender of the learners. A less powerful male was considered protective by his female friends. However, despite the presence of these boys, safety was not guaranteed and the girls were still afraid. Thus, the role of the boys was either seen as not being sufficient to ensure safety or an expression of internalised subordination. Furthermore, the boys also expressed fear of older boys.

Unwanted touching of girls' bodies was an aspect of gender violence, as was derogatory name-calling, which is more common with girl-on-girl violence. The learners' understanding of violence related more to aggressive behaviour than understanding gender related violence. Such views reflect their culturally constructed understanding of what violence means and what gender violence means. Therefore, gender constructed identities were not directly related to gender violence even though it was acknowledged that it is not restricted to one gender but cuts across genders, reflecting power relations between the weak and the strong.

The learners regarded teachers' use of corporal punishment as a form of violence as some teachers used it against female learners who refused their proposal for a relationship. Some learners did not consider corporal punishment as an act of violence towards them but instead they considered corporal punishment as an expression of love by their teachers.

5.2.2 Parental Accounts and the Role of Gender Violence at School

The parental accounts of violence at school reflected what goes on in the community and the homes of some learners with regard to both perpetrators and victims. In the community violence is mainly perpetrated by gangs with male and female members; they are armed and use drugs. Some learners learn violent behaviour at home when their parents fight. Patriarchy dictates that boys are superior to their sisters; thus brothers construct dominant masculine identities and their sisters internalise subordination. Such behaviours carry over from home to the community and school.

Most of the parents that participated in the study supported the use of corporal punishment and did not consider it a form of violence but a way to correct the child. They felt that corporal punishment is the first step in putting an end to community violence. The use of corporal punishment was therefore supported irrespective of the gender of the child.

Violence has been culturally constructed in the learners' homes. The parents noted that violence is something boys do to demonstrate their authority over a girl. This contributes to violence in the community and at school.

5.2.3 Teachers' Role in Dealing with Violence in and Around School

Teachers have the responsibility to curb violent behaviour at school. Teachers noted that learners mimic the behaviour they witness at home. Violent learners are usually the children of violent parents. This finding is confirmed by other studies that link school violence and violence within the communities where schools are located (Burton and Leoschut, 2013; UNICEF, 2010).

However, the teachers' roles were also determined along gender lines as most female teachers were not directly involved in resolving violent behaviour among learners but rather asked their male counterparts to resolve the problem by administering corporal punishment. This might be based on Zulu cultural beliefs. The teachers linked gender violence to male learners' occasional disrespectful behaviour towards female teachers; this was ascribed to the culturally constructed notion of male supremacy in Zulu culture.

Unlike the learners and parents, teachers understood gender violence at school as a form of violence that reflects what happens at home and in the community and that the school was only one of the contexts in which such behaviours were manifested. Thus, gender violence at school is a reflection of the school's context. Teachers tend to focus more on boy on girl violence and ignore girl on boy violence although Connell (2011) reported such power relationships in South African schools. Teachers' views, attitudes and beliefs contribute to the normalisation and perpetuation of violence in schools.

In conclusion, the study found that the views of learners, teachers and parents on gendered violence in the community were influenced by culturally embedded beliefs. These beliefs shape the social structure of the Imfume community where the school is located. Parental views on gender relations and violence are reflected in both the community and at school and are condoned by teachers.

Girls were usually the victims of gender violence and the perpetrators were located at school and in the community. This reflects the male dominance and power imbalance that still permeates rural communities and schools as well as culturally constructed notions of male hegemony and female subordination although in some instances the reverse was reported by participants. School-related gender violence therefore takes place in a context of gender inequality and specific cultural beliefs and attitudes about gender (Leach *et al.* 2003: 67). There was general consensus that violence against those considered sexual deviants such as gays and lesbians is a form of gender violence.

In addressing the problem, the teachers noted a need for a combined effort on the part of all stakeholders. Teachers have a key role to play in curbing violence in schools but they cannot do this alone.

5.3 Summary of the Research

The dissertation was divided into five chapters, each with a particular focus.

Chapter One introduced the study and presented the problem statement, the need for the study, and its objectives and research questions. The participants and the research site were briefly discussed. The chapter ended with an outline of the dissertation.

Chapter Two reviewed the relevant local and international literature on gender violence in schools. Gender violence is a global issue. The causes and extent of gender violence in schools were also explored in this chapter.

Chapter Three presented the research design and methodology employed for this study. Social constructivism was used as the theoretical lens for the study. The study was a qualitative one that used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to gather data. A case study methodology was employed and learners, parents and teachers were the study participants.

Chapter Four presented, analysed and interpreted the findings. These were organised according to the themes that emerged from the data. Six themes emerged that were all centred on issues relating to the complexities of gender violence at school. The views of each group of participants reflected how gender violence was conceived and understood by the learners, teachers and parents.

Chapter Five concludes the study. The findings revealed that gender violence at school is complex and is understood from different points of view. However, cultural influences are paramount in understanding gender violence. Violence at school is linked to violence in the community and at the homes of some learners. Moreover, some teachers subscribed to these cultural beliefs and also used their positions to perpetrate gender violence. The general pattern of gender violence was complex and occurred between males and also between females. The dominant trend was male-to-female violence, confirming the pattern reported in the literature. The chapter ends with recommendations to address gender violence in schools and recommendations for further study.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to address gender violence in schools:

1. Workshops and other educational programmes should be organised to sensitise parents, learners and teachers on the existence of gender violence at schools and the extent to which it is being manifested. Creating awareness would undermine cultural justifications for gender violence in the community, at home and at school. The importance of human rights and gender equity should be emphasised to stakeholders.

2. Parents and members of the community should also be sensitised on the effects of some cultural practices, especially in promoting gender violence. Culturally constructed ideologies that perpetrate violence should be exposed, as well as their effect on victims. This should be placed in the context of education and safety within the community; the continuous silence of the custodians of culture promotes such practices.
3. Violence in schools is a reflection of the domestic violence perpetrated by patriarchal dominance at home and the construction of gender identity. Programmes should be organised to deconstruct such views within rural black communities that have strong cultural traditions relating to gender roles and female subordination. Such initiatives would help to challenge cultural practices that violate human rights.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

All studies have limitations. The results of this study cannot be generalised to other contexts. However, the findings could be applicable to other areas with similar characteristics. Furthermore, the findings of this study could have been influenced by the following key limitations:

1. The study only explored the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence at a rural school. However, the study acknowledges that gender violence involves other stakeholders that did not participate in this study. These include but are not limited to the SGB, South African Police Service, and the Department of Education.
2. Power dynamics existed between the researcher and the participants. The researcher is employed by the Department of Education and had visited the school prior to the research. This could have influenced the data collected as some of the participants might have responded in ways that they thought would fit with the researcher's point of view. To address this problem, the researcher had prior visits and conversations before the actual research process in an attempt to reduce the influence of the power relations between her and the participants.

5.6 Recommendations for the Further Study

The following recommendations are made for further study:

1. To fully understand gender violence in schools, a study should be conducted to explore the views of all of those in authority. This would provide a comprehensive understanding of the views on gender violence at schools, especially rural schools in violent prone areas of South Africa.
2. A study should be done on how best to sensitise parents and learners on the complexities and likely social and academic effects of gender violence in schools. The findings could be used to empower the most vulnerable learners that are likely to become victims and at the same time creates awareness among perpetrators.
3. An in-depth study on the construction and internalisation of gender violence should be conducted in a rural community. This would provide an understanding of how cultural beliefs systems can be tackled and deconstruct the culturally-embedded notion of patriarchal hegemonic dominance that leads to gender violence.

5.7 Conclusion

The summary of the study's findings was presented in line with the objectives which were as follows:

1. To understand the views of learners, teachers and parents on gender violence.
2. To explore learners', teachers' and parents' accounts of gender violence.
3. To investigate the role of learners, teachers and parents in dealing with violence in and around school.

The findings on the views of the three groups of participants on gender violence were presented. The limitations of the study were also acknowledged and the steps taken to address these limitations were discussed. The chapter ended with recommendations to address gender violence in schools and recommendations for further study.

öThere is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities:
violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.ö

-- *Secretary-General of the United Nations*--

Ban Ki-moon (2008)

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Appendix A

Informed consent to parents/guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian

Dear Parent/Guardian of _____

My name is Lungile Ngcobo. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am conducting a study on: Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools.

I am writing to request your permission to allow your child/ward to participate in a study examining the shape and form of gender-based violence (GBV) in and around schools. The research project is titled: Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools. The project aims examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools. Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for some learners. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV. The project will involve interviews with your child/ward, the completion of a questionnaires, as well as some observations of your child's/ward's interactions in schools, including in classrooms and playground. With your and your child's/ward's permission, the interviews will be audio-taped and these tapes will be transcribed. The tapes and transcripts will be stored in locked file cabinets and only I and groups of students who will form part of the research team will have access to the tapes and transcriptions during the project. These will be destroyed when the project ends.

Your daughters/son's/wards' identity will remain anonymous throughout the study and in the various publications we will produce from it (we will not use their real name or the name of their school). In addition, her/his participation in the study is voluntary and he/she may decide not to participate without any penalty. She/he is also free to withdraw from the project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s

which indicate that their well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter.

DECLARATION

Ií (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES/NO

Kindly discuss your daughters/son/wards participation with him/her, and if you both agree and you give his/her permission, fill the form below and return to me.

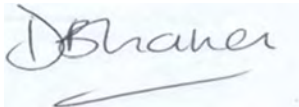
Thank you for your cooperation.

I can be contacted through:

Email: lungilengcobo@vodamail.co.za

Cell: 0827451840

My project supervisor is:
Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X03
CnrMariannahilland Richmond Roads
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3605
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Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 2603
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Email: ÷



You can also contact the Research Office through:
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University of KwaZulu-Natal
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Govan Mbeki Building
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4000

Tel: [+27 31 260 8350](tel:+27312608350)
Fax: [+ 27 31 260 3093](tel:+27312603093)
Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

If í (Full names of parent/guardian) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the

nature of the research project, and I consent to my daughter/son/ward participating in the research project.

I understand that he/she is at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should he/she so desire.

í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í í ..

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/GUARDIAN

í í í í í

DATE

My project supervisor is:

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X03

CnrMariannahilland Richmond Roads

Ashwood

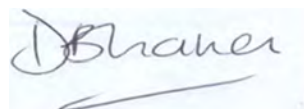
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Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter to Teachers

Date:

Dear _____



My name is Lungile Ngcobo. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am conducting a study on: **Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools.**

Thank you for responding to the invitation to participate in a study examining the shape and form of gender-based violence (GBV) in and around schools.

Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for learners with boys and girls in particular suffering from the effects of violence. The project aims to examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools and what schools can do to stop GBV. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV and the nature of GBV. The study aims to analyze how school learners, experience if at all, GBV, what drives the violence and how this differs for boys and girls. The project will involve filling in questionnaires and interviews with you, as well as some observations of learners' interactions in schools, including in classrooms and playground. Each interview will last for about one hour. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. The tapes and transcripts will be locked in file cabinets. These will be destroyed when the project ends.

Your identity will remain anonymous throughout the study. Your real name or the name of your school will not be used. In addition, your participation in the study is voluntary and you may decide not to participate without any penalty. You are also free to withdraw from the project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group,

there will be limits of confidentiality. Should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that your or someone else's well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek your/their consent in addressing the matter.

DECLARATION

If í (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES/NO

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

I can be contacted through:

Email: lungilengcobo@vodamail.co.za

Cell: 0827451840

Appendix C

Informed consent to learners

Date:

Dear _____

My name is Lungile Ngcobo. I am a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). I am conducting a study on: **Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools.**

Thank you for responding to the invitation to participate in a study examining the shape and form of gender-based violence (GBV) in and around schools.

Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for learners with boys and girls in particular suffering from the effects of violence. The project aims to examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools and what schools can do to stop GBV. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV and the nature of GBV. The study aims to analyze how school learners, experience if at all, GBV, what drives the violence and how this differs for boys and girls. The project will involve filling in questionnaires and interviews with you, as well as some observations of learners' interactions in schools, including in classrooms and playground. Each interview will last for about one hour. With your permission, the interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. The tapes and transcripts will be locked in file cabinets. These will be destroyed when the project ends.

Your identity will remain anonymous throughout the study. Your real name or the name of your school will not be used. In addition, your participation in the study is voluntary and you may decide not to participate without any penalty. You are also free to withdraw from the project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty. Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that

your or someone else's well-being is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek your/their consent in addressing the matter.

DECLARATION

If í (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES/NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES/NO

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

I can be contacted through:

Email: lungilengcobo@vodamail.co.za

Cell: 0827451840

My project supervisor is:

Professor Deevia Bhana, PhD

School of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X03

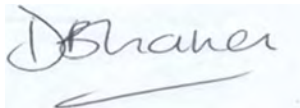
CnrMariannahilland Richmond Roads

Ashwood, 3605, South Africa

Tel: +27 (0) 31 260 2603

Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 3793

Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature appears to be 'Deevia Bhana' written in a cursive style.

You can also contact the Research Office through:

Mariette Snyman

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Research Office: Ethics

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X54001

Durban

4000

Tel: [+27 31 260 8350](tel:+27312608350)

Fax: [+ 27 31 260 3093](tel:+27312603093)

Email: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

Appendix D

Informed consent to principal



Date:

The Principal

Name of School í .

Dear Mr/Mrs/Drí í í í í í

Re: Permission to conduct a research study in the school

I am writing to request your permission to conduct a study of the experiences, meanings and understandings of gender-based violence (GBV). The research project is titled: **Stop the violence: girls and boys in and around schools.**

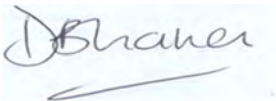
The project aims examine how learners experience, witness and observe GBV in schools. Every day newspaper reports show us that GBV is a problem in some schools and has negative effects for some learners. The project will involve establishing whether and how girls and boys experience GBV. The study aims to analyse how school learners, experience, witness and observe and talk about GBV and how this differs for boys and girls. The project will involve interviews with learners, teachers and school managers, as well as observations of learnersøinteractions in schools, including in classrooms and playground. Questionnaires will be distributed to learners and teachers to ascertain a broad understanding of the scope and nature of GBV in schools.

All participants in the schools and the names of schools will be anonymized. In the various publications that will result from this study I will not use participantsøreal names or the names of their school. They are also free to withdraw from the project at any time during or after data collection, without penalty.

Whilst every precaution will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the participants in every group, there will be limits of confidentiality. Participants will be informed that should there be a disclosure/s which indicate that their well-being/other learners is being compromised or at risk, the researcher will seek their consent in addressing the matter.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely



Project Leader

Prof. Deevia Bhana

Tel: (031) 260 2603

Email: bhanad1@ukzn.ac.za

Permission Form

If _____ (Full names of PRINCIPAL/SGB CHAIRPERSON) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I grant permission to the learners and teachers participating in the research project and give permission for the school to be used as a research site.

I understand that both the learners and the school are at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time.

.....
SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL

.....
DATE

.....
SGB CHAIRPERSON

.....
DATE

Appendix E

Interview Schedule

Interview with Learners

1. What do you understand by gender violence?
2. Do u feel safe at school and on your way from home to school? Why ?
3. Have you ever witnessed any form of violence at school ?What happened?
4. Where did it happen?
5. What did the school do about that violence?
6. What can learners at your school do to stop violence?
7. What do you think the school can do to stop violence ?

Interview with Teachers

1. What is your understanding of gender violence?
2. Do you receive any reports of violence happening in your school? Give examples
3. Who are normally the perpetrators? Boys or girls?
4. What can you do as a teacher to stop violence at school?
5. Do you think the department of education is doing enough in dealing with violence in schools? Why?
6. How is the school working with the community or other stakeholders in trying to deal with violence?
7. What programmes do you have as a school that address issues of gender violence?

Interview with Parents

1. What is your understanding of gender violence?
2. Has your child reported to you any form of violence happening at school
3. Or on the way to school? What happened?
4. Do you think learners who experience violence at home can be also violent at school towards other people? Why?
5. What can you do at home as a parent in trying to address the issues of violence with your children?

6. Do you think the school and the community are doing enough in dealing with violence?
7. What can parents do in working with the school in trying to stop violence in school and around?

Appendix F

Ethical clearance approval



15 September 2014

Ms Lungile Ngcobo (214581933)
School of Education
Westville Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/0064/014M (Linked to HSS/1197/013)
Project title: Gender violence at Blessed High School: Views from learners, teachers and parents at Ugu District, In KwaZulu-Natal

Dear Ms Ngcobo,

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 09 September 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above-mentioned application, and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Shamuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Deevir Bhana
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor P. Mavojala
Cc School Administrator: Mr. Thabo Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr. Shamuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Geyser Mbeki Drive

Postal Address: Private Bag 204021, 21401 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 5180/51804/518044/518045/518046/518047/518048/518049/518050 Fax: +27 (0) 31 260 4600 Email: ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za / ethics@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



10 YEARS OF THEMATIC EXCELLENCE

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Appendix G

Turnitin Report

Turnitin Originality Report
Full Dissertation by Lungile Ngcobo
From Gender Education article (Masters)

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